

Integrating Sustainable Community Planning and Public Education

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Schools are at the Heart of Health in our Communities
PLUS Leadership Regional Learning Initiative
Fellows Report 2012-2013



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Regional planning and schools are siloed institutions.

Eventhough, they have shared visions and goals.



1

Executive Summary

Schools and the communities within which they reside are inextricably linked. As a core component of public infrastructure, schools influence neighborhood quality, travel patterns, real estate prices, and the demography of neighborhoods.¹ On the other hand, communities feed schools with new students, and create the environment within which a school must operate. Even though the interconnections of communities and schools are indisputable, planning for regions, and likewise planning for public education have rarely intermingled.

Key Questions: Commissioned by the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area's Regional Planning body, this report is a direct response to the understanding that alignment between planners and educators is pertinent to the creation of smart growth communities. It seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do ABAG's regional goals, and more specifically the goals outlined by the Sustainable Community Strategy, align with student educational outcomes?
2. What barriers exist for schools in terms of the built environment or transportation that can be remedied by greater educator-planner collaboration?
3. How can ABAG, or other regional planning entities best engage with schools to support student educational outcomes while advancing the goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy?

Methodology: To respond to the questions posed above, a literature review was conducted, and two case studies were analyzed of Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), and the City of San Jose.

Findings:

- I. Schools have limited resources to connect with the community and businesses. Likewise, the community has limited grasp of the complex needs of schools.

Purpose of this report:
To analyze and identify shared visions and goals between ABAG and educators, and develop recommendations for aligning programs and policies to reach such goals.

- II. Linked Learning pathways that are relevant to the economy and community are not always interesting to students.
- III. Transportation limits student involvement in the community and access to internships.

Next Steps:

- 1. **COMMUNICATE:** Build communication structures with school districts and Priority Development Area (PDA) Schools to support planner/educator alignment.

Example: Leverage opportunity maps provided in this analysis to form multiple communication pathways with schools.

- 2. **COLLABORATE:** Collaborate with classrooms/educators/ students/ schools in Priority Development Areas, leveraging community and school partnerships to create stronger involvement in and knowledge of the regional planning process, and PDA goals.

Example: Partner with already existing programs and organizations such as Y-PLAN and Youth Uprising in order to support their work in creating student educational outcomes while involving students in the planning process.

- 3. **COORDINATE:** Develop systems of coordination between ABAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and School District offices to share information, and data, and create shared goals.

Example: Once communication channels are identified, work to bring MTC to the table with School Districts and Schools within PDAs in order to understand opportunities for the transportation network to support positive educational outcomes.

2

Introduction

Schools and the communities within which they reside are inextricably linked. As a core component of public infrastructure, schools influence neighborhood quality, travel patterns, real estate prices, and the demography of neighborhoods.² On the other hand, communities feed schools with new students, and create the environment within which a school must operate. Although there are many endogenous factors to student educational outcomes -- factors directly related to a school such as teacher's ability, and curriculum -- scholars have argued that 2/3rds of school quality can in fact be attributed to exogenous factors such as parental engagement, the built environment of a neighborhood, after-school activities, and health care.³ These factors are rarely under the control of school administration but have profound effects on the performance of a school and its students.

Even though the interconnections between communities and schools are indisputable, planning for cities and regions, and likewise planning for public education have rarely intermingled. The siloed relationship between planners and educators began as a means to keep political turmoil and racial segregation outside of the public education system.⁴ It eventually evolved into the conception of two independent organizations, with many shared goals, but limited ability or motivation to collaborate.

City and regional planners have identified the importance "smart growth", which conserves resources and land; offers choices in housing, transportation, shopping recreation and jobs; encourages community collaboration; and fosters distinctive and attractive neighborhoods.⁵ This model of growth in planning aligns with the movement of educators in supporting community-centered schools. According to the EPA, "through long-term and careful planning with the community – including students, teachers, administrators, etc. – the creation of high quality, community-centered learning environments promote a sense of safety, build connections between schools and members of the community, engage students in learning, encourage strong parental involvement, foster environmental stewardship, strengthen neighborhoods, promote economic development, and improve human and environmental health."⁶ As planners and educators both move toward the shared vision of creating stronger communities and schools, a major opportunity has emerged to reconnect the two institutions.

Commissioned by the Association of Bay Area Governments, this report is a direct response to the understanding that alignment between planners and educators is pertinent to the creation of smart growth communities.

It seeks to answer the following **key questions**:

1. How do ABAG's regional goals, and more specifically the goals outlined by the Sustainable Community Strategy, align with student educational outcomes?
2. What school reform efforts lend themselves to greater planner-educator collaboration?

**Education and Planning are
Linked:**

**“2/3 of school quality can
be attributed to exogenous
factors such as the built
environment of a
neighborhood, after-school
activities and healthcare.”**

3. What barriers exist for schools in terms of the built environment or transportation that can be remedied by greater educator-planner collaboration?
4. How can ABAG, or other regional planning entities best engage with schools to support student educational outcomes while advancing the goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy?

In responding to these questions, this report outlines steps that ABAG can take in order to address the barriers to schools in terms of the built environment and transportation, foster greater involvement of communities, educators, and students in the planning process, and more generally engage with schools in order to enhance student educational outcomes, all while aligning with the goals of Plan Bay Area. This report focuses its analysis on aligning ABAG with school educational reform efforts, such as linked learning, because they offer an entry point to engagement inasmuch as the integrate greater community school connection.

Building upon the past work of the Center for Cities and Schools, this report aligns with the action steps recommended in their report “Opportunity-Rich Schools, and Sustainable Communities,” It also leverages the findings of their report: “Growth & Opportunity, Aligning High Quality Public Education and Sustainable Communities Planning in the Bay Area.”

To respond to the questions posed above, a literature review was conducted, and two case studies were analyzed of Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), and the City of San Jose. Through this work, this report recommends that ABAG take the following steps:

COMMUNICATE: Build communication structures with school districts and Priority Development Area (PDA) Schools to support planner/educator alignment.

COLLABORATE: Collaborate with classrooms/educators/ students/ schools in Priority Development Areas, leveraging community and school partnerships to create stronger involvement in and knowledge of the regional planning process, and PDA goals.

COORDINATE: Develop systems of coordination between ABAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and School District offices to share information, and data, and create shared goals.



“40% of the region's Priority Development Areas (yellow) are located in communities of color or in low-income neighborhoods”

3

The Critical Connection: Regional Goals and School Prosperity

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area's regional planning agency, sits in a unique position in terms of its breadth and impact. As an agency committed to “enhancing the quality of life in the San Francisco Bay Area by leading the region in advocacy, collaboration, and excellence in planning, research, and member service” the organization has a broad scope of work that impacts everything from regional transportation and air quality, to job growth, and economic development. A prime example of ABAG's scope, is offered by ABAG's response to the state mandated “Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)” – Plan Bay Area. Through Plan Bay Area, ABAG is working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to align with the SCS by ensuring climate protection and adequate housing in the Bay Area region (mandated), while also fostering healthy and safe communities, open space, economic vitality, equitable access and transportation system effectiveness (voluntarily).

- PDAs have 11% of the regions schools
- PDAs have more students who live in poverty and are learning English
- PDA schools have fewer fully credentialed teachers
- PDA schools have lower API than Buffer (schools that reside within a one mile radius of a PDA) and non-PDA schools

Moreover, working both at the macro and micro level, ABAG's work varies substantially in scope. Through Plan Bay Area, ABAG and local governments have identified Priority Development Areas (PDAs). PDAs are areas where “new development will support the day-to-day needs of residents and workers with a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit.”⁷ PDAs were originally established to address hous-



“Smart Growth offers benefits to schools, communities, and economies, thus aligning with the shared visions of educators and planners.”

ing needs in infill communities, but they have been broadened to advance focused employment growth.⁸

In a recent publication by the Center for Cities and Schools, entitled *Growth & Opportunity: Aligning High-Quality Public Education and Sustainable Communities Planning in the Bay Area*, Bierbaum, Vincent, and McKoy explore the connections between the FOCUS initiative – Plan Bay Area’s predecessor, and Schools in the Bay Area, focusing on the alignment between “complete communities”⁹, economic development, and school success. More specifically, the report identifies “ten core connections between high-quality education and the creation of complete communities.”¹⁰

1. School quality plays a major role in families’ housing choices
2. A wide mix of housing units is needed to attract families.
3. Housing unit mix, school enrollment and school funding are intricately related.
4. Children and youth may use transit to get to and from school and after-school activities.
5. Multimodal transit alternatives in complete communities support families’ access to the increasing landscape of school options.
6. Mixed-income communities provide opportunities for education workforce housing.
7. Complete communities support walkability and safety for children and families.
8. Complete communities include amenities and services for families.
9. When schools are integrated into complete communities opportunities emerge for shared use of public space.
10. Complete communities offer opportunities for renovating and building new schools in developments, which attract families.

The report further argues that public schools are public infrastructure- educational infrastructure, social infrastructure, and physical infrastructure, and advocates for using such a perspective in framing the conversations about the role of schools in creating complete communities.

In addition to the Center for Cities and Schools's direct case study of the Bay Area region, and the Plan Bay Area's FOCUS predecessor, the connections between regional and school planning are further articulated by the United States Environmental Protection Association (EPA), and the American Planning Association.

In support of the Center for Cities and Schools argument that "public schools are public infrastructure," the EPA discusses the shared goals of planners and educators, and advocates for "Smart Growth Planning" in the construction of schools¹¹. Similar to the idea of complete communities, the EPA identifies smart growth planning as planning that: (1) mixes land uses, (2) takes advantage of compact building design, (3) creates a range of housing opportunities and choices, (4) invests in walkable neighborhoods, (5) Fosters distinctive and attractive communities, (6) preserves open space, (7) strengthens and directs development towards existing communities, (8) provides a variety of transportation choices, (9) makes development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective, and (10) encourages community and stakeholder collaboration. It continues in arguing that smart growth offers benefits to schools, communities, and economies, thus aligning with the shared visions of educators and planners.

Likewise, in an article entitled "A Toolkit for Tomorrow's Schools: New ways of bringing growth management and school planning together" the American Planning Association, discusses the historical reality of the siloed planning and public school systems, arguing that such siloed relationships leave communities in a "regulatory quagmire" in which (1) "poorly aligned planning systems do little to assure a credible connection between school capacity and the needs of new development and (2) there is no interagency collaboration that can be utilized in the construction of new schools.¹²

Each one of the resources above argues for the role of planners and schools in jointly creating the shared vision of a sustainable, opportunity rich community. It is clear that there is a critical connection between healthy schools, healthy communities, and healthy regions.

However, these connections have yet to be leveraged in an effective way in order to support shared institutional goals. The question is how can regional planners best support the goals of educators, and likewise, how can education policies and practices support regional planning and development?

4 Challenges to Envisioning Shared Institutional Goals and Creating Aligned Programs

Although it is clear that regional planners and educators have shared goals in terms of the desire to support the creation of sustainable communities, what is unclear is how these shared goals can be leveraged to break a long history of institutional silos; however, in order to understand how shared goals can be established, it is first important to understand the hurdles to institutional collaboration. In a 2011 report by the Center for Cities and Schools: Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities, McKoy, Vincent, and Bierbaum, explore the challenges to "linking high-quality education and sustainable communities." Through their report, which was aimed specifically at planners and educators, they identified four challenges that are inherent to linking education and community development.¹³

Many of these challenges identified below by the Center for Cities and Schools are, in fact, already being addressed by ABAG through Plan Bay Area, and thus demonstrate open doors to greater collaboration between regional planners, community development institutions and educators.

Challenge 1: Poverty and Inequality: Poverty and inequality among metropolitan regions is manifest in differences in transportation infrastructure, quality affordable housing, municipal amenities, and access to good schools and stable jobs. An uneven geography of opportunity is created, in which there is a strong correlation between residing in a neighborhood of concentrated poverty and poor life outcomes.

“Plan Bay Area will give more people more transportation choices, create more housing choices for residents in livable communities, support a growing economy and reduce transportation-related pollution that dirties our air and negatively impacts people’s health.”

One Bay Area

Through the creation of PDAs, as focused areas for regional development and planning, ABAG has already identified uneven geographies of opportunity, and is working towards improving these areas with Plan Bay Area. More specifically, 40% of PDAs are located in low-income neighborhoods. By investing in these PDAs through transportation infrastructure, and mixed-income housing, for instance, ABAG is already addressing pockets of poverty and inequality, which will begin to break down the system of uneven geographies of opportunity.¹⁴

Challenge 2: Achieving Social Equity: Policymakers and educators have identified the need for policies and programs to achieve social equity; however, these programs and policies are many times disconnected from one another although they are not mutually exclusive. Civic and community leaders must “reconcile an often perceived tension between various viable policy strategies in light of local and regional environmental, economic, political, and social circumstances.”

Through the structure and adoption process for Plan Bay Area, ABAG has already created a forum for greater collaboration between parties that strive to achieve social equity. According to Plan Bay Area “local input has driven the set of alternative scenarios that preceded and informed the development of Plan Bay Area,” and “the non-profit and business communities also played a key role in shaping the plan.” The systematic integration of the community and policy makers in the process has created an open door for local input. Such local input can begin to deconstruct the phenomena of shared visions with divergent paths to achieving those visions. For instance through continued community input in Plan Bay Area, ABAG can work to understand what community development activities are already being implemented and align those activities with the vision of Plan Bay Area. Furthermore, in addition to creating Plan Bay Area in a manner which allowed for community input, ABAG and MTC have additionally adopted five equity analysis measures to evaluate equity concerns including housing and transportation affordability, potential for displacement, healthy communities, access to jobs, and equitable mobility. Through these measures, they have internalized the goal of creating a plan that internally addresses the need for greater social equity in the region.

Challenge 3: Rigid Silos: The work of planners and community development practitioners and educators rarely intersect. Local Education Agencies (LEA) and local governments typically don’t collaborate because LEA geographic boundaries may differ from municipal or metropolitan boundaries, planning time horizons (such as budgetary processes, for housing transportation and infrastructure development) differ between LEAs and municipalities, and they rarely share data systems, and do not have shared information.

ABAG has an advantage in comparison to local governments in fostering a relationship between regional planning and LEAs because LEAs are encompassed within the Bay Area region. Thus, ABAG can overcome the challenge of having diverse boundaries between municipalities and LEAs. Additionally, the establishment of PDAs is another process by which ABAG can potentially overcome this challenge. PDAs provide a micro-focus for ABAG to address specific geographies of inequality. Through Plan Bay Area, ABAG is in a unique position to work directly with LEAs regardless of their geographic boundaries.

Challenges



Poverty and Inequality

Achieving Social Equity

Rigid Silos

Limited Capacity

Challenge 4: Limited Capacity: Municipalities, regional agencies, and LEAs many times do not know where to start in forming relationships and creating aligned programs and policies.

The limited capacity of regional planning entities such as ABAG and LEAs in forming relationship will be a focus of this report. Currently, ABAG does not have a through an understanding of where to start in forming relationships to create aligned programs and policies, or knowledge of where they can best work to support shared educational outcomes. The next sections of this report will address the where and how component of this question, guiding ABAG on the opportunities that exist in creating connections between regional planning and schools, and recommending how to leverage these connections.

This report will further build upon the past work of the Center for Cities and Schools, by aligning its recommendations with the seven steps they provide to “Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development:”

1. Get to know your educational landscape
2. Engage school leaders, families, and young people in planning and development
3. Establish a shared vision and metrics linking high-quality education to economic prosperity at community and regional levels
4. Support the whole life of learners through services and amenities
5. Align bricks-and-mortar investments for regional prosperity
6. Maximize access to opportunity through transportation
7. Institutionalize what works to secure gains and ensure ongoing innovation

By focusing on the first three steps of these recommendations, this analysis will not only provide ABAG with the resources to understand the educational landscape of two districts within the Bay Area region, but also programs to begin engaging school leaders, youth, and families in planning and development.

5 The Educational Landscape of the Bay Area: Entry Points for Regional Planning- School Collaboration:

Linked Learning

“Policymakers must identify and remove barriers such as lack of access to nearby jobs and transportation Young people in low-income communities of color typically lack access to productive work-based opportunities.”

As discussed in the previous section, through Plan Bay Area, ABAG has already begun to deconstruct some of the most divisive challenges preventing more systematic collaboration between regional planners and schools. The collaborative Plan Bay Area envisioning process, paired with the plan's commitment to equity, create a foundation by which ABAG can engage with educational institutions. A pipeline has been created for greater collaboration between ABAG and educational institutions. However, for systematic relationships to be formed, the pipeline for collaboration must be enabled to flow both ways.

In the past, schools have been more or less disconnected from the communities in which they are located. Students were educated behind closed doors, within the physical classroom. New reforms in educational policy and programs have changed this pattern of disconnection -- integrating community involvement into classroom activity-- and present a unique opportunity by which LEAs and planners can form a systematic relationship.

The most notable of these reforms is linked learning. Linked Learning is best defined as educational programming within schools that “brings together strong academics, demanding technical education, and real-world experience” and is focused on student preparation for both postsecondary education, and careers.¹⁵ By creating pathways for students from academics to the community – through real world experience, and career connections – linked learning opens the doors for greater collaboration and involvement between planners, and community development practitioners and educators in enhancing student educational outcomes.

ABAG can leverage LEA reform in order to create opportunities for greater collaboration between regional planning and educators.

To best understand how ABAG could use Linked Learning and similar education reform to create an entry point for more systematic collaboration, this report has identified “pressure points for collaboration.” These pressure points for collaboration are structures within schools and the community that are creating barriers to school implementation of linked learning. More specifically, these pressure points are barriers to new reform that are directly related to the built environment and transportation.

This analysis argues that ABAG can use these pressure points in order to begin interfacing with LEAs, to work towards larger and more systematic future collaboration.

To understand the barriers to linked learning and similar education reform, a literature review was conducted to examine the following question: What barriers exist for schools in terms of the built environment or transportation that can be remedied by greater educator-planner collaboration? This review was followed by two case study analyses (OUSD, SJUSD), in which key stakeholders within the districts were interviewed in order to best understand barriers to linked learning and student educational outcomes directly related to the built environment and transportation. Through such research not only were key pressure points identified that ABAG can directly impact, but also, opportunity maps were created to act as an initial introduction between ABAG and the school districts to guide coordination.

Comparison of School Acreage, 1966 and 2000²¹

Elementary School

School Enrollment	Acres according to the 1966 edition	Acres according to the current edition	Percent increase
450	9.0	9.2	2
750	12.7	13.1	3
1200	15.8	16.4	4

Middle School

600	17.4	17.4	0
900	20.8	20.9	0.5
1200	22.5	23.1	3

High School

1200	31.3	33.5	7
1800	39.7	44.5	12
2400	46.5	52.7	13

LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS:

The main question the literature review sought to understand was whether there were significant barriers to linked learning programs that could be addressed through collaborative planning. An examination of literature has demonstrated that because linked learning is a fledgling program within schools, little formal research has been produced on best practices and hurdles to linked learning implementation. However, through the growing body of research available, three significant barriers to linked learning were identified:

- Schools have limited resources to connect students to the community.**¹⁶ Although linked learning programs encourage classroom-community interaction, very few linked-learning programs have the capacity to connect classrooms individually to the community. Teachers, who already have high demands on time, are responsible for securing internships, community activities, and generally coordinating out of class excursions. When teachers are stretched for time, and resources, community connections are difficult to maintain. Furthermore, teachers frequently are not provided the professional development necessary to understand the application of the full range of career possibilities for their students in various industries and institutions.
- Transportation is a major hurdle, especially for isolated schools, in growing community connection and involvement.**¹⁷ In addition to lack of preparation and support for educators in connecting schools to the community, schools also face a lack of transportation access for students in commuting to and from schools and into their communities for internship and community activities, and lack of nearby jobs and community opportunities. This is especially a problem in low-income communities of color.^{18 19}

School acreage requirements are one reason schools and communities find themselves disconnected. School acreage requirements, are land requirements that schools must meet in the State of California, when constructing or building upon school facilities. Because of school acreage requirements, many schools are built on the outskirts of cities with limited access to public transportation. According to "Public Schools as Public Infrastructure: Roles for Planning Researchers," school acreage requirements are a major point of contention between city planners, who seek to create mixed-use environments and school planners seeking to meet the requirements for an athletic field, ample parking, and school buildings.²⁰ For instance, the California state education department recommends a minimum of 33.5 acres for a High School enrolling 1,200 students, 17.4 acres for a middle school enrolling 600 students, and 9.6 acres for an elementary school enrolling 450 students.²¹ These requirements on average increase school acreage requirements for the three school types by 7% in comparison acreage requirements established in 1966. Acreage requirements, especially at the high school and middle school levels have increased school sprawl, making it difficult for schools to align with existing transportation infrastructure and mixed-use developments. Thus, even if students are provided access to work-based learning opportunities or community programs, they do not have the ability to travel to the locations.²²

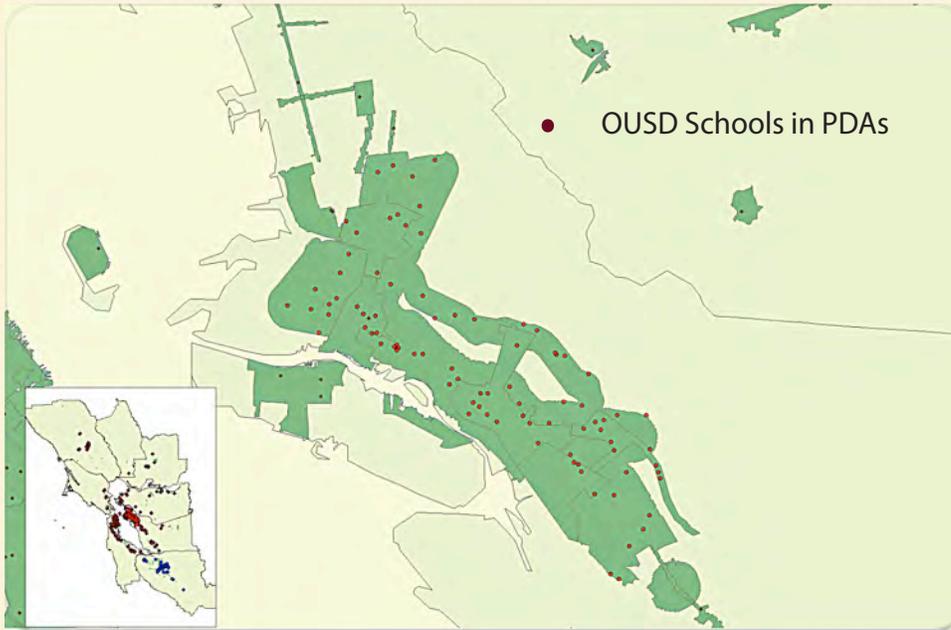
“Linked Learning helps prepare students to graduate from high school well prepared to enter a two- or four-year college or university, an apprenticeship and formal job training.”

LINKED LEARNING IN THE CALIFORNIA CONTEXT:

Within California, Linked Learning is being supported by the State of California Department of Education (CA DOE) through grants issued to 20 school districts between 2012-2017.²³ Additional funding for linked learning has been provided through the James Irvine Foundation, a private foundation whose grant making activities have focused on linked learning initiatives within school districts, secondary institutions, and non-profit organizations. The James Irvine Foundation was additionally the principal in founding ConnectEd, “the California Center for College and Career” which acts as a resource hub to schools implementing linked learning programs.²⁴ Although the CA DOE and the Irvine foundation have provided additional funding for schools implementing linked learning programs, the funding has been limited, especially in a time of fiscal shortages, and shrinking district educational budgets.²⁵ Many times, funding for community based projects, or support for internship and career departments within districts are the responsibility of teachers and support staff, who must seek out grants in order to bridge their funding gap. California in general mirrors the national trend found in linked learning literature: Schools need additional support and resources in order to connect with communities, and businesses through service learning programs, internships, and even externships for teachers.

CASE STUDY 1

Oakland Unified School District



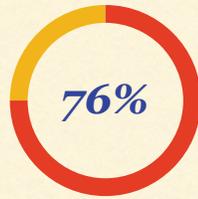
Spanning the City of Oakland, OUSD offers an interesting case study by which to gauge the potential challenges and opportunities to ABAG in supporting educational outcomes within the district. With not only diverse demographics and neighborhoods, but also a system in transition towards the linked learning educational framework, it is feasible for ABAG to engage with OUSD at the school level. This can involve working within classrooms, and directly with teachers, or at the district level, focusing on how ABAG can support the district more systematically.

Through conversations with stakeholders throughout the School District, including non-profit organizations, the district College and Career Services Department, and the District superintendent, one can immediately see that Oakland is committed to community engagement and willing to support its students in accessing community based opportunities.

The College and Career Readiness Office at OUSD is the main body for college and career services for the district.²⁶ Engaging OUSD schools in everything from academic advising to instructing teachers on professional development, the College and Career Readiness Office supports a wide range of activities and initiatives within the district. Predominantly funded through a Pell Grant, the office has a staff member, Jennielyn Dino Rossi, whose primary focus is district-school-community relationships and connecting teachers to the re-

sources they need, to create out of school opportunities for their. As the Workforce and Economic Development Coordinator, Ms. Rossi interfaces between businesses, the community, and non-profit organizations in order to align educators and schools with business/ community partnership opportunities, and funding.

In meeting with Susan Benz, a Program Coordinator within the office, it became apparent that the biggest hurdles the district faces in terms of classroom-community connections is the difficulty in aligning multiple stakeholders. Ms. Benz elaborated, that even though linked learning and community participation is a focus initiative within the district, with constant leadership turnover within the district, it is difficult to create an atmosphere of support for programs, and a consistent desire to implement programs within schools. She stated that there are many community and business leaders that are prepared to engage with the district; however, they feel uneasy when principal OUSD staff is not aligned in the coordination process. Many businesses want a “green light” from a principal, and/or the superintendent, in order to implement a sustainable program; however due to high OUSD staff turnover, such alignment and sustainability is not always possible. On the other hand, she stated that due to recent steadiness in OUSD leadership, especially due to Superintendent Tony Smith holding his position in OUSD for 4 years, the district has become more successful in creating the alignment



of OUSD Schools are in a PDA



86.5% of all OUSD High Schools



89% of all OUSD Middle Schools



72% of all OUSD Elementary Schools

“Districts have to work to align themselves internally, while also creating the infrastructure and opportunities for teachers to engage their classroom with the community”²⁷

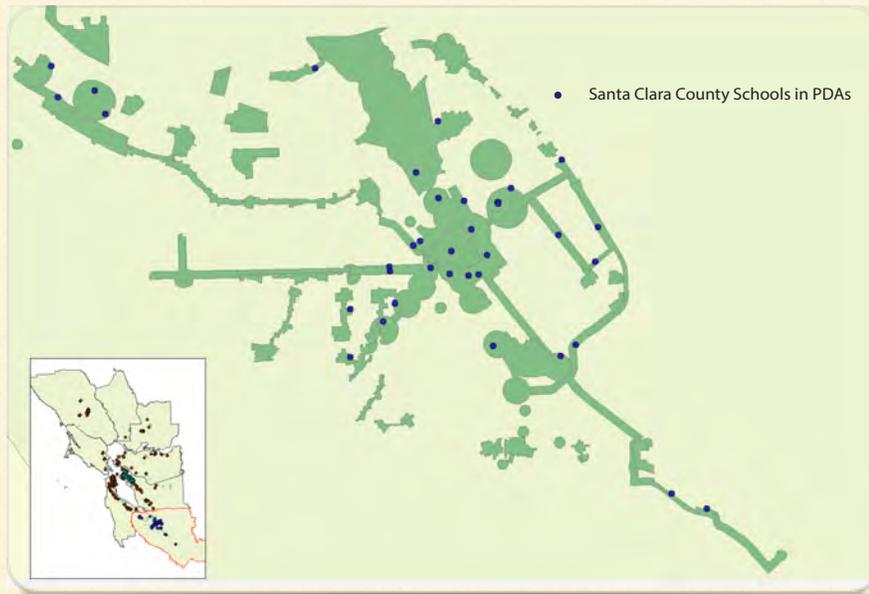
necessary to create sustainable partnerships. This may not, however, be a lasting trend due to the recent resignation of Superintendent Tony Smith.

In addition to business-community connections, OUSD additionally faces the challenge of transportation is implementing career academies within the district. In terms of transportation, because students are able to elect to attend a career academy of their choosing, they have a wide range of pathway possibilities at their disposal; however, for lower-income students or those who may not have reliable forms of transportation, lack of transportation, and related lack of access to multiple school choices, limits their ability to take advantage of the freedom and flexibility offered by new linked learning programs. In terms of transportation, Ms. Benz detailed that the largest hurdles in order of importance are (1) infrequent service, (2) lack of service in entirety or the need for multiple transfers, and (3) cost restrictions in paying bus fare. Additionally, in terms of transportation, students in OUSD face an additional difficulty of limited access to transportation during the school day, when they may have the opportunity to do a practicum or internship within a business or their general community. Lack of transportation additionally limits the ability of classrooms with inadequate funds to take field trips to support their classroom learning.

Coordination with Castlemont School

In accessing the potential for ABAG’s engagement with schools within OUSD within PDAs, the first natural point of entry considered for ABAG’s school engagement was through a teacher at an individual school; however, in implementing case study research it was found that teachers are not receptive to directly facilitating or exploring relationships with ABAG. In contacting several teachers from the school district, and more specifically Castlemont School, it was difficult to establish solid communication in order to discuss the feasibility of direct engagement. In discussing this finding with the College and Career Services Office, it was stated that teachers simply do not have the time to foster such partnerships, and recommended that ABAG work with the Office directly to not only identify a potential teacher or school with which to collaborate, but also better understand the needs of various stakeholders within the district. Direct coordination with Castlemont School is still feasible through a direct partnership with non-profit organization programs such as Y-PLAN and Youth Uprising, discussed in the recommendations section of this report.

The Cities of San Jose and Santa Clara



The San Jose Unified School District, and more broadly the Cities of San Jose and Santa Clara, offer another lens into Regional Planner- School collaboration. Unlike Oakland Unified School District, which spans the entire city of Oakland, the City of San Jose has 19 school districts, which are much smaller than OUSD in terms of size and capacity. The 19 school districts within the City of San Jose, sit under the umbrella of the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE). Through the SCCOE it is feasible for ABAG to engage with the city of San Jose as a whole, and work to identify specific school districts such as the San Jose Unified School District, and the Santa Clara Unified School District in order to directly engage with LEAs. By working through the County Office of Education, ABAG can foster a partnership with a body that has direct connections with school districts in order to effectively access key stakeholders that would be difficult to access otherwise given the small size of the San Jose School Districts.

One area of partnership for ABAG is through joining SCCOE's SJ2020 initiative. Through this initiative the county office has been a major advocate for aligning business, community, and school goals with the school districts. The goal of SJ2020 is to eliminate the achievement gap in San Jose by 2020.

Through SJ2020, the county offices in line with educators, City leaders, and the San Jose districts have piloted a series of initiatives, and resources in order to close the achievement gap.

Silicon Valley Voices: an initiative to engage African American parents, community leaders, and local students to share their insights regarding the success of African American Students.

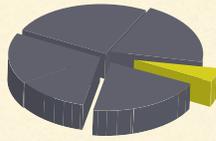
College/ Career Success: SJ202 has partnered with a series of organizations that seek to enhance college and career success:

Notable organizations include:

- Gateways Partnership
- Junior Achievement

Home and Community: SJ2020 has also partnered with a series of organization to enhance school and community support systems:

- Project Cornerstone
- Metro Ed



11% of Santa Clara County Schools are in a PDA



10% of all Santa Clara County High Schools



4% of all Santa Clara County Middle Schools



7% of all Santa Clara County Elementary Schools

“The goal of SJ2020 is to eliminate the achievement gap in San Jose by 2020.”

The organizations that participate in SJ2020 offer an additional lens through which ABAG can reach out to the greater San Jose Community. Much like within OUSD, teachers within the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) were not receptive to direct partnerships given their time constraints, and busy schedules; however, in partnering with programs that are already working within the City, ABAG can not only gain a better understanding of the educational climate in the City, but also leverage partnerships in order to engage with students, educators, and communities to pilot initiatives that support student educational outcomes while aligning with Plan Bay Area.

Educational Reform in San Jose and Transportation

Educational reform in the City of San Jose, and more specifically with SJUSD, has been in the form of Career Technical Education (CTE), which is a form of linked learning. These educational reform programs, however, have not been as significant as that within OUSD, but rather have been confined to magnet schools within the district. In speaking with district administrators, they identified transportation as a major concern in implementing CTE programs throughout the district, as many students within the district rely on school bus systems, rather than on public transit in order to commute to school because they reside more than 3.5 miles from their schools location. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has supported the San Jose School District in purchasing buses to provide students transportation to and from school; however, these buses do not address the need for additional transportation for students who wish to engage with Silicon Valley Businesses or community organizations for internships, or support school-community programs. The availability of school buses in SJUSD, however, does overcome a hurdle that OUSD is facing in terms of aiding students in accessing magnet schools, or school facilities that are not in direct proximity to their neighborhoods, because students can utilize the bus system to access any school in the district.

Case Study Findings

The adoption of linked learning programs within Bay Area School Districts, and their focus on community engagement to support student educational outcomes, offers a natural opportunity for collaboration between ABAG and schools. As demonstrated by the case studies above of the OUSD and SJSUD, although administrators are optimistic about the effect of linked learning implementation within their classrooms, they still face significant barriers that limit the capacity of their programs, these barriers align with and shed light upon the barriers found through the literature review on linked learning programs.

The most significant challenges reiterated by schools were:

- I. **Schools have limited resources to connect with the community and businesses.** Likewise, the community has limited grasp of the complex needs of schools.

Even though linked learning focuses on community- school partnerships, classrooms are not granted direct funding to coordinate such activities. In Oakland, through the Career and College Readiness Office, resources are available to support teachers in engaging with the community; however there is only one staff member appointed to help teachers create these connections for around 120 schools in the district.

In addition to limited resources with which to engage the community, they also face hurdles in terms of finding willing business partners and/or community leaders to engage. Due to high turn around, communication break downs, and quickly changing policies within Districts, businesses and community leaders have difficulty committing to engaging with school districts, or individual classrooms. "When all of the parties in the District are aligned, the school is able to form valuable partnerships; however, when alignment does not exist, partners are not willing to come the table."

There needs to be mutual understanding and commitment by both districts and community leaders in creating partnerships to benefit the classroom. Districts have to work to align themselves internally, while also creating the infrastructure and opportunities for teachers to engage their classroom with the community. Likewise, community leaders and businesses must understand the hurdles districts face in terms of retaining long-term staff, and aligning the resources and infrastructure necessary to support classroom community relationships. If both parties are willing to come compromise at the table, strong partnerships can be fostered that not only support classroom achievement and thus the creation of capital to support future workforce and economic development.

- II. **Linked Learning pathways that are relevant to the economy and community are not always interesting to students.**

Although linked learning programs seek to build human capital in strategic areas of future job growth, student's perceptions of the industries offered by linked learning pathways may negatively align with such goals. In 2011, the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy commissioned by ABAG developed a report detailing that the Bay Area will represent 12% of United States jobs in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry. Additionally, there is interest at the local level, especially in Oakland, in redeveloping the city's advanced manufacturing capabilities. However, because of student perceptions of the manufacturing trade as being "blue-collar"-- despite need for technical skills and many times a college education-- and the hesitancy of female students to pursue such pathways, these programs may face difficulties in achieving enrollment.

- III. **Transportation limits student involvement in the community.**

Transportation stands as a barrier to students and educators alike in forming effective school-community partnerships. In Oakland, for instance, staff expressed that students have difficulty in commuting to internship opportunities within the city, or even commuting to a career academy within the district. Furthermore, staff members at OUSD were interested in building solid communication channels with ABAG and MTC regarding transportation, to better coordinate transportation availability with revised bell schedules, and offer students more efficient transportation. Within SJSUD, students are bused into schools through a school bus system offered by the district. Although these buses provide student access to all schools within the SJSUD district allowing for greater school choice, these buses do not allow students to participate in internships or community engagement activities because they are unavailable during the day or after school, and only provide school-to-home services.



Communicate

to support planner/educator alignment.



Collaborate

to create stronger involvement in the regional planning process



Coordinate

to share information, data, and create shared goals between MTC, ABAG, schools, communities, and educators.

6

Recommendations: Opportunities for Engagement and Action

By strategically aligning regional planning in addressing the challenges that schools are facing in terms of connecting with their communities, and pursuing linked learning programs, such as career academies, there is significant potential to bolster the success of schools while enhancing community development and creating a pipeline for larger and more systematic coordination between ABAG and LEAs in the future.

However, in order to ensure a sustainable multi-sector partnership, the ground must first be sowed to create networks between ABAG and Bay Area region school district, and a deeper understanding of the complex challenges facing schools and districts. In conducting a case study of two districts in the Bay Area there were significant challenges in interfacing with districts that have had limited connection to ABAG in the past.

Challenges included identifying stakeholders, proper entry routes to engagement and, and building solid networks, that have the potential to withstand high turnover within districts.

In following the Center for Cities and School's steps for to "Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development" this report recommends that ABAG communicate, to get to know their educational landscape; collaborate to engage directly with schools, nonprofit organizations, families and students; and coordinate relationships between themselves, MTC, and school districts in order to address limited student transportation access, and work to align data to identify and create shared visions and goals.²⁸ By taking these recommended steps, ABAG will build the foundation for future alignment of bricks and mortar investments that can potentially be integrated into the next iteration of Plan Bay Area.

Create communication channels between educators, planners and businesses.

COMMUNICATE:

Use the contact table and information on linked learning provided in this analysis, to gain a basic understanding of points of contact and collaboration within 2 LEAs.

Appendix 1 offers a contact table to inform communication with Oakland Unified School District and the City of San Jose. These contacts have been created through interviews with stakeholders within the district to identify key points of contact necessary to establish a relationship within the LEAs. These contacts can be used as a means to identify communication channels within specific school districts, community organizations, and schools so ABAG can increase their understanding of the needs of various stakeholders, as well as gauge interest in collaboration.

Through interviews conducted for this analysis, within Oakland Unified School District, the OUSD Center for Career Readiness, and Youth Uprising, a local non-profit were identified as key contacts with which ABAG should cultivate a relationship in order to for a foundation for engaging with schools. Specifically, the Center for Career and College Readiness stated they could be a main source of communication for ABAG within the district, and can direct ABAG to other offices.

Within PDA's in the city of San Jose, collaboration with LEAs is most feasible through the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Unlike Oakland, San Jose is home to 19 school districts that vary in sized and capacity. For this reason, each school district such as the San Jose Unified School District and the Santa Clara Unified School District, do not have pathways to direct coordination (for instance a career services office), as does Oakland Unified School District. For this reason, this analysis recommends that ABAG form a relationship with the Santa Clara County Office of Education in order to cast a wide net in its ability to impact the multiple school districts within its San Jose PDAs.

COLLABORATE:

Implement direct engagement programs in schools within PDA's.

In order to foster new partnerships between schools, and districts to better engage them in the planning process, it is necessary for ABAG to first build relationships, with LEA's through collaborative programs. Through such programs, ABAG will have the opportunity to gain a solid network within schools while also better understanding the diverse needs of each individual school and district. Engaging in such work can also allow ABAG to establish best practices for engagement with schools, and build a shared vision for future collaboration in long term planning.

In the short term, ABAG should prioritize building targeted programs within two PDAs, leveraging the relationships gained through this study's organizational analysis.

Y-PLAN

Y-Plan is a model of youth civic engagement in city planning that uses urban space slated for redevelopment as a catalyst for community revitalization and education reform. Sponsored by the Center for Cities and Schools Y-PLAN identifies three conditions that lead to successful school participation in urban revitalization:

1. "Authentic problems engage diverse stakeholders and foster a "community of practice" that includes local government officials, planners, neighborhood residents, educators, and students;

Implement direct engagement programs in schools with PDAs

2. Adults share decision making with youth, valuing their input and giving them a noticeable role in outcomes; and
3. Projects build individual and institutional success that promotes the sustainability of students and schools working on redevelopment projects

In partnering with Y-PLAN in the Oakland Unified School district, ABAG can not only deepen its understanding of the OUSD educational landscape, but also foster student and community awareness of Plan Bay Area, and its PDA initiatives. ABAG can additionally engage students in understanding and capturing the needs of their communities, and their personal needs in relation to the built environment and transportation infrastructure, which can also speak to ABAG's future work within schools and the community.

Youth Uprising (YU)

Youth Uprising is a Bay Area non-profit organization that seeks to foster community development through youth leadership. Youth Uprising is a non-profit organization that ABAG can partner with in order to capture micro-data of communities in PDAs. For instance, last year, Youth Uprising engaged in a program in which they worked with students from low-income housing communities, to survey members of their community on perceptions of safety, and the built environment. Through such surveying, YU was able to construct a comprehensive survey of their census tract to best assess community need and perceptions of their built environment.

In partnering with an organization such as Youth Uprising, ABAG can not only gain an understanding of the needs of communities within priority development areas, but also have a platform by which to engage directly with students in understanding their neighborhoods transportation and environmental climate.

By forming critical relationships within non-profit organizations, schools, and the community ABAG can gain understanding on how to support a community for future growth while building upon the goals of Plan Bay Area.

ENGAGE KC, and Charleston Area Youth Master Plan

Another model that ABAG can use to foster school-youth-regional engagement is a more governmental based modeled, such as Engage KC or the Charleston Area Youth Master Plan. Each of these programs offer youth an opportunity to engage directly with government officials and elect a board of youth to directly influence and implement programs that are relevant to their well-being. For instance, the Charleston Area Youth Master Plan is a process in which the community

brings together constituencies, including students, the school district, the city, businesses, and parents to engage in a process of information gathering to establish a set of priorities for the community at large, and implement programs to improve the community.²⁹

Similarly, Engage KC, a program offered in Kansas City, creates a board that strives to mobilize and encourage youth to become engaged in the civic arena and promote positive initiatives in the community through service learning requirements. The board provides young people ages 16-22 the opportunity to be a voice in the City's decision-making process.³⁰

In creating a program similar to the case studies above ABAG can not only gain a better understanding of the needs and interests of youth who form the human capital to fuel future economic development, but also can mobilize youth to become active participants in their community and engage them in understanding, and supporting regional initiatives such as Plan Bay Area. Inasmuch as community buy-in and support is a large component of PBA, ABAG can align with its regional growth goals, while pursuing stronger connections between regions, business, school districts and the community at large.

ConnectEd Studios

Sponsored by ConnectEd, a Bay Area non-profit focused on linked learning, and established by the Irvine Foundation, ConnectEd Studios is an online platform that connects students and teachers with Industry Professionals, and that supports project-based learning in the classroom. In a conversation with Roman Stearns, the ConnectEd Director of Leadership Development, career academies were discussed in relation to job growth in the Bay Area Region. Mr. Stearns discussed that although ConnectEd has found opportunity for job growth in the technology-manufacturing sector, it has been difficult to create student interest in such a pathway. Because students associate manufacturing with "blue collar" work, they are hesitant to pursue such a pathway. For that reason, ConnectEd Studios works to build student understanding and interest in relevant career pathways by creating educational videos and content for students.³¹

ABAG can partner with ConnectEd Studios in order to enhance and build upon student interest in and knowledge of important sectors for future job growth in the Bay Area economy, as well as create content for students to understand and participate in the regional planning process.

Coordinate channels of communication between MTC, School Districts, and Data and Metrics Offices.

COORDINATE

Engage with District Data and Metrics Offices to implement data sharing procedures:

In order to establish shared visions and goals with school districts to move forward on collaborative programs, data must be aligned between LEAs and ABAG. Currently, ABAG's data on school districts in the Bay Area is out of date, as it has not been updated since 2011, and does not reflect substantial changes within school districts. One example of this is the transformation of small academies in OUSD, into integrated high school facilities. For instance, in ABAG's GIS database Castlemont High School is listed as Leadership Preparatory High School. If ABAG or MTC were to rely upon that data to make planning decisions within that area, it would not accurately represent the environment of that school.

Although educational data is publicly available, it is a complex and cumbersome process for the data to be compiled and synthesized in terms of PDAs or geographies of interest. By coordinating directly with district data and metrics offices, ABAG could work directly in tandem with the offices that manage the data, and facilitate a means to integrate such data into planning decisions.

Such coordination with the Data and Metrics Office is important inasmuch as it can help ABAG, MTC and school districts identify key patterns in student transportation (for instance how far are students traveling to school), and thus LEA transportation needs. ABAG could work with LEAs in identifying gaps in data that would be necessary to support transportation access, and focused planning initiatives based on school needs.

Bring MTC to the School's Table

Although MTC is currently supporting schools through programs such as Transportation for Livable Communities and Safe Routes to Schools, in r case studies and interviews regarding transportation it was a major concern of school officials, and non-profit administrators alike that there was insufficient coordination between their LEA and MTC. The major cause for concern was lack of transit accessibility for students, especially as schools promote internships and community collaboration as a core component of their curriculum. In order to give students with limited financial resources an opportunity to take advantage of out of classroom experiences, transportation is a major resource that needs to be provided. In conversations with various school and non profit stakeholders, it was made clear that although there is access to transportation resources, the access does not align with bell schedules within schools and thus does not address the need of students to get to and from school and internships/ extracurricular activities.

MTC should collaborate with transit agencies and school district transportation office in order to align bell schedules and ensure accessible and safe routes of transportation for students.

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