THE IMPERATIVE FOR CITY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

CENTER FOR CITIES AND SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Many public schools around the nation are struggling to meet the needs of their students. Although not a new concept, more and more researchers, policy makers, and practitioners are beginning to recognize that addressing these issues will require more than changing classroom practices or working within the confines of the school. Despite this articulated need for stronger connections between schools, students, families, and communities, many well-intentioned policy makers and practitioners continue to carry on their business as if their work was unrelated.

THE BAY AREA NEED

Seeing this dynamic persist in the Bay Area, in 2005, the Center for Cities & Schools (CC&S) met with over 25 civic, educational, and community leaders in Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, and San Pablo in an effort to assess the specific core needs and interests in each of the five communities. These initial leaders identified the following core challenges:

1. Limited communication and knowledge of each partner’s work
2. Unclear or unstated goals for the collaboration
3. Different jurisdictional boundaries and systems of accountability
4. Lack of training and support in breaking down silos and “working outside the box”
5. Lack of evidence on the import and outcomes of collaboration necessary for systemic change.

PLUS (PLANNING AND LEARNING UNITED FOR SYSTEMS-CHANGE) LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

With funding from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund and the Stuart Foundation, CC&S launched the PLUS (Planning and Learning United for Systems-change) Leadership Initiative as a multi-year action research project, designed to prepare current and future educational, community, and civic leaders in the Bay Area region to develop collaborative, mutually beneficial policies and practices, and facilitate comprehensive systems-change. Six identified PLUS city-school teams received a specialized combination of:

1. Technical Assistance and Coaching
2. PLUS Graduate Fellows
3. Public and invitational training institutes and forums
4. Publications, policy briefs and toolkits
5. Y-PLAN (Youth - Plan, Learn, Act, Now) educational methodology and tools for student engagement

From a modest beginning with 25 city and school district leaders from six cities and five school districts brainstorming over breakfast, lessons from PLUS are now reaching across the state and the nation, informing policy making and practice at all levels of government. The following pages highlight PLUS Leadership Initiative city-school collaborations and projects between the years 2007 and 2010.
The Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) is envisioned to be mixed-use, centrally located, and provide a variety of services and opportunities for children, families, and adults in the city of Emeryville, Emery Unified School District (EUSD), and adjoining Oakland neighborhoods. This unique, large-scale development is being co-developed, funded, and governed by both the City and EUSD and evolved over 10 years in response to inequitable gaps in service to diverse Emeryville constituents.

PLUS provided technical assistance to help the City and EUSD move past jurisdictional boundaries by identifying joint governance structures and tools for the ECCL, while ensuring community and youth engagement in planning and design decisions. PLUS documented potential legal and governance structures and worked to institutionalize ongoing community and student engagement in the planning and operation of the ECCL. Through the use of CC&S research and tools, PLUS ensured that ECCL's vision continued to be realized despite leadership turnover.

In June 2005, the Berkeley Alliance launched the Berkeley Integrated Resource Initiatives (BIRI) to increase communication, share resources and create transparent systems of support for Berkeley’s children, youth and families. By 2008, Berkeley Alliance had evolved BIRI and transitioned their focus into a new initiative: 2020 Vision. Berkeley’s 2020 Vision is an institutional and community collaboration to close the achievement gap in Berkeley by 2020, eliminating the racial predictability of low performance.

Across both BIRI and 2020 Vision, PLUS identified ways for the City to reinvigorate the Youth Commission and provided technical assistance to document cross-jurisdictional data-tracking, benchmarks, and indicators of success for 2020 Vision in BUSD and the City. PLUS also crafted recommendations to restructure BUSD’s case management system that helps link students to health and education resources.

PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

**Year 1: 2007-2008**

*A Youth Engagement Strategy for the City of Berkeley*, Fellow: Laura Henry, Goldman School of Public Policy

**Year 2: 2008-2009**

*Essential Structures and Strategies for Maintaining Collaboration within Berkeley’s 2020 Vision*, Fellow: Kristen Ferris, Goldman School of Public Policy

**Year 3: 2009-2010**

*Addressing Barriers to Student Learning through 2020 Vision and the Universal Learning Support System (ULSS)*, Fellow: Paul Perry, Goldman School of Public
Launched in 2001, the Nystrom United Revitalization Effort (NURVE) is a collaborative effort of more than a dozen key stakeholders that aims to revitalize and improve quality of life in the area surrounding the Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, California. Spearheaded originally by LISC Bay Area, this initiative now includes over a dozen stakeholders including: the City of Richmond, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, the Richmond Housing Authority, and the Richmond Community Foundation. In response to the endemic problems of the neighborhood, such as economic blight, high unemployment, aging community facilities and underutilized public space, NURVE planned for the integrated redevelopment of five adjacent facilities, including the school, a park, community center, childcare facility and housing development. The Martin Luther King Park opened in Spring 2011 and other capital projects are underway.

PLUS provided technical assistance to redefine NURVE’s collaboration strategy and identify key areas of improvement. PLUS provided instrumental support as a neutral third-party intermediary to improve relationships between NURVE partners. Despite initial challenges due to leadership turnover, NURVE leaders had begun to institutionalize city-school collaboration. PLUS was successful in developing a tangible strategic plan that outlined goals for collaboration, drafting joint-use agreements, integrating Y-PLAN into NURVE as a way to sustain youth engagement, and creating tools like a scorecard to help NURVE leaders to measure and track change.

PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

Year 1: 2007-2008
_Nystrom United ReVitalization Effort: Examining the Power of Transforming the Built Environment through Collaborative Housing, Land Use, and Educational Policies_, Fellow: Samir Bolar, Haas School of Business

Year 2: 2008-2009
_The Heart of the Matter: Nystrom United ReVitalization Effort (NURVE) Neighborhood Transformation at the Nexus of People, Place, and Collaborative Practice_, Fellow: April Suwalsky, Department of City and Regional Planning

Year 3: 2009-2010
_Making it Happen: Collaboration and Implementation in the Nystrom United ReVitalization Effort_, Fellow: Kris Hartley, Department of City and Regional Planning
In the summer of 2005, San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) convened meetings with San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) staff and community based organizations (CBOs) to strengthen and expand the scope of existing collaborative efforts and improve frayed community relations. PLUS provided technical assistance to the task force to help improve communication and coordination between the city and the school district by identifying the connections between education and housing policies to address the issues of declining student enrollment and affordable housing. PLUS also developed a joint-use schools strategy and set of tools to support the community use of schools that SFUSD, in partnership with DCYF, adopted and is currently implementing.

In addition, the work of the PLUS team expanded to include offering technical assistance to the HOPE SF initiative which aims to transform San Francisco’s most distressed public housing sites into thriving mixed-income communities. To this end, the Mayor’s Office of Housing began to work with SFUSD, and PLUS developed an educational strategic plan for the Hunters View HOPE SF site and a youth engagement strategy based on Y-PLAN for the HOPE SF Youth Leadership Academy. PLUS provided capacity-building support to the HOPE SF team, and helped the city successfully engage local schools and young residents in the revitalization of their communities.

PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

**Year 1: 2007-2008**
*What Affordable Housing and Redevelopment Initiatives in San Francisco Retain and Support San Francisco Unified School District Families?*
Fellow: Cherry Ordonez, Department of City and Regional Planning

**Year 2: 2008-2009**
*Creating Pathways for Educational & Neighborhood Success: Hunters View HOPE SF Educational Strategy Plan,* Fellow: CC&S Staff and Dylan de Kervor, School of Social Welfare

*San Francisco’s Public School Facilities as Public Assets: A Shared Understanding and Policy Recommendations for the Community Use of Schools,* Fellow: CC&S Staff and Jordan Klein, Department of City and Regional Planning

**Year 3: 2009-2010**
*Engaging Youth in Building Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Public Housing Developments in San Francisco,* Fellow: CC&S Staff and LeConte Dill, School of Public Health
In 1994 with a California Department of Education Healthy Start grant, the Helms Middle School launched the Helms Community Project (HCP), a school-community collaborative comprised of district and school staff, community-based mental health service providers, parents, and community members. HCP’s goal is to create a positive and enriched environment that would support student learning by collaborating with city agencies and community organizations to offer an array of supportive services. The newly anointed Helms Community School moved into a new building.

In 2011, through a joint use agreement with WCCUSD, the City is planning to build a community center adjacent to the school, which will house many of the non-profit organizations that provide support services to the Helms Community School.

PLUS provided technical assistance to create systems and structures to provide opportunities for data tracking and evaluation of HCP. CC&S also facilitated Y-PLAN to engage middle school students in the design and development of the community center and surrounding recreational areas.

PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

Year 1: 2007-2008
The Institutionalization of School and Community Partnerships,
Fellow: Erika Tate, Graduate School of Education

Year 2: 2008-2009
Next Steps in Evolving a High Performing Community School Model,
Fellow: Jason Hirschhorn, Haas School of Business

Year 3: 2009-2010
Coordinated Information and Knowledge Sharing,
Fellow: Reino Makkonen, Graduate School of Education
Launched in 2001, the Nystrom United Revitalization Effort (NURVE) is a collaborative effort of more than a dozen key stakeholders that aims to revitalize and improve quality of life in the area surrounding the Nystrom Elementary School in Richmond, California. Spearheaded originally by LISC Bay Area, this initiative now includes over a dozen stakeholders including: the City of Richmond, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, the Richmond Housing Authority, and the Richmond Community Foundation. In response to the endemic problems of the neighborhood, such as economic blight, high unemployment, aging community facilities and underutilized public space, NURVE planned for the integrated redevelopment of five adjacent facilities, including the school, a park, community center, childcare facility and housing development. The Martin Luther King Park opened in Spring 2011 and other capital projects are underway. PLUS provided technical assistance to redefine NURVE's collaboration strategy and identify key areas of improvement. PLUS provided instrumental support as a neutral third-party intermediary to improve relationships between NURVE partners. Despite initial challenges due to leadership turnover, NURVE leaders had begun to institutionalize city-school collaboration. PLUS was successful in developing a tangible strategic plan that outlined goals for collaboration, drafting joint-use agreements, integrating Y-PLAN into NURVE as a way to sustain youth engagement, and creating tools like a scorecard to help NURVE leaders to measure and track change.

In an attempt to build better relationships with community based organizations and parents, OUSD created the Office of Community Accountability in 2006 as part of its greater district redesign. The goal of this office was to provide better information to parents about the district’s redesign and to address the needs and concerns of parents and community. In 2007, the establishment the Complementary Learning Department (CLD) in OUSD reflected the district’s ongoing commitment to collaborative school-community partnerships that improve student success and support whole well-being. Driven by a vision of schools as “centers of community,” the district sought to define the role that schools can have in building healthy communities, and to align its policies to support District-wide efforts.

PLUS provided technical assistance to develop structures to ensure mutual accountability between city, county, and community partners; and identify strategies for OUSD to institutionalize community engagement. In its first year, the PLUS fellow helped the office refine the framework for their data-system sharing tools with the City of Oakland and Alameda County. Subsequent years, PLUS work centered on OUSD’s Department of Complementary Learning (CL) to help its staff achieve CL’s mission to promote the academic success and holistic development of every student through a comprehensive array of support services.

### PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

**Year 1: 2007-2008**

*Oakland Unified School District: Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth with Inter-agency Data-Sharing*, Fellow: Lynn Wu, Goldman School of Public Policy and Boalt Hall School of Law

**Year 2: 2008-2009**

*An Assessment of Unmet Need for Out-of-School Time Programs among Academically At-Risk Students in Oakland*, Fellow: Mara Larsen-Fleming, Goldman School of Public Policy and School of Public Health

**Year 3: 2009-2010**

*An Overview of Tools and Models in Partnership: Ideas for an Orientation*, Fellow: Seenae Chong, Graduate School of Education

*Collaboration for Healthy Communities: The Role of Schools in East Oakland*, Fellow: Sarah Sullivant, Goldman School of Public Policy

**Year 4: 2010-2011**

*A Community-Informed Proposal for Regional Governance in Oakland Unified School District*, Fellow: Victoria Laws, Goldman School of Public Policy
The Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) is envisioned to be mixed-use, centrally located, and provide a variety of services and opportunities for children, families, and adults in the city of Emeryville, Emery Unified School District (EUSD), and adjoining Oakland neighborhoods. This unique, large-scale development is being co-developed, funded, and governed by both the City and EUSD and evolved over 10 years in response to inequitable gaps in service to diverse Emeryville constituents.

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PLUS PROJECT TOPICS

**Year 1: 2007-2008**
Youth Participation in the Civic Process: A Case Study in Emeryville, California, Fellow: Alissa Kronovet, Department of City and Regional Planning

**Year 2: 2008-2009**
Governance Models for Highly Integrated City/School District Service Models, Fellow: Ary Amerikaner, Goldman School of Public Policy and Boalt Hall School of Law

**Year 3: 2009-2010**
Sustaining Community Engagement Through Collaborative Governance, Fellow: Adrianne Wheeler, Department of City and Regional Planning
PLUS MOVING FORWARD

2011-2012 PLUS Projects

East Oakland
How can the planned transformation of Castlemont High School into a full-service community school (FSCS) best support and align with the Building Healthy Oakland initiative and other neighborhood revitalization strategies to create a healthier East Oakland?

Oakland Citywide
How does OUSD implement best practices to support the board-approved policy on school closure, consolidation and expansion that align with and support the District’s vision for full-service community schools?

Richmond
How can LISC Bay Area, as the coordinating hub of the Building Healthy Richmond initiative, integrate K-12 education into a coordinated, multi-sector approach to neighborhood revitalization to ensure a healthy and sustainable Richmond?

San Francisco
How can the planning and implementation phases of Alice Griffith HOPE SF redevelopment, as part of the larger Hunters Point Shipyard/Candlestick Point redevelopment, support and align with SFUSD educational goals and outcomes to support the development of a healthy and sustainable Bayview Hunters Point community?

Stay Tuned! PLUS Leadership Institute - Spring 2012
CC&S is pleased to announce our 2012 PLUS Leadership Institute to be held in Berkeley this spring. This will be an all-day event focused on the role of high-quality education in creating an equitable, healthy and sustainable California. Tentative topics will include:

- School closures, renovations and expansions
- Housing, redevelopment and education
- High-quality linked-learning and community building
- Regional planning and education

Join our mailing list on the CC&S website http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/ for more information and event updates as they are announced!

Walter & Elise Haas Fund

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