



Planning for the Next Generation: Cities, Regions & Schools

Policy Briefs

**Submitted to
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Planning Integration:

Reconnecting Land Development Policies in Cities and Schools

Jean Eisberg, Susan Slingsluff, Lauren Friedman & Christopher Lollini

THE PROBLEM

School facilities funding and construction are not structured to promote sustainable development and regional equity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although school facilities are major public infrastructure investments, planning for schools is happening in isolation from municipal planning. As special planning districts, public school districts have their own governing bodies, budgets and land development powers. School districts have the power to condemn and assemble land, but they are not always required to abide by comprehensive plans or zoning laws. Cities may include school planning in comprehensive plans, but rarely are schools included in revitalization efforts. For example, redevelopment plans tend to concentrate on residential and economic development without taking into account school facilities plans.

Student population and school facilities spending continue to grow. The U.S. Census projects that there will be 81 million school-age children by 2050 – a 32% increase over 2000.^a In 2005, over \$21 billion was spent on school construction.^b With so many new students expected and so much money being spent on schools, it is imperative that policies and planning take into account the current disconnect in processes and work to close the gap.

Current land use and governance policies, such as acreage requirements and two-thirds spending rules, bias new school siting toward new construction, as opposed to infill development, and the reuse of existing building and sites. This leads to disinvestment in existing schools, often in urban areas, and increased spending on new school facilities, usually built in the suburbs or the urban fringe. New school construction has resulted in “mega” schools, consuming large land areas on the edges of town. These schools are often cut off from existing communities, and inaccessible to most students by walking, biking, or public transit. New school construction is contributing to suburban sprawl. The effects of these policies are felt in cities across the country and play a large role in widening the gap between city and school planners.

The confluence of population shifts, allocated capital to school facilities, and disconnected land use policies, leads us to our central policy questions:

- How can we structure school facility funding and construction in a way that promotes sustainable development and regional equity?
- What land use options do urban and suburban municipalities have to encourage efficient use of land and resources?

^a U.S. Census. U.S. Interim Projections. “Table 2a. Projected Population of the United States, by Age and Sex: 2000 to 2050” Age 5-19 projection. <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>

^b Abramson, Paul. “11th Annual Construction Report,” *School Planning and Management*, v45 n2, February 2006: C-3.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is a review of recent academic and industry literature that discusses the intersection of land use and school planning. Interdisciplinary academic research between educators and planners is rare. Much of the recent research and literature focusing on the intersection of schools, land development and land use planning has come from practitioners. The review will explore the following topic areas: schools and “quality of place,” schools and sprawl, smart growth and neighborhood revitalization, and regional equity.

A. Beyond Academics: Schools and “Quality of Place”

Schools are places of learning, thus classrooms dominate most discussions about the role of schools in American society. Discussions about schools tend to focus on academic standards, teaching quality, textbooks, testing, curriculum, and student achievement. Rarely does the discussion take a broader look at the ways that schools interact with their surrounding communities and cities. In order to gain a better understanding of how schools connect to local land use planning, it is necessary to find the connection between schools and the more familiar pursuits of the city planning establishment: economic development and land use planning.

The role of planning departments in most cities is to encourage economic growth and development that will improve the lives of residents, while balancing the city’s tax revenues and expenditures. Understanding the link between local public schools and local planning practice is essential to creating a broader understanding of the impact of schools on cities.

In what ways does the perception of local school quality contribute to notions of a city, or a neighborhood, being “high quality”, and worthy of financial investment? Does financial investment as a result of improving public schools lead to economic growth and longer-term economic development for community residents? In order to understand the role of schools in helping to create a high “quality of place” in cities and suburbs some researchers are seeking to understand how the perceived quality of local public schools contributes to the broader view of a locality. In particular, they have attempted to discover whether or not school quality effects the location decisions of businesses and residents.

Schools as Quality of Life Indicators

Economic development researchers list local schools as one of the most important quality of life indicators necessary to understanding the mechanisms of local business attraction and retention. In a 1997 article examining the impact of quality of life indicators on the location decisions of businesses, economist James Segedy wrote that new models of economic development must create and maintain a “healthy supportive balance between private-sector growth and development, and public-sector resources and services (culture, infrastructure, parks, schools).”^c Schools, then, are an important indicator to businesses and workers that the standards of living in a particular location are of high quality and therefore worthy of investment. In a 2004 article entitled “Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows,” Jonathan

^c Segedy, James A. “How important is ‘Quality of Life: in Location Decision and Local Economic Development?’” *Dilemmas of Urban Economic Development: Issues in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Richard D. Bingham and Robert Mier, *Urban Affairs Annual Reviews #47*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1997.

Weiss reported that the emerging field of study around quality of life indicators has found that cost of living and perceived school quality are two of the top concerns of small and technology-related companies.^d

Using public schools as mechanisms for attracting and retaining businesses has been shown to be an effective method of improving the economic growth of an area, and falls very much in line with traditional economic development strategies. Experiences in expanding suburban and rural towns indicate that schools are a key component to their long-term economic growth and vitality.^e

Schools and Residential Real Estate Values

The connection between schools and economic development that has received the most attention is the link between public schools and the residential real estate market. Again, Jonathan Weiss' review of the research about this topic is illustrative not only of the diversity of opinion surrounding the link between residential property values and the perceived quality of public schools, but also of the need for further investigation into the causes and consequences of this link. Weiss reports that researchers continue to disagree about the exact factors that contribute to a "quality" school, but concludes that the five most likely to be relevant to the real estate market are: school spending, student-teacher ratio, achievement test scores, individual school improvement over time and the number of students taking advanced and AP courses.^f Realtors report that homebuyers bring local school test scores to the table when searching for homes, and school district catchment areas make a large difference in the final price of the home.^g

In an era in which towns and cities must struggle for increased tax revenues, competition between towns for businesses and residents has become a cutthroat game, and the primary endeavor of many land use planners. The implications of the schools-housing market link for local economic development is that the increased property values due to cities and counties as a result of higher home prices can mean large increases in the local tax base, and tax increment financing within designated redevelopment areas.

B. Schools and Sprawl: Disconnected Design, Development and Land Use Planning

Much of the relevant evidence that exists about the relationship between school facilities and neighborhoods is coming from suburban experiences, rather than urban ones. For the past thirty years, most new school construction has taken place in the suburbs. The planning and design of

^d Weiss, Jonathan D. *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows*, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, 2004.

^e McClelland, Mac and Keith Schneider. Michigan Land Use Institute, "Hard Lessons: Causes and Consequences of Michigan's School Construction Boom," February 2004; Gurwitt, Rob. "Edge-ucation: What Compels Communities to Build Schools in the Middle of Nowhere?" *Governing Magazine*, Cover story, March 2004.

<<http://governing.com/textbook/schools.htm>>

^f Weiss, 2004.

^g Hilber, Christian A. L. and Christopher J. Mayer. "Why do Households Without Children support Local Public Schools? Linking Housing Price Capitalization to School Spending," Working Papers Research Department, Working Paper No.02-10, 2002; Goldberg, David. "Of Sprawl Schools and Small Schools," *National Association of Realtors*. Winter 2005. <<http://www.realtor.org/sg3.nsf/Pages/winter05sprawl?OpenDocument>>

new suburban schools has focused on creating large single-story schools, sprawling across greenfield sites located at the edge of new development. As population increases and the demand for new housing rises, this model of school construction has proven costly and has perpetuated “leap frog” development patterns typified by traditional suburban growth.^h

Similarly, the continuation of uncoordinated planning practices between public agencies and private developers has resulted in many schools which are difficult for students to reach by foot or public transit, resulting in costly school district bus services. Both health and school reform advocates have begun to push for a move toward creating smaller, neighborhood-based, walkable schools that provide more effective, efficient learning environments that are located in closer geographic proximity to students’ homes and communities. Advocates for urban school reform and neighborhood revitalization are looking to the experiences of the suburbs to strengthen their calls for coordinated resource and land use planning.ⁱ

“New is Better”: The Competition for Enrollment

Continuing population pressures in newly developing suburbs and rural areas have made school facilities construction an urgent, and often controversial, land use decision for many towns. In recent years, school districts have struggled to meet the growing need for larger, new and improved facilities in the face of tighter state and federal funding guidelines. Across many states, “portable” classroom facilities have been installed on school blacktops and playing fields in order to provide expanded learning spaces for schools. The ubiquitous use of “portables” has led to debates about the health and safety of learning conditions in many schools, as well as concerns that low-quality workplace conditions may be contributing to high teacher turnover and lower academic achievement among students. Sadly, schools resembling trailer parks have become the norm in many struggling urban districts, and rapidly expanding suburban areas are facing similar pressures.^j

As many school districts strive to meet the facilities needs of their student populations, state funding formulas and consumer expectations have created a competitive climate that has compounded district and municipal efforts to improve local schools. In an attempt to level the playing field between financially strapped urban school districts and better-off suburban districts, a number of states have adopted funding formulas that grant districts per-pupil funding. For each student, the district receives a set number of dollars from the state, revenue known as average daily attendance (ADA).^k At the same time, state and federal budgets have become more prescriptive, and school districts have less flexibility in determining how monies will be spent. The result of these funding formulas has been an increase in the competition for student enrollment between school districts to maximize the availability of state funds.

^h McClelland and Schneider 2004, Goldberg 2005. Leapfrog development defined in Section III.B: Effects of School Sprawl.

ⁱ Simril, Renata. *New Schools Better Neighborhoods. A New Strategy for Building Better Neighborhoods*, October 2002. < <http://www.nsbm.org/publications/cra/index.php>>; National Association of Realtors. “Public Schools: A Toolkit for Realtors.” 2005.

^j Ross, Zev A. and Bill Walker. “Reading, Writing and Risk: Air Pollution Inside California’s Portable Classrooms.” Environmental Working Group, May 1999: 10.

^k McClelland and Schneider, 2004

Meanwhile, growing suburban cities and towns have come to realize the importance of schools in attracting new businesses, jobs and residents. Defining the quality of a local school district can be difficult in light of decentralized school planning, and often confusing when evaluating the wide array of variables associated with educational quality. For this reason, many businesses and residents look to standardized test scores and the quality of school facilities to assist them in making their location decisions. Consumer preferences – based upon residential home sales and the location decisions of residents - seem to indicate that a *new* school is de facto a *better* school, and states have responded by prioritizing new school construction over the rehabilitation of older schools.¹

School Sprawl: Facilities Funding, Design and Mega-schools

First published in 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation report *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School* describes the loss of historic neighborhood schools in towns and cities across the United States. In many states, funding formulas for school facilities improvements have made a significant impact on the location of schools within communities. The Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), a professional association concerned with school facilities, issued a recommendation known as the “two-thirds” rule that has since become the “rule-of-thumb” used by many states across the nation to grant school facilities improvement funds.^m The rule specifies that if the cost of renovating an existing school exceeds two-thirds of the cost of new construction, then the state will only fund new construction. As a result, school districts are often faced with few options, and choose to demolish existing schools in favor of new school construction.ⁿ In this way, state funding biases favor new school construction over rehabilitation, and development on undeveloped, “greenfield,” land over building in existing neighborhoods, “infill.”

Another CEFPI recommended design guideline that literally paved the way for unchecked growth and development at the edges of suburban areas is the minimum acreage requirements for different school uses. The acreage is recommended to allow for adequate parking and athletic facilities on site.^o While the acreage “requirements” are merely recommendations, researchers have found that many states have interpreted them as mandated minimums, and have adjusted state requirements accordingly.^p Much of the extra acreage is proposed for use as parking lots and athletic facilities. Similarly, school construction recommendations discourage multi-story designs, due to the fact that excessive use of stairways is seen as a legal liability. In this way, school sprawl is often mandated as the only option for school districts to manage and plan for increasing school population needs.^q

¹ Weiss, 2004; Christian and Mayer, 2002

^m Beaumont, C. & Pianca, E. *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School*. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2nd Edition, Oct. 2002.

ⁿ Beaumont and Pianca, 2002; Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, “Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities,” Translation Paper Number Eight, March 2002.

^o Beaumont and Pianca, 2002.

^p Beaumont and Pianca, 2002; Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, 2002

^q Beaumont and Pianca, 2002; Gurwitt, 2004; McClelland and Schneider, 2004.

An additional result of the need to build new schools on large lots is that most new construction can only be accommodated on the outskirts of town, on outlying parcels far from public transit and existing infrastructure. This means that students will either need to be transported to school in private cars, or the school district will have to operate a fleet of buses to bring students to school on a daily basis. The lack of “walkable” schools has been blamed for contributing to the national obesity epidemic that currently threatens the health of the United States. Nationally, medical experts have warned that decreased physical exercise among school-aged children is leading to “unprecedented levels of obesity” and that more than one-fourth of children aged 6-17 are overweight. While school location may not be the only factor in the nation’s obesity crisis, the de facto requirement that students drive to and from school only exacerbates the problem by depriving them a traditional outlet for physical activity.[†] Similarly, students report that transportation constraints can make participation in after school activities challenging, as parents are often required to transport students to events and practices. While quantitative evidence of the opportunity costs borne by parents due to driving children to multiple, far-flung school locations is unavailable, anecdotal reports indicate that the travel distances between home, school and workplace are long and time-consuming.[§]

C. Schools, Smart Growth and Neighborhood Revitalization

There are mounting discussions about the positive role that schools play in community revitalization and smart growth. Much of this debate centers on school siting, facilities improvements, public and private financing of community development and the co-location of public services.[‡] Like the National Trust for Historic Preservation, advocacy groups such as New Schools Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) and the Smart Schools-Smart Growth Initiative have published a number of articles, professional publications and interviews that emphasize the need for broad-based change in school finance, school construction, community development and public-private partnerships. Due to the fact that many of these “smart schools” projects are relatively recent, some only now in construction, much of the success reported in these publications is anecdotal and pending further investigation.

Schools and Smart Growth

Smart Growth advocates are beginning to understand the profound impact that perceptions of school quality can have on the location decisions of businesses and residents. The power of good schools to help keep middle class residents in cities is becoming clearer to planning officials, and the role of schools in the revitalization of urban and inner-ring neighborhoods is beginning to receive attention. Recent case studies suggest that school construction benefits neighborhoods by

[†] Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, 2002.

[§] United States Environmental Protection Agency, “Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting,” October 2003; Beaumont and Pianca, 2002.

[‡] Weiss, 2004; Simril, 2002; National Association of Realtors, 2002; Zimmerman, Martin. “Downtown Schools: the New Urban Frontier,” National Association of Realtors Winter 2005. <<http://www.realtor.org/sg3.nsf/Pages/winter05urban?OpenDocument>>, Romeo, Jim. “The ABC’s of Mixed Use Schools; Schools, Communities Learn Meaning of ‘Co-Location’”, Planning, 2004. <<http://www.knowledgeplex.org/news/35636.html>>, Halsband, Robin. “Charter Schools Benefit Community Economic Development,” Journal of Housing and Community Development. November/December 2003; Shoskes, Ellen. “Smarter Planning for Schools and Communities in New Jersey,” 2001 <<http://www.asu.edu/caed/proceedings01/SHOSKES/shoshkes.htm>>

improving the built environment of an area, thereby making it more attractive to private investors.^u

Not only can schools help to bring residents and jobs back to city neighborhoods, but they also add to the choices and amenities available to those who locate in the city. By providing façade improvement funding and rehabilitating aging schools, cities can begin to counteract decades of negative images and stereotypes about the crime, violence, blight and general disrepair that plagues urban centers. While these physical improvements will not single-handedly solve the problem of neighborhood disinvestment, efforts of this nature can help to improve the overall investment environment of the area and entice private investment back to areas that have been long ignored.^v

Schools and Neighborhood Reinvestment: Co-Location and Public-Private Partnerships

The NSBN publication “A New Strategy for Building Better Neighborhoods” (2002) presented to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency highlighted a number of ways that the construction of new school facilities can create reinvestment opportunities for older communities. Using the experiences of the Urban Village in San Diego as a case study, NSBN makes the case for using public investments in community infrastructure and services to set the groundwork for an increase in private reinvestment in neighborhoods. In this case, a new police station, an elementary school, a community theater, a public park, a Head Start program, and a new retail center were all designed and built with assistance from community members, the city, local non-profits and private foundations. By co-locating public services and improving the physical space of the local neighborhood, reinvestment in the community took off. At the same time, parental involvement and school outcomes improved as the school became a community center serving a variety of needs.

In order for the co-location of school and community facilities to provide the basis for broader neighborhood reinvestment, it is necessary for redevelopment planners to adapt the processes of neighborhood planning to this framework.^w For the new redevelopment process to succeed, school districts, city councils, planners, legislators, chambers of commerce, parks commissioners, community associations, urban designers and private developers will need to devise new strategies of collaboration to address their diverse needs.^x Traditional planning strategies have not been collaborative and have left each of these individual parties to compete between one another for scarce land and funding resources. Restrictive zoning regulations, building standards and codes frequently hinder the flexibility necessary to create dynamic new spaces and create a development environment that hinders the efficient use of development financing.

By implementing new structures and participation guidelines, various public and private interests can partner to create joint-use, multifaceted development projects that add positive value to the redevelopment of disinvested neighborhoods. A number of different collaboration models have

^u Simril, 2002; Zimmerman, 2005.

^v Simril, 2002; Zimmerman, 2005.

^w Simril, 2002; Zimmerman, 2005; Goldberg, 2005.

^x Romeo, 2004.

emerged nationwide that demonstrate ways to break down the territorial governance boundaries which separate public agencies and private development interests. In Minneapolis, ten school districts, a local university and the city collaborated to create a new and innovative downtown school, while in San Diego a non-profit intermediary organization was founded to streamline the planning process between municipal agencies, private developers and foundations working to revitalize a struggling neighborhood.^y

D. Regional Equity

In recent years, academic researchers have begun to look into the impact of education on the growth and development of metropolitan areas. Most of these investigations have focused on questions regarding regional funding across municipal and jurisdictional lines, primarily in terms of per pupil and school facilities spending. However, others are calling for a more comprehensive look at regional equity that takes on a broader scope of understanding to incorporate racial bias and the role of community building into analyses of metropolitan growth.

School Facilities Expenditures

School Planning & Management Magazine does publish annual figures on school facilities spending, aggregating all 50 states into 12 regions across the country. Nearly 60% of all school facilities funding in 2005 was spent to build new schools.^z The vast majority of these schools are being built in expanding suburbs. Few of these funds are being allocated for use in older suburbs and urban schools. These schools are often the oldest, and most in need of investment. While expanding suburbs certainly demand new school facilities to meet growing population needs, older schools in existing neighborhoods must not be neglected. As will be discussed later in this paper, state and local funding formulas are not currently designed to create a geographic balance in expenditures, and often pit urban and suburban schools against one another.

School Segregation and Sprawl

In his commentary “Smart Growth and School Reform: What if We Talked about Race and Took Community Seriously?” Howell Baum criticizes the planning field’s narrow view of Smart Growth, and the common practice of focusing on the built environment to the exclusion of social forces that act to shape metropolitan areas. In particular, he analyzes the role of race in residents’ location decisions, and the array of “urban pushes” that result in suburban sprawl. “They leave cities,” he argues, “to avoid bad schools, threats to safety, noxious neighborhood conditions, contact with other races, and poor public services. In trying to manage sprawl, the mainstream Smart Growth movement concentrates on improving suburban amenities, giving little attention to remedying urban problems.”^{aa} He asserts that by taking a “systemic” perspective towards sprawl, and by including racial bias and social communities in analyses of development and growth management, a deeper understanding of sprawl becomes possible.

Rather than perceiving suburban sprawl solely in terms of the built environment and fiscal expenditures, Baum argues that seeing sprawl in terms of school segregation offers a more

^y Simril, 2002; Zimmerman, 2005.

^z Abramson, 2006.

^{aa} Baum, Howell S. “Smart Growth and School Reform: What if We Talked about Race and Took Community Seriously?” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 70, No. 1 Winter 2004: 14.

comprehensive understanding of the forces at work that can promote, or manage, sprawl. He calls for a “sophisticated” development plan that includes regional cooperation and metropolitan governance in broader efforts to create metropolitan school desegregation.^{bb}

III. CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

This section will explore current policies surrounding school facilities planning. It will describe the land use and fiscal policies that are contributing to school sprawl and the result of these policies on the built environment, school district budgets and decision-making by city and school planners.

What land use and funding policies have enabled school sprawl and what are the effects of this sprawl phenomenon?

A. Causes of School Sprawl

Acreage Requirements

The Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) has created national guidelines for the minimum number of acres for a school site. These recommendations are not laws in school planning, but have been adopted by a large number of states and are treated that way by builders and planners. The CEFPI guidelines call for:

- Elementary Schools: 10 acres plus one acre for every 100 students
- Middle Schools: 20 acres plus one acre for every 100 students
- High Schools: 30 acres plus one acre for every 100 students^{cc}

These guidelines have benefits in that they can provide a great deal of space for athletic fields and other facilities that students will benefit from, but also force schools to locate in outlying areas that cannot be reached by walking, biking or public transit. Open spaces this large are often impossible to find in small towns and urban areas, but even if land is available in such large quantities, it is more expensive than undeveloped land on the edge of town.

State Funding Policies

There is a mixture of state funding policies that can cause school sprawl by favoring new schools over upgrades and rehabilitation. The “two-thirds rule” is one example of this type of policy. The “two-thirds rule” states that if the cost of renovating an older school costs more than two-thirds what it would cost to build a new school, then the district must build the new school if it wants state financial assistance. These laws are based on the premise that new schools are better schools, and many states have their own percentage rules to help advance new school construction. For example, in Virginia the rule is 50% and in Minnesota, if the renovation costs more than 60% a new school is built.^{dd}

^{bb} Baum, 2004: 22-24.

^{cc} Beaumont and Pianca, 2002: 15.

^{dd} Beaumont and Pianca, 2002.

There are several problems with percentage rules, but the main problem is that the analysis of costs is most often incomplete. Renovations costs are calculated and compared only to construction costs at the new site. Often, the costs of land, extending utility services such as water and sewer lines, transportation and road construction are not included in the const analysis. If these costs were considered it would be easier for renovation costs to meet the percentage rules and older buildings would be favored more often.

Other funding policies such as state reimbursements can lead to the deterioration of older schools and the favoring of new construction. In 1995 it was estimated that \$322 billion was needed to address maintenance problems, modernize facilities and upgrade school technology. More often than not, maintenance costs compete with other important costs like teacher salaries, and are usually deferred. It has been found in several states, that reimbursement rates can lead schools to allow their facilities to deteriorate and then be awarded with new buildings.^{ee} Public agencies also do not receive the reimbursements that many private entities receive for rehabilitating historic buildings, and if these reimbursements were offered to public institutions like school districts, they would be more likely to undertake renovation projects.

Zoning and Planning Laws

Zoning and planning laws help cities and towns control development, maintain community assets and set the framework for how communities function. School districts in most states are exempt from these laws, and when they are not exempt, often choose to ignore them. When this happens schools plan new sites with little or no regard for cities long-range development plans. This is not simply a problem on the part of the schools. Cities do not include school officials in their planning processes and general plans, and in order for school and city planning to work hand in hand, both sides will have to address this disconnect.

B. Effects of School Sprawl

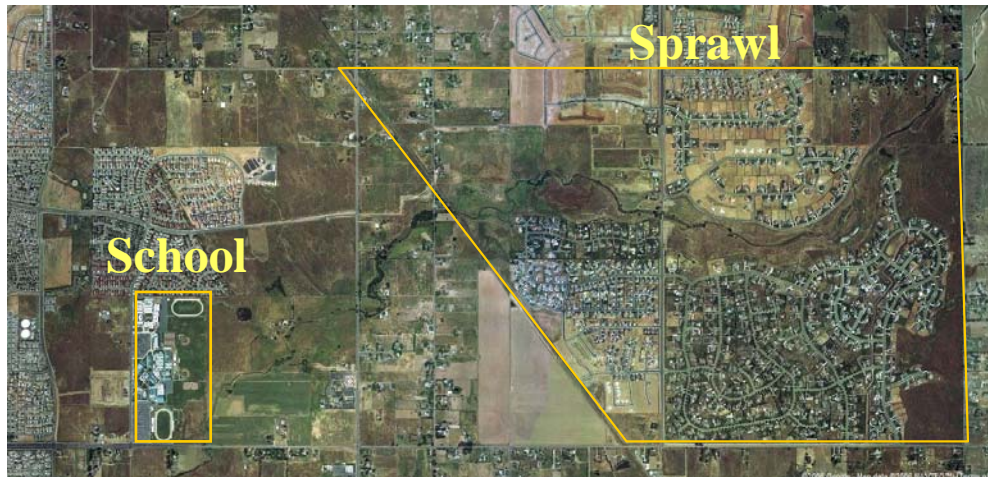
Many of the problems contributing to school sprawl can be seen as direct results of the policies explained in the previous section. While these policies and practices may not always lead to school sprawl, they do lead to many of the results that will be addressed in this section.

Mega Schools

“Mega” schools are schools built on enormous plots of land on the edges of town, as shown in Exhibit 1. These schools cover acres of land in classrooms, parking lots, athletic fields and other facilities and are often so far out of town that new infrastructure must be put in place to support them. These schools are often one story, built fairly quickly to respond to population increases, but do not take long term demographics or planning into account in their construction.

^{ee} Beaumont and Pianca, 2002.

Exhibit 1 Schools and Sprawl



Sheldon High School, Elk Grove, CA

Increased Transportation Costs

Schools have begun to move farther away from the students they serve. When this happens students no longer have the option to walk or bike to school. School sites on the fringes are rarely served by public transportation, and often must have roads built out just so students can get to class. When a school is not accessible by foot, bike or public transportation students and parents are forced to drive, or ride a school bus and districts are forced to spend a great deal of money on busing costs. For example, over a 25-year period in Maine (1970-1995) the student population declined by 27,000 while busing costs rose \$45 million.^{ff}

Students who do not take the bus are either driven to school by their parents, or drive themselves to school every day. This requires parents to take time out of their work day to transport children to and from school, especially for students who participate in extracurricular activities. The other option is for the students themselves to buy cars and drive. This can force already busy students to take after-school jobs to pay for a car, insurance or gas leaving them with less time to spend on schoolwork. An increase in drivers also leads to traffic and pollution increases, and these costs not accounted for in models of new school pricing.

Leapfrog Development

School development can either lead to or is the result of housing development. As schools are build farther to the outskirts of town, families looking to send their children to these new schools look for land and houses near the school. There is a trend for housing developers to plan large developments just past the new school where land is cheap and families will want to move. This causes cities and suburbs to continue expand to the next freeway exit in search for good schools and affordable housing. Once houses are built farther out of city boundaries, schools are built again on the outskirts of the new developments, starting the cycle yet again.

^{ff} Beaumont and Pianca, 2002.

Physical and Psychological Disconnect

Since 1950 the number of schools in the United States has declined by approximately 70% but the average school saw a fivefold increase in size^{eg}. Schools that once served as centers of their communities are being traded in or demolished in favor of new buildings. Many of these schools were in urban centers and provided rallying points for communities, places to gather and organize and served to educate generation after generation of the cities families. As these schools begin to disappear, residents try to save them, often to no avail. Smaller, neighborhood schools serve a purpose outside of simply educating students. They are often a psychological center of their communities, and as these schools are left unused, a disconnect both physical and psychological results.

IV. ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

In order for city planners and school facilities officials to create an effective partnership, these two groups need to work within the same policy framework. In an attempt to facilitate this collaboration we have combined planners' strategies for efficient land development, exemplified in the smart growth movement, and an analytic framework that takes into account the character and context of the locality. In this way, we highlight the connection between effective city planning and school siting in order to create common ground and a common language between the two entities.

How can school facilities funding and construction be structured in a way that promotes sustainable development and regional equity?

School funding formulas and facilities decisions are made at the local level, within varying political, demographic and land development contexts. State education policies and development guidelines differ widely, and district level decision-making can take many forms. While some school district jurisdictional boundaries follow municipal lines, other districts are administered at the county level. The possibility of regional collaboration between city and school planners will depend greatly upon these jurisdictional differences. Within this multivariable context, formulating a single, over-arching policy to guide school siting and land use decisions becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Linking schools to the smart growth movement provides a broader organizational structure within which to make policy recommendations for school siting and facilities design. Due to the localized nature of land development and school facilities planning, we have attempted to create a framework that will enable local decision-makers to apply appropriate solutions to their given situation.

^{eg} Vincent, Jeffrey M. 2006, forthcoming. Public Schools as Public Infrastructure: Schools, Community, and Land Use Planning. In *Infrastructure Planning and Finance: A Guide for Local Officials*. Edited by Vicki Elmer and Adam Leigland. Point Arena, CA: Solano Press Books. Chapter 25.

SMART GROWTH GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. *Mix Land Uses*
2. *Take Advantage of Compact Building Design*
3. *Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices*
4. *Create Walkable Neighborhoods*
5. *Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place*
6. *Preserve Open Space, Farmland, and Critical Environmental Areas*
7. *Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities*
8. *Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices*
9. *Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective*
10. *Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration*

Connecting the Smart Growth Movement to School Facilities Planning

The smart growth movement advocates the integration of mixed land uses as a means to create a better place to live. Effectively integrating schools into this objective provides a focal point and anchor for development. Siting a school in close proximity to a variety of land uses creates an environment in which walking and biking become viable transportation alternatives and allows for education opportunities with local businesses. Mixing land uses also increases property values, creating a healthy tax base that can be used for other local initiatives. Assimilating effective school siting into mixed-use development is critical to effective planning and further enhances the benefits to the overall quality of the neighborhood.

Compact school design creates an alternative to traditional consumptive development patterns, allowing schools to fit into “smart” neighborhoods. By building vertically, schools will reduce their environmental footprint, leaving more land available for other uses. This allows the school to be more coherently integrated into the community, rather than isolated from it. Compact building design also leads to “open space preservation [which] supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our community’s quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.”^{hh}

“Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.”ⁱⁱ Housing lies at the foundation of a healthy community, constituting the very lifeblood of the neighborhood. A mix of housing options diversifies the community and thus the classroom make-up. Housing density and design affects household transportation options, governs commuting patterns, and most importantly determines accessibility to services and education. Revitalization of the housing supply in existing areas can also bring the economic stimulation to increase commercial pedestrian traffic and reinforce the perception of safety throughout the community, especially for the children.

^{hh} SmartGrowth.org, <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=6>

ⁱⁱ SmartGrowth.org, <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=3>

“Communities are beginning to implement new approaches to transportation planning, such as better coordinating land use and transportation; increasing the availability of high quality transit service; creating redundancy, resiliency and connectivity within their road networks; and ensuring connectivity between pedestrian, bike, transit, and road facilities.”^{jj} Coordinating mixed-uses and compact design ushers in a streetscape that invites pedestrian activities and provides a safe environment in which children can engage their community.

Schools can serve as a catalyst for creating a strong sense of place and engaging communities. The goal is “to create interesting, unique communities which reflect the values and cultures of the people who reside there, and foster the types of physical environments which support a more cohesive community fabric.”^{kk} Creating quality neighborhoods will aid in bolstering the community’s economic vitality while fashioning the built environment to reflect the values of its residents. As a result, the success of the student population will be incorporated into the development of neighborhood to foster a greater sense of place that residents will be proud to identify with.

Communities are a reflection of their constituents, which results in no community being the same as any other. As a result, every community will prioritize different smart growth objects to shape and guide their growth. “Growth can create great places to live, work and play—if it responds to a community’s own sense of how and where it wants to grow.”^{ll} This sense of community individuality is critical to “smart growth” planning, because without it the other aspects of planning fail to be effectively organized and implemented. School and city planning processes must be united in order to best utilize the school to lay the foundation for building a vibrant community. Until the focus is redirected towards schools, smart growth will be missing a big opportunity and subsequent support base.

Considering Local Context and Land Use Policy Options for School Facilities

The second component of our analytic framework is organized based upon predicted demographic and market trends facing different metropolitan regions across the nation. Due to the fact that most school facilities funding is tied to population growth or decline, changing demographic trends will have a tremendous influence on school facilities planning, student learning needs, and general land use patterns.

The matrix below identifies land use options available to school districts according to current demographic trends and regional types. The matrix divides the metropolitan region into urban and suburban areas, recognizing that land use decisions differ dramatically based on the availability of developable land and market demand for new development. The urban and suburban geographic categories are subdivided further to reflect projected demographic trends in the coming decades. Examples are provided of metropolitan areas that fall into each category,

^{jj} SmartGrowth.org, <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=8>

^{kk} SmartGrowth.org, <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=5>

^{ll} SmartGrowth.org, <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=10>

and offer suggestions for land use options that may be appropriate to the local school facilities context.

We have further divided urban areas into three categories based upon predicted population trends: declining, increasing and stable. Within each of these sub-categories, we have listed cities that we feel are facing similar demographic circumstances that will have a dramatic impact on local school facilities needs.

Suburban areas have also been divided along different parameters than the urban areas mentioned above. We sub-divided suburban areas according to the age of the neighborhood: inner ring or “first” suburbs and newer, expanding suburbs and exurbs. The land use options available to, and appropriate for, these areas differ greatly from those needed in urban areas. We offer a recommended list of options that municipal and school-facilities planners can apply, depending on the local context.

**Table 1
Framework for Analyzing Demographic Trends and Regional Types**

	Demographic Trends		City & Regional Examples	Land Use Options
URBAN	Declining	Decreasing school-age population due to out-migration and lack of in-migration of families	San Francisco, Detroit	Infill, Consolidation, Adaptive Reuse, Historic Preservation, Joint-Use Facilities
	Increasing	Increasing diversity, immigration and overall population	Los Angeles, Las Vegas	Infill, Eminent Domain, Increase Zoning Densities, Joint-Use Facilities
	Stable	Relatively stable population trend	Boston, New York City	Infill, Redevelopment, Consolidation, Adaptive Reuse, Joint-Use Facilities
SUBURBAN	Inner Ring (First Suburbs)	Increasing density, diversity, immigration and overall population	Maryland, Ohio, New Jersey	Infill, Adaptive Reuse, Historic Preservation, Redevelopment, Increase Zoning Densities, Joint-Use Facilities
	Expanding (New Suburbs and Exurbs)	Increasing diversity, mobility, immigration and overall population	California, North Carolina, Atlanta, Michigan	Increase Zoning Densities, Joint-Use Facilities

V. CASE STUDIES

The following case studies offer examples of cities' experiences, successes, challenges and missteps. They suggest possible courses of action for other cities and regions with similar demographic changes and development patterns, as well as the costs and pitfalls of these decisions.

Declining Student Population & Public-Private Partnerships: San Francisco Unified School District, California

Cities can undergo population decline for various reasons. For example, in Detroit, Michigan, the lack of job opportunities and a weak economy may prevent families from moving to the area or encourage existing families to leave. Alternatively, in San Francisco, California, high housing prices and a high cost of living have forced families out of the city in pursuit of lower prices in nearby cities, suburbs or out of state. Regardless of the instigating factors, these declining enrollments challenge school districts with reduced revenues and difficult decisions around school closings, mergers and reconstitutions. San Francisco Unified School Decision illustrates this dilemma.

The San Francisco Unified School District supports over 160 schools and over 56,000 students. Over the past ten years, the student population has decreased by about 5,000 students or 8 percent.^{mmm} As a result, the district has lost average daily attendance revenues and several school sites are under-capacity.^{mm} In January 2006, the district voted to close three schools, merge four schools into two locations and relocate seven schools (including two charter schools) into school sites freed up by the closings and mergers.^{oo}

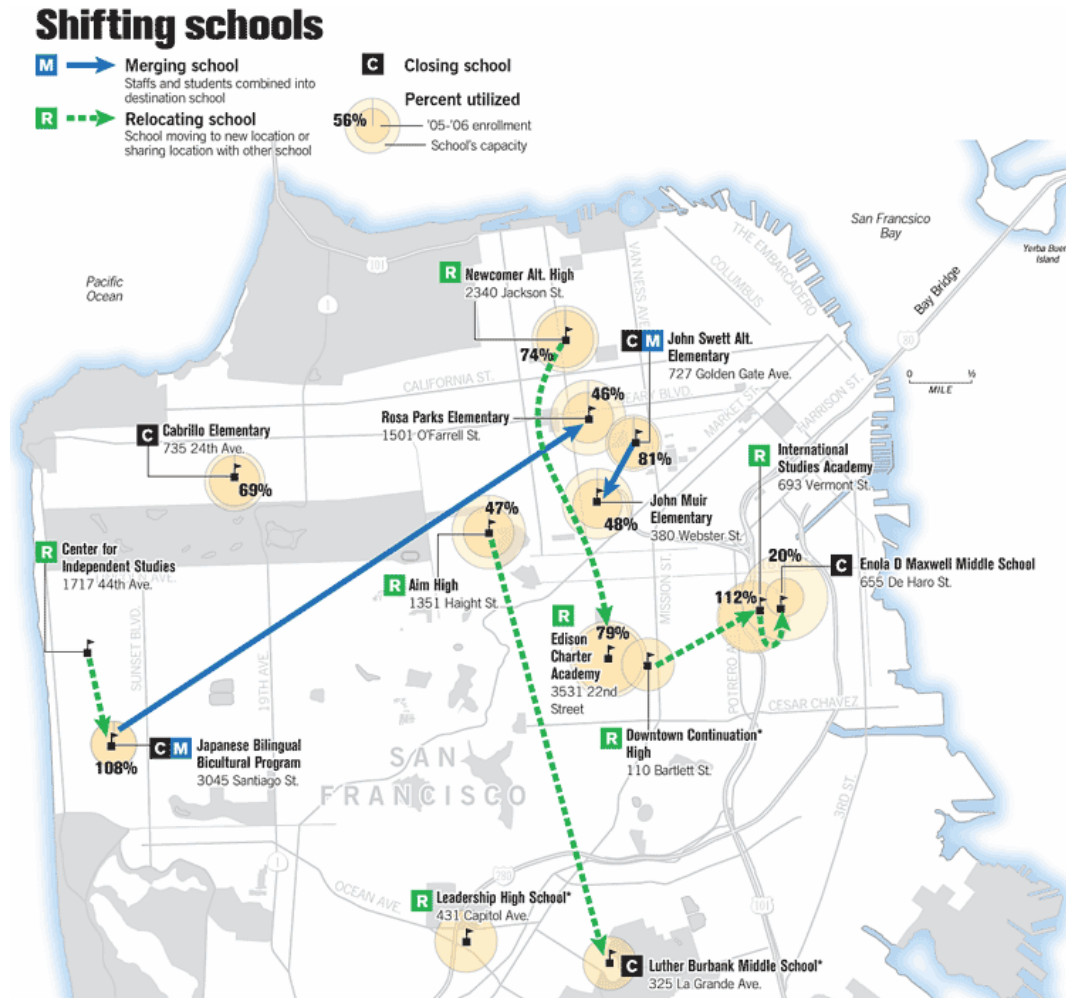
Certainly there are costs and benefits to this decision. On the one hand, parents and students attending the schools slated to close, move or consolidate were angry about the decision. Exhibit 1 shows how these closings and mergers play out spatially. Several of the schools set to merge and relocate, depicted by the blue and green arrows respectively, are far away from their destination schools. Closing schools will invariably separate friends and classmates and potentially create transportation costs and hassles for students who want to remain in a school that is moving. What impact will these changes have on students and learning?

^{mmm} San Francisco Unified School District. Historical Student Data. Accessed April 19, 2006.
<<http://orb.sfusd.edu/schdata/hist/hist-100.htm>>

ⁿⁿ Knight, Heather. "Many SF Schools to Close or Merge." San Francisco Chronicle. January 20, 2006.

^{oo} San Francisco Unified School District. "School Closure Decisions." Accessed April 19, 2006.
<<http://portal.sfusd.edu/data/news/pdf/2006%20School%20Closure%20Decisions%20January%2020,%202006rev.pdf>>

Exhibit 2 School Closings and Consolidation: San Francisco Unified School District



Source: San Francisco Unified School District via San Francisco Chronicle

On the other hand, these decisions save the district approximately \$2.4 million and an additional \$4.7 million if the district is able to lease two of the buildings that will be vacated.^{PP} In addition, in an innovative move to address several issues troubling the district, school board members have discussed the possibility of using underutilized or vacant district-owned properties to build or renovate housing for teachers. This could involve selling land to a developer in order to build housing, a portion of which could be reserved for teachers. A report from an independent architect, revealed eight sites around the city that could be used for teacher housing within 2-5 years of program adoption.^{QQ} This type of public-private partnership could serve two purposes. First, sale or lease of land would provide revenue for the school district (which could in turn be used to improve facilities and instruction, thereby encourage families to keep their children in

^{PP} Knight, Heather. "School Vote Stuns Families." San Francisco Chronicle. January 21, 2006.

^{QQ} Knight, Heather. "Teachers could get break on housing if plan gets go-ahead." San Francisco Chronicle. October 8, 2004.

San Francisco public schools). Second, reducing the cost burden of housing would allow the district to attract and retain the best teachers.

***Confronting Tradeoffs in an Expanding Urbanized Land Area:
A Comparison of Charlevoix and Harbor Springs, Michigan***

Expanding suburban areas refers to both the growth in population and the increase in urbanized land area. A February 2004 report from the Michigan Land Use Institute documents Michigan's trend of building large schools, far away from city centers—at a faster pace and with more expenditures than most other states in the U.S.^{rr} Between 1996 and 2004, over 500 new schools were built and 278 older buildings were closed, despite only a 4.5 percent increase in the student population. The report sites a series of factors that contributed to the decision to build new rather than renovate older schools.^{ss}

- A voter-approved measure which reduced property taxes and tied districts' revenues to student populations, creating competition among school districts for students.
- Architects and financial advisors biased the decision making process by offering free feasibility studies in exchange for contract guarantees.
- School districts' exemption from zoning requirements and comprehensive plans; therefore, they often build on farmland and open spaces otherwise preserved in plans.

However, the authors argue that in all the cases they studied, new school construction was more expensive than it would have been to renovate older buildings. Other arguments for considering renovation over new construction include:

- Closing of schools tends to slow the appreciation of property values, whereas keeping existing schools open increases homes values in the area.
- Leapfrog development creates infrastructure expenses, such as utility extensions and government services that are often passed on to taxpayers.
- Increasing home prices can force low and moderate income families out of the community in search of more affordable housing.

Juxtaposing two similar towns on the coast of Lake Michigan demonstrates the costs and consequences of non-collaborative decision making and the infill vs. greenfield debate.

In Charlevoix, Michigan, a community of about 2,000, the school district built a brand new high school, at a cost of \$17.4 million. This 74-acre site, previously used as pastureland, lies on the outskirts of town, surrounded by woods and farmland; this suggests pretty views, but additional transportation costs for the district and individual families. The decision to build in this location was the result of closed-door sessions among just a few stakeholders, which ended in the decision to build new rather than to renovate at lower cost. This was much to the chagrin of the public, who generated several lawsuits, attempted a school board recall, and are left mistrusting their local school board.

^{rr} McClelland and Schneider, 2004: 3.

^{ss} McClelland and Schneider, 2004: 3.



Charlevoix High School, Charlevoix, Michigan

In contrast, the 1,600 person community of Harbor Springs modernized the town's 1915 nine-acre high school and built a brand new middle school a block away, at a total cost of \$31.5 million. Voters approved a bond measure after prolonged community debate on the subject of school construction, which was encouraged by the school board. Whereas, in Charlevoix, the school board only held two public meetings to discuss the school construction proposal, in Harbor Springs, the school board held 70 public meetings.^{tt}



**Harbor Springs High School
Harbor Springs, Michigan**

This extensive planning period took 18 months to complete, but the result was a stronger community for a lower price. The community was proud of its schools, litigation was avoided, many students are able to walk or bike to schools reducing reliance on busing and vehicle traffic, and the schools consume less land, because of the infill site, higher densities and shared facilities.

***Accommodating Enormous Population Growth in a Constrained Land Area:
Los Angeles Unified School District, California***

In the Los Angeles Unified School District's new school expansion plan, the district boasts that its new construction program is "the largest single-district new school building program in the United States...EVER!"^{uu} The district is facing unprecedented population growth, but counter to stereotypical thinking about Los Angeles, the supply of undeveloped land within school district boundaries is dwindling. In other words, population growth has outpaced the growth of

^{tt} McClelland and Schneider, 2004: 3; and Harbor Springs Public Schools < <http://www.harborps.org>>. Accessed April 22, 2006.

^{uu} Los Angeles Unified School District. "New School Construction Strategic Execution Plan for 2006" January 2006: 10. [Hereafter denoted as LAUSD New School Construction Plan]

urbanized land area, leading to increasing densification of the area and necessitating more creativity when it comes to planning for schools.^{vv}

In the 2004-2005 school year, Los Angeles Unified School District served 741,201 students in 721 schools. These schools were located within eight districts, employing 34,855 teachers and 1,449 support staff.^{ww} The district opened an additional 13 schools at the beginning of the 2005-2006 and anticipates opening dozens more over the next six years.^{xx} The goal of the expansion plan is to provide 180,000 classroom seats at a total cost of \$11.7 billion by 2012. Construction will be financed by a series of local bond measures approved by the voters between 1998 and 2005 and the California-wide Proposition 55 which provides matching funds for school construction projects.^{yy}

Building all of these new schools requires the demolition of old schools or acquisition of new land. The district confronts some difficult decisions: “As the Los Angeles region becomes more populated, the District is faced with the difficult choices of purchasing densely occupied residential properties or undertaking expensive cleaning of potentially contaminated industrial property. Either choice carries schedule and budget impacts.”^{zz} Since 2000, the district has acquired an additional 900 acres of land, sometimes through eminent domain. The district has relocated 1,571 households and businesses. To their credit, they have facilitated first-time home purchases for 13% of those relocated tenants.^{aaa} Still, this leaves many families potentially disconnected from their previous communities and dislocates many students who may have otherwise attended the new school.



South East High School (Opened September 2005), Los Angeles, California

How does the district identify and acquire school sites? After analyzing census data and enrollment records, the district comes up with demographic population projections. Using the state’s acreage recommendations as a benchmark, the real estate department within the district targets a specific site size and then identifies, nominates and completes an in-depth review of the site’s suitability. Suitability refers to its environmental safety and community vitality, which

^{vv} Fulton, William et al. “Who Sprawls the Most? How Growth Patterns Differ Across America.” The Brookings Institution: Washington, DC. July 2001: 14.

^{ww} Los Angeles Unified School District. “District Accountability Report Card 2004-2005” Prepared by School Information Branch Planning, Assessment, and Research <<http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe?w3exec=darc3>>

^{xx} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 1.

^{yy} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 10-11.

^{zz} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 51.

^{aaa} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 8.

includes location, traffic, noise, cost and ease of acquisition. This due diligence is followed by a formal environmental impact report as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Once the environmental report is adopted, the real estate team offers to purchase the property from the property owner. Ideally, the property owner agrees to sell and the deal moves on without a hitch. However, if the property owner refuses, “as a last resort,” the district can acquire the property through eminent domain.^{bbb}

Regardless of the method, the district pays fair market value for the property as well as relocation expenses and offers workshops to facilitate homeownership for relocating tenants and opportunities for Section 8 landlords.^{ccc} Belmont Elementary School #6 is a standard example of this type of identification and acquisition. This new elementary school sits on a three-acre site in the Koreatown neighborhood. The site previously contained approximately 100 housing units, two businesses and adjoining parking lots, which the school district acquired by compensated all of the land owners.^{ddd}

**Strategies for Low Density Neighborhoods:
Examples from Across the Country:**

Many of the best examples of efficient school building designs and land use practices come from urban areas; can these policies be implemented in lower density neighborhoods? This section explores some examples of innovative school designs on smaller sites in suburban areas. It also offers suggestions for collaboration in suburban communities, from Kelvin Lee, Superintendent of the Dry Creek School District in California and an active participant in national discussions around school facilities.

^{bbb} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 25.

^{ccc} LAUSD New School Construction Plan: 23-25.

^{ddd} Class Discussion with Kathleen Moore, February 8, 2006.

The Mendez Fundamental Intermediate School in Santa Ana, CA was built on a 12-acre infill site next to a retail shopping area. The school is a three-story building, situated on top of an at-grade parking garage which can be seen in the photograph on the right. Pushing the parking underneath the building allows for a smaller building footprint and a more interesting streetscape design for students and other pedestrians.^{eee}



Mendez Intermediate School, Santa Ana, California

The Oak Lawn Hometown Middle School serves 1,000 students in grades 6-8 on an eight acre site within a residential neighborhood as shown in the photograph on the right. The structure is three stories tall, with one story serving each grade. Completed in August of 2005, this new school was built around the existing school previously on the site to allow for continued use of the school during construction. The school design takes into account the residential character of the neighborhood, using different materials, shapes and heights to complement the surrounding houses.^{fff}



Oak Lawn Hometown Middle School, Oak Lawn, Illinois

^{eee} Vincent, 2006: 17; Fuscoe Engineering. "Education & Medical Projects" <<http://www.fuscoe.com/projects.php?nav=projects&page=31#>>.

^{fff} American School Board Journal. *Learning by Design 2006* <<http://www.asbj.com/lbd/2006/pdf/Oak%20Lawn%20Hometown%20Middle.80.pdf>> :80.

Recommendations for collaboration from the Dry Creek Unified School Superintendent, Kelvin Lee.^{ggg}

- Coordinate school planning with residential subdivision planning
- Identify expectations and goals for all stakeholders
- Create a statement of priority: What will the school site communicate to the community? What are the school's values?
- Think of school facilities as the longest lasting piece of curriculum, a 3D textbook!



Silverado Middle School, Roseville, California

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS: RECONNECTING CITIES AND SCHOOLS

This section defines two sets of recommendations: broad policy suggestions that can be implemented across different types of localities, urban, suburban and exurban; and a flexible guide for making land use decisions depending on the demographics of the locality and the needs of a city and school district. The focus of this analysis has centered on removing barriers to joint city and school planning. By addressing many of the underlying issues that support the current disconnect, the following recommendations provide for a more friendly, decision making climate.

What land use options do urban and suburban municipalities have to encourage efficient use of land and resources?

This new process will engage stakeholders, eliminate bias and provide for a more community centered approach to planning for the future. The purpose of these recommendations is to improve decision-making about school facilities in order to encourage the most efficient use of land and resources, as well as to promote student learning.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Broader policy recommendations address many of the causes of sprawl discussed in earlier sections. Many state and local level policies contribute to school sprawl both directly and indirectly through financing and land use requirements. The policy options listed here are meant to facilitate communication and bring relevant stakeholders together to address the important issues of school and local development

^{ggg} Class Discussion with Kelvin Lee, February 8, 2006.

1. **Eliminate acreage requirements** – The elimination of acreage requirement will allow schools to choose a site based on what best fits the students and community as opposed to where large tracts of land are inexpensive and available. Without acreage requirements schools will also be able to build up as opposed to out, leaving smaller footprints while still providing adequate facilities for students. However, community members may resist this change because smaller sites decrease opportunities for playing fields and other resources. Additionally, multi-story building designs can be more expensive than one-story structures, but reduces land costs.
2. **Eliminate the “two-thirds rule”** – Percentage rules lead districts and school planners to build new schools instead of rehabilitating and renovating old facilities. It is understandable that a district would want to do a full analysis of the cost of both options before coming to a decision about where and what to build, but as these rules stand, the full costs of building a new school are unaccounted for. Once this process can account for the full costs of all options, percentage rules still favor new schools over old. Only by eliminating these rules will schools be built where they make the most sense. Pre-development costs and planning may increase with more comprehensive cost analysis.
3. **Encourage public-private partnerships** – Often, the school districts that need money most cannot get that funding without raising taxes on community members or floating bonds. Public-private partnerships can provide revenue for districts and allow for mixed use development. An example of this type of partnership can be seen in the Oyster Bilingual School in District of Columbia, where the school district sold a portion of land to a developer to build apartment housing. The district was able to build a new Oyster School on the site, paid for by a bond which the developer is paying off.^{hhh} The potential for San Francisco Unified School District to employ a similar strategy is discussed in the case study above. This type of partnership may only work in areas with a tight land market. The downside of these partnerships is that coordination is difficult and requires substantial commitment and support from both sides.
4. **Integrate city and school planning processes** – The disconnect between school and city planning processes must be overcome. When officials in both camps plan collaboratively, they can plan more effectively and efficiently. As a start, several communities have experimented with joint-use facilities in schools, such as shared meetings rooms and athletic facilities. Such facilities require commitment and work from the city and school district to overcome building code obstacles and coordination challenges. But, the results can be worth it: improving relationships between community and schools, avoiding the redundancy of facilities, and sharing the cost of major infrastructure and land uses. Joint-use facilities can be a small step towards more integrated planning between schools and cities around school enrollment estimates and future school facilities needs. However, participatory planning can be cumbersome; it requires multiple stakeholders, working on different schedules and under separate governing structures.

^{hhh} Local Government Commission. “New Schools for Older Neighborhoods: Strategies for Building Our Communities Most Important Assets.” January 2002: 6-7.

5. **Involve schools in development agreements** – Development agreements are contracts between a developer and a city intended to provide security to both sides. This agreement assures the developer of her right to complete her project and allows the city to levy fees and require infrastructure facilities to accommodate the burden of new residents on public services. In growing suburban areas, schools are often excluded from development agreements, with school impact fees negotiated by the city. Involving school district administrators earlier in the process would help to better predict school enrollment, the burden of new development on existing school system and allow the school district to advocate for itself in terms of school impact fees.

6. **Regional equity spending** – Our final recommendation and goal is to balance school investment between existing and expanding neighborhoods in order to allow equal opportunities for all students. On a more macro level, this means creating a range of housing options to facilitate school and district desegregation, design schools to improve transportation efficiency and walkability, and integrate school and community health initiatives. One challenge will be regional tax base sharing and convincing more affluent communities to redistribute funds for school spending.

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 2 below explains the land use options for school facilities construction, renovation and design that are available to communities (left-hand column). The most appropriate land use options for a community depend on the character of the neighborhood, land constraints and population demographic trends (right-hand columns). For example, expanding exurban communities tend not to have many options for infill development, but they can still pursue smart growth strategies through joint-use facilities and more compact building designs. A more in depth discussion of the land use policy options below is available in a glossary of planning and design terms in Appendix A. This table along with the accompanying definitions has been included in the hope of creating the foundation of a common language between school and city planners.

**Table 2
Menu of Land Use Options**

	<i>URBAN</i> → → → → → → → → → → <i>SUBURBAN</i> → → → <i>EXURBAN</i>				
	Population Demographics				
Land Use Policy Options	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Increasing</i>	<i>Inner Ring</i>	<i>Expanding</i>
Infill					
Greenfield					
Joint-use					
Adaptive reuse					
Historic Preservation					
Eminent Domain					
Compact School Design					
Consolidation					

VII. CONCLUSION

Student populations are growing, forcing school construction to either expand existing schools or build new schools. Over \$21 billion was spent last year on school construction and roughly the same amount is projected for 2006.ⁱⁱⁱ As discussed, school districts and municipal governments currently pursue land development policies and planning activities in isolation from one another. Moreover, these policies often bias school districts to choose new construction over renovation when planning for schools, thereby contributing to inefficient sprawl development. By integrating school planning and city planning, communities can achieve smart growth objectives, create more efficient land development patterns, improve students and families access to schools and in turn, improve student learning.

Communities can achieve more sustainable land use patterns and improve equity throughout the region by implementing some of the aforementioned policy changes. By decreasing the acreage requirements, schools can be more readily integrated into the community rather than isolated from it. Reexamination of the “two-thirds” rule to account for all costs incurred when developing on the edge of town will redirect valuable funds to struggling schools in existing communities, helping to revitalize often depressed neighborhoods. Uniting city and school planning can also create partnerships and joint-use facilities opportunities. These help to create stronger connections between schools and communities while fostering a greater sense of community ownership in the school’s success. Coordination will be challenging and communication essential. Planners need to realize the importance of schools to their community’s quality of life and as an essential component of smart growth development. Likewise, school district officials must acknowledge the role of city planners in creating comprehensive plans to serve and improve whole communities. Reducing land costs, decreasing transportation expenses, and sharing the costs of building large capital facilities, can allow school districts to redirect funds towards improving any number of facilities and extracurricular programs such as health services and art classes.

Land development and school design are fundamental to shaping sustainable growth and stimulating effective community cohesion. Disjointed school and city planning leads to community distrust, disinvestment in existing urban areas (where investment is often most needed) and other social inequities such as racial and economic segregation, and competition between neighboring school districts. Bridging the disconnect between cities and schools can lead to more efficient land development, infrastructure spending and community development. With an integrated planning process, schools can effectively shape smarter growth and contribute towards more sustainable development patterns. Ultimately, the purpose of bridging the gap between school and city planning is to improve the living environment of *all* students and their families. By strengthening the connection between cities and schools, both physically and psychologically, we will enliven our communities and provide for a nurturing environment in which our city’s children can learn and grow successfully.

ⁱⁱⁱ Abramson, 2006: C-2.

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APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Infill Development

Infill development refers to the reinvestment of land and buildings in urban areas. This process takes available sites in existing neighborhoods and rebuilds on that land. With infrastructure, including utilities and transit, already in place, schools do not need to make expensive investments into extending utility lines or creating costly busing programs. Infill development offers a strategy for siting new schools inside city limits and existing communities as opposed to building new schools on sites outside of city limits.

Greenfield Development

In order to meet the recommended acreage guidelines for new schools many school districts have resorted to constructing new schools on larger, less expensive “greenfield” parcels located at the edges of town. Due to the fact that schools are often not required to abide by comprehensive plans and zoning requirements and because they must compete for land with market-based real estate developers, schools regularly site new facilities on greenfield parcels that might otherwise be earmarked for agricultural production or open space.

Joint-use Facilities

Joint-use planning seeks to ensure that a city does not waste time and money duplicating facilities in a given community. Joint-use facilities planning also aims to increase the total amount of time a facility is used throughout the day. In joint-use planning, planners try to build facilities for schools that can also benefit the surrounding community during non-school hours. Examples of joint-use facilities include public libraries, auditoriums, health clinics, gymnasiums and sports fields. This land use option requires coordination between cities and schools, but also allows communities to redirect revenue that would have been spent on school facilities to other important projects.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse planning strategies call for vacant, old buildings to be renovated and rehabilitated and then used as school facilities. Examples of adaptive reuse include turning abandoned buildings such as malls, offices and warehouses into schools. This allows communities to reuse buildings that may be unsightly or underused and turn them into functioning, welcoming centers for students, teachers and community members.

Historic Preservation

In 2000, The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) launched an effort to assist communities in the preservation of old schools as opposed to the building of new ones. In the emerging movement to have schools serve as civic institutions and centers for community building, the NTHP sees historic preservation of old schools as the key ingredient for educating students about their history, retaining downtown schools and keeping the community involved.

Eminent Domain

Eminent domain is a statutory power given to cities and special districts, such as school districts, allowing government entities to condemn property in exchange for paying property owners fair market value (plus relocation or other expenses) for their property. Eminent domain is currently being used in school districts where land is scarce and student populations are growing. School districts need to assemble parcels that are large enough to accommodate a school (or the acreage requirement); if the property is unwilling to sell, the school district may legally condemn the property.

Compact School Design

Compact school design creates an alternative to traditional development patterns. By building up vertically, situating parking beneath the building and installing playground and fields on rooftops, schools reduce their environmental footprints, leaving more land available for other uses. Compact designs allow schools to be part of a continuous streetscape and more integrated into the community, rather than isolated from it. Compact building design also allows for the preservation of open space.

Consolidation

School consolidation is the practice of combining two or more schools in one building for educational or economic benefits.ⁱⁱⁱ School consolidation allows schools that might otherwise have closed due to dwindling enrollment to continue to serve students. Consolidation also allows schools to increase the number of classes and other resources they offer students by sharing those resources with other schools in similar situations.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nelson, Erik. *School Consolidation*. ERIC Digest, 13. 1985.

How Housing and Transportation Impact Education:

Strategies for Change

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Executive Summary

This policy brief explores the many dimensions along which issues related to housing and transportation impact educational outcomes. Though often discussed as distinct policy areas, it is clear that addressing housing and transportation inequities could positively impact schooling.

- Students residing in the center cities often attend schools that have fewer resources than schools in the suburbs.
- Families who do not own a car are less able to engage in school choice programs.
- Students who are repeatedly forced to change residences have a higher likelihood of dropping out of high school.

Low-income, minority communities are disproportionately affected by a lack of housing and transportation options. To better understand the situation, this brief seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) *How do the following contribute to the quality of schools and student outcomes?*
 - *Lack of quality affordable housing,*
 - *Economic segregation,*
 - *Forced mobility, and*
 - *Poor access to transportation*
- (2) *How can the following strategies address these problems?*
 - *Inclusionary zoning,*
 - *School-centered developer models,*
 - *School-choice programs with transportation,*
 - *Low income housing tax credits (LIHTC), and*
 - *Housing choice vouchers*

A look at examples where these strategies have been implemented reveals the following general conclusions:

- **These strategies are not one-size-fits-all approaches.** Local circumstances must be taken into consideration.
- **The effectiveness of these strategies depends on the specific parameters of the program or development.** Outcomes from implementing the strategies can vary, and they are highly dependent upon specific parameters.
- **There is a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of these strategies.** Evaluation of these strategies, particularly regarding their educational impact, is an area of future research.
- **Community opposition needs to be mitigated through research and information.** While there are difficulties in implementing each of the strategies, these can possibly be mitigated through providing community stakeholders with additional information.

I. Introduction

This policy brief explores the many dimensions along which educational opportunities are impacted by issues related to housing and transportation. In reviewing the literature, it is evident that housing, transportation, and education are often discussed as separate policy issues, yet it is clear that they are interrelated. Recent headlines highlight the intersection of housing, transportation and schools.

- In San Francisco, the lack of affordable housing is forcing more and more families with children to move out. In January, the school board decided to close or merge 14 schools because the public schools are losing on average 1,000 children a year.¹
- In Seattle, the school board voted down a plan to shift students from yellow school buses to public buses in an effort to cut costs and maintain its school choice program.²
- New York City will offer housing subsidies to attract math and science teachers to its schools.³

Low-income, minority communities are disproportionately affected by a lack of housing and transportation options, a situation that serves to stifle educational opportunities. To better understand the situation, this brief seeks to answer the following questions:

(1) How do the following contribute to the quality of schools and student outcomes?

- *Lack of quality affordable housing,*
- *Economic segregation,*
- *Forced mobility, and*
- *Poor access to transportation*

(2) How can the following strategies address these problems?

- *Inclusionary zoning,*
- *School-centered developer models,*
- *School-choice programs with transportation,*
- *Low income housing tax credits (LIHTC), and*
- *Housing choice vouchers*

II. Background

Economic segregation and the resulting lack of access to quality housing and transportation options are due in part to governmental policies.⁴ Federal housing policies, such as the Housing Act of 1934, promoted redlining, which systematically undervalued minority central city communities and promoted housing almost exclusively for whites in the more affluent suburbs. Effectively, “the federal government paid whites to leave the central cities and barred people of color from doing the same.”⁵ The Federal Highway Act (FHA) of 1956 shifted transportation funding towards building highways in suburban areas, and along with

urban renewal,⁶³ exacerbated the movement of whites to the suburbs, stranding low-income communities of color in inner cities.⁶ In addition, the federal government concentrated public housing projects in low-income, minority communities, further increasing economic and racial segregation.⁷

At the local level, municipalities engaged in racial and exclusionary zoning, which prevented low- and moderate-income minority households from moving to affluent communities.⁶⁴ Economic segregation resulted from discrimination in the private market as well; one example is racial steering, where realtors and lenders directed individuals towards certain communities based on their race. Minorities were often directed to low-income, center-city neighborhoods.⁸

Education policy has also played a part in perpetuating economic segregation. As a reaction to court-mandated desegregation of schools during the 1970s, there was an exodus of middle class white families from inner cities and towards outer suburbs to avoid racially-mixed, urban schools.⁹ Overall, policies at all levels have served to concentrate low-income households in poor, center-city communities. This is a legacy that impacts children and their education, as the following section illustrates.

III. Issues Affecting Schools and Learning

Lack of quality affordable housing, economic segregation, forced mobility, and poor access to transportation all have a direct effect on students and their ability to learn. This section explores the connections between these issues and the educational outcomes and opportunities of predominantly low-income students.

A. LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, nearly one-third of households in this country have issues with housing affordability, overcrowding, or housing quality.^{65,66,67} Housing problems disproportionately impact low-income households.⁶⁸ Low-income people comprise one-quarter of the population yet represent two-thirds of those with housing problems.¹⁰

⁶³ Urban renewal is the process by which local governments used federal funds and the power of eminent domain to demolish center city communities in order for highway construction and redevelopment to take place.

⁶⁴ Explicit racial zoning was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1917, though exclusionary zoning continued through the 1900s. Exclusionary zoning was banned by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1975.

⁶⁵ Housing affordability is defined as spending at least 30 percent of income on housing. Note that this 30 percent threshold masks variation, as the impact of 30 percent on a low-income person's budget may be relatively more than on a higher-income budget.

⁶⁶ Overcrowding is defined as more than one person per room.

⁶⁷ Substandard conditions include lack of electricity, lack of complete kitchen and/or bathroom facilities, frequent breakdowns of heating systems, water leaks, or large areas of peeling paint or plaster.

⁶⁸ Defined by federal policy as having household income below 80 percent of area median.

The reason for the lack of affordable housing is a combination of supply-side and demand-side factors. On the demand side, as housing costs have increased, income for low-income households has not kept pace. On the supply side, there has been both a decrease in the stock of older affordable housing and in the production of new affordable housing. In the private market, some previously affordable rental units have been converted into more profitable for-sale units. In the publicly-subsidized market, due to increasing costs, there has also been a decline in the stock of affordable housing. According to the Harvard Civil Rights Project, from 1997-2002, 150,000 subsidized units were taken off the market. This led to a dramatic increase in the waiting list for public affordable housing.¹¹ Overall, both the affordability of homes and the availability of affordable housing have decreased.

Housing choice explicitly impacts neighborhood environment, household environment, and access to quality schools.¹² The fact that children are overrepresented in low-income households, for whom the lack of affordable housing is most pronounced, makes it clear that the lack of affordable housing is not just a housing problem, but an educational one as well. As noted researcher David Rusk has said, “housing policy is school policy.”¹³ According to a Rusk study on the impact of peer effects and socioeconomic status on school outcomes, low-income students performed significantly better when enrolled in a middle-class school. However, attendance in a middle-class school, for the most part, requires residing in a middle-class neighborhood.

Affordable housing is predominantly located in low-income, minority neighborhoods.¹⁴ As low-income families are more clustered in center-cities, so too are affordable housing units. Thirty-seven percent of rentals in central cities are considered below-market versus 18 percent of rentals in suburbs. Overall, “residents of affordable housing are much more likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods than other US residents are.”¹⁵ This pattern increases the racial and economic segregation conditions which are a historic legacy, and lead to exacerbating concentrated poverty. As discussed in Section III-B, economic segregation has an explicitly negative impact on the educational outcomes of children.

As mentioned above, housing problems beyond affordability include overcrowding and poor quality housing.⁶⁹ Children living in overcrowded homes often have to deal with increased family tensions, and those living in poor quality homes are more prone to poor health conditions, such as asthma.¹⁶ These are all problems which children bring to the classroom, problems which both stunt their own learning and may disrupt the learning of other students.

In the extreme, the lack of affordable housing leads to homelessness. One estimate reported that families with children made up 13 percent of the Los Angeles homeless population.¹⁷ Children who are homeless do not receive a proper education.¹⁸ The issue of homelessness dramatizes the issue of housing instability, wherein families are often forced to move and constantly shift schools. As discussed in Section III-C, forced mobility, a problem exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing, has negative impacts on educational outcomes.¹⁹

⁶⁹ Eighty-seven percent of low-income persons with housing problems indicated that housing cost burden was their biggest issue.

While the lack of affordable housing impacts low-income households the most, it is a problem for moderate-income households as well. Most pertinent to schools, especially in high-cost metropolitan areas in California and the Northeast, is that teachers are often priced out of the communities in which they work.²⁰ This results in weaker ties between teachers and communities, and possibly to increases in teacher turnover due to housing instability.

Increasing the availability of affordable housing would improve the educational outcomes of low-income students whose families have improved housing opportunities. However, one obstacle to affordable housing comes from schools themselves. Specifically, some school districts are concerned that increasing affordable housing in their district could decrease the amount of property tax per student which they receive.²¹ Affordable housing would likely increase the number of students in a school district, and if the number of students increases proportionally more than the property tax base, then district wealth would decline. School funding primarily through property taxes encourages the development of single-family detached homes, rather than multi-family homes or affordable rental units, both of which are more affordable to low-income families.

B. ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Although the Supreme Court declared *de jure* racial segregation in schools unconstitutional just over 50 years ago, segregation by both race and socioeconomic status persists in neighborhoods throughout the U.S. Although “income and class segregation declined over the last half century as the rich and poor have become more evenly distributed throughout the country,” the “concentration of affluence and poverty, however, has increased in neighborhoods, leading to significant class segregation within metropolitan areas.”²²

Economic and racial segregation are directly correlated with low performance in schools. In fact, one study found that “the strongest predictors of a school’s academic achievement was the percentage of black students in the school and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch.”²³ A number of studies find that “[s]chool poverty concentration is consistently related to lower performance on every education outcome measured.”²⁴ In fact, nationally, a middle-class school is 24 times more likely to be consistently high performing than a high-poverty school.²⁵

Students in schools with high levels of poverty face problems that their peers do not, making educational achievement more difficult. These schools attract less stable and less qualified teachers, who are more often uncertified, and whose turnover rate is higher.²⁶ In addition, students in high-poverty schools are less healthy and lack proper nutrition. They also face the challenge of gangs, crime, and unstable home environments.²⁷ These conditions translate into a student body with higher needs, though the schools usually lack sufficient resources to deal with these extra challenges.²⁸ These students’ additional needs also take a toll on teachers, whose performance may suffer as a result.²⁹ High poverty schools also tend to offer fewer academic credits and a less vigorous curriculum.³⁰ Other conditions that students face include weaker preschool experiences, one-parent homes, high mobility and unstable

housing, friends and classmates with lower levels of achievement, and school facilities that are deteriorating.³¹

Studies show that attending middle class schools would result in increased opportunity for low-income students.³² Not only do low-income students who attend middle-class schools perform higher, they are also “exposed to a higher set of educational expectations and career options.”³³ They also get the benefit of middle-class parents with the resources, time, and education to advocate for their children.³⁴

Economic segregation and concentrated poverty do not affect all students the same. High poverty schools are more apt to contain a high percentage of minority students. As noted by researcher Gary Orfield, “[t]he reality of segregation by race and poverty means that, while the majority of white students attend middle class schools, minority students in racially segregated schools are very likely attending a school of concentrated poverty.”³⁵ In contrast, 15 percent of predominantly white schools are schools of concentrated poverty.³⁶ African-American and Latino students attend predominantly minority schools in disproportionate numbers. In fact, “[t]wice as many African-American and Latino students as white students attend predominantly minority schools,” defined as more than 50 percent minority.³⁷ The resulting impact, as shown by studies, is that there are clear relations between segregation and negative education outcomes, such as higher dropout rates, for minority students.³⁸

C. FORCED MOBILITY

Forced mobility refers to unanticipated or undesirable residential changes. It can result from a lack of jobs, unstable income streams, family disruptions, and scarce affordable housing options, especially in urban areas. The specific housing changes resulting in residential movements stem from eviction or mortgage foreclosure proceedings, anticipated eviction, inability to pay rent or utility bills, eminent domain actions, upgrading and rehabilitation, and other gentrification pressures.³⁹

The effects of forced mobility are born disproportionately by low-income families.⁴⁰ Children of such low-income families experience some of the greatest negative effects. Forced mobility leads to negative consequences on a child’s education.⁴¹ Researcher Chester Hartman adds:

To the extent such involuntary residential moves...cause harm to a student’s education, it is certainly an important goal of public policy to reduce their incidence wherever possible. A second public policy goal is to put in place systems that, to the extent feasible, minimize the deleterious impact of these moves. Such steps are vital if we are to take seriously the right of all children to an adequate education.⁴²

High mobility affects teachers, staff, and students by upsetting the educational routine. The Government Accountability Office reported in 1994 that one in six third-graders have attended three different schools.⁴³ A 2002 study of children in Chicago public elementary

schools reported that only 38 percent of students examined had attended the same school during the same school year.⁴⁴ For many of these students, higher rates of mobility are related to lower achievement.⁴⁵ Further, average achievement scores of schools with many mobile students are significantly lower than those schools with a more stable student base.⁴⁶

Older students are also affected by residential changes. A University of Chicago study indicates that “students who change schools between grades 8 and 10 are significantly more likely than nonmobile students to leave school before 10th grade.”⁴⁷ The results also show that both residential and educational mobility are strongly correlated with early high school dropout rates. Students that are more likely to drop out are generally female and Latino. They also come from households with low-income status and low levels of educational attainment.

D. TRANSPORTATION INEQUITY

The issue of transportation equity is most often discussed in relation to school choice programs. Many studies have acknowledged that school choice programs that do not provide free transportation to low-income children are not providing a real choice and risk further alienating the most at-risk children in poorly performing schools.⁴⁸ Low-income, central city families are less likely to possess the means to transport their children to schools in neighborhoods other than their own.⁴⁹ While many school-choice programs do provide transportation, the problem of parental transportation remains. Lack of transportation choice limits parents’ ability to participate in parent-teacher associations, school meetings, events, and sports games. These factors may influence a parent’s decision not to place his/her child in a school outside of the neighborhood.

Transportation is a major cost associated with voluntary and mandatory school choice programs. Costs to transport children to non-neighborhood schools and to accommodate a wider variety of student routes and schedules are greater than those to transport students to the closest school. Even without the added costs of choice programs, the cost of transporting children to school is increasing. This change is largely driven by the lower density of new neighborhoods, which require longer commutes for more children. In 1980, the average cost for transportation per student was \$407 compared to \$606 in 2002.^{70,50} In Seattle, tight budgets have led to efforts to minimize inter-neighborhood busing, which has been a core part of Seattle’s school de-segregation efforts for over 25 years.⁵¹

One way that school districts can cut transportation costs is by encouraging more students to walk to school. School officials, health organizations, city planners and environmentalists are working to increase the number of children walking and biking to school, as a way to increase children’s health and well-being, and cut down on traffic and emissions. In 2005, the Federal Highway Administration was funded to create a national Safe Routes to Schools Program that is administered by the State Departments of Transportation. The program funds infrastructure development and related activities like parent education and better enforcement of traffic rules to both enable and encourage elementary and middle school students to walk and bike to school.⁵² The largest barriers preventing children from walking to

⁷⁰ Figures reported in constant 2001-2002 dollars.

school are distance from school and safety.⁵³ Walkable neighborhood schools, however, are often not feasible in newer, low-density suburbs or low-income neighborhoods with crime issues.

IV. Strategies to Address These Issues

The following five strategies are relevant and effective ways to address problems of economic segregation and the lack of access to affordable housing and transportation. They vary from local government and private programs to federal policies.

A. INCLUSIONARY ZONING

Inclusionary zoning is a market-based solution to integrate neighborhoods. Through integrating neighborhoods, inclusionary zoning could also serve to integrate schools.

i. Background

Local inclusionary zoning ordinances either encourage or require developers to include a certain amount of housing for low- and moderate-income households in market-rate developments. Standard inclusionary zoning ordinances establish a certain percentage of units in a new development to be set aside as affordable. Other than establishing the ordinance and making sure that residents meet certain income guidelines, there is little need for governmental administrative work; further, there is generally no significant usage of public funds.⁵⁴

Inclusionary zoning was popular as a tool during the late 1970s and early 1980s, primarily in wealthy suburbs and small cities. In the current environment of skyrocketing home prices and limited resources for publicly supported affordable housing, inclusionary zoning has again become a popular tool.⁷¹ In California in the early 1980s, about 40 cities utilized inclusionary zoning; by 2003, 107 jurisdictions, representing over 20 percent of jurisdictions in California, were utilizing it.⁵⁵ The increase in inclusionary zoning includes large cities, where the housing market experienced high growth.

One leading proponent of inclusionary zoning, David Rusk, believes that “[it] is the only housing strategy that ... guarantees that low- and moderate-income children attend middle-class schools.”⁵⁶ There are few, if any studies, however, which measure the impact of inclusionary zoning on education, and only a few studies which measure its impact on community desegregation. Rusk’s assertion is based on the experience of Montgomery County, Maryland, the first jurisdiction in the country to enact an inclusionary zoning ordinance.

ii. Case Study: Montgomery Country, Maryland

In 1974, in response to growing urbanization, and increasing home prices, Montgomery Country passed an inclusionary zoning ordinance, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit

⁷¹ It has been adopted, in some form, in San Diego, Boston, San Francisco, and New York. However, there are few, if any, studies on the impacts of these ordinances on integration.

Ordinance (MPDU). The result of the ordinance was that by 2000, over 10,000 affordable housing units, both owner-occupied and rental, had been created.⁵⁷ Montgomery County has since been described as “one of the nation’s more racially and economically integrated communities.”⁵⁸ In terms of economic desegregation, studies have shown that the owner-occupied households represented a variety of income levels. Further, nearly 14 percent of the units were public housing rental units for low- and very low-income households.⁵⁹ In terms of racial integration, a sampling of residents in 1998 showed that 80 percent were minority. From the period 1991-1998, nearly 55 percent of the new purchasers of MPDU’s were minority.⁶⁰ During the 1990s, the growth rate of the minority population was 25 percent greater than the total population growth rate of the county.⁶¹

Montgomery County’s success in integration has been credited to key provisions of its inclusionary zoning ordinance.

- **The program is mandatory for developers.** This ensures that affordable units are actually constructed. The ordinance specifies that 12.5 to 15 percent of developments greater than 50 units should be set-aside as affordable.⁶²
- **Affordable units are purchased by public housing authorities.** One-third of the units are offered to the local public housing authority, and this ensures that units remain permanently affordable for low-income households.⁶³
- **Households earning up to 65 percent of the Area Median Income are eligible, and households are chosen by a lottery system.** This ensures that low-income residents are able to benefit from the program.⁷²

In addition, the MPDU’s were found to be widely dispersed throughout the county, instead of being concentrated. For instance, the public housing rental units were located in over 200 middle-class neighborhoods.⁶⁴

While the integrative impact of the Montgomery County ordinance on the community has been studied, there are still no in-depth studies of the impact on educational outcomes in the local school district; this is an area for future research. In addition, while Montgomery County has been successful, there is concern that Montgomery County’s stock of affordable housing is stagnating, and might even decrease as units previously designated as affordable become market-rate units.⁷³ Inclusionary zoning works best in high-growth areas, but once growth slows, then the production of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning will also decrease.⁶⁵

iii. Drawbacks

The results of inclusionary zoning are highly dependent on specific parameters, a point illustrated by the well-known example of New Jersey. After the *Mount Laurel* court decisions,

⁷² Another system might be first-come-first-serve. It is reasonable that relatively higher-income households might be more aware of the MPDUs, and apply first; in that case, a lottery system would ensure that low-income households still had access to the affordable units.

⁷³ Price restrictions are placed on rental units for 20 years and on owner-occupied units for 10 years.

many New Jersey municipalities adopting inclusionary zoning.^{74,66} Analysis of the first five years after the *Mount Laurel* decision (1983-1988) report that 75 percent of the over 5,000 new units were produced because of inclusionary zoning requirements. However, the policy did not lead to economic integration, mainly because most of the inclusionary units were offered for-sale, rather than as rentals, which made the units more appropriate for moderate- rather than low-income households.⁶⁷ In addition, studies report that minorities remained segregated in the central cities. Overall, the results in New Jersey showed “no sign of residential integration along racial [or] economic lines”.⁶⁸ Adoption of parameters is dependent upon local circumstances, and can lead to varying results. In California, of the inclusionary zoning programs which are voluntary for developers, half of them have resulted in zero construction of affordable housing units.⁶⁹

The ability of inclusionary zoning to achieve integration is also hindered by political opposition, mostly from developers who claim that producing affordable housing for low-income households is economically unfeasible. One incentive to mitigate developer opposition and encourage affordable housing is a density bonus, which allows developers to exceed local density restrictions. One tradeoff, however, is community opposition, including from school districts, which fear extra strain on their services.⁷⁰ Another incentive is in-lieu fees, in which, in exchange for fees, developers can opt out of inclusionary zoning programs. Sometimes these fees are used to increase the stock of affordable housing, though it would be less likely to occur in mixed-income neighborhoods.⁷¹

iv. Recommendations: Lessons Learned

- 1) Inclusionary zoning should be implemented in growing housing markets.
- 2) The program should be mandatory.
- 3) Program parameters should specifically be tailored to serve low-incomes.
- 4) More research needs to be done to assess whether inclusionary zoning specifically impacts community and school segregation, and school outcomes.

B. SCHOOL-CENTERED DEVELOPER MODEL

i. Background

The school-centered developer model strategy focuses on schools as part of a comprehensive approach to revitalizing blighted neighborhoods. Private and non-profit developers try to attract middle-class families by improving schools and housing, while also trying to retain existing, low-income residents by creating superior, affordable housing options. The programs’ primary goal is to de-concentrate poverty and promote integration in both neighborhoods and schools. Programs are often borne out of the demolition of public housing

⁷⁴ *Mount Laurel I* (1975) struck down exclusionary zoning. *Mount Laurel II* (1983) mandated that municipalities act affirmatively to create low-income housing opportunities.

projects, or are the product of urban gentrification efforts. In some of those cases, developers also make agreements with city authorities to develop neighborhood schools – those in which students are drawn primarily from nearby neighborhoods – in exchange for the renovation by the developer.

Funding for these communities is drawn from many sources. Developers utilize their own resources and investments. A substantial portion of resources are provided through HOPE VI grants, which are federal funds provided by HUD. The HOPE VI program was created in the 1980s to redevelop decaying public housing projects and to help residents become homeowners. Finding private funding sources from companies and creating partnerships within the community are also key ingredients in developing these new housing programs.

Richard Baron, one of the originators of the model, states, “[s]chools affect housing markets and home values. They affect the economic decisions of the private market when they consider making an investment or locating in a new city. They affect the ability to retain residents in a particular school system or in a local community.”⁷² Below are two successful case studies showcasing schools as the focal point for reconstruction and redevelopment efforts.

ii. Case Study 1: Centennial Place, Atlanta, Georgia

- *The Challenge*

Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes in downtown Atlanta were the sites of the nation’s oldest public housing projects. The racial composition was primarily African-American, and the majority of children qualified for free lunch. Despite efforts to improve the barrack-style apartments, by the early 1990s heating and plumbing systems were outdated and residents were dealing with the hazards of lead-based paint.⁷³ The local neighborhood school – Fowler Elementary School – was performing badly.

- *The Solution*

The revitalization project was a joint venture between private developers and the Atlanta Housing Authority. Centennial Place was the first HOPE VI site, and as such, much of its funding came from HOPE VI grants. Centennial Place is a mixed-income community including 738 units, of which 40 percent is designated for public housing, 20 percent is selected for tax credit families, and the remainder for market-rate units.⁷⁴ The community combines townhomes and single-family homes (some units are available for ownership). Most of the families residing in Centennial Place have incomes below Atlanta’s median household income, which was \$ 37,385 in 2004.⁷⁵

The hallmark of the community is Centennial Place Elementary School. Working with the local board of education and professors at Georgia Technical Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), developers were able to form an agreement to replace the old elementary school. Local partnerships were integral to creating the school, as resources to rebuild came from the Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Company. In June 2002, the school was the highest scoring

elementary school of the 63 in the city of Atlanta.⁷⁶ In 2005, almost half of the students exceeded standards in reading, and 20 percent exceeded standards in math, marking the school as one of the top performers in the state.⁷⁷ Most notably, many students from other districts are seeking entrance to Centennial Place Elementary, as the city of Atlanta allows students to transfer schools.

Despite the academic successes, the school remains relatively homogeneous, with nearly all of its students African American. Further, 65 percent of its students receive free or reduced lunch. To the extent the school can achieve a more racially and economically integrated community is a challenge in a city that is nearly two-thirds African American.⁷⁸

iii. Case Study 2: Murphy Park, St. Louis, Missouri

- *The Challenge*

The Murphy Park development replaces a distressed 658-unit public housing site. The average household income prior to the rehabilitation effort was \$6,000, making it the poorest census tract in the entire metropolitan St. Louis area.⁷⁹

- *The Solution*

A forerunner of a HOPE VI endeavor, the revitalization of Murphy Park worked much like a HOPE VI site. Total construction costs were more than \$54 million. Developers worked with the former Secretary of HUD, Jose Cisneros, to gain partial funding for the redevelopment. Funding also came from private corporate investors, the City of St. Louis, and the St. Louis Housing Authority. Like Centennial Place, Murphy Park has a mix of public housing, tax credit and market-rate units. The 287-unit community offers two to six bedroom units. Seventy-two percent of the residents earn below \$30,000, while the remaining earn between \$30,001 and \$100,000.

The community has a non-profit entity that operates as an umbrella for all human capital programs. Resources are generated through partnerships with local companies and foundations. In an effort to ensure that the neighborhood is community-oriented, neighborhood members come together regularly to discuss health care and summer youth programming.

At the center of the community is the newly-renovated Jefferson Elementary School. The reconstruction originated through collaboration between developers and the board of education. The school was in poor physical condition, and students had low academic performance. The developer formed an understanding with the board, that if the school were made into a neighborhood school, then the developer would raise the necessary funds to renovate the school. The school now houses an arts program, co-sponsored by the Center for Contemporary Arts in St. Louis, as well as an adult training lab for teachers and parents to learn computer skills.

iv. Drawbacks

Not all communities benefit from revitalization efforts. In Chicago, gentrification efforts coupled with school reform led to the pushing out of low-income, minority families.⁸⁰ Under Chicago's "Renaissance 2010" program, 60 schools will be closed and 100 new schools will be opened, two-thirds of which will be charter or contract schools. According to Pauline Lipman, the dual plan is concretely and symbolically linked to pushing out low-income people of color and destroying their communities.⁸¹ As efforts to attract the middle-class with new housing and schools reduce the stock of affordable housing, working families are forced to move out of communities. As old schools are closed and new ones opened, a symbolic reconstruction of the urban space takes place.

Further problems exist with the school-centered developer model. While communities may initially include housing units for low-income residents, as schools increase property values, housing costs are likely to rise. The extent to which these communities can sustain a stock of quality affordable homes while the quality of education rises should be the subject of further study. A related problem is the retention of previous residents in newly-renovated housing sites. Despite the success at Murphy Park in creating a mixed-income neighborhood, a drawback is the drastic reduction in the number of housing units. Often, HOPE VI sites do not have the same number of housing units as prior to the renovation. Also, funding can be difficult. HOPE VI funds have been reduced dramatically in the past five years.⁸²

v. Recommendations: Lessons Learned

- 1) Assess a city's local circumstances. The model may not be appropriate in every community. Generally, it is successful in communities requiring a revitalization effort.
- 2) Stable and varied funding sources are essential. Local housing authorities, private investments, and federal resources are among some of the possibilities. Recognize that HOPE VI grants may not be available in future years due to substantial federal budget cuts.
- 3) Non-profit developers may be the most likely supporters of the school-centered developer model, as some private developers may be more profit-driven.
- 4) Community partnerships among many entities can increase the success of the program. Consider partnerships with local universities, non-profits, and corporations

C. SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS WITH TRANSPORTATION

i. Background

The number of school choice programs in the country is increasing with more school districts experimenting with charter schools, school voucher programs, and public school choice programs.⁸³ School choice programs are often presented as a way to disperse concentrated poverty in schools by giving low-income children access to better performing

schools. However, critics worry that school choice programs will further hamper those children most at risk since choice relies on a parent's access to information about school options and often on a student's ability to get to his/her school of choice.⁸⁴ Research has shown that ensuring free transportation to schools outside a student's immediate neighborhood is a critical part of creating an equitable school choice program.⁸⁵

In addition to the rising number of voluntary choice programs, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 forces every district to offer a choice to children in failing or dangerous schools. Under NCLB, if a school fails to make "adequate yearly progress" towards increasing student achievement two years in a row, the district must offer either public school choice or supplemental educational services to students attending the school.⁸⁶ The statute also mandates that districts provide transportation (using up to five percent of that district's Title I funds) for such students to attend another school within the district.^{75,87} If Title I funds do not cover all of transportation costs, then the district must give priority to the lowest-achieving low-income children.⁸⁸ Critics of NCLB, including the National Education Association, claim that the statute is under-funded. Further, they are concerned that transferring funds to transportation will have a negative impact on other critical parts of the budgets.⁸⁹

ii. Challenges

Offering free transportation for school choice is often expensive and logistically challenging. Students are spread across a larger geographical area, and their routes do not always coincide with regular school bus routes. Using school buses at full capacity is difficult when only a few students from a given neighborhood attend the same school. In the case of voucher programs that include private schools, the differences in start times, end-times, and days off lead to increases in staff overtime costs and coordination problems.⁹⁰

Transportation has been a challenge in past school choice programs. For instance, Cleveland's voucher program, adopted in 1995, had significant difficulties providing adequate transportation and ultimately resulted in major cost overruns. In Cleveland, the Municipal School District took several months to figure out how to provide transportation to all of the voucher-takers. Some voucher students' homes were too remote to be served efficiently by buses, forcing the school district to pay an estimated \$15-18 per pupil per day⁷⁶ to transport these students by taxi.⁹¹ An evaluation by Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance found that transportation was one of the top three factors keeping children from participating in Cleveland's voucher program.⁹²

Other districts have tried to avoid costly transportation burdens by limiting free transportation to students with disabilities and/or students who receive free lunch.⁹³ In Chicago, the school board has a disclaimer that "it may not be possible for your child to be enrolled in certain schools because it is not feasible to establish a transportation route for one or very few students."⁹⁴

⁷⁵ Title I funds are provided by the federal government. Originally designed to help schools meet the needs of special needs students, the funds are currently provided to help schools improve educational outcomes of all students.

⁷⁶ Compared to \$3.33 for busing.

How could a large metropolitan school district create an equitable school choice program utilizing free transportation? One promising new program which could provide insight is the voluntary school choice program in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

iii. Case Study: Miami-Dade County Public Schools

District Profile⁹⁵

- Type of district: Greater Metropolitan Area
- Area: 1955 square miles
- Students Enrolled: 370,000
- Number of Schools: 340
- Racial demographics: 21 percent white, 19 percent African-American, 57 percent Latino
- School Lunch: 62 percent subsidized meals

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is a large, geographically dispersed, metropolitan school district that has struggled with racial and economic segregation. The district has had some form of school choice since 1971 when the courts mandated desegregation.⁹⁶ However, issues such as large geographic distances, an inadequate transportation system, and parents' lack of knowledge regarding available opportunities, led to only 12 percent of students participating in choice programs.⁹⁷ In addition, a study published in 2002 found there was still a high degree of residential and school segregation in the district.⁹⁸

Since 2001, MDCPS has redefined their diversity goals and implemented a voluntary desegregation program called "I Choose" with a federal grant from the Voluntary Public School Choice Program.⁹⁹ "I Choose" created six choice zones,⁷⁷ each containing approximately four high schools, six to twelve middle schools, and nine to sixteen elementary schools.¹⁰⁰ The choice zones are intended to cut down on transportation costs by limiting the distances between schools of choice and the students that choose them.¹⁰¹ Transportation is provided to choices within a student's choice zone, and controlled choice options outside the zone. These choices include a broad array of magnet and school theme programs, charter schools, and commuter schools.¹⁰² Commuter schools are located in the downtown area so that parents who commute downtown can drop their children off.¹⁰³

The District has also invested in new technology to improve their ability to deliver transportation services. MDCPS purchased new computerized routing software to track buses more closely, design more efficient routes, and minimize the number of buses needed.¹⁰⁴ The District also has an automated fueling system that sends information about mileage and fuel level to a main computer.¹⁰⁵

⁷⁷ For NCLB student choice, the district was divided into 3 zones.

iv. Drawbacks

- **Providing transportation for school choice programs is expensive.** The rising cost of fuel and the low-density of most new developments are increasing the cost of school transportation. A school needs to consider the trade-offs in its districts budget in terms of money that could be used for books, teachers, and other programs.¹⁰⁶
- **Providing transportation does not single-handedly lead to equitable school choice programs.** Other issues such as parental education, access to information, and protections for non-choosers need to be addressed in order to create equitable school choice.
- **School choice with transportation does not necessarily help develop the community. It can also make it difficult for low-income parents with limited transportation means to participate in school events.** For instance, in Seattle, low-income parental involvement in the schools decreased when children were bused to schools outside of the neighborhoods.¹⁰⁷

v. Recommendations

- 1) Invest in smaller buses and vans. Smaller vehicles allow more flexibility.
- 2) Divide the district into smaller choice zones. The strategy is particularly helpful for large districts; however, it is critical that each “choice zone” have a similar range of school options.
- 3) Invest in technology to collect and analyze transportation-related data. This investment can lead to management improvements and long-term cost savings.
- 4) Consider location and ease of transportation when choosing schools to host new programs and/or receive funds for improvements. Planning ahead can decrease transportation barriers.

D. LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

Private development of affordable housing through the use of the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program is another potential means of producing mixed-income neighborhoods and therefore providing more educational opportunity for low-income children.

i. Background

The LIHTC program, started in 1986, is “the principal mechanism for supporting the production of new and rehabilitated rental housing for low-income households,” committing about \$3.2 billion a year.¹⁰⁸ The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) administers the program, disbursing approximately \$1.75 of credits per capita to each state. An agency in each state then allocates the tax credits to developers, either non-profit or for-profit, based on the cost of

development. Developers must set aside a certain percentage of units as below-market.⁷⁸ The vast majority of projects, however, are composed almost entirely of low-income units.¹⁰⁹ The tax credits cover 4 percent or 9 percent (depending on whether other federal funding is used) of development costs for each of ten years, and developers usually sell the credits to investors who can use them to offset their taxes. The money from the tax credit sale is used to fund the development.

Through LIHTC, approximately 55,000 units per year were placed into service through 1995.¹¹⁰ Between 1995 and 2003, that number jumped to an average of 95,000 per year.¹¹¹ Over 1.2 million units have been developed using LIHTC.^{79,112}

Two-thirds of LIHTC projects are targeted towards families, and this means that the location and provision of LIHTC projects can play an important role in the educational and social opportunity of children.¹¹³ Utilizing the program to develop affordable housing in low-poverty communities or to bring households of varied incomes into relatively poor communities can help de-concentrate poverty and economically integrate these communities and their schools.

ii. Advantages

Compared to other federally assisted housing, LIHTC units are located in lower poverty neighborhoods. Specifically, the average poverty rate in LIHTC neighborhoods is 10 percent lower, and the median income is \$9,000 higher. This may be due in large part to the fact that LIHTC developments attract households that are higher-income than those in other subsidized developments, making their location in more affluent neighborhoods less contentious.¹¹⁴

In addition, the LIHTC program has been more successful than other subsidy programs at dispersing low-income households into the suburbs and into neighborhoods with lower minority populations.¹¹⁵ Locating families in suburban neighborhoods is important because these neighborhoods have higher median incomes and lower levels of poverty than central city neighborhoods.¹¹⁶

The relative success of the LIHTC program at dispersing poverty translates to increased opportunities for students living in these units. They may attend higher-quality schools with students from more middle-class backgrounds. As the largest source of affordable housing in the country, the LIHTC program also provides thousands of families, including families with children, with stable housing. Moreover, tax credit properties are considered “permanently affordable,” as their subsidies last at least 55 years.¹¹⁷ The heavy involvement of nonprofit developers in the program also helps ensure permanent affordability.

⁷⁸ Developers have the option of setting aside, for a period of at least 30 years, 20 percent or more of the units to households at or below 50 percent of the AMI, or 40 percent or more to those at or below 60 percent of the AMI.

⁷⁹ More than half of LIHTC projects use some other federal funds, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME funds.

iii. Drawbacks

Despite their success relative to other subsidy programs, tax credit units are less likely than households in general or rental units overall to be located in low-poverty areas and more likely to be in areas with high minority populations.¹¹⁸ This is particularly true for LIHTC units located in the central cities, where they are five times more likely to be located in a high-poverty neighborhood than those in suburban neighborhoods.¹¹⁹

The LIHTC program does not serve the neediest populations. Residents of LIHTC units are generally more affluent than those in other federal housing programs.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, a HUD study found that they still serve “primarily extremely- and very-low-income households.”¹²¹

Although LIHTC developments may face less opposition from NIMBYs because they are developed by private developers and nonprofit organizations rather than local housing authorities and because they serve higher-income tenants than other programs, they are not subject to any regulatory guidelines on locating them in low-poverty communities.^{80, 122} On the contrary, the LIHTC statute “actually gives *preferences* to [developments] in qualified lower-income neighborhoods,” defined as neighborhoods where at least 50 percent of the households have incomes below 60 percent of the AMI.¹²³ On the other hand, developers have an incentive, in the form of a 30 percent increase in the basis on which the tax credits are allocated, to develop in “difficult development areas” (DDAs) as well. These areas include those where the cost of development is high relative to the area median income because land prices may be high.

NIMBY opposition is still a problem for LIHTC projects, as residents are concerned with depressed property values. In addition, zoning for single-family use in the suburbs prohibits the development of denser multi-family housing. LIHTC developments may also serve relatively higher-income households as developers try to obtain rents that can make the projects feasible.

iv. Recommendations

- 1) Build at least some market-rate units in LIHTC developments to promote mixed-income projects.
- 2) Build LIHTC developments in higher-income areas, such as suburbs.
- 3) Take advantage of the difficult development area (DDA) incentive.
- 4) Revise the statute in order to give preference to developments in low-poverty areas.

⁸⁰ NIMBY stands for Not In My Backyard, and generally refers to community opposition to development in that community’s area.

- 5) Target LIHTC developments to lower-income residents. Research the difference between NIMBY opposition when developments are targeted to lower incomes versus more moderate incomes in order to determine the opposition.

E. HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS

i. Introduction

Research on whether tenant-based voucher programs can play a significant role in de-concentrating poverty and economically desegregating communities is limited. The effects on individual voucher holders, however, have been explored. Despite some mixed conclusions, such programs generally result in upward residential mobility—moving from poor to more middle-class neighborhoods. Two programs in particular provide the bulk of the evidence on the topic: Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity (MTO). Current data on the Section 8 also provides some insights.⁸¹

ii. Section 8

The Section 8 program has had disappointing results in moving families out of concentrated poverty. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has found that voucher-holder households that move “are only slightly more likely than non-movers to avoid neighborhoods with moderate- and high-poverty concentrations.”¹²⁴

- *Background*

Section 8 vouchers and Section 8 certificates function similarly, and will be collectively referred to as vouchers. As opposed to project-based Section 8, tenant-based vouchers may be used anywhere a landlord is willing to accept them. In its most simple terms, a tenant pays 30 percent of his/her income towards rent, and the government-issued voucher makes up the difference. For the most part, only very low-income tenants are eligible.⁸² Started in 1975, the program has grown to be the largest HUD expenditure. In 2001, the program cost \$24 billion. Around 1.6 million people received vouchers, and another 1.3 million lived in units subsidized by project-based Section 8.¹²⁵

According to HUD, just over 60 percent of Section 8 participants are households with children, making vouchers an issue that affects students and schools.¹²⁶ Voucher-holders make up “a very modest portion of the affordable housing stock, just over 6 percent.”¹²⁷ They are disproportionately found in the central cities; around 58 percent are located in the central cities and about 42 percent in suburban areas.¹²⁸

⁸¹ Section 8 vouchers are currently called housing choice vouchers.

⁸² Defined as households making 50 percent of the area median income or below.

- *Findings*

In 1994, HUD found that 80 percent of voucher holders in large cities secured quality housing.¹²⁹ In addition, tenant-based voucher holders are more likely to live in diverse neighborhoods than those in project-based Section 8, public housing or tax credit developments. And when compared with low-income non-voucher holders, Section 8 households are less concentrated in low-income neighborhoods.¹³⁰

The success of the program has been modest, however, despite program rules that require voucher administrators to encourage participants to move to more affluent neighborhoods.¹³¹ Voucher-holders are still disproportionately concentrated in low-income communities.¹³² In central cities, this concentration is even more pronounced. More than one-third of voucher-holder families live in neighborhoods where the poverty rate is at least 30 percent. In suburban neighborhoods, only 6 percent of voucher families live in such areas.¹³³ Minority voucher-holders are even more likely than other voucher-holders to live in areas of concentrated poverty.¹³⁴

Independent studies confirm HUD's interpretation of the data. One study found that over 60 percent of Section 8 recipients continue to reside in neighborhoods where African-Americans or Latinos make up at least 50 percent of the population.¹³⁵

One explanation for the clustering of urban minority Section 8 recipients in inner-city neighborhoods is that "recipients are excluded from living in many desirable communities because few landlords are willing to accept these families and their housing subsidies," a fact that could be addressed with anti-discrimination laws.¹³⁶ In addition, evidence suggests that "the housing search is more difficult for voucher recipients who attempt to move to a new neighborhood" compared to those who stay nearby, largely because of the lack of transportation options.¹³⁷

Two important limitations are landlord hesitance and unfamiliarity with the Section 8 program. Landlords may have a bias against low-income tenants or wish to avoid the regulations and paperwork imposed by the program. Another main limitation is the "fair market rent" calculation, as defined by HUD, which has proven to be a barrier to moving to desirable neighborhoods in high-cost markets and in areas where rents are increasing rapidly.¹³⁸

Whether Section 8 can be successful in providing poor families with housing choice depends on a number of factors, including housing market discrimination, and the desire of many participants to remain near established social networks. Further, there are time and transportation constraints that interfere with housing searches in suburban locations, and administrative and programmatic shortcomings of local housing authorities.¹³⁹ Some voucher programs, therefore, include housing search counseling, transportation assistance, landlord outreach, or post-placement services.¹⁴⁰

Two programs in particular utilized counseling and/or targeted placement to areas with low concentrations of poverty: the court-mandated Gautreaux program in Chicago, and the Moving to Opportunity experiment by HUD. Both are discussed below.

iii. Gautreaux

- *Background*

The Gautreaux residential mobility program was intended to redress the discrimination that had occurred in Chicago public housing.^{83,141} The program enabled low-income African-Americans living in public housing or on the waitlist list for public housing to apply to move to mostly white suburbs throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Families who volunteered were required to move to census tracts with 30 percent or fewer African-American residents.¹⁴² Between 1976 and 1998, more than 7,000 moved.¹⁴³ The program, however, did not include employment, transportation, or other assistance.¹⁴⁴

- *Findings*

In 1982, children who moved to the suburbs “had smaller classes, higher satisfaction with teachers and courses, better attitudes about school, and no permanent decline in grades, relative school performance, or attendance.”¹⁴⁵ In addition, follow-up of these children seven years later found that suburban movers were more likely to be in school, college preparatory courses, four-year colleges, and better-paying jobs.¹⁴⁶

Families who moved also stayed in relatively affluent neighborhoods years later.¹⁴⁷ In fact, only about a third of families who had moved to the suburbs returned to the city.¹⁴⁸ Only 3 percent of city movers had returned to their original census tract.¹⁴⁹ Evidence shows that those who left their placement neighborhoods moved to even more affluent areas, and their income increased by nearly \$10,000.¹⁵⁰ Racial segregation, however, did increase from placement to current neighborhoods, though they were more integrated than their original neighborhoods.¹⁵¹ In addition, the “program accomplish[ed] residential integration with little visibility and in small numbers that raise[d] little threat, thus reducing the likelihood of backlash and stigma.”¹⁵²

There was only one primary criticism: the under-utilization of the program. Only 19 percent of eligible families successfully relocated.¹⁵³

iv. Moving to Opportunity

- *Background*

The experimental Moving to Opportunity (MTO) residential mobility demonstration program started in the mid-1990s, growing “in part out of early positive research on Gautreaux.”¹⁵⁴ The program divided participants into three groups: an experimental group that received housing vouchers and housing counseling, a Section 8 group that received standard vouchers but no counseling, and a control group that did not receive any vouchers.¹⁵⁵

⁸³ The Gautreaux program was the result of a 1966 Supreme Court housing segregation decision.

- *Findings*

The MTO program had mixed results. A high number of participants successfully utilized the vouchers to find housing (47 percent of the experimental group, and 60 percent of the Section 8 group). Further, “even families in the Section 8-only group, lacking focused counseling and programmatic requirements to choose low-poverty communities, relocated to communities more advantaged than those from which they originated.”¹⁵⁶ Several years after their initial moves, however, 66 percent of the experimental group participants had moved again to communities with higher poverty rates.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, those in both relocating groups had improved their neighborhood economic conditions.¹⁵⁸

In terms of educational impact, MTO had significant but small effects on the quality of the schools available to children who moved, but “virtually no significant effects” on educational performance. It may be too early to tell, however, what the long-term effects for families and children are.¹⁵⁹ Further results were that MTO “did little to reduce residential racial/ethnic segregation for MTO’s Section 8 or experimental groups.” Placement neighborhoods for both the Section 8 and experimental group were around 85 percent African American, compared to 28 percent for those moving under the Gautreaux program.¹⁶⁰ This suggests that “it may take a program like Gautreaux, which defined target neighborhoods in terms of race, to induce placement in non-minority segregated neighborhoods.”¹⁶¹

v. Recommendations: Lessons Learned

- 1) Provide housing search counseling, specifically to help participants find housing in the suburbs.
- 2) Provide a more flexible fair market rent that allows participants to attain more expensive housing in the suburbs.
- 3) Educate landlords and tenants about how the program works and the laws against discrimination.
- 4) Expand the current Housing Choice Voucher program.
- 5) Enforce federal and state laws and adopt local ordinances against discrimination against voucher-holders.

V. Conclusions

Efforts to improve educational outcomes for low-income, minority communities must include efforts to improve housing and transportation opportunities. However, few studies have examined the effects of interventions such as inclusionary housing, housing vouchers, developer models or changes in transportation provision for school choice programs on student outcomes. In conclusion, we find that:

- **These strategies are not one-size-fits-all approaches.** Inclusionary zoning works well when there is a very strong housing market and developers are willing to provide affordable units. Developer models necessitate a lead developer who can pull together the funding and community support for a school-based project. Transportation solutions depend largely on the layout and infrastructure of a given community.
- **The effectiveness of these strategies depends on the specific parameters of the program or development.** Inclusionary zoning's effect on alleviating concentrated poverty in schools will be limited if its provision does not mandate housing for low-income households. The highlighted school choice program's ability to provide low-income, minority students with real choices depends on how many quality choices those student have within their regional subdivision. Likewise, housing choice voucher programs will be more effective in dispersing poverty if they include counseling and target participants to low-poverty neighborhoods.
- **There is a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of these strategies.** These programs need to be carefully evaluated to determine whether or not they lead to positive school outcomes for students, particularly low-income students.
- **Community opposition needs to be mitigated through research and information.** NIMBY opposition to integrative housing efforts such as LIHTC arises because the benefit to middle-class households of economic integration has not been made clear. The efficacy of housing choice vouchers is stunted by landlords who may not understand Section 8. Similarly, inclusionary zoning relies on developers believing that serving low-income households is economically feasible.

Healthy Students, Safe Schools and Strong Communities:

School-Community Solutions to Obesity and Violence

Gloria Bruce and Eliza Johnston (with Sara Dombkowski)
May 2006

Healthy Students Equal Safe Schools and Strong Communities

Kids have to be healthy to learn, and they have to learn how to be healthy.
Healthy kids make better students. Better students make healthy communities.

- **William Potts-Datema, Harvard School of Public Health, speaking at the Healthy Schools Summit**

An effective, long-lasting, sustainable school reform initiative can only succeed if it is based on a healthy school system...If we are serious about saving a generation of kids, ensuring that not one of them is left behind, we must see that health and achievement go hand in hand. Only when children are healthy and safe will we be able to focus on improving their academic performance.

- **Pat Cooper, Superintendent, McComb School District (Mississippi), published in *The School Administrator***

Making the Connection between Health and Achievement

Research has shown through the observations of teachers and parents as well as test scores that students who have their health, nutrition and exercise needs met have greater cognitive energy to learn, achieve and behave. These children have higher academic achievement, self-esteem, mental health and school attendance, the main contributors to successful student performance. The problem lies in the fact that a growing number of children are entering the classroom with a variety of health-related problems that inhibit successful learning. Children cannot learn if they are unable to read the chalkboard because of undiagnosed or untreated poor sight. Toothaches, headaches and simple hunger are common issues that contribute to lack of concentration but are easily avoidable with basic health attention. Furthermore, a safe school environment is necessary in order for students to succeed academically. The need for safe schools does not mean just "violence-free," but safe, secure, and peaceful. Safety—both psychological and physical—is a basic need that must be met in order for students to succeed in school.^{clxii}

Whether it be physical health - lack of nutrition, hunger, obesity, physical safety - or mental health - perception of safety, bullying, or depression, it is vital that schools incorporate health and prevention programs into school improvement. It is obvious how obesity and violence affects the physical health of students, but equally important are the mental health implications of these threats. Children who are overweight are often teased or bullied more often than their peers; this bullying contributes to lower self-esteem and depression. Additionally, a child's safety, whether actual or perceived, affects his or her mental state, ability to feel comfortable in their surroundings and overall psychological health, all of which have strong effects on academic performance. Because health and achievement are so closely linked, ensuring that students are healthy and safe should be one of the central tactics used to improve academic performance on a student by student basis as well as school-wide.^{clxiii} The task is a great one, so educators, parents, communities, and policymakers will need to find new models for school and community collaboration for health services.

Schools as the Ideal Location for Change

School-aged children spend a significant amount of time at school, making it a vital location to curb unhealthy or dangerous behavior and the ideal setting to change health habits and ingrain positive mental health. In today's urban centers and increasingly in suburban areas, both schools and health facilities are facing crisis; linking the efforts of academic and local service providers will allow the sharing of funds and increase efficiency and ease for the primary patrons – the student and surrounding community.

The subject of wellness, safety, and health in schools is a broad one that policymakers and educators have been struggling with for decades. This brief will explore two of the most pressing issues related to physical and mental health, respectively – *childhood obesity* and *school violence*. These trends have emerged as real threats in the twenty-first century and any attempt at school reform or community development through education must address them. Both obesity and violence may have their roots in home or community conditions, but they have profound impact in the classroom. By understanding the causes of these issues, the depth of the problem, and the policy alternatives, we can start to construct a solution that brings schools and their surrounding communities together – to save kids and improve their neighborhoods. This brief will offer several examples of school-community health partnerships that are showing promise, and recommendations for tackling issues like violence and obesity on a district- and city-wide basis. Our conclusions and recommendations for further study are summarized below:

- Childhood obesity is a nationwide threat not only to the physical health of students, but to their mental wellbeing and academic performance. Schools play a role in contributing to the causes of obesity, but can also help combat the problem.
- Violence and threats to safety – real or perceived – have profound impact on the mental health and school performance of school-age children. Bullying and feelings of safety are linked to achievement and must be a focus of today's school health programs.
- School-based health centers (SBHCs) are a type of school-community partnership that shows promise in tackling complex issues like obesity and violence. They bring in local resources and provide an intense level of care without overburdening school staff.
- To be truly successful, SBHCs need to be tailored to different settings, funded sustainably, and paired with wise city management, planning, and policy.

Childhood Obesity: School and Community Causes and Effects

Scope of the Problem

The United States Centers for Disease Control reports that presently one third of children in the United States are obese, overweight, or at risk of obesity, up from 15% percent in the 1970s.^{clxiv} Since the 1970s, the prevalence of obesity among children has more than doubled for

preschoolers (ages 2-5) and adolescents (ages 12-19), and it has more than tripled for children 6 to 11 years of age.^{clxv} A study of 4th, 5th and 6th grade students found that 53% of them already had one or more cardiovascular risk factors^{clxvi} associated with being overweight. Additionally, in 2001, The Institute of Medicine released a report naming childhood obesity a national priority^{clxvii} because of its increase in prevalence. Trends among school children are reflecting nation-wide trends of increased rates of adult obesity. Given the rapid increase in the number of children with this health risk, the U.S Surgeon General in 2001 declared childhood obesity one of the top health priorities for the United States with the hopes of improving national efforts to decrease the prevalence of obesity in the United States.

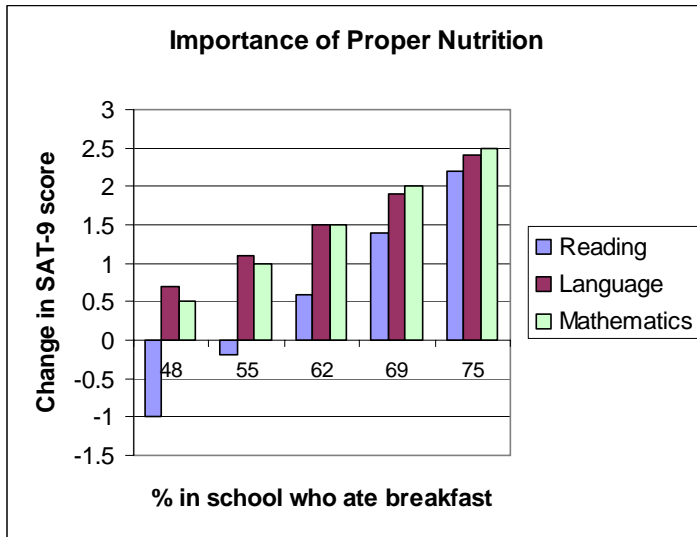
What a person chooses to eat, how much they exercise and how this translates into body composition for each individual is a mixture of personal choice flavored by cultural, environmental, and genetic variables. Some research has attributed the increase of childhood and adult obesity to the changing nature of life in the United States, replete with less opportunities in suburban communities to exercise and walk in daily activities, and increased occurrence for consuming fast food in fast paced, consumer-based lifestyles. All of these lifestyle trends are also present in today's schools. So determining the "silver bullet" to solve the problem of obesity may be likened to looking for a needle in a haystack. Furthermore, research has shown that there is a direct link between the occurrence of childhood obesity and adult obesity. Twenty-six to forty-one percent of overweight preschoolers will remain obese into adulthood; and approximately 50%- 70% of obese 10-18 year olds will remain obese as adults.^{clxviii,clxix,clxx}

Children who are overweight are exposed to psychological, social, and health burdens. The medical problems that obese children experience can include: high blood pressure, increased stress on weight bearing joints^{clxxi}, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, asthma, and hyperlipidemia (high cholesterol)^{clxxii,clxxiii} to name a few. Not only are overweight children affected physically, but they are also prone to being teased and at greater risk to experience social isolation; an example of how physical and mental health issues intersect and have effects in the school setting. To put it mildly, childhood obesity can lead to lifetime of health problems and therefore needs to be addressed from an early age.

Obesity and Achievement

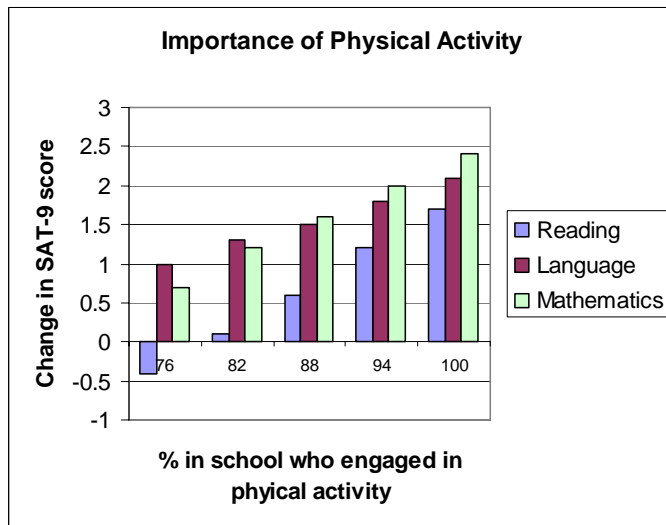
In addition to the enormity of health issues associated with obesity, poor academic achievement is also linked to the problem. The strongest correlation between achievement and weight relates to the social isolation and stigma of being overweight. A nationwide study of found that overweight kindergartners had significantly lower math and reading scores by the end of 1st grade compared with non-overweight children. The study indicated that low-income children are at greatest risk of obesity, this factor as well as many others contributes to their lower test scores and overall achievement. Because obesity is strongly correlated to socioeconomics and behavior, when controlling for these variables overweight status becomes insignificant. The study does point out, however, that compared with socio-economic status, obesity is more easily observable by other students and therefore a target for bullying, making it one of the highest risk factors for academic underachievement.^{clxxiv}

While the link between obesity and school performance may not be statistically significant due to other variables that contribute to obesity, its two main causal factors - proper nutrition and physical activity - are indisputably correlated with academic achievement. According to the California Healthy Kids Report, the prevalence of physical activity and proper nutrition are related to subsequent increases in test scores. The chart below illustrates significant gains in test scores as the percentage of students who ate breakfast increases. The pattern shown in the chart below is striking, particularly for reading scores, which declined by 1 point in schools where 48% of students reported eating breakfast and increased by 2.2 points in schools where 76% of students reported eating breakfast.



Source: California Healthy Kids Statistics

In 1991, 42% of high school students had physical education class every day during at least one semester; by 1999, that figure had dropped to 29%. While there has been an increase since 2001, up to 32%^{clxxv} of students, that number still remains low. The chart below, similar to the one showing the effects of proper nutrition, indicates the importance of physical activity on test scores.



Source: California Healthy Kids Statistics

Obesity and Schools

Biological, environmental, and cultural factors play a role in the food choices and activity patterns that determine one's weight and health. Given such a complex equation, can schools play a role in affecting nutrition and exercise habits of its students and positively affect the subsequent health of children? Since 54 million children spend approximately six hours a day in school for a total of about 180 days from the ages of seven to nineteen^{clxxvi}, and most students eat one if not two of their daily meals at school, it only makes sense to work to improve the quality of school food and physical activity programs to help combat childhood obesity, among other health and wellness issues.

Recognizing the complexity of the issue, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are calling for an integrated approach to combat issues community health issues in schools such as obesity and violence. The CDC hopes to implement comprehensive Coordinated School Health Programs (CSHP) that integrate nutrition programs, health education, physical education, family/community involvement, health promotion for staff at schools, a healthy school environment, counseling, psychological, & social services.^{clxxvii} In the past there have been countless attempts to combat school and community health issues such as obesity and violence though direct education, however many of these programs have short-term goals. And research has shown that short-term nutrition programs have not had long-term benefits of reducing childhood obesity.

The current USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP) provide low cost or free daily meals for children both during the school day, and snacks during after school programs. Schools are reimbursed thorough federal funds for food served following specific nutrition guidelines. School food service is a "critical part of comprehensive school-based nutrition", the benefits of offered by the program are counteracted by the availability of food and beverages of "minimal nutritional value" that are void of nutritional

benefits.^{clxxviii} One study found that of all snacks sold in San Diego, CA middle schools, 88.5% were high in fat and/or sugar.^{clxxix} This reflects trends found in more and more schools in recent years that have allowed students greater access to low nutrition and foods of minimal nutritional value that are outside the regulation of the NSLP.^{clxxx} This begs the question - Are the USDA guidelines and school nutrition programs making the grade? Are the regulations that guide and govern the NSLP and NSLB being "left behind" and trailing the health of our nations children with them? Many school nutrition programs, operating under the pressure to generate profits by selling competitive items that are not regulated by the USDA, and signing "pouring rights" contracts with corporations such as Pepsi and Coca-Cola, may actually be putting the health of school children at risk.

Providing nutritious meals that exceed USDA guidelines and enhance student health and wellbeing is one in a series of steps toward providing an integrated health program at school.

Action at the School District Level: A Soda Ban in Los Angeles

In 2002, concerned parents, students, community health advocates, acting with guidance from California health agencies, petitioned the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest district in the United States, to stop selling soda and candy. The major obstacle in the approval process was convincing members of the district that the revenue generated from the sale of such items, including food and candies for fundraisers, would not decline to such an extent that it would jeopardize school programs. Armed with data that proved otherwise, the vote was passed and the 2003-2004 school year marked the beginning of a "Soda Ban" for Los Angeles Unified:

"...Effective January 2004, the only beverages authorized for sale at the Los Angeles Unified School District before, during and until one half hour after the end of the school day at all sites accessible to students shall be: fruit-based drinks that are composed of no less than 50 percent fruit juices and have no added sweeteners; drinking water; milk, including, but not limited to, chocolate milk, soy milk, rice milk and other similar dairy or nondairy milk; and electrolyte replacement beverages and vitamin waters that do not contain more than 42 grams of added sweetener per 20 ounce serving."

This policy serves as a model for other districts in its bold measure to prohibit the sale of soda and other competitive foods district wide. The specificity of the language used will help to clearly delineate which foods are and are not allowed in school lunches.

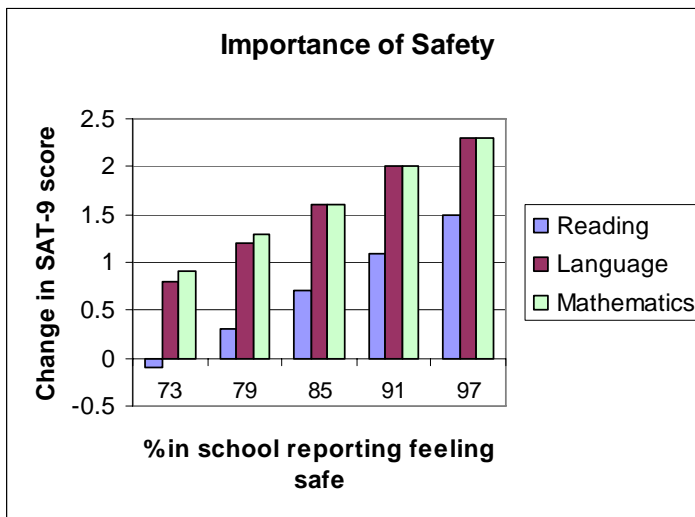
There are many other examples of actions taken at the local school district, and state levels that raise the level of nutrition in school food programs. Actions such as those taken by the Los Angeles Unified School District, which improve upon a service already provided through schools, are one way to combat childhood obesity, and work toward fostering positive community health.

On May 6th of this year, due to an initiative of the William J. Clinton Foundation, the nation's largest beverage distributors agreed to stop selling non-diet sodas in most public high schools and only unsweetened juice, low-fat milk and water in elementary and middle schools. The changes will be implemented at 75 percent of the nation's public schools by the 2008-2009 school year, and at all public schools a year later. This is the type of policy change, accomplished through partnerships between business, schools, and the non-profit or philanthropic sector, that can help fight the threat of obesity and improve schools nationwide.

Safe Schools: Mental Health, Violence and Crime

Much like the issue of obesity, school safety has both physical and mental health dimensions: the threat of violence and injury, as well as implications for depression, anxiety, anger, and risky behavior. Although most schools in the United States are not considered to be dangerous, fears about safety, the threat of violence, or the psychological taunting of students, teachers, parents, and community members are growing problems and therefore need to be addressed. Concerns of school safety include not only the physical characteristics of the school building, site and surrounding community but also the behavior and habits of the students. Because of this, a broad-based effort by the entire community - educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and other community organizations - needed to ensure that America's schools provide a healthy environment for achievement.

As previously mentioned, current research definitively links school violence and psychological distress with low academic achievement. In an education era that increasingly measures success by test scores, these threats of school violence and episodes of actual violence cannot be ignored. First, exposure to violence, abuse, and crime at school can increase a student's emotional and psychological distress. This distress can, in turn, worsen academic performance by reducing students' capacity to concentrate and expend energy on academic-related matters. Secondly, the distress associated with exposure to crime, violence, and/or bullying and teasing may directly reduce instruction time causing students to stay home from school or cut classes. Perceptions of danger at school could also reduce students' psychological engagement with school. Lastly, lack of school safety may affect academic performance by influencing teaching and learning processes in the classroom due to behavior-related disruptions. The graph below indicates that schools with a proportionately high number of students who report being harassed, being threatened with weapons, having property stolen or vandalized, feeling unsafe, engaging in physical fights, and possessing weapons on school property exhibit lower concurrent test scores than students who felt safe at their school.



Source: California Healthy Kids Statistics

There are two main ways in which actual and perceived threats to school safety manifest themselves – bullying and the broader issues of in-school violence. Both have implications on the physical as well as mental state of the students and to a lesser extent the surrounding community members. While we traditionally think of bullying and violence as threats to physical safety, there is no denying that they have a direct affect on the mental health of both the victim and the aggressor as well as the perception of safety in the school environment.

Bullying

Almost thirty percent of American school children report that they are affected by some type of bullying on a frequent basis, and in 2002, 10,000 students stayed home from school at least once a week because they had been targets of bullying. Bullying generally begins in elementary school, peaks in middle school and can persist into high school.^{clxxxii} Those who bully and are bullied appear to be at greatest risk for under achievement in the classroom, in part because they are more likely to experience depression and loneliness, and are at higher risk for involvement in problematic behavior such as smoking, drinking and truancy. Many children who are targets of bullying do not report their experiences to adults and therefore teachers may be unaware of it even when it occurs in their classrooms. One recent study reported that teachers intervened in only eighteen percent of cases.^{clxxxii}

There are three main types of bullies: physical, relational, and reactive. However, bullying usually consists of a combination of two or more types of these behaviors. Physical bullies often hit, kick, or shove others while verbal bullies use name-calling, insulting, racist comments, or harsh teasing to harm others. Relational bullies often focus on excluding one person from their peer group and usually do so through verbal threats and spreading rumors. Reactive bullies are individuals who are often both bully and victim. Typically victims first, they respond to victimization with bullying behavior. There are differences across gender in how and when

bullying occurs. Boys tend to bully and be bullied on a more frequent basis and it is often both physical and verbal, while girls experience more relational bullying later on into adolescence.

Regardless of bullying type or age of victimization, there are often mental and physical health consequences for both bullies and victims. Bullying can lead to other delinquencies such as alcohol and drug abuse or dropping out and is often indicative of broader mental instability. Both bullies and victims often experience depression, academic problems, self-defeating behaviors, interpersonal problems, absenteeism, loneliness, and loss of friends. Furthermore, bullying has implications beyond the individuals directly involved. It can contribute to school-wide mental unease and in extreme cases lead to escalating violence and crime, which quickly become community-wide safety issues.^{clxxxiii clxxxiv clxxxv}

Other Issues of Violence and Safety

When teachers and students are more concerned about their safety than education, they cannot concentrate on teaching and learning. This has increasingly been the case in America, where 39% of middle school students and 36% of high school students say they don't feel safe at school. In 2001, one in six teachers reported having been the victim of violence in or around school, compared to six years ago when the ratio was one in nine. According to a 2004 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 33.0% of students had been in a physical fight one or more times during the year and 9.2% of students had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.^{clxxxvi} Contrary to common conception, violence is not simply an urban issue; teens living in suburban areas are equally vulnerable to serious violent crime at school. Furthermore, recent statistics indicate that all schools, private as well as public, have experienced an increase in school violence.^{clxxxvii}

As mentioned previously, the threat and ensuing fear of violence can be as problematic as actual physical injury. Nationwide, 5.4% of students do not go to school each month because they feel unsafe either on their way to and from or at school.^{clxxxviii} There are several ways in which violence can manifest itself in schools. Most straightforward is an act of physical violence. Fighting, physical or verbal, often comes before severe violence and is often perpetrated by both parties. School harassment is another form of violent and abusive behavior that makes the person being harassed feel vulnerable, isolated, and afraid but often does not physically harm them. It can lead to taking part in risky behavior such as drug use, or the two other common attributes of violence, carrying a weapon and gang membership. In light of recent disasters and the media's coverage of them much of the public concern over school safety is focused on the prevalence of guns and other weapons at school. According to research done by the California Healthy Kids Statistics, 14% of the state's seventh graders belonged to a gang at some point. While gang violence is often considered a separate issue than general school violence and harassment, it contributes directly to overall security and perception of safety and therefore must be considered.^{clxxxix}

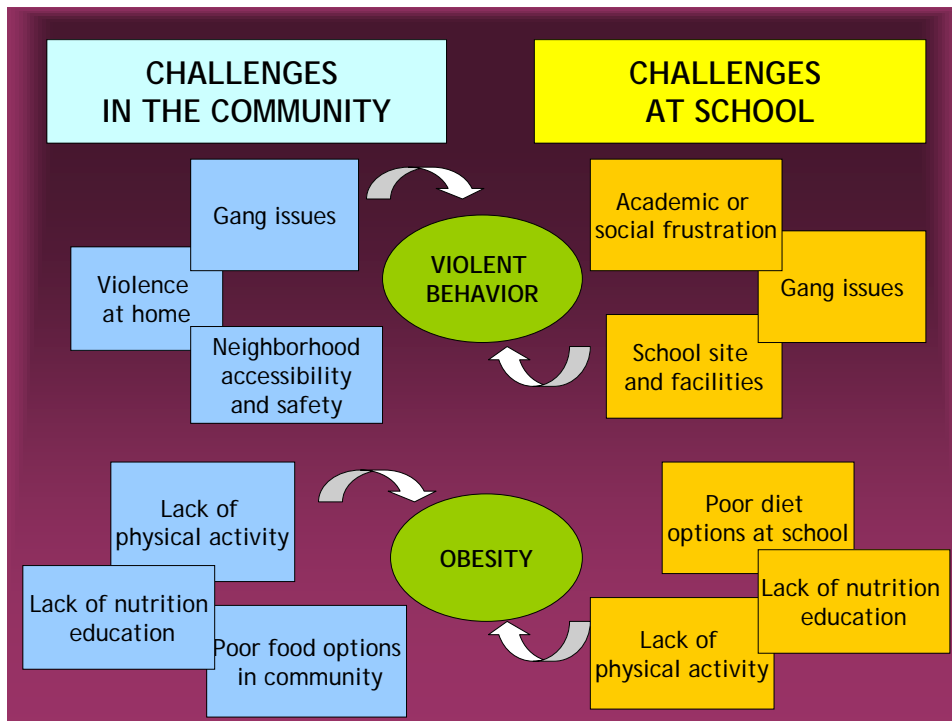
There are in-school strategies to address bullying and violence; however, they ignore the broader community issues and therefore act only as a band-aid on a case-by-case or school-by-school

basis. Policies and practices that neglect student's comprehensive physical and mental health needs are almost certain to leave many children and schools behind. To that end, efforts that mesh the overall mission of education with community health can promote academic excellence, socialization, citizenship, and healthful lives for the long term. Students who feel they belong to their school are also less likely to be involved in violent behavior at school.^{cxv} And when students feel safer at school, their academic achievement and the well-being of the entire community may benefit.

School-Community Health Partnerships: Innovative Solutions for Students and Society

We have highlighted two of the main health and safety challenges that face young people today. Both obesity and violent behavior may have their roots outside of school walls, but can be affected by what happens during the school day – bullying in the hallways, for instance, or poor nutrition in the cafeteria. Therefore, an integrated approach that brings together school and surrounding community is necessary to combat these problems, along with other “new morbidities” threatening children – drug and alcohol use, sexually transmitted diseases, depression, untreated vision, hearing, and dental problems. With 20% of poor children not enrolled in Medicaid or any other form of insurance, school-based services can help to tackle these issues, which often build on each other. As Richard Rothstein points out, the “cumulative disadvantage” of these various physical and mental health problems adds up to an achievement gap between middle-class and poor children that not even committed teachers and well-designed curriculum can close.^{cxvi} The connections between health and academic achievement are clear. But the problem is perhaps even more daunting than it was in the past, as serious but more straightforward public health issues (such as infectious disease) are joined by more complex, personalized, and sensitive issues like mental illnesses, sexually risky behavior, and eating and exercise habits. These health problems need to be tackled with resource-intensive programs like anger management classes, support groups, nutrition guidance, and sustained care.

How can schools be expected to provide this level of attention to students' mental and physical health on top of their academic mission? After all, environmental, socioeconomic and family conditions may contribute to mental illness, violence, feeling unsafe, and poor nutrition as much as anything occurring within the school building. Because of this, a growing body of theory and practice asserts that while schools can play a crucial role in solving health problems, they should not be asked to act alone. As represented in the diagram below, schools and community are already deeply involved in the health and safety of students, as agents that can exacerbate – or combat – environmental, social, and psychological problems in children's lives. The CDC, for instance, identifies both risk factors and protective factors for violence that can spring from family situations, or from peer/school environment.^{cxvii} Therefore, both schools and their surrounding communities should be involved in creating innovative partnerships to deliver health care.



Realizing this, a number of schools have undertaken innovative approaches to mental and physical health services, drawing on community and local resources to enhance health and safety without overburdening school staff. One widespread and growing model is the school-based health center (SBHC), an on-campus health facility providing comprehensive care for students. Rather than asking school nurses or counselors to take on more work, SBHCs forge community partnerships so that schools can draw on the resources and expertise of local medical facilities, social service providers, and city services. While SBHCs exist in many different forms, they are often a key component of “community schools,” educational facilities that provide integrated services for children and families to create a neighborhood hub. By linking to community assets like clinics, teaching hospitals, business or employment centers, even schools in low-income neighborhoods can provide community-based health care and lifestyle programs that may improve academic performance and neighborhood welfare. However, local and state policies must support funding for these centers and ensure that they are partnered with a diverse network of place-based services.

The full-service, on-site SBHC model is not ideal or feasible everywhere, which is why school-community health and safety partnerships vary: some offer only counseling or other limited services; some focus on health career training rather than on-site medical treatment; and others draw students in with recreational and creative opportunities in addition to health care. The following sections will explore the health policy that led to the establishment and growth of SBHCs, offer a few case studies, and outline challenges and recommendations for implementing these solutions in different metropolitan settings.

School Based Health Services: History and Recent Developments

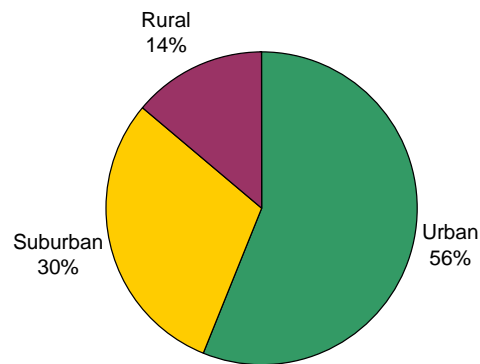
As education experts like Joy Dryfoos and Phillip Coltoff have noted, the idea of bringing health services into schools as a means of improving community health and achievement is not new. For over a century, educators and public health officials have recognized that schools are the ideal delivery site for mental and physical health services. With over 95% of all children attending schools, there is little argument today that schools are logical places to provide certain basic health services, such as screenings for scoliosis and immunizations, especially in communities where children have no primary care provider. A 1992 Gallup Poll showed that 77% of respondents were in favor of “using public school buildings in their communities to provide health and social services to students.” So there have been few political obstacles to traditional health care at schools: generally consisting of a school nurse providing first aid, treatment for minor injuries and illnesses, and screenings and shots. But what about treatment for complicated problems like violent behavior and obesity – such as mental health counseling, anger management classes, comprehensive physicals, or nutrition guidance? Realizing that school nurses are often underfunded and underresourced, some school districts have partnered with local health or human services departments to augment the services and referrals they can provide. This approach has taken root in places as diverse as rural Lincoln County, South Dakota and burgeoning Miami-Dade County, Florida.

These types of programs are valuable, but school-based health centers raise health services to another level, and have gained acceptance slowly because in some cases they substitute for a family doctor or provide controversial services. Community schools (the forerunners to today’s “full-service schools”) with health services surfaced several times in the early twentieth century, notably during the Progressive Era and the Depression. As late as the 1980s, however, many parents objected to school-based clinics, fearing that they would erode family authority over issues like contraceptives. (Most SBHCs provide some sort of reproductive health services, and most provide confidential services even though parents must give consent to enroll students in the center). Medical professionals worried that school health services would cut into their business, and school staff were wary of additional administrative workload.^{cxci} If the recent growth in SBHCs is any indication, however, resistance has faded as the community school movement gains political and social acceptance. The first full-fledged SBHCs were founded in the 1970s, and Dryfoos identified just ten of them in 1984. By 1988, the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) counted 120 facilities. This number jumped to 1,200 in 1998, and the most recent NASBHC survey in 2001 identified 1,378 centers in 45 states.^{cxci} This popularity demonstrates growing political and social acceptance, but may also reflect the sad fact that many uninsured or poorly insured families increasingly rely on SBHCs as the *only* source of care for their school-age children.

With 45 million Americans uninsured in 2004, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the problem of inadequate health care affects all communities.^{cxci} Furthermore, health threats such as violence and obesity, as this brief has shown, are nation-wide problems not limited to the “inner-city” areas typically identified as high-risk neighborhoods. This is why it is crucial that,

if SBHCs are to fulfill their promise of improving children’s health and performance on a national basis, they be located in a variety of settings. While most partnerships are in urban areas, suburbs and rural communities can also benefit from integrated community services. Especially since many “first suburbs” are experiencing an increase in high-poverty neighborhoods, full-fledged SBHCs should not be limited to urban cores and, in fact, many are located outside of central cities (see chart below).^{cxcvi} Children in suburban and rural neighborhoods may also lack access to care, or may feel that they need a safe, confidential space to get counseling. For children in a rural area, an SBHC could provide a one-stop shop, providing health and support services that might be otherwise geographically remote.

Location of School-Based Health Centers, 1999



Source: National Assembly on School-Based Health Care.

Recognizing that the need for health services is not confined to inner-urban areas, a number of states have initiated statewide programs to encourage community health partnerships with schools. In 1999, Delaware’s Governor Thomas Carper promised a health center for every high school in the state that desired one. Today, the Delaware Department of Public Health administers 29 such centers. California’s Healthy Start program, which facilitates linkages between schools and community services, has awarded 823 grants to over 1,700 schools since 1991. And on May 2, 2006, the state of Oregon celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its School-Based Health Center program. Governor Ted Kulongoski pledged \$2 million for SBHCs in his new budget, promising to extend the program to cover half of the state’s 36 counties.^{cxcvii}

Because they can be adapted to different school environments and enjoy wide political acceptance, SBHCs have also won national-level support from advocacy groups like the Coalition for Community Schools, the Healthy Schools Network, and the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care, and they have been funded extensively by philanthropies like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In 2005, Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) introduced the Full-Service Community Schools Act to the House of Representatives. The bill, which is still in committee, reflects the success of Hoyer’s late wife in establishing “Judy Centers” in suburban Maryland. These early childhood facilities provide parenting support and health services, in addition to day care, at elementary schools.

The idea that schools should provide health care and should reach out to their communities has clearly taken hold at all levels of government and policy; the following case studies show some inspiring examples of success and raise questions about future directions for such partnerships.

Case Studies: Different Models of Community-School Health Partnerships at Work

The different community-school health partnerships described here –one full-fledged SBHC, one school-linked health clinic, and one health-and-supportive services program – have two main characteristics in common: students in need of better health and safety, and wise connections to a network of local organizations and funding sources. Whether in one of Oakland, California’s urban neighborhoods or an exurban county in New Jersey, diverse and low-income communities have assets as well as challenges. Schools in these places draw their success from their ability to convene many different programs and organizations working in their community. These connections allow these centers to take on complicated health issues within the context of an academic and supportive setting, approach the goal of creating a full-service community school.

Chappell Hayes Health Center, McClymonds High School (Oakland, CA)

Established in 2004, the Chappell Hayes Center at McClymonds High School in Oakland is a much-touted example of how the full-fledged SBHC model can work. Although Oakland can be technically defined as an older suburb of San Francisco, this city of 400,000 is an urban center in its own right, and certain neighborhoods there have all of the problems typically associated with older urban cores. McClymonds, located in West Oakland, serves a predominantly African-American student body in an area characterized by high levels of poverty, violence, and economic stagnation. Yet West Oakland is a proud community with a history of activism and a strong network of non-profit and foundation support. Drawing on the many neighborhood and city agencies that provide services nearby, Chappell Hayes is a full-time SBHC providing preventative care, counseling, support groups, reproductive care and other services. Because the school and the neighborhood face major issues of violence and safety, mental health care with a focus on violence prevention and anger management is a keystone of Chappell Hayes services. Care is provided in a confidential manner: students enter a “Safe Space” where they can talk about their problems without fear of judgment by teachers, parents, or police.

A partnership with Children’s Hospital-Oakland adds to school health staff rather than straining incumbent faculty; a connection with the San Francisco Foundation provided a start-up grant for the \$1 million cost of opening the facility; and the Medical insurance reimbursements of the low-income students support most of the Center’s 1.5 million operating budget. These three partnerships are critical to the financial feasibility and success of the health center. Early indicators, including heavy use by the students, imply that Chappell Hayes is a success – keeping kids on campus, educating them about health issues like safe sex, and providing a safe space to diffuse tensions and violence. It remains to be seen, however, whether this model, supported by public insurance reimbursements and spearheaded by a few dynamic leaders like Alex Briscoe of the County Health Care Services Agency, will be sustainable over the long-term.

Youth Uprising, Castlemont Community of Small Schools, (Oakland, California)

While technically a school-linked rather than a school-based center, Youth Uprising is an example of a facility that brings a wealth of services, including mental and physical health care, to a low-income school. Located in a former surplus county building, Youth Uprising houses an impressive array of programs in a 25,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art center next to Castlemont Community of Small Schools in Oakland. While slightly more diverse racially than West Oakland, the Castlemont area fits the image of an underresourced, high-poverty urban or “first suburban” neighborhood. But the programs at Youth Uprising (YU) demonstrate the possibilities when school officials, community members, and area philanthropists mine the richness of services and connections available locally. A partial list of YU’s activities includes music recording and production lessons, dance and martial arts teams, job training, a youth-led neighborhood safety council, spoken word classes, ceramics classes, and culinary arts training. The idea is to keep young people off the sometimes unsafe streets and to diffuse temptations to violence and risky behavior through skill-building and social activities.

Youth Uprising’s 3,600 square foot health facility is available to students who use any of these services. During the school day and after school, young people can access general medical care provided by Children’s Hospital Oakland, holistic healing from the Upaya Center for Wellbeing, and a number of mental health support groups – touted by the center as “all confidential, all free, and all safe.” At YU, healthy and safe lifestyles are encouraged not just by medical care, but also by the structured activities, life skills training, and safe, positive social atmosphere. Other community partners include Health Initiatives for Youth, the Alameda County Office of Education, Youth Employment Partnership, and Bay Area Youth Agency Consortium.

While Youth Uprising is still too new to have documented effects on community health or academic performance, students have reacted positively to the Center. In a student-led Community Assessment Report conducted in 2005, young people reported satisfaction with YU’s programs and culture, and 65% of them reported using the center four to five times a week. The assessment did not focus on the health services, which have garnered less attention than the media arts and other creative programs at the center.^{cxviii} Further research could explore whether young people who might be reluctant to use a traditional SBHC are drawn in to the health clinic once they become comfortable visiting YU for other programs.

With the advantages of a large, dedicated facility next to the school and the support of local music celebrities and arts organization, YU benefits from East Oakland’s unique combination of resources. Can multi-service centers like Youth Uprising work in less dense, more isolated settings? New Jersey offers a model that shows great promise.

School Based Youth Services, Pinelands Regional Middle & High School (Tuckerton, NJ)

Children who live in the rapidly developing suburban-rural fringe, like New Jersey’s Ocean County, can also face social and environmental pressures that hinder their mental and physical health and hence their achievement. The staff of Pinelands Regional High School in Tuckerton recognizes this, and works with the state to develop school-based services to address health issues. Ocean County’s population is mostly white and native-born, but many families are low-

income, as evidenced by the fact that a third of students in the school district qualify for free or reduced lunch. Serving Tuckerton and several other small towns, the School-Based Youth Services Program at Pinelands provides students with primary and preventative health care, individual and group counseling, a 24-hour crisis hotline, recreation programs, and drug and alcohol abuse treatment. Pinelands also offers job placement and training, academic tutoring, and parenting workshops.^{cxcix}

While Tuckerton is 35 miles from the county seat and depends on Atlantic City as an employment base, its school district took advantage of the community services that were nearby. Pinelands Regional partners not only with Saint Francis Counseling Services and the Kimball Medical Center, but also with the Ocean County Vocational Technical School, Little Egg Harbor Police Department, and Gold Hawk Tae Kwan Do, among other organizations. Evaluation of the programs at Pinelands Regional reveal that the rates of dropouts and pregnancy have decreased, that attendance increased from 89.5% to 92.5% between 2000 and 2001, and that 89.8% of students passed the New Jersey High School Proficiency Test, compared to 74.4% in 1993.^{cc}

Pinelands Regional is just one branch of New Jersey’s much-imitated School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) administered by the State Department of Human Services. New Jersey has 45 such programs, spread throughout schools in all of its counties. Every SBYSP school has a site manager as well as a managing agency, usually a local clinic or social services center.^{cci} The Department of Human Services mandates core health services that should be provided, gives grants averaging \$200,000 a year, and ensures that all young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years old – enrolled at a sponsoring school or not – receive free services at the centers.

Who Needs School-Community Health Partnerships?			
<i>Profiles of three different communities</i>			
<i>Name of School</i>	<i>McClymonds High School (2001 data)</i>	<i>Pinelands Regional High School (2004 data)</i>	<i>Castlemont Community of Small Schools (2003 data)</i>
Name of Health or Service Center	Chappell Hayes Health Center	School-Based Youth Services	Youth Uprising
Average enrollment and grade	745 (grades 9-12)	888 (grades 10-12)	1,723 (grades 9-12)
Racial/ethnic breakdown			
White, non-Hispanic	~1%	97%	1%
Black, non-Hispanic	79%	1%	53%
Hispanic, all races	10%	2%	41%
Asian	9%	N/A	6%
Other or Mixed-Race	~1%	N/A	N/A
% qualifying for free school lunch	55%	46%	57%
% of community below poverty *	40%	8%	32%
*For McClymonds, refers to Census Tract 4016 (population 1,749). For Pinelands, refers to Tuckerton Borough (pop. 3,347). For Castlemont, refers to Census tract 4097 (pop. 5,208). Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.			

Challenges for School-Community Health Partnerships

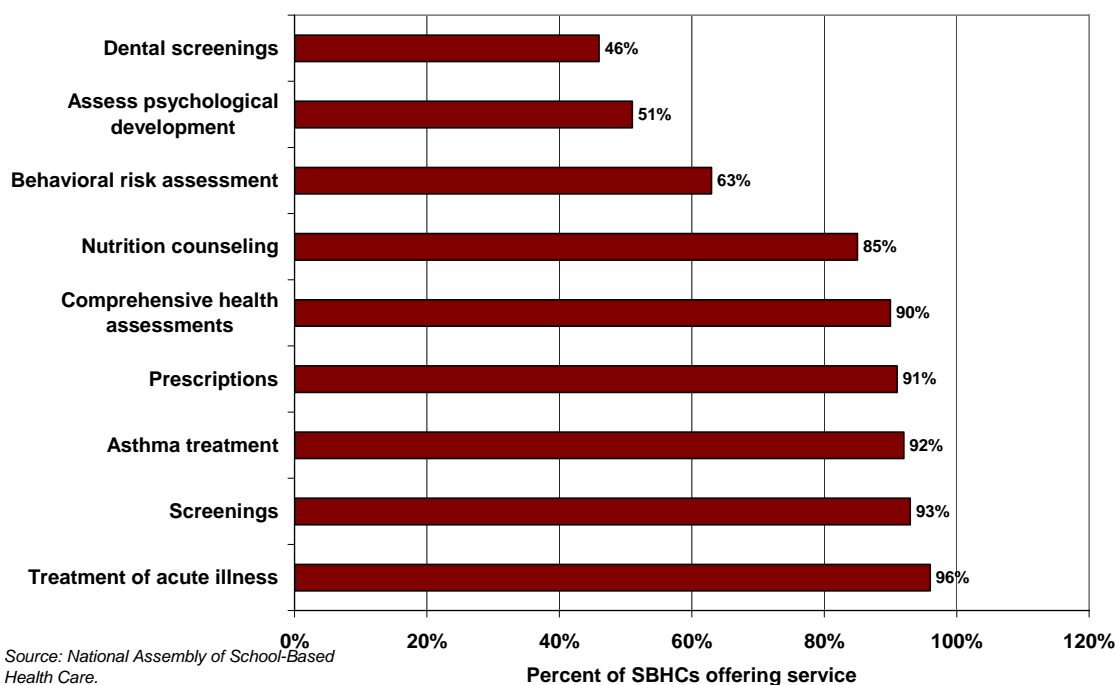
School-based health centers and other community partnership-based solutions are growing in number and acceptance, but the question remains whether they are a successful and appropriate way to approach widespread health, safety, and nutrition issues. This section lays out some of the primary challenges that these new models will have to address.

Limited services

Not all SBHCs can address all health issues. School-Based Youth Services in Pinelands provides a valuable range of support services, but without full-time health practitioners cannot act as a student's primary "medical home" (the place where he or she receives most basic treatment). Some services are limited because they are complicated or controversial. None of the state-funded SBHCs in Delaware, for instance, are authorized to distribute contraceptives. And while most clinics have expanded from a focus on physical and reproductive health, mental health services that could stem violence and create safer environments are still developing. As highlighted in the chart below, only 51% of SBHCs assess psychological development and only 63% provide behavioral risk assessment.^{ccii} School-community partnerships will adapt to their resources and the needs of their students – hence Pinelands' emphasis on vocational training and Chappell Hayes' specialty in violence prevention – but rarely have these models risen to the level of the full-service community schools endorsed by some educators and policymakers.

This lack of full services is especially critical when dealing with an issue like obesity, which cannot be solved by a one-time or simple treatment. Sustained nutrition counseling and opportunities for physical education must be part of a full health services package, but often are underfunded. Furthermore, a school that provides nutrition services at an SBHC but serves processed food in the cafeteria or sells sugary snacks in the halls is not truly "walking the walk" to promote health and combat obesity. A school is often bound by district- and even nation-wide food funding and distribution systems, which is why broad policy solutions like the soda ban discussed earlier in this brief must be combined with local-level health services.

Selected Services Provided at SBHCs



Financing and Resources

One of the primary reasons that SBHCs or other partnership models cannot provide every service that every student might need is, of course, lack of adequate financing. The patchwork of non-profit and state support programs mentioned earlier is not enough to sustain the facilities and staffing needed for a full SBHC, which includes dedicated exam rooms and at least one full-time nurse practitioner and/or pediatrician.

Alex Briscoe, a founder of Chappell Hayes, emphasizes that a funding model based on Medical reimbursements is most likely to work in schools with a high concentration of poverty like McClymonds.^{cciii} With the center open for less than two years, it remains to be seen how sustainable this will be over the long term. A federally qualified health center like Chappell Hayes is eligible to have 100% of its costs reimbursed by Medicaid, but funding through public insurance is not always the clear answer.

The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care emphasizes that in most cases, administrative requirements make obtaining reimbursement from public insurance programs quite difficult.^{cciv} At the state level, California's legislature addressed the problem by amending MediCal to allow any nurse practitioner – including those in SBHCs – to bill directly for reimbursement. But with most centers unable to count on large amounts of public insurance or major foundation grants, and with much health funding besides Medicaid limited to crisis relief, SBHCs need to explore new strategies for financing.^{ccv}

Communication and Cultural Issues

No matter what community resources a school uses to enhance provides health services, student wellbeing and achievement are unlikely to improve if students or families feel uncomfortable or unsafe using SBHCs. Students and families have to know about health services that are available, and they must feel that their own cultural, personal, and religious values will be respected if they participate.

This challenge of home values versus school values is encountered in all areas of education. What is a school-based mental health practitioner to say when, counseling a student to try nonviolent conflict resolution, the student replies that his parent told him to “always fight back?” What if a deeply religious student feels uncomfortable receiving services in a clinic that distributes birth control? One SBHC in Denver had trouble convincing Asian students to use services because the children generally did not want to discuss private health issues outside of the family circle. As in academic classrooms, these cultural differences must be addressed: through well-trained, diverse, and sensitive staff, community outreach and education conducted in all necessary languages and formats, and partnerships with local ethnic- or faith-based organizations that can help build trust.

Community and Lifestyle Obstacles

Providing mental support, a safe space, and a medical home for students is crucial, especially when they have no other source of health care. But even the best SBHC cannot solve all environmental issues that children face when they leave school. Streets that are unsafe – because of gangs, dangerous drivers, or other hazards – are too often located in neighborhoods with other environmental challenges, such as too few green spaces for play and exercise or pollution from industrial sites and freeways. While they do draw on community organizations for resources, the models discussed here are by their nature based on the school grounds and thus limited in their power to increase health and safety in the surrounding area.

Recommendations: Making School-Community Health Partnerships Work with and for Cities

How can these very real challenges be addressed? We offer a few solutions, understanding that there are no one-size-fits-all approaches. The obstacles to better student health and safety – and thus academic achievement and community well-being – are daunting, but the potential is inspiring. The recommendations below discuss new directions for school-community health partnerships, linking them to the other areas of city and school planning discussed in these policy briefs.

Safer and Healthier School Facilities and Neighborhoods

School-based health centers must have dedicated facilities for their operations like exam rooms, waiting rooms, counseling offices. The models explored here, and many SBHCs, manage to find surplus space or capital grants to provide this needed room. However, the overall campus needs to be a safe and healthy space. Many older school buildings suffer from environmental hazards

ranging from bad air (because of poor ventilation systems), to dangerous conditions during construction or renovation. They also may lack adequate gymnasiums or fields to encourage the exercise that can combat obesity. Private grants or bond issues for capital improvements should focus on creating healthy buildings.

For newer school buildings, which tend to have better recreational facilities and do not have risks like asbestos or faulty HVAC systems, city and school officials should work together to site schools near community services and in locations that encourage students to walk or bike to school. In the broader sense, city governments and community organizations can support the health and safety of schools with policies like community policing, neighborhood watch groups, traffic calming devices to deter dangerous driving and encourage walking, and funding of after-school programs that keep kids active, away from gangs, and out of harm.

Land Use Planning for Healthy, Safe Schools

While schools and the community groups they work with can concentrate on lifestyle and health education, counseling, and direct medical care, they do not have the power to guide the development of the neighborhood in the way city agencies do. A ban on soft drinks in schools is important, but city zoning that discourages liquor stores or fast food restaurants from locating next to schools is a logical next step. Land use planning can also ensure that schools are located away from pollution points like freeways, truck lots, or factories. In the same way that education departments partner with local health departments, they should work with city parks and recreation departments to support well-maintained parks and fields near campuses.

True Community Schools

Some of the cultural and communication issues mentioned earlier can perhaps be surmounted if families are fully integrated into care. One way of doing this is by allowing all family members – not just students – to make a school-based health center their “medical home.” Some SBHCs, like the Apopka Children’s Health Center in Orange County, Florida, encourages parents to receive care along with their children. Allowing all community members to have access to a SBHC increases trust, strengthens the connection to the neighborhood, and may improve public health overall in the vicinity of the school. However, this model is most appropriate in low-income areas where most families are uninsured. It also may work better in elementary schools, where children are less likely to desire confidential care away from their parents. And community SBHCs would have to employ multilingual staff, counselors, and perhaps even security staff as appropriate. However, the full-service model has wide political support, and involving families in their children’s care could make huge strides against violence and obesity.

Sustainable Financing

All of the recommendations above must, of course, be funded to be successful. SBHCs are supported by a range of federal, state, and local programs as well as private foundations, but they may not be able to rely on government grants for most of their funding. Public health insurance

such as Medicaid or Medical can provide a key source of revenue, as it does for the Chappell Hayes Health Center. However, this model only works in a concentrated-poverty environment where most students are eligible for state insurance reimbursement. Some schools with more mixed-income clientele may need to adopt a sliding scale approach – used at the Apopka Children’s Health Center to ensure that families pay what they can, but still create some revenue stream. Cities and school districts need to provide dedicated streams of funding to health partnerships, and help schools link to foundations that can support them.

In Oregon, SBHCs leverage approximately four dollars of public-private funds for every dollar of general fund moneys they get from the state. In Miami-Dade County, local organizations “sponsor” a health care provider to work part-time at a local school so that the district does not have to pay the practitioner’s salary. Government-supported efforts like these can help schools make the community connections they need to ensure sustainable financing.

<i>What Works Where?</i>	High-poverty urban core (McClymonds, Oakland, CA)	Mixed urban/ first suburb (Castlemont, Oakland, Ca)	Suburb/rural fringe (Tuckerton, NJ)
<i>Full-service SBHC</i>	YES	Feasible?	Necessary?
<i>Limited service clinic</i>	Sufficient?	YES	YES
<i>Community Partnerships</i>	YES	YES	YES

Research into best practices and evaluation

The table above shows that different types of school-community health partnerships may be suited to different types of metropolitan settings. Rural students need health care but may not have the dense concentration of services to provide a full SBHC like Youth Uprising. Newer, more affluent suburbs should provide counseling, safe facilities, and health services – since their students certainly suffer from violence and obesity – but may not need intensive services like job training or holistic healing. More research needs to be done to classify SBHCs and other partnerships, to find out what services they provide, and determine what models work best in urban, suburban, and exurban schools.

School officials, educators, and policymakers also need more data that can link the work of school-community health partnerships to safer schools, less violence, lower obesity rates – and increased academic achievement. Older programs like SBYS at Pinelands have started to generate some evidence, but newer centers like Youth Uprising and Chappell Hayes should be tracked in the coming years to see how they affect their student bodies and neighborhoods. Community partnerships could even play a role in this evaluation process, with nearby universities taking on the research.

Conclusion: Connecting Health, Safety, and Community Concerns for Better Schools and Students

Few would dispute the fact that schools can only be successful if their students are healthy. Politicians and parents agree that challenges such as obesity and violence threaten not just academic achievement, but the quality of life in our neighborhoods and our future as a productive, safe society. Yet educators, service providers, and policymakers are still searching for strategies will reach a broad range of students, satisfy the sometimes conflicting needs of children, community members and educators – and prove to be financially sustainable. Violence prevention, better decisions about food distribution and better nutrition training, integrated city and school planning, and provision of physical and mental services at school-based health centers are just a few solutions.

Connecting to community through integrated services is a logical direction for schools as they confront the challenges of the 21st century. We have shown that schools cannot succeed in their efforts unless they look at broader neighborhood and district conditions and link up with local organizations and funding streams. While the health and safety problems facing our children are nationwide in impact and scope, the solutions will have to be tailored to local conditions and motivated through community networks. By bringing together the seemingly disparate fields of physical health, school safety, and community-school service partnerships, we hope to articulate a new vision for how cities and schools can work together to ensure a better future for our children.

Equity, Segregation, Choice & Reform:

The Changing Nature of Education

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Jeanette Nelson Blankenship

Greta Kirschenbaum

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May 10, 2006

Introduction

Within the United States, the debate around educational equity is fueled by dynamic socio-political forces and divergent ideological perspectives. Everyday realities such as an economy with changing workforce needs, patterns of economic and racial segregation, competing theories surrounding the structure and size of effective schools, and persistent funding and achievement disparities between races and classes all play a role in the current quest for educational reform. This brief is an attempt to both examine the reasons for the persistent inequity of educational opportunities available to different groups and individuals, and address the undying policy question of how to bridge the gap in educational quality and achievement that continues to exist in this country between rich and poor, white and nonwhite.

The primary objectives of this brief will be to define a key problem in education today – the lack of equitable, and in many cases even adequate, educational opportunities for all children – and to review and propose potential remedies for addressing this problem. The key reform efforts reviewed and assessed include: small schools, charter schools, vouchers, and community organizing for school improvement. Our assessment of these remedies for addressing educational inequities within our public school system will include a review of current literature, including a description of both areas of consensus and points of debate around these approaches, and a set of recommendations that are sensitive to the sorts of community and educational settings where these reforms are most likely to be successful.

Defining the Problem

Research has shown not only that poor and minority students are substantially concentrated in low-performing public schools, but that this concentration has a negative correlation with school performance. While the causal relationship is debated, the observed correlation between high poverty and minority schools and low test scores and teacher quality is well-documented. Some researchers put the emphasis on the issue of spatial segregation, proposing if the schools are desegregated, then performance will rise for poor and minority children. Other researchers see the problem with a disparity in school performance as attributable to the teachers, who are more likely to be younger, more transient, or less-qualified than their counterparts in high-performing schools. The solution to the problem, which many school choice options attempt to address, may lie in more acutely interpreting the causes of low-performing school options within affected neighborhoods.

Recent publications and articles have explored the relationship between student demographics and low-performing schools, including Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee's *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*^{ccvi}, Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain, and Steven G. Rivkin's *New evidence about Brown v. Board of Education: The complex effects of school racial composition on achievement*^{ccvii}, and Debra Viadero's *Lags in minority achievement: Defy traditional explanations*^{ccviii}. These publications, along with the work of many other scholars, provide evidence that links segregation by class, and to a lesser extent, by race, to academic achievement. Ronald Ferguson's recent work targets teacher quality as the lever to improving

schools, not desegregation, and in fact proposed that students may learn better with other students like them so long as the teachers are highly qualified and maintain high expectations.^{ccix}

The various authors demonstrate that concentrated poverty, which often exists concomitantly with concentrated neighborhood populations of black or Latinos, is likely to be a major contributing factor to low test scores and low graduation rates. Orfield and Lee's research examines specifically the makeup of U.S. public schools, which are now 41 percent nonwhite and substantially segregated on the basis of race. The study notes that segregation of black and Latino students has been steadily increasing since the 1980s and that achievement scores are strongly linked to both school racial composition. The study also demonstrates a correlation between student achievement the presence (or absence) of highly qualified and experienced teachers. In sum, the authors contend that "segregated schools are unequal and there is very little evidence of any success in creating 'separate but equal' outcomes on a large scale."^{ccx}

While the black-white achievement gap is a concern, so too is the class gap. Richard Rothstein notes that social class produces notable differences in opportunity. For example, by kindergarten, almost all upper-class children, about half of middle-class children, and fewer than one in five lower-class children have used computers. He asks, "how can...children with such inferior preparations for learning, with such health, housing, and economic disadvantages, do anything but perform less well, on average, in school?"^{ccxi} These factors are attributed to class, not necessarily racial factors, though they may overlap.

Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain and Steven G. Rivkin conducted a study on Texas schools to look at the effect of desegregation on the racial gap in achievement. Class was not addressed. The study showed that nearly 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), blacks are more likely to have white classmates, but still lag whites on achievement test scores. Further, the authors provided evidence that desegregation in Texas was not fully effective, in large part because of increases in housing segregation and constraints on district enrollment prevented integration. The authors note that the rise over time in the numbers of Hispanic students in proportion to white and black students was an addition barrier to desegregation. Hanushek and his coauthors conclude that because further desegregation is limited by district boundaries, the best way to narrow the achievement gap would be the continued suburbanization of black Americans.^{ccxii}

Debra Viadero claims that some popular explanations for the achievement gap^{ccxiii}, such as peer pressure, do not take into account overlapping factors, and are therefore not satisfactory in explaining why black and Hispanic children do not perform as well as white children in school. Although the knowledge gap was first documented in the 1960s, Viadero expresses surprise that so little is known about its correct causes. She attributes the lack of understanding to political sensitivity and the taboo on talking about racial issues. Stricter standards and more transparent testing related data have revealed disparities that are undeniable, bringing renewed interest in the gap. According to Viadero, numerous interdependent factors contribute to the knowledge gap. These include poverty, academic coursework, peer pressure, high mobility, teacher quality, parenting, preschool, "stereotype threat", the "summer effect", teacher expectations, test bias, television, and genetics. Like many other experts, Viadero contends that the "trick is to figure

out how^{ccxiv} to do something about the knowledge gap, not just focus on the factors that cause the different outcomes.

Teacher quality, not segregation, is the main concern of researcher Ronald Ferguson. In his 2005 article ““Teacher Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap”, Ferguson proposes that segregation is not detrimental to children at all, but the quality of the instruction is not adequate for many children.^{ccxv} A key lever, according to Ferguson’s research, is teachers must become less accepting of poor performance and more aggressive in seeking ways to unlock student potential. One solution he poses is attracting more talent to the teaching profession so that all students have the opportunity to learn from an excellent teacher each year.

While researchers may disagree on the severity of the problem, all agree that a disparity exists between the average achievement of white children compared to black and Latino children. Due to the importance of education in today’s economy, the fact that these disparities persist into adulthood should be a major source of concern; and, the most direct place to address this concern appears to be within the nation’s public school system. The current challenge is that school reform efforts often focus on increasing school choice options only for those who are most able to exercise their right to take advantage of various educational alternatives. The assumption herein is that because many low-income minority children are lacking the quality of education they need in order to compete in the modern economy and to function as productive citizens, we should be doing more to provide them with the types of quality choices that will allow them to receive a more equitable education. Such choice options are not one size fits all. Some attempt to integrate schools to diminish the correlation between concentrations of low-income minority groups and low achievement, while others address quality of education more than integration. As will be demonstrated in the remainder of this brief, each is worth considering, but only within the specific educational and community contexts.

Equity and Segregation

The concept of equity is applied in various ways, often defined by school funding cases. Each of these has a distinct approach to desegregation measures to achieve equity. Recent court cases have focused more attention to adequacy, yet equity still stands as a legal pursuit. As applied to access, equity addresses policies of inclusion, such as special education and desegregation by race or gender. When applied to funding, equity means neutrality-oriented school finance. Equity as applied to resources deals with policies of inclusion as related to special programs (such as Advanced Placement) and language programs for English Language Learner students. Finally, when applied to outcomes, equity is achieved through programs such as affirmative action. All these concepts of equity – access, funding, resources, and outcomes – are issues in many communities and regions across America.

Table 1: Concepts of Equity

<i>Equity</i>	Applied to Access	Applied to Funding	Applied to Resources	Applied to Outcomes
Webster: “no barriers”	Policies of inclusion special education, desegregation by race, gender	Neutrality-oriented school finance cases	Policies of Inclusion applied to special programs (like AP); language programs for ELL students	Affirmative Action

Norton Grubb, 2006^{ccxvi}

Segregation is often at the heart of the equity debate. Since the 1980s, segregation of black and Hispanic students has been steadily increasing, causing concern that the nation is returning to the segregated schools of the *Brown v. Board of Education* era. Meanwhile, achievement scores are still strongly linked to school racial composition, as well as the presence (or absence) of highly qualified and experienced teachers. For example, a school that is performing well in academics is far more likely to be a majority of upper class white students than lower-class black or Hispanic students.

This achievement gap persists across the nation and few urban public school systems have been able to overcome this disparity in academic achievement. The conflicting goals of the U.S. education system may play a role in reproducing the gap. While the public schools were created out of a democratic ideal, the notion that all children can achieve at high levels is relatively new. Public schools were originally designed to educate the elite. With the advent of the industrial revolution, schools were designed to prepare children for factory work. As the country turns toward a knowledge economy, education is seen as the key to social mobility as stable, factory jobs decrease. Perhaps now more than ever, the existence of a persistent achievement gap predicts a continued stratified society.

Policy Context

The tensions between segregation, equity and choice in the United States have been debated for decades. The landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* altered the current legal relationship between the segregation and equity, and the Civil Rights Movement sought to carry out this mandate. The 1970s and 1980s saw increased busing and desegregation measures in an attempt at compliance, but those efforts have faded since the 1990s. The rise of school choice programs is partially a response to the perceived failure of mandated busing to provide racial integration and a more equitable education for all children. Meanwhile, the federal No Child Left Behind program has increased the attention given to the academic achievement gap that persists between middle- and upper-class white children and low-income minority students. The school choice options that are leading reform efforts seek to address this achievement gap, with varying degrees of emphasis on integration.

Modern day desegregation efforts began in 1954 with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The suit started in 1950 when Linda Brown was denied acceptance to a neighborhood school. Her father, Oliver Brown, a welder and lay minister, filed suit against the Topeka, Kansas school board. The Brown case took four years to make it to the Supreme Court and represented a milestone in the Civil Rights Movement. With this judgment backing their efforts, black students sought acceptance to previously all white schools. The transition was tumultuous, but by the fall of 1972, 44 percent of black students in the South attended predominantly white schools, while 30 percent attended predominantly white schools in the North. By the mid-1970s, only 12 percent of the black students remained in segregated schools.^{ccxvii}

However, the 1970s and 1980s produced challenges to affirmative action and many of the instructional and financial assistance programs for urban schools diminished. Court-mandated busing initiatives increased throughout the nation as the de facto integration tool. Graduation rates and test scores did improve for African-American and Latino children, but they also improved for white children, failing to narrow the achievement disparities to any perceivable equitable level.

To address the performance low-performing schools and those that have a wide gap between racial achievement outcomes, the bipartisan No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001. In exchange for increased federal resources to states to improve low-performing schools, the federal government expects state education systems to guarantee that no child will be left behind. Increased student testing and the tracking of subgroups is central to the act, in addition to ensuring a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. The stated goal of the act is that all students, regardless of socioeconomic factors, achieve a proficient level of education by 2015. The intense pressures now facing low-performing schools because of NCLB provides a fertile environment for reform. While some choice options seek to strengthen the existing schools by providing additional resources and partnerships to address the low-performance and achievement gap, other options remove children from the public school system altogether. Each of these choice reform efforts is embedded in a history of segregation and inequitable schooling, attempting to address one or both of the imbalances.

Schooling and Choice

Recognizing the correlation between segregation and school quality, educational policy makers have proposed a variety of choice alternatives to the traditional schooling model. In general, the idea of choice in education is seen as important because of the positive outcomes that can result from the ability of a parent or guardian to choose a school for his or her child. Studies show parents are more involved and more satisfied when given a choice in schooling. Choice also decreases public school monopoly and increased competition can increase accountability for the schools. Parents are also given the ability to select schools that better suit the needs/interest of the child when choice is offered.

The major choice options examined in this policy brief are small schools, charter schools, vouchers, and community organizing for school reform. Community organizing is presented not so much as an educational choice in and of itself, but as a tactic through which schools and communities may create options for themselves that might not otherwise have been available through traditional channels.

Each of the choices produces and grows out of a different relationship with the neighborhood. For example, one choice option may strengthen the focus on revitalizing and reinvesting a struggling neighborhood, while another may bus children out of segregated neighborhoods. With each choice comes a different notion of equity and a different approach to addressing current challenges within America's segregated metropolitan areas.

Small Schools

The small schools model has become popularized in a national educational context wherein large, impersonal, of often overcrowded urban high schools are perceived to be delivering less-than-adequate results for the students they serve. As such, small schools are seen as a way of breaking up failing large-scale high schools into more personalized learning environments that can better address the individual needs of their students. Importantly, these schools are schools of choice, sought out by parents looking for safe, equitable and achievement-oriented learning communities for their children.

The term "small schools" refers generally to smaller than average primary and secondary educational institutions. While no agreement has been reached as to the optimal small school size, research suggests that numbers in the order of 300-400 students for elementary schools and 400-800 students for secondary schools are ideal.^{ccxviii} Proposing schools of this scale represents a significant departure from economies of scale approach to education, which has made 2-3,000 student high schools commonplace and urban high school enrollments approaching 5,000 far from unusual.

Small schools usually take the form of either school-within-a-school structures, wherein large-scale urban high schools are broken up, often by building floor, into small, thematically-focused learning academies, or as small autonomous schools, which sometimes take the form of charter schools, and independent schools, wherein a principal oversees several autonomous schools headed by lead teachers.^{ccxix} Small schools are also sometimes referred to as interdisciplinary teams, sub-schools, mini-schools, academies, or theme schools. Regardless of the nomenclature, the small schools model presents a means not only of improving academic achievement, but of reinstating an element of community accountability both within schools, and between schools and the geographic locales in which they are situated.

The primary underlying assumption of those who promote small schools is simple: size matters. The idea is that all students can benefit both personally and academically by developing deeper connections with their teachers, with one another, and with the community external to the school, and that these benefits can be realized, in large part, through the formation of more intimate learning communities. Importantly, much of the literature on small schools notes that while

smaller, more personalized learning communities have potential benefits for all, the model may prove most beneficial for poor and minority students.

Insofar as the students who are most adversely affected by attending large, substandard schools are those from racial minority groups and low socioeconomic backgrounds, small schools are also perceived as a way to address educational inequities. Past research has shown that minority and low-SES students have been concentrated in states that have large school districts and large schools within those districts, and that this distribution has been a notable factor in determining levels of student achievement.^{ccxx} As Robert Jewell describes, "...if minority students must struggle more to achieve a solid public education and if large districts and large schools find it increasingly difficult to achieve solid educational results for their students, we may be acting contrary to the interests of all concerned by organizing our public education system in a manner which assigns high proportions of minority youngsters to large schools within very large school districts."^{ccxxi}

In addition to past research conducted on the implications of small schools in terms of their ability to promote educational equity, a fair amount of past research has been done regarding the affects of school size in general. Researchers have investigated the effects of school and unit size on many student performance, attitude, and behavior measures, including^{ccxxii}:

- Achievement
- Attitudes (toward school or particular school subjects)
- Social behavior problems (discipline problems, vandalism, drugs/alcohol, etc.)
- Levels of extracurricular participation
- Feelings of belongingness vs. alienation
- Interpersonal relations with other students and school staff
- Attendance
- Dropout rate
- Self-concept (academic and general)
- College-related variables (acceptance, completion, etc.)

Recent studies on the ability of small schools to benefit students by counteracting some of the common problems associated with urban schools generally have focused on examining the effects of downsizing schools on school climate and student performance. Based on such research, the general consensus is that small schools offer benefits to most students, and that, as stated above, they tend to benefit poor and minority students, because these are the students that are concentrated in some of the nation's largest schools.

Research has recently focused on several specific benefits, among which are student achievement and safety. According to a 1996 analysis of 103 research documents, achievement in small schools, especially for poor and minority students, is at least equal and often superior to that in large schools.^{ccxxiii} Research has also demonstrated a correlation between small schools and decreases in violence and behavior problems among students. According to a study of small schools in Chicago, issues such as truancy, classroom disorder, vandalism, aggressive behavior, theft substance abuse, and gang participation all decrease when schools are structured as smaller

learning communities.^{ccxxiv} This same study found that students in small schools in Chicago's poorest neighborhoods attended up to five more days per semester and dropped out at a third the rate of students at larger schools.

Other demonstrated benefits include greater participation in extracurricular activities and stronger personal bonds, both of which can lead to students feeling a greater sense of belonging and engagement in school, and both of which are correlated with higher levels of academic achievement.^{ccxxv} Other benefits that have been linked to gains in student academic achievement include greater parental and community involvement, improved communication among staff, improved instructional quality, and improved teacher working conditions and job satisfaction. Small schools are also hailed as a way to offer greater choice not just to the low income and minority students who might benefit from them the most but to all students. Just as the argument for charter schools goes, the availability of small, quality schools of choice is intended to engender competition among schools in general, creating improved educational opportunities for all. As the Gates Foundation, sponsor of numerous small schools across the country, frames the argument, students benefit by having a choice of several small schools, each offering a focused set of "streamlined but academically challenging set of courses that prepare all students for college, work, and citizenship."^{ccxxvi} In sum, the development of small schools is looked upon by those who promote them as an effective way to "counteract many of the problems plaguing high schools today, such as overburdened teachers who barely know the names of their students, low expectations for all but the highest-performing students, inadequate support for students needing extra assistance completing their coursework for college, and curricula that fail to engage students in their own learning."^{ccxxvii}

While the small schools model clearly presents an opportunity to improve school cultures and educational outcomes, various political, economic and social factors can pose real implementation barriers to forming and sustaining these types of schools. First, long-established ideas about what schools, and high schools in particular, should look like can present a barrier to the acceptance of the small schools model. The common image of the American high school is a large, comprehensive learning institution, with multiple sports teams, and a great deal of community momentum behind them. And, while small schools may offer other benefits that large schools cannot, they tend to defy this traditional notion. Furthermore, laws in some states actually favor the construction of large schools; and, district policies that centralize budgeting and decision-making can restrict the autonomy and flexibility of small schools.^{ccxxviii}

Forming and maintaining small schools also can be hampered by a lack of sustained resources and technical assistance. Schools may lack reliable district resources, and thus need to ask staff to devote time above and beyond what teachers in large, traditional high schools are expected to put in toward the planning and implementation of new structures, schedules and approaches. Further, while overall costs as compared to large schools may not be greater, transportation costs for students choosing to attend non-neighborhood schools can be an issue of concern. Small schools can be neighborhood-based, but many are not. Thus, some students may have to leave their immediate neighborhoods to attend a theme-based school of choice. This phenomenon has transportation costs as well as costs to neighborhood cohesion associated with it.

Lastly, perceptions that small schools simply cost more to run than large ones can be a notable impediment. At least one recent study refutes the notion that small schools are an unaffordable luxury, concluding that the small additional budgets required to run small schools are “well worth the improved outputs.”^{ccxxix} However, in general, the challenge of altering public perceptions and changing long-established structures should not be underestimated.

Case Studies: Small Schools

Recent studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between school size and academic achievement, particularly for poor and minority students. Studies have also indicated that for most students, small schools can often be less alienating, impersonal, and unsafe than their larger counterparts. Many districts across the county have dabbled in the implementation of some sort of small schools initiative in order to achieve the benefits that appear to be afforded by smaller learning environments. Two examples of such initiatives are presented below – one in Oakland, California and one in New York City, New York.

Oakland Community Organizations – Small Schools Movement

Starting in 1997, community activists affiliated with Oakland Community Organization (OCO), a group of eight churches that came together to discuss ways in which they could make their neighborhoods better places to raise families, began to organize around school change. Joined by CES’s National’s affiliate, the Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (Bayces), OCO and the Oakland Unified School District came together to form the Small Schools Initiative. (www.essentialschools.org) The district put a New Small Autonomous Schools policy in place, and as the 2001 school year commenced, the neighborhoods of East Oakland sent over a thousand students to six new, small elementary, middle and high schools: Ascend (k-8), International Community School (k-5), Life Academy (9-12), Melrose Leadership Academy (6-8), Urban Promise Academy (6-8) and Woodland Elementary School (k-5). The Small Schools Initiative sponsors the Small Schools Incubator, which is managed by Bayces staff and designed to support small school proposal creation, future small school design and current small school quality and improvement. An ongoing Request for Proposals process invites more designs for small schools, and the largest high schools in the city are in the process of subdividing.

Melrose Leadership Academy – OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Melrose Leadership Academy (MLA) was founded in the fall of 2001 by Moyra Contreras and a committed team of parents and community organizations in response to the overcrowded, unsafe schools in East Oakland. The mission of Melrose Leadership Academy is to partner with families to support and nurture creative, high-achieving, thoughtful, self-motivated learners, actively involved in their own learning, working towards the transformation of the school, the community and the world. The school currently enrolls 196 sixth-, seventh-, and eight-grade students. Melrose Leadership Academy’s school population is 90 percent Latino, 8 percent African-American, and 2 percent Asian-American and Pacific Islander with 94 percent of Melrose Leadership Academy’s students receiving free or reduced lunch. Despite

socioeconomic disadvantages and a high percentage of English language learners, in 2005, Melrose Leadership Academy was able to move 16 percent of students out of far-below and below-basic levels on the CST for Language Arts and Math.

Had Melrose Leadership Academy not been founded, its students likely would have attended their neighborhood school - Havenscourt Middle School. Over the last few years, students at Melrose have surpassed their counterparts at Havenscourt in many ways, including standardized test scores (CST) and attendance, one of the best measures of how committed students are to their education. If CST data for the two schools is broken down for Mathematics, 50 percent of Melrose Leadership Academy students scored at Basic level or above on the CST compared with 25 percent of Havenscourt students. In attendance, students at Havenscourt have a 90.1 percent average attendance rate compared to Melrose's rate of 96.3 percent.

One of the ways MLA has managed to engage its students in school has been to offer a number of unique programs and opportunities for learning. At the end of each semester, Melrose Leadership Academy and Community Bridges host an Exposition of Student Work, an event intended to provide students with an authentic audience for their work. The Expo includes demonstrations, art exhibits, performances, academic portfolios and presentations, and videos. In addition, after Winter Break, all MLA students spend a week in intensive workshops, which the school calls "Discovery Week." The students spend the entire day in this class. The purpose of Discovery Week is to give students an opportunity to do in-depth study of an area of interest. The workshops have a small student-to-teacher ratio, are project-based and usually involve field trips. Past workshops include: Photography, Camping, Capoeira and Afro-Brazilian Music, Web Design and College Tours.

Another unique program at MLA is Community Bridges, an arts, athletics, and academic extended day program. Funds for Community Bridges come from special grants. The goals of the program are to promote the articulation of student voice through art, use athletics to promote team building, inclusion and cooperation, to provide students with additional support so they can reach grade level standards and further develop skills necessary for academic achievement. To that end, all arts classes have a literacy component designed to improve students' reading and writing skills. MLA also offers Academic Intervention to students that require a more intensive approach.

Finally, MLA students demonstrate their academic growth and understanding through the development of an academic portfolio. Each semester, students reflect on their work and select pieces to add to their portfolio, and at the end of the eighth grade, students present their work to a panel that includes parents and staff. The purpose of the portfolio is to provide a place for students to collect their best work and to reflect on the work of their learning over time.^{CCXXX}

Small Schools in New York City

Over the last decade, New York City has created more than 200 small high schools in all parts of the city. The movement for small schools in New York is backed by research showing that small schools, and especially small high schools, can help many different types of students succeed in

school. Specifically, in its push for the creation of small high schools, the City cites findings that small schools address a number of important issues, including the need for learning environments that provide curricula that are both rigorous and individually tailored to student needs. It is one thing for schools to provide a wide variety of course options, proponents of small schools claim, but the comprehensive high school does little to help the student whose lack of basic reading and math skills are not being addressed within the large school setting.

Through its small schools initiative, NYC also claims to address the City's low graduation rate. In New York and throughout the country, too few students are graduating from high school in four years. New York City, in particular, has a four-year cohort graduation rate of 51%. New York City small schools also attempt to address the achievement gap that exists between poor and minority students and their white counterparts. Small schools, some research has shown, tend to alleviate the achievement gap to some extent, but providing students with more individualized attention, more motivation to stay in school, and more resources for addressing their individual academic needs.

A driving force behind the explosion of small schools in New York City has been an organization called New Visions for Public Schools (New Visions). New Visions is dedicated to improving the quality of education children receive in New York City's public schools. In partnership with the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, New Visions for Public Schools was chosen by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Open Society Institute to spearhead the New Century High Schools Initiative. Since 1993, New Visions has helped to create 113 new public schools, including 78 New Century High Schools. The New Century High Schools Initiative (NCHSI) engages communities in the process of developing and sustaining small, personalized high schools that offer academically rigorous educational opportunities for all students.^{ccxxx}

Each of the schools created in the context of this movement has emerged in the wake of one of the most famous early examples of small schools in NYC – Central Park East. Central Park East is a small school of choice created in the 1970s by Deborah Meier. Located in East Harlem, the school has not proven to be a panacea for the ills of the community in which it is situated; however, it has provided a strong example for the schools that have followed it through its proven ability to better serve individual students by emphasizing personalized instruction and community involvement. As Meier believes, "...only in a small school can deep, ongoing discussion take place in ways that produce change and involve the entire faculty."^{ccxxxii}

The numerous recently established NYC small schools have taken on many different forms and have a variety of different curricular orientations. A few examples of myriad specialized schools offered as choices for New York City students include: The New York City Museum School; Academy of Urban Planning; City As School; The New York City Museum School; Community Prep High School; Food and Finance High School; and the West Bronx Academy for the Future. Like other New York City high schools, most of these schools teach traditional subjects and prepare students to pass the five Regents exams, but do so by focusing on a particular theme or curricular orientation.

Following are three more detailed profiles of schools located in different parts of NYC: Frederick Douglass in Harlem, El Puente in Brooklyn, and Julia Richman Education Center in Manhattan. These particular case studies were chosen because of the specific attention the founders of these schools have paid to serving student and family needs that are specific to the communities in which the schools are situated. These profiles have been adapted from a report prepared by Nathan & Febey (2001) entitled “Smaller, safer, saner, successful schools.”^{ccxxxiii}

Frederick Douglass Academy - HARLEM, NEW YORK

Frederick Douglass Academy is located on the northern end of Harlem in New York City in a low-income area. Approximately 90 percent of the students graduate within four years of entering the school, compared to a citywide average of about 50 percent. The school enrolls 1,100 students in grades 6 through 12. There are no testing requirements for enrollment.

The school’s goal is to “provide a rich, vigorous, and challenging academic curriculum that will enable students to enter the college of their choice.” To this end, students are required to wear uniforms, and expectations are high. The school not only is named for Frederick Douglass, but also attempts to embody his resolve. The school’s motto—“Without struggle, there is no progress”—which appears at its front entrance, comes from one of his speeches. Douglass’s picture is featured throughout the building.

Beginning with the sixth grade, the school is committed to preparing its students for college. The college counseling office is open every day until 4:00 p.m. and from noon to 4:00 p.m. two Saturdays per month. The college counselor meets with seniors weekly to make sure they are following through with the college admissions process. The school’s approach, as explained by the college counselor, is based on the assumption that all children can succeed; and the school works with students their families to ensure

The school’s students have a much higher passing rate on state Regents Examinations than the average New York City public school. In June 1999, Frederick Douglass had 114 graduates. Of those, 113 went on to college, including Princeton, Penn State, Cornell, Georgetown, Middlebury, Carnegie Mellon, and the University of Michigan. One student decided to enter the military. The students received more than \$5 million in scholarship offers. Douglass teachers acknowledge societal problems. But challenges are not excuses. They believe, and the school’s record show, that hard work, creativity, encouragement, and expectations produce success.

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice - BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice opened as a public school in 1993 in a very low-income, racially diverse section of Brooklyn. The school’s building houses a variety of community development and service programs along with the school. The school serves 146 students in grades 9 through 12. Located in an area where the large high school (more than 2,000 students) had a graduation rate of less than 30 percent before it was shut down, El

Puente's graduation rate is currently more than 90 percent.

Translated from Spanish, El Puente means "the bridge." Physically located near the Brooklyn Bridge, the school's ideological approach is intended to bridge the gap between where students are and where they want to be. El Puente was founded as a "New Vision" school within the New York City Public Schools. It was created by a community organization that focuses on improving conditions in the Williamsburg and Bushwick communities, both of which are extremely low-income sections of North Brooklyn situated just across the Williamsburg Bridge from Manhattan. El Puente's curriculum is designed to help students develop strong academic skills and the ability to help improve the world. The school has four guiding principles: creating community, love and caring, mastery, and peace and justice. Students take classes, participate in internships, and are involved in various forms of community action. For example, some of El Puente's students helped create a multiracial coalition that successfully convinced the city of New York to reconsider putting a large incinerator in their neighborhood. The incinerator would have had a negative impact on the air quality in the neighborhood, whose residents already suffer from diseases related to poverty and poor air quality.

Teachers at El Puente combine class work with community research. For example, students studying biology tested the air quality in the school's neighborhood, while other students applied the principles of economics by comparing the quality and price of produce available in neighborhood stores to that of stores in more affluent neighborhoods. Students use art—plays, murals, video and dance—to help illustrate what they are learning. El Puente students have worked closely with the Puerto Rican Education and Legal Defense Fund, the Hispanic Federation of New York City, and the Congress for Puerto Rican Rights on issues such as housing, education, employment, and relationships between police and community members.

The school is located in an old church building, which has been restored to house the school as well as act as community headquarters. El Puente organizes its space to include not only the academy but also a health and wellness clinic, career and guidance services, and a program to help community residents learn to speak English. El Puente sees its mission as helping to solve community problems. The integration of educational, advocacy, health, arts, and guidance services is part of El Puente's strategy to serve its students and families.

Graduation rates at El Puente average over 90 percent, well above New York City's average as well as the average of large neighborhood high schools. In addition, student achievement on statewide Regents Examinations is at the top of achievement standards for all schools. El Puente faculty have noted that in addition to documented academic gains among students, changes of attitude and behavior have also occurred among many students. Such changes are credited to the fact that young people have learned to use their energy and talent to help create better lives for themselves, their families, and the broader community.

Julia Richman Education Center - NEW YORK, NEW YORK

People come from all over the world to see what educators have done to the rejuvenated Julia Richman School building in New York City. Erected in 1923, the building hosted a school for young women who were being trained in clerical work. It was then utilized as a large

comprehensive school for more than 2,000 students. By the mid-1990s, attendance and graduation rates at the school were so low the New York City Board of Education adopted a plan, proposed by the Coalition of Essential Schools, to close the large failing high school and create six small schools of choice. Today six autonomous schools share the Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC).

The schools housed at the JREC include the following autonomous schools:

- *Ella Baker Elementary School*, which provides a rigorous academic program for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades;
- *P226M Junior High*, which serves autistic junior high school students by emphasizing learning through arts and technology;
- *Manhattan International High School* for students who have lived in the United States less than four years;
- *Talent Unlimited High School*, which focuses on the performing arts;
- *Urban Academy*, which emphasizes inquiry-based learning and uses seminars, fielded trips, internships, and university courses to prepare students for the future; and
- *Vanguard High School*, which helps students become intellectually powerful, creative, and resourceful members of society.

Three of the four high schools use a system of performance assessment to grade students, which is intended to contribute to their students' academic success. Each school has its own space in the building and shares some common areas, such as the library and auditorium. In addition to the schools, several services share space in the building. These include the Mt. Sinai Student Health Center, the Teen Parent Resource Center, and the Center for Inquiry in Teaching and Learning. The building also houses First Steps, an infant toddler program serving the children of high school students attending school in the building. The facility includes an observation room that is used for child development classes for students and daycare center workers from throughout New York City.

Graduation rates at the high schools are significantly better than the citywide average. Students at the schools have achieved considerable success in the world of work. The U.S. Department of Education has named Urban Academy a "New American High School," meaning the school is regarded as a national model. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded Urban Academy a grant to help further develop and share information about its program of assessing student performance.

What binds these schools together is a common vision of providing students and their parents with a greater degree of choice in selecting educational options. Small high schools typically enroll between 400 to 500 students with about 100 students in each grade. Because of their small size small schools claim to provide safer learning environments, in which students and teachers know one another, and problems can be more easily recognized and solved. This staff and student familiarity, along with a smaller student-teacher ratio, is intended to create an

environment where students receive more individual attention and are more accountable to educators and to themselves.

Ideologically, these schools also all rest on the idea that in a small school setting students will have an opportunity to learn fewer subjects well. Students are expected to meet state graduation requirements, but by design, small schools will not have hundreds of different classes from which to choose from. Typically, in making the choice to attend a small school in NYC, students are choosing a school with a specific theme or approach of interest to them, that they will be able to explore more deeply than they would at a more traditional high school. Many of these schools also employ a somewhat non-traditional curriculum focused on student-initiated research and analysis, examination of real-world problems, deep exploration of topics, hands-on demonstrations and presentations, and multi-disciplinary group projects.

Charter Schools

Since the opening of the first charter school in 1992, as of September 2003, 2,700 charter schools operate in the United States. In the 2002-2003 schools year, 700,000 students attended charter schools, which is 1.5 percent of the student population.^{ccxxxiv} Charter schools are autonomous, tax-funded public schools that are self-governing and largely freed from school district regulations. Parental choice determines pupil enrollment in charter school, not residential zones.^{ccxxxv} Charter schools are an attractive reform proposal to some because they allow school leaders to design their own school programs and practices without the regulation of the school district. In exchange for this autonomy, school leaders are held to a high level of accountability. If they fail to meet standards, they will lose their charter and their school will close. The idea for charter schools rests with the assumption that parents will choose to withdraw their children from low performing schools, which will make it difficult for low performing schools to succeed in the educational marketplace. In theory, the idea of charter schools gives more community empowerment because parents are more in control of their children's future.^{ccxxxvi}

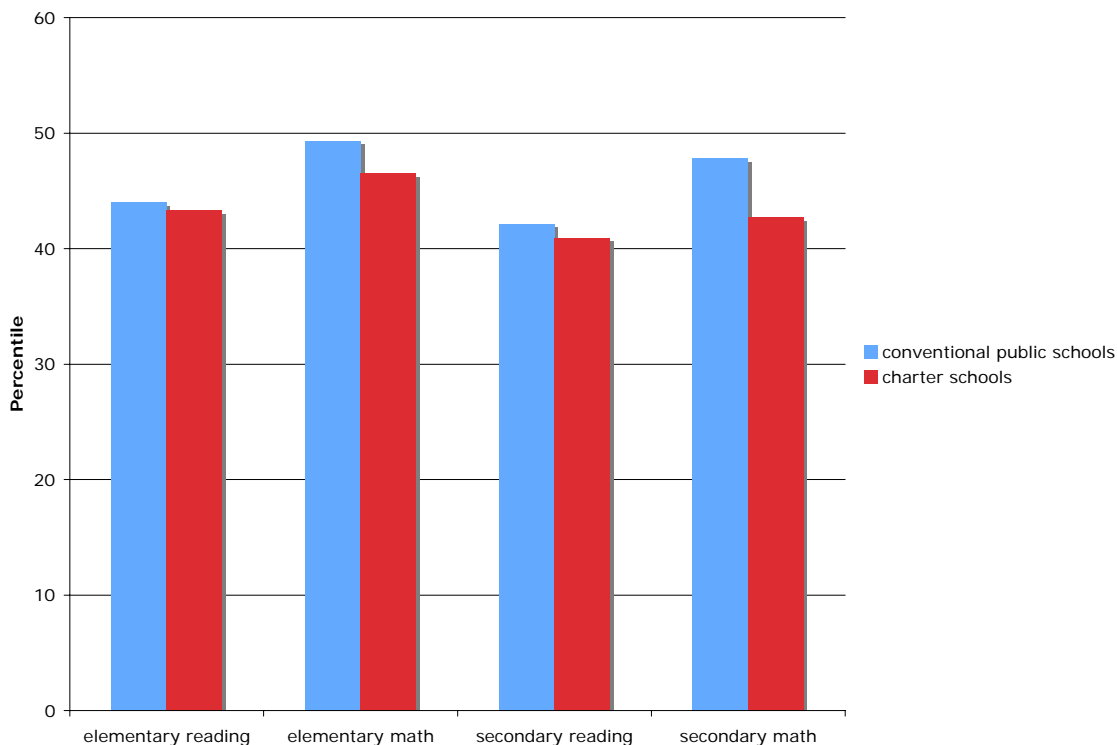
Charter schools attract students from many neighborhoods because it is a school option that does not have a location-based student population. Most attention has been paid to inner-city charter schools, but charter schools can be found in every type of municipality: urban, suburban and rural.

Much of the discussion around charter schools deals with the question of whether they are more effective at improving student achievement, especially for the disadvantaged students who charter schools target. Although there are many examples of charter schools in which students have had significant achievement gains, several studies came to the same conclusion: charter school students, on average, begin with lower test scores than their public schools counterparts and then after an initial start up period, attending a charter school had null or negative effects on test scores when compared with public schools.^{ccxxxvii}

A 2003 study conducted by the RAND Corporation concluded that students in charter schools have lower scores than students in conventional public schools.^{ccxxxviii} The researchers point out,

however, that this may be misleading because charter schools may enroll a large number of low-achieving students and be located in areas of high poverty.^{ccxxxix}

Figure 1. Charter School Performance in Comparison to Traditional Public Schools



Source: Buddin, Richard and Ron Zimmer, “Charter School Operations and Performance: Evidence from California: Academic Outcomes.” The RAND Corporation, 2003.

On the other hand, in the elementary grades, charter schools students showed faster academic growth than their public schools counterparts.^{ccxi} The reason of this trend may be because elementary school tends to focus on academic subjects, while high school charter school students may receive vocational training or out of classroom learning that is not accurately reflected in standardized test scores.^{ccxli}

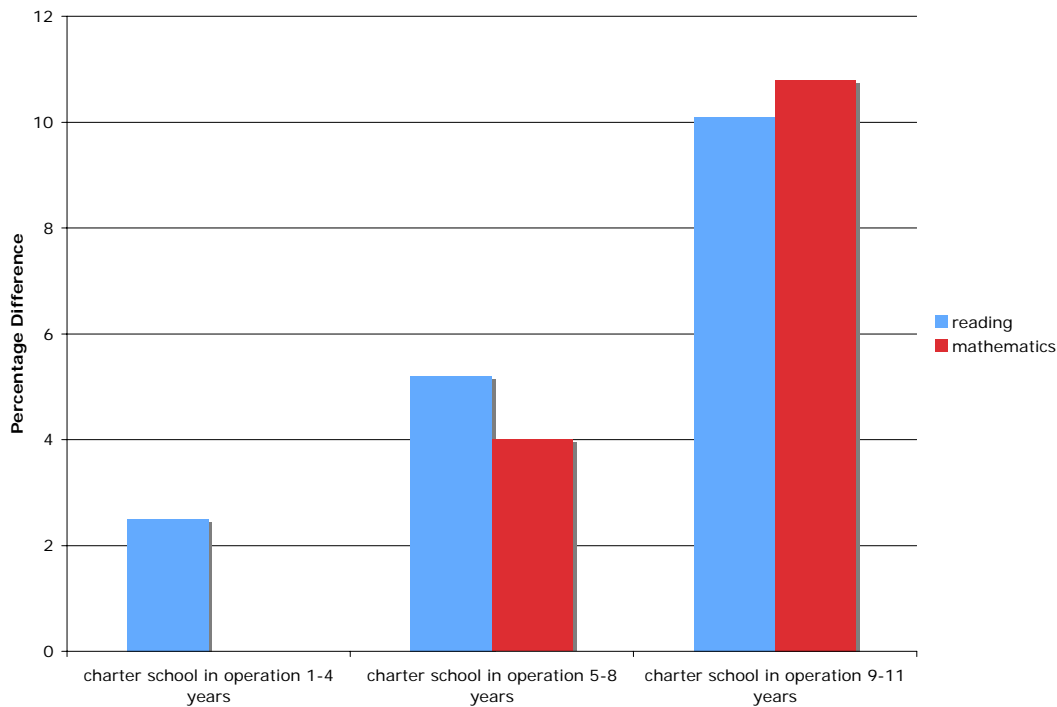
Early attendance at a charter school may provide the basis for subsequent achievement in traditional public schools, especially if students have learned to read at a charter school. This may be why students who transfer from charter schools to public schools in the later grades are prepared for later studies.^{ccxlii}

The negative effects of charter schools attendance vary across the different types of charter schools. According to a RAND study, nonclassroom-based charter schools, such as experiential learning programs, have lower scores across the board compared with public schools.^{ccxliii} Most of the studies that concluded that charter schools have null or negative effects on achievement only used single state data. On the other hand, Caroline Hoxby conducted a nationwide study of charter school performance that included 99 percent of fourth graders in charter schools in the

study. It is the first comprehensive study of charter school performance, and the study concludes that reading and mathematics proficiency is improved in charter school students relative to their public school counterparts in their neighborhood.

Hoxby conducted a study that compared charter school performance to the performance of the schools that the students would most likely otherwise attend. Hoxby’s matched school method compares charter schools to public schools that are likely to share the same neighborhood, economic conditions, and population of students and parents. The study found that charter students are 5.2 percent more likely to be proficient in reading and 3.2 percent more likely to be proficient in math.^{ccxliiv} In addition, charter schools that have been in operation longer have a greater proficiency advantage over the matched public schools. In reading, the advantage is 2.5 percent for a charter school that has been operating 1 to 4 years, 5.2 percent for a school operating 5 to 8 years, and 10.1 percent for a school operating 9 to 11 years (see Figure 2).^{ccxlv}

Figure 2. How the Effect of Charter Schools Depends on the Number of Years a School has been in Operation



Source: Hoxby, Caroline M. “Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences” Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research.

The results also show that charter schools are especially likely to improve the achievement for students who are poor (see Table 2).^{ccxlvii}

Table 2. Showing Whether Charter Schools have a Different Effect on Achievement in Areas where a High Percentage of the Students are Poor

	Reading	Mathematics
Charter Schools in Areas with High Percentage of Poor	6.5	4.8
All Other Charter Schools	2.6	4.7

Source: Hoxby, Caroline M. “Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences” Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research.

One of the main fears with school choice is that it will result in more racially stratified schools. In other words, minority students will choose to attend schools with high minority populations, and white students will choose to attend charter schools that have high white student populations. Charter school students are more likely to be black and less likely to be Hispanic or Asian, but no more or less likely to be white.^{ccxlvi} According to a study conducted by Gregory Weiher and Kent L. Tedin, whites, African Americans and Latinos transfer into charter schools where their groups account for between 11 and 14 percent more than their original public school.^{ccxlviii} This article also discusses that school choice can create racially distinct schools in two ways. First, households can differ in their ability to utilize choice, which means that choosing households tend to be of higher socioeconomic status than non-choosing households. Secondly, preferences may lead school choice participants to sort themselves according to race.^{ccxlix} The researchers looked at charter schools in Texas and found that charter school choice in Texas increased racial segregation of schools.^{cc} In a choice program in Maryland, white choosers were more likely to opt into schools with higher percentages of white students, while minority choosers attended schools that had higher minority populations.^{ccli}

New charter schools across the country face similar difficulties securing adequate facilities, obtaining start-up funding, and acquiring the expertise to run a charter school.^{cclii} Charter schools are currently located in disparate facilities: strip malls, church basements, under-utilized space in municipal buildings, or in facilities donated by local nonprofits.^{ccliii} Facilities are a difficult issue for charter schools because they are unable to issue bonds for the construction, purchase, or renovation of buildings. Charters receive their per-pupil funding once their doors open.^{ccliv} On the other hand, charter schools are more flexible and are able to locate practically wherever they want, as their student population is not location-based. New Urbanist developers could work together with charter schools to secure affordable, safe, quality facilities. Developers could incorporate charter schools in their developments as anchor tenants, providing them with leased space.^{cclv}

Overall, the success of the charter school movement has been mixed. According to an Economic Policy Institute study, while deregulation helps some educators devise good schools, it also allows others to devise bad or even corruptly managed schools. Some charters use this flexibility to hire unusually talented teachers and other schools use this freedom to hire less qualified teachers.^{cclvi} Additionally, researchers found evidence that the charter school accountability system is flawed because parents may not be able to determine whether or not their charter school is effective.^{cclvii} Charter schools inspire a lot of creativity and experimentation in curriculum, but it is likely to produce a lot of failures before identifying success.^{cclviii}

Because poor standardized test scores usually occur within the first few years of a charter school's operation, charter schools should be better supported in their early development in order to produce viable schools.^{cclix} In addition, improving the dissemination of information about school performance, especially to poor families, will help families make informed decisions about school choice. Unfortunately, the families who would most benefit from information of their children's school are often the ones who are least likely to be able to get it. This imbalance of information leads to inequity of choice and can perpetuate segregation by socioeconomic class.

Following are several detailed descriptions of charter school models that have been implemented throughout the U.S. These case studies demonstrate the ways in which different school designs function within the context of different community contexts.

Case Studies: Charter Schools

High Tech High – SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

High Tech High began in 2000 as a single charter high school launched by a coalition of San Diego business leaders and educators. High Tech High International's mission is to help students develop global awareness through rigorous academics and relevant workplace skills in preparation for rewarding lives in our increasingly technological and interconnected world.

High Tech High has been extremely successful in getting its high school students college ready. In fact, 100 percent of its graduates have been admitted to college, with approximately 80 percent admitted to four-year programs. This is especially impressive considering that over half of its graduates are first-generation college students.

Source: <http://www.hightechhigh.org/>

Lighthouse Community Charter School – OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

The Lighthouse Community Charter School serves disadvantaged students from the Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods of Oakland, California. Lighthouse is a part of Oakland Unified School District, which is one of the poorest performing districts in California. Lighthouse's student body is 80 percent free or reduced lunch (an indication of poverty) and 80 percent English Language Learners.

Lighthouse has several unique features, including Individualized Learning Plans (ILP) and Expeditionary Education. Every student at Lighthouse has an ILP that is created with the student, his parents, teachers, and where appropriate, administrators. ILPs detail a student's academic, as well as social, emotional, and physical strengths and challenges and detail strategies to improve a student's ability to succeed in school.¹ Lighthouse also uses Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. This program strives to create relevant, real-world learning for students through projects.

Source: <http://www.lighthousecharter.org/>

KIPP Schools – NATIONWIDE

The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) began in 1994 when Teach for America alumni Dave Levin and Mike Feinberg launched a program for fifth graders in a public school in inner city Houston, Texas. Doris and Donald Fisher, co-founders of Gap Inc., formed a unique partnership with Feinberg and Levin to replicate KIPP's success nationwide. Established in 2000 with a \$15 million grant from the Fishers, the nonprofit KIPP Foundation recruits, trains, and supports outstanding teachers in opening and leading high-performing college-preparatory public schools in educationally underserved communities. KIPP helps secure facilities and operating contracts while training School Leaders through a yearlong KIPP School Leadership Program. Today, 45 KIPP schools with 400 teachers serve more than 9,000 students in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

Source: <http://www.kippschools.org/>

ReadNet Charter School – BRONX, NEW YORK

The freedom and flexibility given to charter school leaders can also lead to them taking on too much and lead to the demise of a charter school. Most charter schools fail due to financial and management problems. In November 2006, the ReadNet Charter School in South Bronx, New York City announced that it was going to close in June 2006 rather than face rejection by the New York Board of Regents later in the year.

The original site for the school was the Metropolitan College of New York, but the state did not like the idea of having young children so close to college students. ReadNet spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to lease and refurbish a building, but it was not ready in time for the 2002 school year; the school opened in September 2003 on the fifth floor of Public School 277 on a temporary basis. In addition, they did not have computers in the schools, which was one of the founding tenets of the charter school. The school's founder Robin Hubbard blamed the school's problems on "the school's late start, the difficulty of raising money after September 11, 2001, and the expense of having to find a new building." Shelia Evans-Tranumn, the associate state education commissioner said, "growing a school into academic excellence is not as easy as it looks. It is a very difficult thing to do, and sometimes even with the best intentions, things don't work out."

Source: Gootman, Elissa. "Death of Bronx Charter Schools Holds Mirror to Wider Problem" New York Times April 3, 2006.

These case studies of charter schools illustrate the complexity of running a successful charter school. Currently, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and foundations are all supporting charter school expansion in order to replicate successful charter schools on a larger scale. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) represents this growing trend of professionalized charter schools. The KIPP Foundation offers start up charter schools with assistance, which stand-alone charter schools usually do not receive. While this trend has led to many successful charter schools, it begs the question of whether the community is better served by charter schools that are created by community leaders, rather than a charter school organization deciding that a certain location would be a good charter school site. On the other hand, professionalized charter schools, like KIPP, are able to replicate best practices from their schools in other settings.

School Vouchers

In most discussions of school choice, the debate over school vouchers invariably takes center stage. School vouchers are certificates issued by the government to parents, who then have the ability to choose among competing schools - both public and private - which would in turn collect the vouchers and redeem them for cash to run those schools. This concept of privatizing education by giving subsidies to parents for the purchase of education has existed since Adam Smith alluded to the idea in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), and has in recent decades gained a groundswell of support from the work of Milton Friedman (1955) and various other scholars from both ends of the political spectrum.^{cclx}

While a hotly contested issue, few publicly-funded voucher experiments have actually been implemented,^{cclxi} and only at a limited intensity and duration,^{cclxii} making it difficult to assess the impact such programs have on issues of choice and equity. In 1990, the Wisconsin legislature enacted the first public voucher program of its kind, providing public school students access to private schools in Milwaukee on an experimental basis.^{cclxiii} The program was expanded to religious schools in 1996, and after surviving a constitutional challenge, went into full effect in 1998.^{cclxiv} Similar programs have been enacted in Cleveland in 1995^{cclxv} and in Florida on a statewide level in 1999.^{cclxvi}

Because few measurable voucher experiments have actually been implemented, most of the literature on the equity of school vouchers either deals with evaluation of the limited programs that do exist, or the structuring of theoretical voucher models that could best serve the interests of the poor. The following are some of the principal points of contention in the literature on vouchers.

Spatial Context

Because many voucher programs seek to increase choice options for low-income students outside of their communities, there is the potential that a large-scale choice program may have the unintended effect of disinvesting from local communities. Though there has yet to be a voucher program of a magnitude large enough to measure such consequences, it has been argued that these programs conflict with the movement toward strengthening the capacity of neighborhood schools.

Quality of Education

Few of the theoretical disputes over whether vouchers really improve education have been resolved, principally because information about school-choice programs is not readily available. Although several published studies compare public and private schools, they have consistently been criticized for comparing dissimilar populations.^{cclxvii} Even when statistical adjustments are made for background characteristics, it is unclear whether findings describe actual differences between public and private schools or simply differences in the kinds of students and families attending them. Voucher opponents contend that while certain private schools outperform public schools in academic performance indices, those schools have the distinct advantage of dual selection: only the most motivated families are able to pursue a private education, and private

schools are able to select and choose the most academically capable students among them.

With regard to the publicly financed voucher programs, there is very limited meaningful data to be found in regard to performance measures. Of the three most prominent publicly funded voucher programs in the United States, only Cleveland's has maintained an on-going, state-commissioned evaluation program.^{cclxviii} The Wisconsin legislature ended state evaluation of the Milwaukee program in 1995 and the Florida legislature has never provided for evaluation of its voucher program.^{cclxix} Additionally, none of the private schools in Milwaukee or Florida that receive public money through vouchers are required to test students or report test scores.^{cclxx}

An assessment by Peterson and Howell of a randomized voucher experiment conducted in New York City in 1997 represents one of the more comprehensive studies to date of how vouchers impact low-income students who move from public to private schools.^{cclxxi} One of the study's principal conclusions was that school choice seems to both raise test scores as well as reduce test score differences among students. Some researchers have questioned the validity of the 2002 study, causing Education Week to conclude that the data "raise as many questions as they answer" about students who receive vouchers.^{cclxxii}

Economic and Social Equity

There is fierce debate over how a broad-based voucher program would impact economic and social equity, as well as disagreement among voucher advocates as to the proper structure of a socially equitable voucher system.

Two-thirds of the current publicly financed voucher programs provide vouchers regardless of income, and limits on the voucher size effectively minimize the choices that poor students have.^{cclxxiii} Participating schools have also not been held to the same access requirements as public schools, and many opponents allege that it is the schools, and not the students, who do the choosing. Unlike public schools, private schools are not required to accept special-needs or disabled students, students with behavioral problems or those with academic difficulties, and are generally permitted to refuse to accept students on the basis of academic performance, religious affiliation, aptitude, achievement or test scores.^{cclxxiv} This is a cause of concern since it is well established that the greatest concentrations of special needs students are in low-income public schools.

Though there is debate among voucher proponents as to the best methods for meeting the needs of low-income families, realizable solutions have been proposed. The literature suggests that either limiting vouchers to low-income students best resolve these issues, or providing sliding-scale vouchers based on economic status.^{cclxxv} Many voucher proponents have addressed the need to adequately subsidize a voucher program.^{cclxxvi} Other noteworthy solutions proposed include transportation subsidies to students who choose to travel to remote schools, as well as prohibitions on participating schools requesting tuition and expenses that exceed the full voucher value.^{cclxxvii} Under such circumstances, parents who choose non-participating schools would have to opt out of the program, and would be responsible for meeting full tuition expenses without public subsidy.

As to access to participating schools, there is some contention among voucher proponents. Many believe that schools should have the ability to select students so long as not in violation of federal civil rights laws, because it would ensure that private schools whose goal is educational quality retain some administrative autonomy.^{cclxxviii} Others have proposed more realistic solutions for increasing access to low-income students. Some of the proposals include stronger antidiscrimination laws for participating schools, a lottery system for selecting new students, increased subsidies to schools that accept at-risk students, and creation of an agency with oversight and enforcement power to oversee antidiscrimination mandates.^{cclxxix}

Cost Effectiveness

Voucher proponents rely on several market-based theories for why a voucher system would create greater efficiency and save taxpayer money. Principal among these is the theory that providing parents with vouchers would motivate them to make informed choices about their child's education. This would in turn motivate educators and administrators to respond to choices on the market by providing a more efficient provision of education, resulting in greater profits to owners, higher salaries for competent teachers, and the incentive to lower tuitions while at the same time increasing the quality of the educational output.^{cclxxx}

Proponents often attempt to increase capital for this theory by measuring the tuition of private schools with the average per pupil spending of public schools. One such study found that the average tuition of private schools located within the boundaries of the San Antonio School District was less than \$1,500, while the average per pupil expenditures on public school students in the San Antonio Independent School District was over \$5,000.^{cclxxxii}

Voucher opponents argue that these estimates fail to take into account the cost of necessary services that most private schools do not provide - such as breakfast and lunch programs, health services, aid for children with disabilities, special education, ESL programs, vocational training, counselors and transportation.^{cclxxxiii}

The estimates also fail to account for private school costs that are subsidized by either the state, in the form of vouchers and voucher-related expenses, or, in the case of religious schools, the church. Most parochial schools receive hidden subsidies from the churches with which they are affiliated, by requiring students to pay fees for extracurricular activities, holding various fundraisers, and using clergy as instructors whose salaries understate the true market value of their services.^{cclxxxiv} Finally, these estimates fail to factor in the substantial costs of administration and oversight that a publicly funded voucher system would require, specifically those costs related to oversight, enforcement, and parental education. Henry Levin, an education economist at Columbia University's Teachers College, estimates that a nationwide voucher program would add more than \$73 billion per year to the states' cost of education, an amount equal to almost 25 percent of the public education budget nationally.^{cclxxxv}

Accountability

There is serious concern among voucher opponents that voucher programs would be largely unaccountable, and would produce schools that are prone to corruption, mismanagement, and

poor planning. There is already evidence of such unaccountability among schools currently participating in voucher programs. A 1999 investigation by the NAACP found that a number of Milwaukee voucher schools were violating the law by imposing unlawful admissions requirements on voucher students, charging unlawful fees, or discouraging parents of voucher students from exercising their statutory right to opt their children out of religious activities.^{cclxxxv} In Florida, several voucher schools have been accused of abusing students, misappropriating government funds, hiring unqualified teachers, and providing students with inadequate school supplies and services.^{cclxxxvi}

Studies have shown considerable support for accountability measures, with a general consensus that private schools be held more accountable to parents and taxpayers, through teacher certification requirements, curriculum requirements, public auditing of finances, standardized testing, mandates that parochial schools admit students of all faiths, and requirements that schools set aside a certain number of new spaces every year for low-income children.^{cclxxxvii} Current voucher programs have few accountability measures in place for participating schools, however, and there is considerable resistance from voucher proponents to increase government regulation.^{cclxxxviii}

Constitutionality

A final issue that is prominent in the literature, though one which will not be fully addressed here, is whether voucher programs that provide subsidies to parochial schools violate the constitutional separation of church and state. This is a point of contention worth mentioning because nearly 80 percent of private schools are parochial,^{cclxxxix} and much of the literature proposes that successful voucher programs include these schools in order to truly create choice for low-income families.^{ccxc} The constitutionality of such a program has yet to be fully weighed by the Supreme Court, though some evidence exists that the Court has cleared way for certain voucher programs to withstand constitutional scrutiny.^{ccxci} The most contentious issue seems to be whether parochial schools can use public funds for religious instruction or other religious-affiliated services. This, of course, is a very complex First Amendment issue requiring many layers of analysis, and would best be addressed on its own. Beyond constitutional questions, however, voucher opponents contend that school vouchers are nonetheless problematic because parochial schools are constitutionally protected if they choose to discriminate against students of other faiths.^{ccxcii}

The literature proposes two primary ways to address these concerns. One, though considered politically impracticable by some, is to exclude parochial schools altogether. The other more pragmatic approach would be to allow religious schools to participate so long as all public funds are used for educational purposes unrelated to religion, schools agree not to discriminate based on religious affiliation, and students are allowed to opt-out of religious activities if they so choose.^{ccxciii} It would also be important to create some mechanism for overseeing and enforcing these requirements. This second approach also seems to be the most politically expedient (constitutionality aside), since it would have more support from conservatives and would include a greater pool of schools for parents to choose from.

The Parental Choice Program – MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

In 1990, Wisconsin became the first state in the country to implement a means-tested school choice program. Though the number of students allowed to participate in the program is limited to 1.5 percent of public school membership, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program remains the largest voucher experiment in the country, providing vouchers to over 15,000 students who attend some 118 private schools throughout the city. The following are some lessons from the program:

Voucher schools do not appear to have creamed the best students from Milwaukee Public Schools

A 1995 Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel investigation of the city's voucher schools found that while a very small number of schools in the choice program draw more motivated students, many of the schools serve large numbers of at-risk students or even specialize in students who have struggled in Milwaukee Public Schools. Access protections, both in regards to who receives vouchers as well as to how schools select students, have played major roles in making the program accessible to the highest needs students. Because the program is limited to students whose family income is at or below 1.75 times the national poverty line, voucher students (whose family income averaged \$12,300 in 1990) are substantially more disadvantaged than the average student in Milwaukee public schools (whose family income was \$24,000). Further, schools participating in the Milwaukee program are required to admit choice students without discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity, or prior school performance. State law also requires that students be "accepted on a random basis," which has been interpreted to require random selection if a school is oversubscribed in a particular grade level.

Inclusion of religious schools has played a major role in creating choice for low-income families

One of the most important lessons of Milwaukee's voucher program is the importance religion plays in the choices parents make. When parochial schools were excluded from the program from 1990-91 to 1994-95, only 12 of the 23 nonsectarian private schools participated, and enrollment never reached the maximum number of students allowed by law. When the statute was amended in 1995 to extend school choice to the hundred-plus religious schools in Milwaukee, enrollment in the program increased tenfold (from 300 to over 15,000 students in 2004-5), with 118 schools now participating in the program.^{ccxciv}

Funding from vouchers has had the effect of regenerating several parochial schools in Milwaukee, including dozens of Catholic and Lutheran schools that had been experiencing declining enrollment. Vouchers have also made possible a network of several independent church schools led by black ministers throughout the city. In total, seventy percent of current voucher students attend religious schools.

There remains dispute over whether Milwaukee choice students have performed better than their peers

Three major studies – by the Witte team,^{ccxcv} the Greene team,^{ccxcvi} and Rouse^{ccxcvii} – reached varying conclusions about whether achievement improved for Milwaukee voucher students in private schools. All three used achievement data from the earlier years of the program, because no new data has been collected since 1995. The studies also employed different research methods and compared different groups of students. The Rouse and the Greene group found statistically significant positive outcomes for students in mathematics, while the Witte team did not. The Greene group found significant positive outcomes in reading, while Rouse and the Witte team did not. The Witte study also concluded that voucher students who left the program for various reasons had lower test scores than those who continued to participate.

Community Organizing for School Reform

One strategy for improving urban schools, and for addressing issues of educational equity that affect students attending such schools, is community organizing. Community organizing for school reform relies on collaboration between schools and community organizers as a means of improving educational opportunities and advancing community development objectives. According to a report prepared by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at the New York University Steinhardt Schools of Education, in 2002, there were at least 200 community groups across the country organized around efforts to improve local public schools.^{ccxcviii}

Organizing efforts around school reform have expanded in recent years most rapidly in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, wherein groups often raise equity issues affecting students, such as whether schools address the needs of immigrant youth or whether students of color are provided with adequate educational opportunities. Organizers, under this model, generally consist of members of formal community-based organizations working with educators, parents, and other community members, or parent organizers, who emerge as what Gramsci would term organic intellectuals from within the ranks of their communities. But, regardless of who is spearheading the work, the emphasis of community organizing for school reform is on enlisting residents as partners and leaders in the development of collaborative efforts to promote educational equity.

The community groups that spearhead and/or support local organizing efforts take on various forms and orientations. Some are long-time organizing groups that consider education to be but one of many pressing neighborhood issues. Others are community development groups that see quality schools as integral to rebuilding neighborhoods. And, others have emerged organizing directly around educational issues they or their children have experienced first hand.^{ccxcix} In general, these groups are community-based and have histories of working to improve their communities.

Central to the organizing approach utilized by these groups is the assumption that in order to address the issues commonly associated with struggling urban schools, such as low student achievement, poor teacher training, and degraded schools facilities, schools and communities must work together to develop the relational power necessary to foster change. They emphasize relational power, as opposed to unilateral power, as a means of building the capacity to get things

done collectively^{ccc} (Warren, 2005). Hence, community-organizing groups are actively and intentionally engaged in “building relationships, skills and organizing power among parents, young people, and community residents to transform local conditions and create new opportunities.”^{ccci}

This intentional fostering of intersecting sets of relationships among community members is often referred to as building social capital. The concept of social capital has been used liberally in social science literature in recent years to describe the benefits associated with membership within interpersonal networks. Popularized in large part by political scientist Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, social capital is generally perceived to be both a private and a public good, because as a by-product of social relations, its benefits reach both individuals and the social networks they create. The origination of the concept is generally attributed to Pierre Bourdieu, whose notion of social capital is widely cited by social theorists in general, and educational theorists, in particular, as a means of interpreting the nature and value of social interactions. As defined by Pierre Bourdieu, social capital describes the ability (based on social and often economic circumstance) to utilize one’s social networks and membership within groups to secure benefits. One can acquire social capital through interactions, social obligations, connections and networks. Thus, it is an individual benefit that can, in the case of communities and schools, be used to promote larger social gains.

Some scholars have invoked the concept of social capital more specifically around issues of school reform, both as an explanation of how collaboration between schools and communities can take place, and as an example of a positive residual effect of community collaboration for minority or low income parents and their children, who do not necessarily have access to expansive, influential social networks. As Warren explains, the concept of social capital “provides a useful framework to think about overcoming both the external and internal isolation of public schools in order to reweave the social fabric of schools and urban communities.”^{cccii} Further, as Noguera articulates, social capital can be used to describe the way in which the development of social networks around school reform can provide a potential, powerful catalyst for transforming inner-city schools into genuine assets for the communities they serve.^{ccciii}

More specifically, Noguera adopts the idea of social capital in his discussion of urban school reform by suggesting that key to making the types of investments in urban public schools that address larger “urban” issues such as poverty, social isolation, and economic marginalization, is the development of positive social capital among inner-city residents. For Noguera, the development of social capital and relational power represents the primary goal of urban school reform; it is not merely a bi-product. True reform must “transform urban schools into sources of social stability and support for families and children by developing their potential to 1) serve as sources of intra-community integration, and 2) to provide resources for extra-community linkages.”^{ccciv} Thus, the end result of school-based community organizing efforts is twofold: parents are empowered to act on behalf of their children, and schools can realize benefits that have a positive ripple effect outward into the community at large.

Community organizing for school reform utilizes numerous strategies, depending on the specific community and educational context. As is mentioned above, schools and local residents generally partner with community organizations that are already well established before

engaging in school reform efforts. These organizations often have been engaged in organizing around other issues within the community, and are thus well suited as builders of social capital. As Warren explains, autonomous community organizations can serve as mediators between families and schools that can focus on building relationships while school staff continue to work on improving instruction. Further, they can alter the power dynamic that often exists between school professionals and parents of color by creating a foundation from which parents can enter into collaboration on a more equal footing.^{cccv}

One example of a school reform initiative through which local residents partnered with established community organizations is one spearheaded by the Oakland Community Organizations (OCO). This initiative, which worked to address issues common to many struggling schools, such as over-crowding and multi-tracking, through the development of small schools, achieved success by creating partnerships between long-standing community organizations and the local school district. Other initiatives, like one launched by the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) in Chicago, have sought to address community-specific issues, like the need address the educational needs of local immigrant populations, by utilizing parents as resources and partners in the formation of community learning centers. Still other models focus on the development of social capital across physical communities as a means of overcoming the isolations of schools. One such example is the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation's Alliance Schools Initiative, which focused on facilitating change through a relational organizing approach, wherein agendas for change emerge from conversation among parents, teachers, and other school staff, and are often implemented by these same actors. These initiatives are described in greater detail in the case studies provided below.

Other examples of community organizing for school reform can be found in local educational foundations (LEFs), a model for garnering community support for educational reform that has become popularized both in poorer urban districts and in more affluent suburban locales. LEFs are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations whose boards represent local community and education leaders and who are financially accountable to their communities. Each LEF is unique in its operation, its programs and the resources it provides to its community, but all share a common commitment to improving education at the local level. In general, educational foundations are created to:

- Serve as conveners with non-profit agencies to address community issues relating to education.
- Link people and organizations in their communities with public schools, developing awareness and resource support.
- Increase teacher morale by making direct financial grants to teachers and by recognizing their importance in the community
- Broaden support for public education and local schools with greater community awareness

In 2000, California education foundations raised more than \$50 million for public schools. LEFs supported public schools throughout California, impacting nearly 4.6 million children. LEFs sponsored programs as diverse as the communities they represented, ranging from grants to teachers to purchases of instructional technology. Some 10,000-community volunteers served on

the boards of LEFs, bringing new ideas and perspectives to educational issues. Greater detail on one example of an LEF is provided below.

Central to the organizing approach to school reform is the notion that educational equity and community development cannot be divorced from one another. For, it is the relationship between schools and the economic and social forces that shape the environment in which they are located that determines the quality of education provided. According to Noguera, one of the reasons this connection is so important to make is that schools have a potentially powerful role to play not only in educating students, but also in either perpetuating social ills and inequities or transforming urban environments into arenas for community collaboration toward positive social change. And, one of the ways in which schools can serve as social assets within a given urban community is through the development of positive social capital.

The argument can be made that as powerful as building social capital can be for individual school and neighborhood improvement, a broader solution requires creating the political capacity to address issues of structural inequality.^{cccv} Furthermore, there are many practical and ideological barriers to organization around school reform. For example, reformers may be loathe to collaborate with community activists, for fear that they will interfere with their agendas; and, community activists may be discouraged from stepping into a domain traditionally reserved for educators and academics by structure not designed for the inclusion of outside actors. Schools and school reformers also may fail to see the value of investing time and resources into engaging parents, connecting with community organizations, and addressing the broader needs of children, in the context of enormous pressure to raise achievement immediately. Furthermore, even if organizing victories are able to create significant improvements in local schools, victories can be fleeting, and accomplishments can be reversed or diminished within a short time.^{cccvii}

Another question that emerges from the consideration of this model of school reform concerns the role of government in creating educational equity. In general, social policy responses grounded in social capital theory have focused on civic regeneration, volunteering and community self help; the aim being to build social capital by strengthening local community networks.^{cccviii} What this means in the realm of educational reform is that when most of the responsibility is placed on individual schools and community organizations, the government is, to some extent, released from its responsibility to ensure that all children are provided with equitable educational opportunities. In short, while a policy-driven reliance on local actors can provide ground up, organic community and school change, it can also serve as a justification for a retreat from educational spending.

Despite these tensions, several clear benefits of the organizing approach to school reform emerge. One important effect is that community organizing around educational issues can do much to strengthen school-community links. When relationships between school and community actors are strategically built and maintained, the likelihood increases that the community's stake in the school, and the school's in the neighborhood community, will stand the test of time. Another benefit is that because reform efforts grow organically out of the interests and ideas articulated through interactions between parents, teachers, and concerned community members, they tend to be more strongly and enthusiastically supported than reform projects imposed from outside. Moreover, many community-based organizations engaged in school reform link their

school-by-school endeavors to broader initiatives, thus enabling them to engage in more far-reaching community development efforts. And, even more importantly, by building the local leadership base, community organizing for school reform teaches local actors to develop skills and capital that will allow them to engage in future efforts for school and community change. Local organizing for school reform is the antithesis of top-down, generic approaches that, in the past, have failed to address either the physical manifestations of neglect, or the underlying structural factors that create and reinforce educational inequality.

Following are three case studies illustrating some of the successes and challenges associated with this approach to improving schools through community building efforts.

Case Studies: Community Organizing for School Reform

As described previously, examples of community organizing for school reform range from statewide initiatives to increase test scores to local educational foundations geared toward raising funds for academic and enrichment programs. Following are three examples of community organizing efforts that have made successful attempts at fostering educational change within different neighborhood contexts. The first example is case study of the organizing efforts led by the New Settlement Apartments (NSA), a unique housing development group in the South Bronx, New York. The second is a case study of the Orinda Educational foundation, a funding partner to the public schools in Orinda, CA. And, lastly, is the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), which, guided by a “Holistic Plan,” developed a successful Parent-Teacher Mentor program, as well as community learning centers that have served hundreds of children.

Community Organizing for School Improvement – SOUTH BRONX, NEW YORK

Much of education organizing in New York City has evolved from neighborhood efforts to improve housing and the general quality of community life. The organizing effort in the South Bronx undertaken by New Settlement Apartments (NSA) represents one such case. NSA is a housing development of nearly 1900 families in the Mount Eden section of the southwest Bronx. The development is composed of 14 fully renovated, previously abandoned buildings within an eight square block area that had experienced decades of unchecked physical decay and economic decline. The neighborhood surrounding the development is part of one of the poorest areas in New York City.

In contrast to the social and physical community rebuilding that NSA was spearheading, the condition of the local schools at the time was dim. In fact, Community School District 9 “had earned a reputation as one of the most corrupt and poorly performing districts in the entire city.”^{cccix} In 1996, amid widespread concern around issues of educational equity and corruption in the South Bronx neighborhood schools, NSA was approached by members of the local school board to discuss what could be done to improve local schools. In 1997, NSA began organizing parents, helping them to form the NSA Parent Action Committee (PAC).

The PAC was born out of a voter registration drive led by a small group of parents, and supported by NSA, around school board elections. The drive lasted only a few months and had little impact on the election in the district. However, it did lead to NSA’s involvement with the School Board Election Network, a citywide effort to support the engagement of local constituencies in school board elections, and piqued NSA’s interest in playing a role in the improvement of public schools. After the election, NSA began to consider how to effectively engage those parents who had worked on the voter registration drive around specific concerns they had about their children’s schools.

During the winter and spring of 1997, PAC members began to meet to consider what their strategy would be for prioritizing and acting on the issues of importance to them. After several meetings, they decided to focus on the district’s efforts to promote literacy. Organizing around literacy promotion, and ultimately forcing out an ineffective school leader, helped to create a base of local leadership capable of building an organizing base and of navigating the school system. Importantly, these new community leaders came to “feel they have the right and the responsibility to contest the prevailing distribution of power in their community as well as their own organization.”^{cccx}

Educational Foundation – ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

Orinda is an affluent community, located in Contra Costa County, on the east side of the Oakland and Berkeley hills in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is a semi-rural community that is home to approximately 17,500 residents. The 12.8 square mile city consists of a small downtown, surrounded by tree-studded hillsides, populated primarily by single-family homes. The median income for Orinda residents is approximately \$132,500, and the median home value in 1999 was

approximately \$632,000.^{cccxi} Despite the relative affluence of this community, residents have found it necessary to mobilize a volunteer base to protect the integrity of their local public schools. They have done so through the formation of an LEC.

The Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) is a volunteer-led, non-profit organization dedicated to providing financial support for quality educational and enrichment programs for student in Orinda's public schools. Established in 1979, EFO has become a leader among educational non-profits, setting the standard for fundraising and accountability. Working in partnership with the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) and Miramonte High School, EFO steps in where state funding leaves off, by funding academic and enrichment programs that could not otherwise be offered to students. EFO is comprised of parents and community members committed to “building on a tradition of strong community support for educational excellence in Orinda's schools...”^{cccxi}

Each Orinda school is represented on the EFO Board of Directors, and every aspect of the organization’s fundraising efforts is performed by volunteers. More than ninety-five percent of the monies raised from both parent donors and non-parent contributors go directly to Orinda’s schools. Edo’s annual budget for Orinda schools is developed collaboratively with OUSD and Miramonte High School through a yearly prioritization process and in accordance with prescribed funding guidelines. The budget serves as the basis for EFO’s fundraising campaign goal, which was \$1.3 million for the 2005-2006 school year.

Orinda is just one of 400 school districts across the U.S. wherein parents and other community members have taken the fate their educational resources into their own hands. Many LEFs in California sprung up after Proposition 13, which placed limits on local property taxes, significantly limited the funding all districts experienced cuts in local school funding. But, those that were cut the most were those districts, like Orinda, with wealthy parents and community members who could afford to make private contributions. And, it remains primarily these types of districts that have found ways to provide for raise to a level above mere adequacy, the quality of their children’s public school education.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association – CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

In Chicago, community organizing to improve schools has been initiated largely by “multi-issue neighborhood groups with a long track record of empowering communities to fight for neighborhood improvement.”^{cccxiii} Most such groups have used local school councils, through which parents and community representatives have the power to develop school budgets and appoint school principals, as negotiating grounds for local struggles. The Logan Square neighborhood is an example of a community wherein local residents worked together to improve their community schools.

The Logan Square neighborhood is a struggling, but culturally vibrant neighborhood, located on the west side of Chicago. During the 1970s and 1980s, Latinos migrated to the neighborhood from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Central America, and began to replace the European immigrants

living in the area. Logan Square is comprised of a mix of working-class and lower-middle-class families, and boasts a significant home owning population. The neighborhood also possesses lively commercial districts and thriving small businesses. Most public schools in the Local Square neighborhood are over 95% low income and 90% Latino.^{cccxiv}

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) began organizing for school reform in the early 1990s after a citywide movement culminated in the devolution, through the passage of the Chicago School Reform Law, of decision making powers to elected local school councils at each Chicago public school. In the wake of this new legislation, local community groups employed a variety of strategies to getting involved with school change. Recognizing the overcrowding effects that a new wave of Latino immigrants was having on local schools, LSNA decided to focus on school construction. Organizing around school overcrowding, LSNA was able to bring together school principals, teachers, and parents in a collaborative effort to make schools the centers of community.

Out of the social capital built through the initial stages of this effort came the adoption by LSNA of a “Holistic Plan,” intended to build on trust established with local principals to advance organizing work not just around schools, but within them. Guided by this plan, LSNA developed a successful Parent-Teacher Mentor Program and raised funds to hire parents in local schools to work two hours a day in classrooms. The establishment of the Mentor Program represented a deliberate effort by LSNA organizers to not only involve parents in local schools, but to develop a leadership base among parents, so that they could become not only volunteers, but active participants and decision makers.^{cccxv} LSNA also launched a collaboration with Chicago State University to create a training program for local residents to become bilingual teachers in local schools, as well as a literacy ambassador initiative, through which teachers and parents act as “ambassadors of literacy” within the home of a host family. Though this program is focused primarily on literacy, of equal importance is its aim to bring together teachers and parents.^{cccxvi}

There is much anecdotal and some statistical evidence that LSNA’s work within schools has improved educational outcomes, including data showing that student performance on standardized increased between 1997 and 2002. Furthermore, both organizers and educators have reported numerous ways in which LSNA initiatives have improved school learning environments, from improved safety to increased classroom help.^{cccxvii} Importantly, much of LSNA’s success at organizing can be attributed to its ability to forge relationships not only between local actors like parents and teachers, but by its ability to build alliances with public officials outside of the immediate school/neighborhood context.

Recommendations

Each school choice option examined in this policy brief addresses the problem of school quality and spatial racial segregation or teacher quality in different ways. To address the issues of equity and segregation and to increase the effectiveness of choice options, in this brief we propose several recommendations:

- 1) Information should be more easily accessible for parents on school performance and choice options. Often, parents who would most benefit from school choice, are least likely to know how to access information needed to make informed decisions about their child's school. Alternatives to the large, overcrowded, under-performing schools that many low-income and minority children attend cannot be made available to these students if adequate information about educational options is not provided by schools and communities. Information should not only be readily accessible, but, to the degree possible, should be made accessible in languages commonly spoken immigrant communities.
- 2) Charter schools and schools participating in voucher programs should have access requirements in order to limit discrimination against the highest need students. There is some evidence that schools participating in voucher programs and charter schools have discriminated against students on the basis of academic performance, religious affiliation, aptitude, achievement, or test scores. Such practices should be strongly discouraged by district policies; and, small schools, charter schools, and other "alternative" learning environments should be encouraged to foster educational equity by serving those low-income and minority students that are likely to benefit most from their programs.
- 3) Schools and communities should be encouraged to work together to continually improve neighborhood schools. Community members understand what their locality needs and can be a great asset to school leaders in addressing the needs of their community. School districts in collaboration with community organizations should create structures to promote parental, teacher and broader community involvement in local school reform efforts.
- 4) More emphasis should be placed on addressing issues of equity and segregation on a regional level. Students should have opportunities to choose to attend schools outside of their neighborhoods or even outside of their districts. This would require cities and districts to reach out across borders to create governance structures, collaborate on funding schemes, and meet the transportation needs of students wishing to exercise their available educational choice options. While a regional approach to creating choice in educational opportunities could detract from the potential benefits of maintaining strong neighborhood-school connections, educational outcomes for individual students able to attend more challenging and resourced schools are likely to improve immediately. This recommendation is more likely to impact low-income students who may not be able to attend a school of their choice due to lack of transportation options or sufficient funds.

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The Role of School Governance and Finance in Improving Cities and Schools

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is not a new idea that poor school performance is largely due to deficiencies in the broader social context in which schools exist. However, the sort of coordinated policymaking across issue areas that might address both student achievement and issues of health, housing, and transportation is almost completely absent from the governance of cities and schools. Notably, school performance is not currently defined broadly enough to encompass schools' integration with the neighborhoods and constituencies they serve, but instead is based solely on standardized test scores.

Traditional school governance structures aim to hold schools accountable through the electoral system. Failures to achieve accountability through these structures have led parents and reformers to seek remedies through the legal system, market-based reforms, and building the civic capacity of communities. The traditional reliance on local property taxes for school financing has led to inequitable and inadequate schools for many students. The rise of standards-based education and the No Child Left Behind Act that created new demands for accountability and student performance have also resulted in revamped local governance structures and school finance mechanisms to respond to those demands. Such trends in the governance and finance of school systems provide insights into the barriers which prevent such coordinated policymaking, and also suggest the potential for increased integration across policy areas to promote school excellence.

For one, accountability has been worked into school finance structures by attempting to fund schools equitably and adequately. However, as the sources of funding have moved away from localities and towards centralized power at the state level, so has control over those funds. Though this has often been done to create more equitable funding of schools across socioeconomic strata, this equalizing force has been offset by certain hidden mechanisms in funding systems. For example, categorical funds have restricted the ways in which local districts spend their money, while local education foundations have often raised money at the local level to keep unequal funding levels in place between wealthier and poorer districts.

Secondly, the trend in many large urban school districts of mayors taking direct control over the school system is another response to calls for greater accountability. A greater degree of mayoral control in the schools has produced some gains in student performance in certain cities. However, the potential for a mayor to formalize coordinated planning between school districts and other municipal agencies in order to address school performance in coordination with greater social forces has yet to be realized.

Our analysis of how these two trends might promote or prevent more integrated policymaking to support enhanced school performance leads us to the following recommendations:

- Conduct research on the direct link between changes in governance structure and student achievement.
- Conduct more research to assess the effects that both greater state-level finance authority and hidden mechanisms in school funding have on educational equity.
- Implement a more inclusive approach to school finance that equalizes spending on instruction and non-instructional/support categories.

- Develop policy solutions that encourage and/or require state legislatures and state education agencies to define a notion of adequacy for the state's schools
- Institutionalize coordination across policy areas in cities with integrated city and school governance structures.

II. INTRODUCTION

Schools are among the key institutions which help define and shape neighborhoods, cities, and regions. Families with the means to choose where they live have long considered school quality an important factor in this decision. At the same time, schools are also a reflection of the neighborhoods, cities, and regions within which they are located. Student achievement in schools is influenced not only by what goes on in school, but also by larger social forces operating beyond school walls.

There is a growing recognition that increasing the vitality of cities and metropolitan areas requires improving the schools in these places and improving schools requires attention to the issues of the communities that surround them. Therefore, coordination is needed between school policies and the many other policies which affect communities – including such policy areas as land use, housing, transportation, and health. In order to succeed, all policy initiatives require funding and the cooperation of those who make crucial decisions about how to implement them. Therefore, any attempts to achieve greater coordination between these different policy areas must take into account traditional school governance and finance structures as well as alternatives to them.

This report examines the role of school governance and finance structures in improving schools and the communities around them. In particular, we seek to explore the following question:

“How can school governance and finance structures support enhanced school performance and increasingly vibrant cities and metropolitan regions?”

Recognizing the links between schools and communities described above, school performance must be defined broadly as encompassing not just student achievement in classes or on standardized tests, but also schools’ integration with the neighborhoods and constituencies they serve. Similarly, a key indicator of a “vibrant” neighborhood, city, or region is surely the quality of its schools.

We begin by discussing the history and background of school governance and finance issues and the mechanisms by which different governance models seek to ensure accountability. We then examine two key trends in terms of how they impact school performance and the integration between schools and cities/metropolitan regions:

- State-Level School Finance
- Strong Mayor Initiatives

We end by summarizing our conclusions and making five recommendations regarding both suggested short-term research topics and long-term policies.

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Traditionally, the systems of educational governance and finance in this country have emphasized local control. Education writer Michael Kirst notes that “historically, American education has been rooted in local policy, local management, and local financial control,

traditions deeply embedded in our political culture.”³¹⁸ Local school boards and committees, often directly elected, have made school policy and management decisions and financed schools by levying local property taxes. However, in recent decades the states and the federal government have played an increasingly important role in both governance and finance.

In addition to being rooted at the local level, the traditional system of educational governance and finance has been separated from other local governmental entities such as cities and counties. This has been the case both where school districts share the same geographic boundaries as cities or counties and where districts cross these boundaries. This “separate government for education, consisting chiefly of state and local education boards and superintendents” was intended to shield schools from politics.³¹⁹ The institutional separation between school systems and municipalities impedes the ability of these government agencies to coordinate policy in ways that could improve the efficiency and efficacy of programs in many areas.

Adding to the complexity of the governance and finance picture have been the numerous state and federal court decisions which have mandated changes in school systems. Due in part to these court cases as well as the publicity and research they have prompted, in recent decades standards-based reforms and calls for greater accountability of schools and local school districts has resulted in the increasing involvement of city, state, and federal government officials. There is a wide range of stakeholders at different levels of government who are now responsible for student performance at varying degrees. Table 1 chart depicts a breakdown of these stakeholders by sector.

TABLE 1: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Level of Accountability	Stakeholders
FEDERAL	President, Dept. of Education, Congress, Courts
STATE	Governor, Dept. of Education, Chief State School Officer, State Board of Education, Legislature, Court
LOCAL	Superintendent, School Board or Committee
SCHOOLS	Principal, Parents, Teachers

Literature Review

A number of existing works examine the complex, dynamic intersections of school governance and finance, accountability, and the integration of schools with the cities and regions in which they are situated. In *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*, Richard Rothstein argues that school-centered reforms are generally rendered ineffective due to the vast social inequities that inherently cause them. In our examination of the institutional dynamics between the governance structures and the funding mechanisms they preside over, it becomes abundantly clear that current reforms, at a minimum, must be made in a greater context than simply improving school site performance. Historically, this country has chosen to address school inequity entirely within the silos of established school governance mechanisms. Rothstein argues that such efforts are doomed. Boards of Education simply do not have the necessary scope of policy impact needed to fundamentally address the root causes of school inequity and the achievement gap. And, while educators should not simply “throw up their hands,” their mission will be critically impaired until public policy begins to

address fundamental problems of housing, transportation and zoning that inhibit families of different economic backgrounds from attending the same schools.³²⁰

In *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools*, Stone, Henig, Jones and Pierannunzi examine the concept of “civic capacity”, a measure of an urban area’s ability and willingness to create collaborative change in education; in their words, civic capacity is “about various sectors of the community coming together in an effort to solve a major problem.”³²¹ One of the first observations that Stone et al. make is that urban education reform often falters because it lacks collaboration with other political, social entities, both public and private, that are not strictly involved in the world of education. Furthermore, even when such collaboration does happen, the alliances are not often institutionalized in any way that allows them to “live beyond the moment.” Stone et al. are careful to note, however, that civic capacity is not a generic quality that can be easily be summoned by any city at any time. Pedro Noguera’s “Racial Isolation, Poverty, and the Limits of Local Control in Oakland” further examines the notion of social capital and the barriers to its creation in high-density poverty regions of cities such as Oakland, California.

In looking at recent trends toward mayoral takeovers of city schools, Michael Kirst’s 2003 work, “Mayoral Influence, New Regimes, and Public School Governance,” addresses the levels of involvement and the breadth of governance changes made by recent mayoral This text provides the most comprehensive look at governance changes in large urban public schools and a review of key studies that look at the different degrees of “mayoral takeover”. His study concludes that school performance has not been demonstrated to be linked to the degree of mayoral influence in the school district. However, a number of positive developments in cities with high levels of mayoral influence are highlighted.

In addition to giving the reasons for and historical background behind mayoral takeovers in large cities, Kenneth Wong and Francis Shen also note the gains that have been made in large urban school districts under mayoral control in “Big City Mayors and School Governance Reform: The Case of School District Takeover” (2002), and “Do School District Takeovers Work?” (2003), respectively. They offer brief case studies of districts in large cities that have been taken over by mayors. The most recent takeover, in New York City, has not been formally studied yet, but has been written about to a limited extent in education journals. Catherine Gewertz’s *Education Week* article, “Grading the Mayor” (2005) discusses key reforms made in New York City by Mayor Bloomberg since his reorganization of the public school system. She balances a list of key achievements with commentary by critics. One such critic is Sol Stern, who writes extensively about the politics behind and what he perceives to be the failure of the city’s standardized citywide reading and math curricula, as seen in his *Education Next* article, “A Negative Assessment: An Education Revolution that Never Was.” Joe Williams rebuts this claim in his *Education Next* article, “On the Positive Side: Bloomberg and Klein Seek to Repair a Failure Factory.” This article notes the gains made by the Bloomberg administration in five key areas: leadership training, school construction, contract reform, new schools, and cutting down on bureaucratic waste. Taken collectively, there are few conclusions to be drawn from the literature on mayoral takeover of large urban school districts.

On the finance side, Education Week's report "Quality Counts 2005: No Small Change: Targeting Money Toward School Performance" highlights the shift in focus from "equity" to "adequacy" in state-level public education finance systems brought on by a recent wave of litigation and the pressures to increase student performance under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. While states formerly focused primarily on how to distribute money equitably across districts, they are now paying increased attention to how the dollars are spent and what specific student performance results are produced. However, there is little agreement on how to calculate the cost of providing an "adequate" education, with estimates in different studies ranging from \$5000 to \$11,000 per pupil depending on the state and the method used. Thirty states have conducted studies on adequacy. Other trends in state-level education finance include a decreasing reliance on local property taxes, overall revenues rising (but not fast enough to keep up with costs), the introduction of incentive- and performance-based teacher salary schedules in a few states, weighting funding formulas to provide extra money for students with certain characteristics (including poverty, disabilities, or a lack of fluency in English) and the widespread use of categorical funding to provide restricted grants to schools for specific achievement-related purposes. Overall, this report indicates the extent to which school funding is increasingly being tied to student and school performance.³²²

Overall, these texts serve to examine the explicit and implicit mechanisms behind America's multifaceted public education system. While they describe the landscape of public education's shortcomings and define long-term problems that must be solved to achieve better results in education and urban settings, they do not address short-term, realistic implementation strategies to ensure that needed changes occur. In part, these works led to our desire to research existing finance and governance structures to determine the causes of – and remedies to – the lack of integration between schools and their surrounding metropolises. These works also prompted our specific recommendations for further study surrounding enhanced school performance.

IV. MODELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In recent years, accountability has become an increasingly important aspect of educational policy at all levels. However, there is no broad agreement on how to define accountability – who is to be accountable to whom and for what? The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy emphasizes accountability based on curriculum standards and standardized testing to ensure that all students are performing at an acceptable level. Schools are held accountable to parents and to the public in a number of ways, including through mandates about how federal funds are to be used in schools found to be failing. As defined below, the ways in which accountability is achieved through a governance system include:

1. The Electoral Model
2. The Participatory Democracy Model
3. The Market Model
4. The Legal Model *

Table 2 illustrates the mechanisms behind each model as well as the party to whom a school is primarily accountable through that model.

TABLE 2: ACCOUNTABILITY MODELS

Model	Key Accountability Mechanism	Party to Whom School is Primarily Accountable
Electoral	Voting	Citizens
Participatory Democracy	Active Involvement	Parents; Community
Market	Competition; Choice	Parents
Legal	Litigation	Courts

1. Electoral Model

In the electoral model, citizens hold schools accountable through elected officials who set school policy and oversee the school system’s administrators and teachers. If citizens are unhappy with the performance or policies in place in the schools, they can elect new officials or presumably even run for office themselves. The traditional locally elected school board is an example of this model. An independent school board appointed by an elected official such as a mayor or governor also relies on this accountability mechanism, although the chain of relationships between the citizens and the schools is longer and more indirect. Strong mayor initiatives are a somewhat different example of this model, where the accountability is centered on one particular elected official, but that official is responsible for other policy areas in addition to education.

* Depending on how one defines accountability, there may be more models and the exact terms used for each one vary depending on the author. The four models we are highlighting are the most relevant to our discussion of governance and finance structures. (See Adams, J E & Kirst, M, 1999, “New demands and concepts for educational accountability: striving for results in an era of excellence.” In J Murphy & K Louis (eds), *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration* (2nd edition), San Francisco, Jossey-Bass and Jane Armstrong, “What is an Accountability Model?” ECS Issue Paper. Education Commission of the States, July 2002; Noguera, Pedro. “Racial Isolation, Poverty, and the Limits of Local Control in Oakland,” *Teachers College Record* Volume 106, Number 11, November 2004, pp. 2146–2170.)

2. Participatory Democracy Model

In the participatory democracy model, parents and community members hold schools accountable directly through active participation with the school and direct dialogue with teachers, administrators, and school district officials. If parents and community members want to change school policy or performance, they have to show up at meetings and organize with others to put pressure on school officials. For many schools, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) serves as a point of dialogue between parents and school personnel about issues that arise regarding curriculum, instruction, and the general operation of the school. In some cases, the participatory democracy model has been institutionalized in the form of site-based management councils or parent/community advocates at the school site.

3. Market Model

In the market model parents hold schools accountable through competition between schools. Parents choose the best school for their child's needs based on information about the schools' performance and programs. If the parents are unhappy with the performance or policies of a school, they transfer their child to another school. The threat of losing the funding that goes along with each student and the prospect of gaining more funding by attracting more students provides an incentive for schools to perform and offer varied and innovative programs. All school choice programs, including charter schools, public school choice, and vouchers, rely to some extent on this model.

4. Legal Model

In the legal model of accountability, parents and other stakeholders hold school systems accountable through litigation in the court systems. Parents or others who feel that the existing system is violating rights guaranteed by the federal and/or state constitution bring litigation to challenge the system and ask courts to mandate changes. The most famous example is *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation in schools, which was the culmination of several decades of litigation. Landmark court cases include the following cases also discussed in the "State-Level School Finance Litigation: From Equity to Adequacy" section.

- *Serrano v. Priest* – Generally regarded as the first of the modern-era education finance litigation, this 1971 case (later appealed in 1976 and 1986) determined that the wealth-related disparities in per-pupil spending generated by California's education finance system violated the equal protection clause of the California constitution.
- *Williams v. State* – This class action lawsuit, filed in May 2000 on behalf of thousands of California public school children, challenged the State's failure to provide all students with basic educational necessities citing inadequate facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers and overcrowding in particular. Highlights of the 2004 settlement include \$800 million committed to emergency facilities repairs, a requirement that every student be provided textbooks, and the increased capacity of county superintendents.³²³
- *Abbott v. Burke* – The New Jersey Supreme Court, in seven separate rulings since 1981, has ordered the State to provide students in its 31 highest-need, mostly urban school districts with educational opportunities equal to their peers in the wealthier

suburbs. The ensuing education programs and reforms are considered by some to be the most fair and just in the nation and have served as a model education adequacy and equity framework for other states.³²⁴

Analysis of Models

Although each model offers a potential mechanism for holding schools accountable, there are problems with each as well. The electoral model requires citizens to be informed about school issues and the positions and records of incumbents and candidates for office on these issues. However, voter turnout in school board elections is generally low and research shows citizens “know little about the role of school boards in general.”³²⁵ When other candidates and elected officials at the city, state, and federal level claim to be taking responsibility for educational issues, it is unclear to what extent it is realistic to hold these officials accountable for student achievement or schools’ integration with communities. After all, “teachers and the students are at the end of a long chain of authority stretching from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue through state capitals to districts to local schools and finally into classrooms.”³²⁶ It is important to examine this “chain” closely to see who really has access to the levers which will affect school performance. Mayors, for example, may exert some influence on independently elected school board members through their general political clout, but it may be unrealistic to try to hold them accountable for school performance unless they are given direct control over the management and budgeting of the school system (as is generally done in strong mayor initiatives). Officials at higher levels may be too distant to exert direct influence except through policy mandates, with or without accompanying funding designated to carry them out.

Participatory democracy requires an even greater degree of knowledge and involvement on the part of parents and other members of the public. Both of these models are particularly problematic for communities with high concentrations of poverty or those where language and cultural barriers exist between parents and community members on the one hand and teachers and school officials on the other. Pedro Noguera notes that “poor communities typically lack the resources necessary to monitor the quality of education provided to their students” and suggests that building civic capacity and social capital in these communities is the best way to address this issue.³²⁷ This approach also has the potential to connect schools more closely with the communities they serve and may provide a stronger and longer-lasting form of accountability.

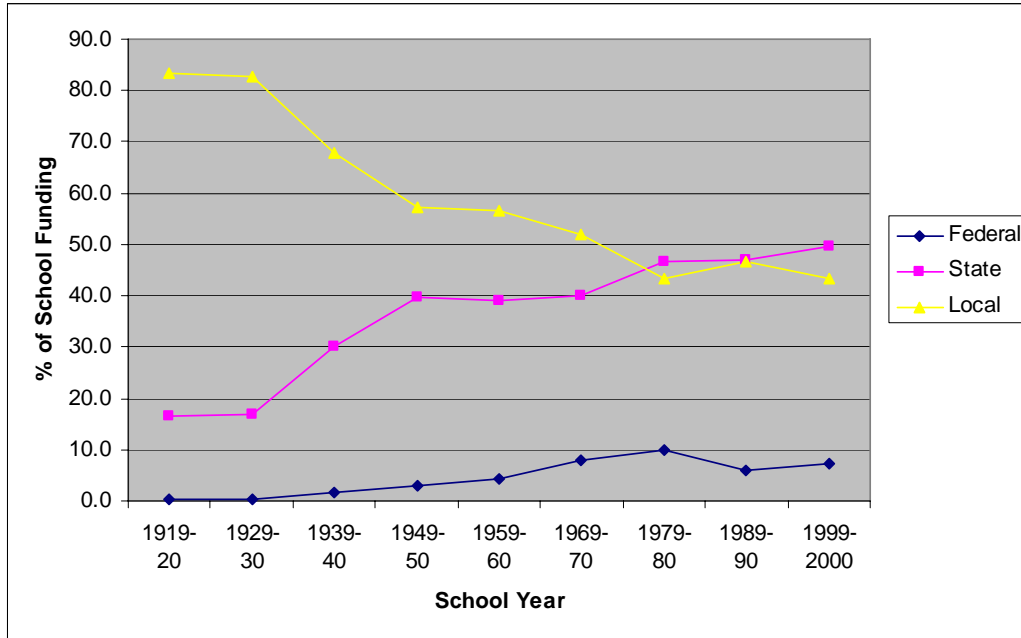
The legal model has the capacity to bring about fundamental and sweeping changes to large numbers of schools and districts at once. However, litigation is expensive to mount and takes many years. The court system also lacks the capacity to enforce its mandates directly or allocate funds to carry them out. Policymaking by courts can also be uncoordinated and may simply add to the administrative burden and complex regulations facing schools.

Most actual school governance systems in place today rely on a combination of these models to hold schools accountable for student achievement, sound financial management, and offering curricula and programs that meet the economic and social needs of the broader community. Additionally, the onset of standards-based reform across the nation has increased the degree to which the state is responsible for accountability in schools. NCLB has not only reinforced the role of standards, and extended the power of the state in holding schools accountable, but also has increased attention to individual school performance.

V. FINANCE OVERVIEW

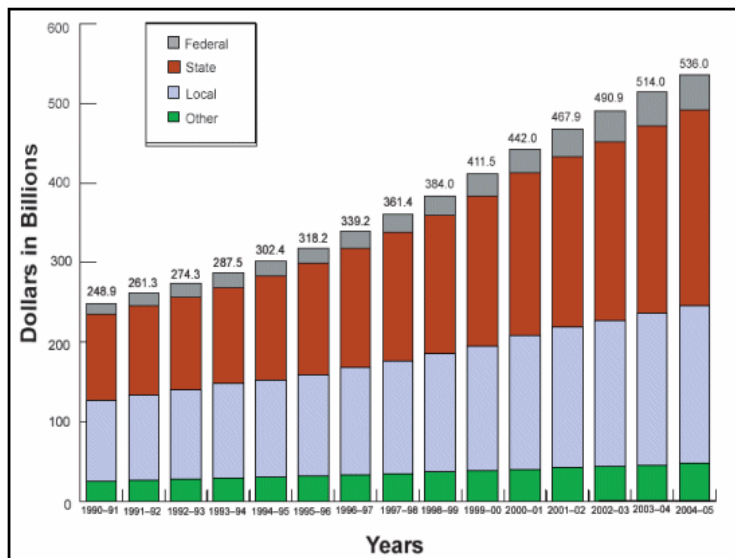
Historically, the largest single source of public school funding has come from local sources such as property taxes. In the early part of the 20th century, this source represented over 80% of school funding, but since World War II, the state and federal share of school funding has increased. (See Figure 1)

FIGURE 1: LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL SHARE OF SCHOOL FUNDING³²⁸



In recent years, state dollars leveraged mostly through corporate, income and sales taxes have generally made up the largest source of revenues. Federal dollars generally represent less than 8% of dollars spent on public elementary and secondary education in a given school year, as represented above.³²⁹ Total expenditures for public education for grades pre-kindergarten through 12 exceed \$500 billion per year, while the average spent per student is \$7,734 and is projected to jump to \$9,400 by 2013.³³⁰ (See Figure 2)

FIGURE 2: TOTAL U.S. EXPENDITURES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION BY REVENUE SOURCE³³¹



Sources: NCES, "Common Core of Data," surveys and unpublished data.

Hidden Mechanisms of Funding

These figures obscure some hidden mechanisms in the school finance system. It is important to note that decision-making power regarding educational policy, including how to spend funds, is not necessarily proportional to the funding sources cited above. For example, while much of the funding for public schools comes from revenues collected at the local level, this does not necessarily imply that control over how the funds are used remains at this level. In some states, state formulas designed in response to equity and adequacy litigation result in most or all of local education revenues actually being distributed by the state. Similarly, although the direct federal expenditures on education are a small portion of total education spending, the federal NCLB legislation represents a major shift of educational policymaking from the local to the state and federal levels.

Looking at the direct expenditures also obscures hidden mechanisms that alter the picture of where educational funding is really coming from. For example, since many taxpayers are able to deduct some state and local taxes from their federal taxes, the indirect federal support of education may be much higher. While the direct federal subsidies are targeted at low-income students, the indirect subsidies tend to benefit higher-income districts much more than low-income districts.³³²

Additionally, private non-profit foundations can play a significant role in funding individual schools. At the local level, active PTA groups can subsidize the often restricted public funding of their children's schools with private funding obtained through fundraisers and independent grant-writing. Additionally, local education foundations which raise money from the local community and then grant it to schools are one example. Categorical funds and local education foundations are among the many hidden mechanisms which hamper policymakers efforts to address the

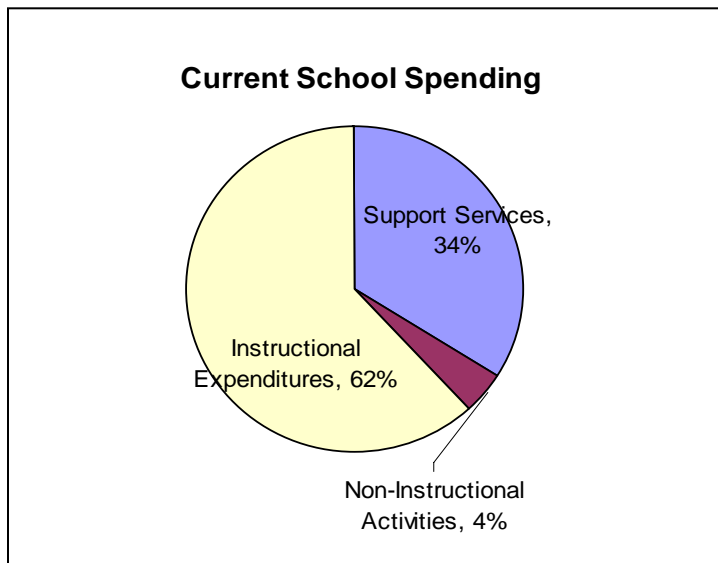
problems of inequitable and inadequate educational opportunities afforded by the public school system.

The Education Dollar

Numerous studies show that non-education factors such as physical and mental health and transportation contribute to both student and school underperformance.³³³ By design, traditional school finance models and funding formulas assign less importance to these “external” factors. Increasing the proportion of expenditures spent on such factors is likely to increase school performance. The breakdown of the average education dollar reinforces the fact that such factors are not prioritized. The three categories of public education dollars are:

1. Instructional Expenditures (62%): teacher salaries and benefits, supplies (e.g., textbooks), and purchase services;
2. Support Services (34%): operation and maintenance of buildings, school administration, transportation, and other student and school support services (e.g., student counseling, libraries, health services); and
3. Non-Instructional Activities (4%): school meals and enterprise activities (e.g., bookstores)³³⁴

FIGURE 3: CURRENT SCHOOL SPENDING BY EXPENDITURE CATEGORY³³⁵



VI. TREND: STATE-LEVEL SCHOOL FINANCE

From Equity to Adequacy

Traditionally, local property taxes have funded schools within each school district, but this has caused disparities in school quality based on the relative wealth of surrounding neighborhoods. Given the high levels of housing segregation by socioeconomic class and race that persist in this country, and this has contributed to the achievement gaps between students of different racial and class backgrounds. Having found elected officials unable to resolve this problem, parents from poorer districts and their allies have used the legal system to hold states accountable for providing an equitable and adequate education for all students, bringing litigation challenging state school financing systems as violating the federal equal protection clause and/or state constitutional guarantees regarding public education.

The first wave of litigation, arguing that state school financing systems violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution began with the 1971 *Serrano v. Priest* decision in California but quickly came to halt when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that socioeconomic class was not a protected class under the equal protection clause in their 1974 decision in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* decision. The second wave of litigation, based on state constitutional provisions, began with the 1973 *Robison v. Cahill* case in New Jersey and also focused on equity. We are now in the third wave of litigation, which began in 1989 and focused on adequacy – states’ responsibility to provide an adequate education for all students.³³⁶ Sixteen states are currently facing school finance litigation, along with suits in twenty other states that have already been decided or settled.³³⁷

State school finance litigation has had a significant impact on school governance and finance systems, shifting the balance of control over school funds from the local to the state level. The recent shift from equity to adequacy also has important implications, redefining accountability by tying funding to student performance rather than student attendance. Mandating adequacy rather than equity focuses on the outputs rather than the inputs of schooling. It defines a level of student performance that shows that the student has received an adequate basic public education and mandates that the state allocate money as is necessary to bring all students up to this level. Translating this into practice is not easy as “an adequacy standard poses challenges for policy makers. It is not clear, for example, what adequacy means and what educational objectives it sets for students and schools.”³³⁸

Educational researcher Lawrence Picus describes three methods that have been identified for determining the cost of an “adequate educational program:”

- The **cost function model**, favored by economists, uses “complex statistical analysis to ascertain the mix of inputs needed to reach a given level of student outcomes.”
- The **observational method** involves setting spending guidelines based on expenditures observed in school districts that already meet the specified outcome levels.
- The **professional judgment model** relies on “teams of educators” to “define the components needed to establish a prototype school that...will have enough resources to enable a specified percentage of students to meet established standards. The cost of those resources is then estimated to ascertain an adequate level of funding.”³³⁹

A school finance system based on adequacy would likely result in allocating more resources to school districts that serve large numbers of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. As noted above, school performance is closely linked to numerous factors external to the school, such as the housing and health status of students, and schools will require additional resources to address these issues in coordination with other government and non-profit agencies. Responding to the pressing needs of a community is a necessary, but expensive, component of increasing student performance. Analyses based on the cost function model have “typically resulted in funding estimates for urban schools that are two to three times higher than current funding levels – and higher than funding levels identified for other school districts in the state. Although such differences might be appropriate given the tremendous educational needs of students in central cities, political and financial hurdles make this a difficult model to implement.”³⁴⁰

While state-controlled financing has the potential to redistribute school funding in this fashion, budget constraints represent a major constraint. The increasing shift to a more state-controlled school funding system has put further pressure on ever-shrinking state budgets.³⁴¹ State governments have been struggling to develop financing mechanisms at the state level that provide schools with the resources they need, given the revenue available. Thirty-one states are currently reevaluating their funding formulas and funding distribution strategies.³⁴²

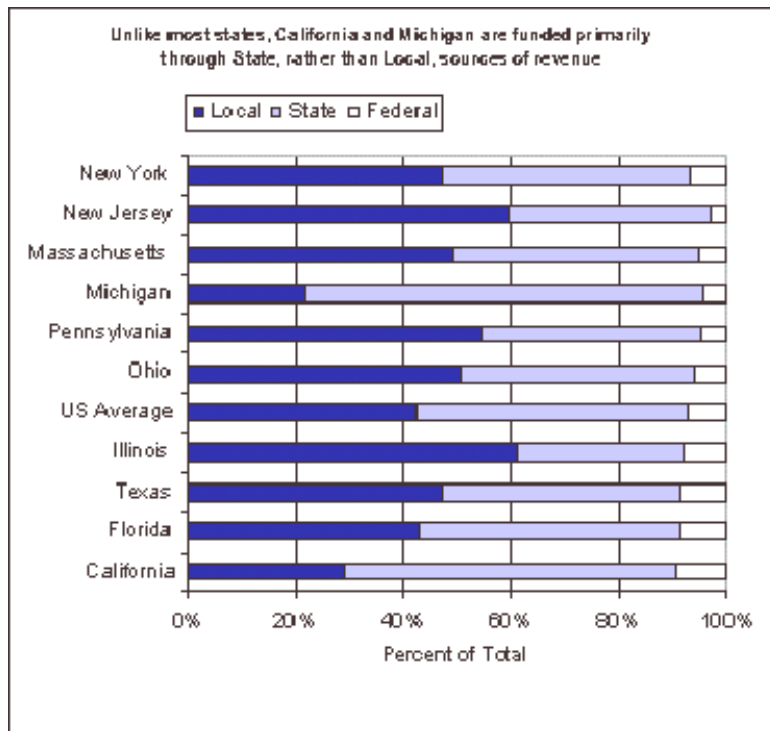
Increasing centralization of funding control at the state instead of the local level naturally leads to a corresponding shift in the power over school policy from the local to the state level. State legislatures and education officials, charged with the distributing a large portion of school funds, respond to pressing educational issues and lobbying by interest groups to create categorical funds which can only be spent in particular program areas. This means that district and school leaders have less flexibility in responding to the needs of their particular student population in trying to improve student achievement. It may even impede efforts to provide “adequacy” since these local officials may know better how to respond to the social, economic, and educational challenges faced by their students. For every move that has been made to revamp state school finance systems to alleviate the disparity between high-wealth and low-wealth districts, the more affluent communities have found ways around the system which ensure that their schools will still have more resources.

VII. STATE-LEVEL SCHOOL FINANCING: CASE STUDIES

Two key strategies have been used at the state-level to influence equity and adequacy of schools across districts. States like Michigan and California have designed state-controlled school finance systems to limit the effect of local revenues on a persistent achievement gap in search of equity. Other states, such as Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey, use a funding formula that allocates more money per pupil to schools serving high concentrations of children in poverty, in order to ensure the adequacy of education for all schools.³⁴³

In California and Michigan, schools receive the majority of their funding from the state, not from local property taxes, as illustrated in the graph below.

FIGURE 4: RANKINGS AND ESTIMATES 2001-02³⁴⁴



Michigan

In 1993, Michigan voted in favor of a ballot initiative to eliminate property taxes as a source of school funding, becoming the first state to move toward state-level control as a strategy to mitigate the large per-student funding differentials between districts.³⁴⁵ Instead, the state would receive revenues through a variety of sources, including a 50 percent sales tax increase. The measure achieved many of its goals.³⁴⁶ Overall funding for public schools has increased by more than 50 percent since 1994, and eliminating property taxes as a means of school funding has narrowed the spending gap in many areas around the state, boosted funding for the poorest districts, and reduced property taxes. The state is now responsible for providing approximately 80 percent of school funding.³⁴⁷

Some argue that quality has been sacrificed as a result of this shift to state-level authority over school funds, especially for smaller districts. The lack of local control can limit a small school's ability to provide educational services. Since Michigan's funding formula does not lend itself to a per-pupil model, a classroom has the same operating expenses whether there are three children or thirty.³⁴⁸

California

California's state-level controlled school finance reform stems from the 1976 decision *Serrano v. Priest*, which ruled that California's property tax rates and per pupil expenditures should be equalized, and the 1978 Proposition 13, which placed a statewide cap on property tax increases.³⁴⁹ The state administers funding both through a per-pupil formula and through categorical programs, which complement funding to provide schools with adequate resources.

Since property values do not have a direct correlation to the amount of funding the schools receive from the state, funding can be more equitable between poor and wealthy communities.

Certain communities, however, have developed strategies to capture additional categorical funds that are not dedicated to disadvantaged schools, or do their own fundraising to compensate for insufficient state dollars. As such, some argue that California should create one simple funding mechanism based on a “weighted student formula” that would include one base allocation equalized across the state and additional weighted funds for students with additional needs.³⁵⁰

VIII. TREND: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: STRONG MAYOR INITIATIVES

In the last 15 years, a trend has emerged in large urban school districts such as Chicago, New York, and Boston, where mayors have taken direct control over the school system. Most recently, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has announced his ambition to do so as well. Many of these leaders recognize the importance of school quality in retaining middle-class families. Indeed business and civic leaders in many cities have come to view “the improvement of deeply troubled city schools [as] critical to urban economic development.”³⁵¹ In many cases they were responding to a perception of entrenched underperformance in schools and institutional fragmentation that made it hard to hold anyone accountable. Strong mayor initiatives centralize accountability on a single, visible elected official. This may increase the efficacy of the electoral model of accountability as voters know who to hold accountable for school performance.³⁵² Once in power, however, mayors may pursue policies which make use of other accountability models, such as the market model, by promoting charter schools and other public school choice options. While governance shifts, such as state takeovers, may also centralize authority on one individual, mayoral takeovers “differ from state takeovers, because unlike state-appointed superintendents, mayors are politically accountable to their constituents. If parents and residents are unhappy with the progress of educational reform, they can choose to vote the mayor out of office. When state-appointed officials are put in charge, however, it is sometimes difficult to see who is accountable if the district does not improve.”³⁵³

Mayors are uniquely positioned to use their political influence to mobilize resources and support for school reform, reduce institutional fragmentation and coordinate policy between schools and other areas. Mayoral takeover, or “integrated governance,” typically involves mayors:

- reducing the size of existing boards of education,
- appointing its members, and
- taking responsibility for rehabilitating failing schools.

Strong mayor initiatives represent a move towards centralization of power within the school district. In addition, mayors may choose to encourage the development of charter schools, small schools, and other types of schools that have significant levels of autonomy. In this sense, the end result of a mayoral takeover may be increased governance power at the school level for some schools and decreased power at this level for others which remain in the traditional district system. It almost certainly represents a shift of power away from the central office bureaucracy, whose influence is often replaced by managers and policymakers from the mayor’s office. Big-

city mayors may have the political clout to move school governance towards a system that harnesses the “comparative advantage” that different levels of the school governance system – classrooms, schools, districts, states, and the federal government – wield for making decisions that will support improved student learning.³⁵⁴

To date there is no research evidence that proves a direct link between changes in governance and student achievement.³⁵⁵ However, cities with the highest levels of mayoral involvement – Chicago, New York, and Boston – show some positive effects.³⁵⁶ Mayors bring political clout and ties to business leaders, which can result in increased support for public schools. Strong mayors have had an impact on increased funding for schools, streamlined and coordinated school district bureaucracy, and presided over gains in student achievement. The effect of strong mayors is due, at least in part, to charismatic leadership, which may mean that the effect of the governance changes involved in mayoral takeovers of schools has been overstated. Increasing civic capacity must also be a part of the puzzle as a means to institutionalize this shift. Opposition among some in the African-American community in Boston and among some community groups in Chicago indicate that support for the strong mayor initiatives has not been universal, and the existing civic capacity of the communities is not necessarily being utilized in this reform effort.³⁵⁷

School district leaders and school boards have not succeeded in affecting cross-issue area policymaking in a city, due to their limited roles. A mayor, however, has the unique capacity to coordinate citywide initiatives to positively influence school performance, more broadly defined. It is not clear that mayors who have gained control of schools systems have used their position to formalize integrated policymaking across issue areas, such as community development, housing, urban planning, and health policy. It is likely, however, that mayoral control over the schools increases the likelihood that planners and officials in the school system will interact with their counterparts in other departments around issues of common interest.

IX. STRONG MAYOR INITIATIVES: CASE STUDIES

Boston

After the desegregation and school busing controversies of the 1970s, Boston voted to elect a thirteen-member School Committee made up of representatives from each neighborhood, to reflect the diversity of the city itself. This model was extremely popular with the citizens of Boston, although unfortunately, those who ran for School Committee positions tended to be those with higher political aspirations, energized by the heightened political environment at the time.³⁵⁸ As such, School Committee meetings were highly political, with each member advocating in the best interest of the schools in their districts, instead of working to improve Boston Public Schools (BPS) as a system. Several Superintendents resigned from their posts, citing an inability to work with the School Committee.

The political hostility of the 1980s, coupled with declining quality of schools, prompted then Mayor Raymond Flynn worked to pass a referendum that would give the Mayor sole responsibility over the school system, which passed by only a very thin margin. In 1991, the Massachusetts State Legislature passed Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991: An Act Reorganizing

the School Committee in the City of Boston.³⁵⁹ This statute abolished the elected Boston School Committee, and established a seven-member Committee to be appointed by the Mayor of Boston. The new Committee would no longer serve as a decision making body, but would instead take on an advisory role to the Mayor and the Superintendent of BPS. Included in the legislation was a provision to hold a ballot election in 1996, giving the citizens of Boston the opportunity to repeal the Act and return to an elected School Committee.

In the years between 1991 and 1996, the move from an elected School Committee to an appointed School Committee became extremely popular in the city of Boston, as evidenced by the 1996 referendum in which 70% of voters re-approved the appointed Boston School Committee. Notably, this result came despite little support from the African-American community.³⁶⁰

In 1995, “the stars aligned” with the appointment of Superintendent Tom Payzant, a leader with a strong educational background and former Superintendent of three other cities.³⁶¹ Payzant was the first Superintendent to be appointed by the newly-appointed School Committee, and has encouraged cooperation and collaboration between the Mayor’s Office, the Superintendent and the School Committee. Mayor Thomas Menino has aligned his policy priorities with those of the Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, allowing for meaningful cross-issue policy development. It has been a relatively “quiet” scene in BPS ever since Payzant’s appointment.³⁶²

Mayor Menino has made education and improving the Boston Public Schools a keystone of his platform, and has enjoyed a groundswell of support. As the first mayor to appoint the members of the School Committee, he has overseen a \$60 million increase in the budget for Boston’s schools.³⁶³ The teachers’ union, once strongly opposed to the mayoral takeover, is now firmly behind the Mayor. His major accomplishments include new attendance, homework and social promotion policies, progress toward wiring every school to the Internet, and a significant increase on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test scores. For example, 41% of 10th graders tested at proficient reading levels in 2002, up from 23% in 1998.³⁶⁴ In addition, the number of failing students at the lowest-performing schools has fallen at a faster rate than the district as a whole.³⁶⁵

Chicago

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) experience under Mayor Richard Daley’s control has been marked by a reduction in bureaucratic authority and increased measure-based accountability at all levels. Test scores initially rose, particularly for the elementary schools with the lowest scores, per-pupil expenditures have increased, and schools benefit from more public- and private-sector financial support.³⁶⁶ Daley’s efforts might offer the best characterization of a mayoral takeover done to attract the middle class back to the city. Paul Vallas, the first CEO of CPS appointed by Daley, marked his tenure with a number of initiatives aimed at further encouraging higher performing students in the district. While promoting the creation of new magnet and charter schools filled with programs for advanced students, such as the International Baccalaureate degree, Vallas also oversaw the establishment of a number of alternative schools founded to house lower-performing students removed from regular schools.³⁶⁷

Also part of his efforts to attract the middle class, Daley's Renaissance 2010* initiative could be seen as an example of a mayor's ability to coordinate resources across policy areas. Veronica Anderson, Editor of *Catalyst Chicago*, an independent newsmagazine created in 1990 to document, analyze and support school-improvement efforts in the Chicago Public Schools, cited Renaissance 2010 and the increased number of smaller community schools that have opened since 1995 as the greatest example of coordinated policies occurring as a result of Mayor Daley's school district takeover. These schools are open for extended hours and offer programs for parents to encourage them to utilize school facilities as well. The Mayor's push to change the face of public housing, the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation, was explicitly coordinated with Renaissance 2010. This plan involves the closing of schools in neighborhoods where the housing was redeveloped and the construction of new schools strategically built in surrounding areas.³⁶⁸

Renaissance 2010, with its emphasis on opening small schools, charter schools, and contract schools, is an example of a mayor using his power to promote decentralization and autonomy for many schools, even while he maintains overall control over and accountability for the entire school system. Renaissance 2010 has been controversial, as community and teacher groups have complained that they were not included in the planning process. Others have expressed concerns that these policies will result in gentrification that displaces many low-income residents and primarily benefits the middle class and about the level of privatization involved in plans for new schools.³⁶⁹ Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan has responded to such concerns by noting the benefits of providing school choice as a system of accountability, and by highlighting the gains made by schools that have been reopened since the plan was implemented.³⁷⁰

While strong mayor initiatives have the potential to increase coordination between school policy and other areas of local policymaking, there appears to be little evidence of an institutionalization of coordination of this sort in Chicago, but informal coordination does occur in some areas. While CPS and Mayor Daley's office are in "constant communication" on a daily basis, neither entity reports any official policies that serve to coordinate efforts.³⁷¹ Part of this seems to be due to the fact that Mayor Daley has been in office for 17 years and has been in charge of the schools for the past 11 of those years. For example, Assistant to the Mayor for Education, Sandra Cardenas says that while there are no written policies in place, whenever the city looks to build new housing developments or schools, or design new public bus routes and turnarounds, all city departments are aware of the plans, the school district being one of them.³⁷² She states that since Mayor Daley took over the school system and appointed all members of the school board, all city planning processes are more transparent and seamless.³⁷³ This system does not seem to mandate or even actively encourage coordinated efforts, but rather accepts them as part and parcel of a longstanding bureaucracy. Upon election of a new mayor, such an informal system – i.e., one based on idiosyncratic relationships – could easily dissolve.

Veronica Anderson, Editor of *Catalyst Chicago*, is, however, encouraged by the takeover.³⁷⁴ She states that many of the positive outcomes – such as the ending of social promotion – which have

* Renaissance 2010 is the Mayor's plan to turn around Chicago's most troubled elementary and high schools by creating 100 new schools in neighborhoods across the city by 2010.

arisen since 1995 are unlikely to ever be reversed.* Additionally, she holds that there is ultimately an umbilical cord between the school district and the Mayor, regardless of whether it is considered formal or informal, since Mayor Daley has ultimate authority and must approve all major decisions. For example, since Arne Duncan and Michael W. Scott, CPS Board President were hired, there has been a push to lower busing costs by re-designing the school bus system around centralized pick-up points; Mayor Daley has been aware of this plan since its inception and has been integral in its implementation.

New York City

Before Mayor Bloomberg took over New York City's public schools in 2002, they were governed by 32 independent boards of education that were created as part of a comprehensive decentralization movement born out of the Civil Rights Era. The Mayor has trimmed this down to 10 regional superintendents who answer to the newly appointed schools Chancellor, Joel Klein. Furthermore, while the former decentralized structure had the same local governing bodies concerned with both instructional and operational oversight, those responsibilities are now split amongst newly created regional offices. The regional superintendents oversee 113 Local Instructional Superintendents whose duty is to focus on classroom instruction through school visits. Administrative and operational tasks are the sole concern of six Regional Operations Centers. This division appears to have removed much of the overlapping administrative layers that characterized the former Boards of Education, and has fostered a district-wide focus on instructional accountability.³⁷⁵ There is concern, however, that even with the reorganization some overlap of responsibilities remains, as in the fact that principals are to be rated by both the regional superintendents and the Local Instructional Superintendents. Additionally, some have criticized the fact that parent councils are not permitted to have binding input in the rating, hiring, or firing of principals.³⁷⁶

Since this is the most recent takeover in a major city, concrete results are few, but are seemingly positive for the most part. In 2004, the overall graduation rate in the city's high schools went up to 54%, from 50.8% in 2002. In the most recent round of reading tests, the city's fourth graders scored a 9.9% gain, which was the largest on record. Record gains were also made in 2005 by 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th graders in reading and math scores.³⁷⁷ The city's new single, unified curriculum has been cited as a large reason for gains in test scores and a shrinking achievement gap between white and minority students.³⁷⁸ Though support for the reading and math curricula is certainly not uniform across all teachers, its popularity with school principals might be gauged by the fact that of the 209 schools that were exempted from using the program, 120 have asked to join part of it.³⁷⁹ However, some critics believe that the curriculum has deeply frustrated teachers by hampering their creativity.³⁸⁰

Like Chicago's Mayor Daley, Mayor Bloomberg appears to be attempting to balance centralization of power with returning some power to principals and parents. Central fiscal and administrative staff are dealing directly with principals instead of old district intermediaries whose positions were eliminated. Principals have also been given more discretionary power over their budgets, and are responsible for the hiring and firing of each school's new Parent

* Social promotion is defined as a practice "where students are allowed to continue to pass through school with their peers without satisfying academic requirements or meeting performance indicators at key grades," *Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion*, 1999, Department of Education, Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley.

Coordinators, of which there are now 1,185 across the city.³⁸¹ The creation of new Parent Coordinator positions and elected community councils for every school could be seen as an attempt at building civic capacity by institutionalizing community voice, but for now the councils have only an advisory role.³⁸² Furthermore, the recently negotiated teachers' contract makes it easier for principals to deal with underperforming staff, which has been partly responsible for the fact that all New York City teachers are certified, while four years earlier, 15% were not certified.

One of the ways in which mayoral takeovers can lead to improvement in schools is when mayors use their political clout to bring in additional resources. Mayor Bloomberg was able to use his political clout to secure more state funding for school construction in New York City in this year's budget. He halted school construction projects in the districts of legislators who did not support the budget additions. He also threatened to personally help fund the challengers of any Republican state senators who refused to support the inclusion of those funds in the budget.³⁸³ Ultimately, to the surprise of many lawmakers, the budget signed by Governor Pataki included \$20.6 billion over five years for 97 school construction projects.

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) may be the next large urban district to have its governance structure reorganized under mayoral control. Despite high levels of support for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's planned takeover of LAUSD, some have called LA the "most difficult" city for such a plan to succeed in, mainly due to the fact that 20 percent of the 740,000 students in LAUSD actually attend schools in cities outside of Los Angeles.³⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Mayor Villaraigosa has revealed several key points about the plan which suggest that his model mirrors those of Chicago and New York City on a couple of dimensions. At the time of this writing, the California State Assembly has not yet considered legislation to put control of the LAUSD in the hands of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Further, there is no clear indication of the chances such legislation would have in passing through the State Senate and House. However, Governor Schwarzenegger has pledged his support for the proposal.

Part of the Mayor's takeover plan seems to take cues from Mayor Bloomberg's recent attempts to balance overall centralization of decision making power in the district, allowing principals more control over their individual school budgets. Under the plan, principals would be given direct handling of 90% of their school's resources in an attempt to force the decentralization of the existing ineffectual bureaucracy.³⁸⁵ Additionally, Mayor Villaraigosa intends to have a focus on leadership training similar to that of Mayor Bloomberg, pledging to create a principals' academy. The plan also includes the creation of parent coordinator positions in all schools, modeled after those recently created in New York City.³⁸⁶

As is the case with Chicago, the City of Los Angeles seems to have put little thought into designing explicit formal mechanisms to ensure coordination between the governance of city services and the governance of the schools. According to Marcus Castain, Mayor Villaraigosa's appointed Associate Director, Education, Youth & Families, the Mayor's overall restructuring plan would allow for more opportunities for the city and the school district to tie-in programming together, however, turning those "opportunities" into

legitimate mechanisms is too challenging and too costly.³⁸⁷ If Mayor Villaraigosa's much talked about takeover succeeds, instead of the Mayor taking responsibility for such a monumental coordination task, he will rely on the management team he assigns to the school district to do so that instead.

Where Mayor Villaraigosa's school governance plan departs from those of other cities is in the jurisdiction of his office and the makeup of the reorganized school board. As mentioned above, some have expressed concern over the fact that LAUSD's boundaries encompass several cities in addition to Los Angeles. Though many parents have expressed support for making the mayor the focal point of accountability, some have questioned how well residents in the collar cities around Los Angeles will hold the Mayor accountable for failures in their schools.³⁸⁸ The way Villaraigosa has addressed this is another element in the plan that makes it unique from mayoral takeovers in other cities. The only policy that the Mayor's Office is sure will officially change under the plan is that the California State Education code which will be amended with a few paragraphs that outline the replacement of LAUSD's elected school board with a council of seven mayors.³⁸⁹ These mayors would represent the seven cities which LAUSD encompasses. This council would convene only twice per year – once in May to review the district budget and once in June to pass the budget.

Should Mayor Villaraigosa's plan pass through the Assembly and be signed into law, it would provide an interesting additional case from which to judge the effectiveness of centralizing power in large urban school districts. Given the close resemblance of elements in the plan to those in Chicago and New York City, it appears that we might expect the experience in LAUSD to be similar to that of Chicago and New York. However, the inclusion within LAUSD of schools that fall outside of Los Angeles's boundaries clearly poses a challenge to Mayor Villaraigosa. This could prove to be instructive in determining whether or not the ability of voters to hold a single official accountable for the performance of their schools has much bearing on the performance of those schools.

X. CONCLUSIONS

Revamped local governance structures and school finance mechanisms are a response to the increasing demand for school district accountability at state and federal levels. At the state level, legal strategies to hold states accountable for equity and adequacy in school funding have led to a shift in the control of funding towards states. The move from equity to adequacy has resulted in funding increasingly being tied to student performance rather than student attendance, but huge political and policy challenges remain in figuring out how to implement funding mechanisms based on adequacy standards. Meanwhile, wealthier parents and districts continually find ways to ensure that the schools their children attend have more than adequate resources, utilizing such hidden mechanisms as Local Education Foundations.

Strong mayor initiatives represent a reversal of the longstanding separation of city and school governance and therefore have the potential to bring about greater integration of schools with cities and metropolitan regions. These governance changes centralize accountability on one visible, local elected official. Mayors are able to bring their political clout to bear on such issues

as streamlining fragmented and inefficient bureaucracies and increasing public and private funding for schools. They are also in a position to support greater integration of school policy with policies in other areas, such as housing, land use, transportation and health, and appear to be doing so in some cases, but it is unclear that this coordination is being institutionalized in formal ways. In order to address the external factors influencing school performance, including segregation, educational equity, funding, poverty and health, integrated governance structures must be institutionalized to support coordinated planning between school districts and other municipal agencies. In order to ensure the success of school reform efforts, there must be increased civic capacity to draw stakeholders from various sectors within the region. Electoral accountability must be backed up with accountability based on participatory democracy.

These two trends are in some ways in tension with one another. State finance litigation has shifted control over funding from the local to the state level, while strong mayor initiatives consolidate authority in the hands of a local elected official. This poses the danger that these two policy trends could undermine each other. This is typical of the problems that characterize the highly decentralized and complex system of governance and finance that has evolved from years of policymaking by local school boards, state legislatures, Congress, state and federal courts, and others in the web of school governance and finance actors.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are five recommendations, the first two of which suggest more immediate research and further study, while the last three require large-scale policy-related action.

Recommendation One: Continue to Research Mayoral Takeovers

Although there has been a great deal of attention paid to mayor takeovers of school systems, no research has been done to date to determine the direct effect of these initiatives on school performance. Researchers should examine the impact of strong mayors on school performance, and whether the impact of a mayoral takeover would have a lasting effect, particularly through the election of new mayors in these cities. To assess the degree to which integrated governance impacts schools, this research should examine school performance using a broad definition, including student achievement and well-being as well as schools integration with and responsiveness to the surrounding neighborhoods, cities, and regions.

Recommendation Two: Address “Hidden Mechanisms” of School Funding

At the state level, research should be conducted on the effect of greater state-level finance authority on educational equity. In particular, there is a need for the collection and dissemination of accurate information about the ways in which hidden mechanisms such as PTAs, non-profit corporations, Local Education Foundations and categorical funds impact equity and adequacy. Research should be conducted to find out the nature of the various forms of individual fundraising on the state, district and school levels, as well as to determine the overall impact on schools that receive such funding, financially and academically.

Recommendation Three: Re-envisioning The Public School Dollar

A more inclusionary approach to school finance would equalize spending on instruction and non-instructional/support categories by adding additional funding to support such areas as counseling, health, nutrition, and transportation without cutting existing instructional expenditures (See Figure 5). This is not to say teachers should receive lower salaries or fewer benefits, but rather that support services, such as school counselors, and non-instructional activities, such as school meals, should be recognized as equally as important as teachers. To ensure enhanced school performance, teacher benefits and salaries could remain the same or grow, but funding for support services and non-instructional activities would need to grow at a faster rate.

Recommendation Four: Redefining Adequacy

Develop policy solutions that encourage and/or require state legislatures and state education agencies to define a notion of adequacy for the state's schools. The state-level financing of schools must be designed to meet this level of adequacy, and the resources to do so must be allocated by a combination of federal, state and local funds. National organizations such as the Council for Chief State School Officers, the National League of Cities or the National Education Association might be effective partners to advocate for the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation Five: Institutionalize Coordinated Government Initiatives

Cities with integrated city and school governance need to institutionalize coordination across policy areas. As it stands, integrated governance has only resulted in informal coordination that may not outlast changes in mayoral administrations. Instead, there should be formal procedures in place to ensure that housing, transportation, and health policies are made in conjunction with school policy.



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- ³⁷⁹ Barrett, Wayne. Oct. 15-21, 2003.
- ³⁸⁰ Stern, Sol. "A Negative Assessment: An Education Revolution that Never Was." *Education Next*, Fall 2005.
- ³⁸¹ Barrett, Wayne. Oct. 15-21, 2003.
- ³⁸² Ibid.
- ³⁸³ Cooper, Michael. "New money for school construction but not daily expenses." *New York Times*. March 30, 2006. sec. B, col. 2, pg. 1.
- ³⁸⁴ Gewertz, Catherine. "Kirst says LA mayoral takeover schools would be difficult." *Education Week*. January 4, 2006.
- ³⁸⁵ Phone Interview with Marcus Castain, Associate Director, Education, Youth & Families, City of Los Angeles, May 2, 2006.
- ³⁸⁶ Helfamd, D. and Hymon, S. "Mayor's school takeover would bypass local voters." *Los Angeles Times*. April 19, 2006, Section A, p. 1.
- ³⁸⁷ Phone Interview with Marcus Castain, Associate Director, Education, Youth & Families, City of Los Angeles, May 2, 2006
- ³⁸⁸ Gold, Scott. "Takeover views mixed." *Los Angeles Times*. April 23, 2006, Section A, p. 1.
- ³⁸⁹ Phone Interview with Marcus Castain, Associate Director, Education, Youth & Families, City of Los Angeles, May 2, 2006.

APPENDIX B: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (SELECTED WORKS)

Beaumont, Constance E. with Elizabeth G. Pianca. 2002. "Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School." Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation

First published in 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation report *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School* describes the loss of historic neighborhood schools in many towns and cities across the United States. Faced with an increase in school-aged populations, a need for the school facilities upgrades and a common belief that "new is better", many school districts have

abandoned older, often historic neighborhood schools for newer facilities located at the edges of town. The effects of school location decisions have often resulted in negative impacts on both educational and neighborhood quality. State funding biases and building codes favor new construction over renovation, and minimum acreage standards for schools have pushed school facilities to the “greenfield” fringes of towns. This “school sprawl” often results in decreasing participation by families and community members in their children’s educations, increasing transit costs for residents, and increasing isolation of schools from the rest of the city. It is perpetuated by a persistent lack of coordination and communication between local land use planners, policy-makers and school facilities planners. This report highlights case studies from across the country that show alternatives to the push for new construction, and ways that communities have preserved older schools as neighborhood anchors, institutions of civic pride and neighborhood revitalization. The report concludes with recommendations for policy reforms that support smart growth and neighborhood conservation efforts nationwide.

Bingler, Steven. “New Schools, Better Neighborhoods” Metropolitan Forum Project. September 1999.

This report advocates smart growth planning in school facilities construction. Education facilities consultant Steven Bingler defines these “smart schools,” as places that serve as centers of community and provide joint-use of public facilities. These schools grow out of collaborative planning and design processes that involve all stakeholders and allow for flexibility due to changing needs. Bingler claims that the result is schools that improve student learning and contribute to more sustainable development patterns.

Smart schools create magnets for urban development, encourage inner-city housing and employment opportunities, reduce suburban migration, conserve greenfields, encourage the creation of learning communities within the rich infrastructure of the urban environment, enhance community access and participation, support teachers and school personnel by providing more affordable and attractive places to live and work. The author recommends participatory and community-based planning of school facilities, innovative educational facilities that promote the concept of learning communities and schools as centers of community, including joint-use, the planning of urban and suburban projects based on the principles of smart growth, and support the assessment of all public expenditures based on the concept of integrated resource development (increasing efficiency of budgeting at the macro level).

Local Government Commission. 2002. New Schools for Older Neighborhoods: Strategies for Building Our Communities’ Most Important Assets. Washington DC: National Association of Realtors.

"New Schools for Older Neighborhoods" provides an overview of current thinking about school design and funding in older neighborhoods. The report begins with the assertion that the United States is entering a "Golden Age of School Design" and that increasing population and fiscal pressures are inspiring new ways of approaching constrained land availability and aging structures in existing communities. Emphasizing the role that schools can play in revitalizing

neighborhoods, as well as creating more livable and walkable places, the report takes a closer look at what new and rehabilitated school facilities can do for the communities surrounding them. Improved public health, educational achievement, safety, and fiscal responsibility are the highlights of the new school design era. Creative approaches to school design and neighborhood revitalization are presented through the use of case studies from a diversity of geographic areas across the US: Washington, DC, Pomona, CA, Dallas, TX, Chattanooga, TN, Manitowoc, WI and more. By "thinking outside of the box" of school design, each of these case studies emphasizes new and creative ways to address the need for more and improved schools in the US.

McClelland, Mac and Keith Schneider. "Hard Lessons: Causes and Consequences of Michigan's School Construction Boom." Michigan Land Use Institute. February 2004.

A joint project of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Land Use Institute, this report documents school construction decision making and the patterns of spending on school facilities over time. Michigan tripled spending on school facilities between 1992 and 2004, despite only a 4.5% increase in student population. The report offers urban, suburban and rural examples of the impact of school facilities decisions and demographic patterns can have on communities; it also describes strategies that different types of communities can pursue to improve development patterns overall. It discusses how fiscal policies and zoning can inadvertently push schools out of the cities and thereby contribute to sprawl and conversely, how the preservation of historic structure near downtowns can substantially increase residential property values. Finally, the report offers a series of recommendations, including prioritizing infill development and renovation of existing buildings and only building schools where infrastructure already exists.

National Association of Realtors. "Public Schools: A Toolkit for Realtors" 2005

This report documents the emergence of "school sprawl" which it defines as spread-out schools in unwalkable neighborhoods. In the 1960s roughly half of all students walked or biked to school; while in 2001 the number was closer to 1 in 10. The report considers some of the oft-cited causes of bias against renovation of existing buildings, including acreage requirements and percentages rules. But, it also analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of smaller and larger schools and offers creative financing solutions to increase efficient spending on school construction—for example through impact fees and public/private partnerships). Written by the National Association of Realtors, this report suggests that the realtor community is interested in preserving neighborhood schools, perhaps as a way to revitalize housing markets or otherwise encourage prospective buyers into urban and other infill areas.

Stevenson, Kenneth R. 2002. Ten Educational Trends Shaping School Planning and Design. National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.

<http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/trends.pdf>.

Stevenson is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policies at the University of South Carolina, Columbia and facilities consultant for school districts. His article for the National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities reviews trends in education, school

facilities and technology, in an effort to encourage educators and administrators to anticipate future needs and look beyond the status quo. He advocates observation of the environment and community, communication among educators, businesses, policymakers and the public, and empirical analysis of education practices in order to anticipate future needs. Although the author alludes to the importance of recognizing demographic changes, he does not include immigration and student mobility patterns as one of his major trends. He identifies ten trends that should be considered when planning new education facilities:

- 1) Increasing school choice creates uncertain attendance in traditional public schools
- 2) Schools will be smaller, but potentially more costly and not necessarily better
- 3) Reduced class sizes
- 4) Increased technology, including distance education and computer networks
- 5) Changing school spaces: multipurpose rooms, shared facilities with community
- 6) Roles of students and teachers: organization by learning styles, instruction methods
- 7) Increasing time/days spent in school puts added strain on facilities and utilities
- 8) Increase in use of digital media
- 9) Rethinking of grade configuration and elementary, middle, high building separation
- 10) Disappearance of brick and mortar school

Vincent, Jeffrey M. 2006, forthcoming. Public Schools as Public Infrastructure: Schools, Community, and Land Use Planning. In *Infrastructure Planning and Finance: A Guide for Local Officials*. Edited by Vicki Elmer and Adam Leigland. Point Arena, CA: Solano Press Books.

Ideas concerning the building of public schools and the purposes the schools serve have changed a great deal throughout history. The building of schools has centered around both shifting educational and city planning philosophies. In the 21st century, schooling has been re-envisioned in response to a changing economy, urban and suburban growth and priorities in academic achievement. This book chapter by Jeffrey Vincent explores the changing patterns in school planning with a focus on the financing of new schools and school improvements, current school infrastructure, and the social, cultural and economical values of our world.

Recently there has been a trend toward creating small, neighborhood schools. These schools can serve as central structures in their communities providing needed services, and serving as possible cornerstones for redevelopment. While there are many benefits to schooling as it is envisioned by movements such as Smart Growth, there are also tradeoffs, especially in terms of diversity. Some of the impediments to building small schools come in the form of federal and state requirements for school acreage, and the availability of funding. A large problem with school planning is the immediate tie to neighborhood demographics and housing problems. Until some compromise can be reached in creating both mixed income and mixed use housing, neighborhoods will not be diverse enough to support this small school movement. The charge of this chapter is to find ways to create schools that enhance their communities in an effort to strengthen both the institutions and the communities around them.

Additional Internet Resources

21st Century School Fund: Building Educational Success Together (<http://www.21csf.org/csf-home/BEST/best.asp>)

Center for Cities and Schools (<http://www.citiesandschools.org/>)

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (<http://www.edfacilities.org/>)

New Schools Better Neighborhoods (<http://www.nsbns.org/>)

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Segregation:

Grubb, W. Norton (2006). What should be Equalized? Litigation, Equity, and the “Improved” School Finance.

[Grubb argues that a deep concern with the financing of public schools has been one of the most powerful expressions of equity in American public schooling. In the area of school reform, Grubb presents a variety of conceptions of equity and argues that while the simplest aspects of education (access and funding) may be addressed through litigation, more difficult dimensions of resources and outcomes are much more difficult to equalize through litigation. Grubb views this as the only point as which it will be possible to realize the goals of equal opportunity that have been so insistently stated in this country.]

Orfield, Gary and Chungmei Lee (2005). *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*.

[Orfield and Lee provide policy recommendations on addressing segregation in the context of public education in “Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality.” The authors believe that “segregated schools are unequal and there is very little evidence of any success in creating ‘separate but equal’ outcomes on a large scale.” Their findings strongly suggest that exposure to more desegregated settings can break the tendency for racial segregation to become self-perpetuating for all students later in life.]

Small Schools:

WestEd. (2001) “School Size Considerations for Safety and Learning.” Policy Brief, October 2001.

[Outlines the major benefits found to derive from small schools including higher student achievement, improved school culture, increased school safety, greater levels of parent involvement, and increased teacher job satisfaction.]

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[Provides case studies of 22 public schools in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the United States. including both district-run and charter public schools. Provides key conclusions regarding the benefits of small schools.]

Wasley, Patricia A. et al. (2002). "Small schools: Great strides — A study of new small schools in Chicago," Bank Street College of Education. www.bankstreet.edu/html/news/SmallSchools.pdf [Summarizes findings of research conducted over a two-year period, from 1997 through 1999 of new small schools (schools housing fewer than 350 students) in Chicago. Also provides a summary of other current urban research and an overview of the small schools movement.]

Charter Schools:

Garber, Michael P. et al. (April 1997). "Scale & Care: Charter Schools and New Urbanism." [Provides an excellent background on charter schools. Describes the unique nature of charter school law and the value that quality schools add to development projects. Advocates that charter school operators and new urbanist developers work together.]

Hoxby, Caroline M. "Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences" Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research. [Important study on charter school performance. It measures almost all fourth graders' performance in charter school versus their matched public school.]

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School Vouchers:

Kober, Nancy (2000) *School Vouchers: What We Know and Don't Know – And How We Could Learn More: A Report by the Center on Education Policy*, Washington, D.C.: The Center [Excellent analysis of what is known from studies of publicly-funded vouchers, what we don't know but could know, and what we can't know because of limitations in current program structures. Could serve as a helpful guide for future evaluations of voucher programs].

People for the American Way, "Facts About Vouchers," at <<http://www.pfaw.org>> [Website provides a comprehensive overview of state voucher programs, and evidence to support PFAW's belief that vouchers undercut public education, economic equity, and religious liberty].

"Inside Choice Schools: 15 Years of Vouchers," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, June 11-17, 2005, located at <<http://www2.jsonline.com/news/choice/>> [Seven-part series investigates the history as well as some of the greatest issues facing Milwaukee voucher schools 15 years after the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program was first initiated].

Alliance for School Choice, "School Choice Programs Around the Country," at <<http://www.allianceforschoolchoice.org>> [Website provides detailed statistics on current U.S. voucher programs, including program descriptions and recent data on voucher subsidy amounts and student and school participation levels].

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Paul E. Peterson, William G. Howell, Patrick J. Wolf, & David E. Campbell (2002) *The Education Gap: Vouchers and Urban Schools*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press [Three-year evaluation of private voucher programs in three cities, which found that black choice students performed significantly higher on combined reading and math tests than control group students who had applied for vouchers but remained in public schools].

“Educational Vouchers: Effectiveness, Choice and Costs,” Henry M. Levin, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 373-392 (1998), p. 387 [An economic analysis of the comparative costs of public and private schools and an overall voucher system].

Community Organizing:

Institute for Education and Social Policy, Steinhardt School of Education, New York University (with California Tomorrow, Designs for Change and Southern Echo). (2002). “Organizing for School Reform: How Communities are Finding Their Voice and Reclaiming Their Public Schools.”

[The study examines the work of 66 community groups that are organizing to improve public education in low-performing schools and districts. Largely local, community-based organizations, these groups focus on engaging public school parents and low-income families, as well as students themselves, in efforts to improve their schools.]

Medeiratta, Kavitha and Fruchter, Norman. (2003) “From Governance to Accountability: Building relationships that make schools work.” New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy, for the Drumm Major Institute for Public Policy.

[Provides critique of current school reform efforts by showing evidence that large-scale school improvement is unlikely to occur unless it combines top-down structure with bottom-up relationship and capacity building among those actors most important to student achievement: parents and communities]

Noguera, Pedro. (1999). “Transforming Urban Schools Through Investments in Social Capital,” *In Motion Magazine*, May 20, 1999.

[Argues that the way in which urban school reforms are typically implemented largely ignores the relationship between schools and the economic and social forces that shape the environment in which they are located, and that the development of *positive* social capital should be a central goal, not merely a bi-product, of urban school reform.]

Warren, Warren. (2005) “Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform.” *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2, Summer 2005.

[The author argues that if urban school reform in the United States is to be successful, it must be linked to the revitalization of the communities around our schools. Warren identifies a growing field of collaboration between public schools and community-based organizations, developing a typology that identifies three different approaches: the service approach (community schools); the development approach (community sponsorship of new charter schools); and the organizing approach (school-community organizing). The author elaborates a conceptual framework using theories of social capital and relational power, presenting case studies to illustrate each type.]

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- The authors examine the impact of free market, ownership models on educational trends including the charter and small school movements.

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- Barrett's article for the Village Voice examines the successes of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's efforts to resuscitate the New York City school system.

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- Barrett criticizes Mayor Michael Bloomberg for failing to recognize the general failings of the historical decentralization model of school governance and reform.

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- Boghossian, of the LA Daily News cites the precedents of New York City, Chicago and Boston mayors in examining the recent developments in the Los Angeles system.

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- Mayor Bloomberg's 2006 budget, up for approval from Governor Pataki, requests \$11.2 billion in funds for the development of 76 new, New York City schools buildings.

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- Stanford professor Larry Cuban questions whether centralized policy-making trends will result in positive improvements in the classrooms.

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- Well-known educational researchers discuss the history, current state, and future possibilities of the system of public education governance in the U.S. They point out that the current system is complex and confusing and makes it difficult to determine who is in charge and who is

accountable to whom for what and offer suggestions for how to improve it. Includes chapters by Michael Kirst, Larry Cuban, and Paul Hill.

Gewertz, Catherine. "Grading the Mayor." *Education Week*, October 26, 2005. Vol. 25, Issue 09, Pages 40-43.

- In the days before Mayor Bloomberg's re-election, Gewertz provides a comprehensive examination of the Mayor's educational reform initiatives for *EdWeek*.

Hansen, Janet, "New Funding Challenges" *American School Board Journal*, 2002

- Hansen examines the changing landscape of school finance with respect to accountability requirements in a system barraged by growing demographic challenges.

Hill, Paul T. "Recovering From an Accident: Repairing Governance With Comparative Advantage" in Noel Epstein, ed., *Who's In Charge Here? The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004, p. 75-103.

- Hill notes that the current educational governance system was not designed rationally, but from an amalgamation of policies at different levels and times. He suggests redesigning the system to take into account the strengths and weaknesses of different governance actors, and placing as much decision-making power as possible as close as possible to the actual teaching and learning in the classroom.

Kirst, Michael W. "Mayoral Influence, New Regimes, and Public School Governance". *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 2003. Vol. 102, No. 1, p. 196-218.

- Kirst examines the levels of involvement and the breadth of governance changes made by recent mayoral education initiatives across the country.

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Williams, Joe. "On the Positive Side: Bloomberg and Klein Seek to Repair a Failure Factory." *Education Next*, vol. 5 no. 4, Fall 2005.

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- Wong and Shen examine the relative early success of strong mayoral initiatives in and lay out a framework for future evaluation.