Planning A Systems Approach To Community-Oriented Schools
PLUS Leadership Initiative 2011-12
The Center for Cities & Schools (CC&S) is excited to present the PLUS Leadership Fellow research and policy projects for 2011-2012. This year’s projects are organized around the role of high-quality education in building healthy, equitable and sustainable communities.

The PLUS Leadership Initiative, funded by the Walter and Elise Haas Fund and The California Endowment, is currently completing its sixth year of partnership development and capacity building. PLUS has evolved into a dynamic regional learning network of over 40 city, school and community leaders dedicated to developing collaborative, mutually beneficial policies and practices that are child- and family-centered, and lead to improved public education quality and more vibrant and healthy neighborhoods.

Project titles and partnerships include:

**Oakland**
1. The Role of Career Academies in Realizing OUSD’s Full-Service Community School & District-wide Policy Goals: A Case Study of the Sustainable Urban Design Academy
2. Community Engagement in School Restructuring

**San Francisco**
3. Strategic Planning to Align Alice Griffith HOPE SF Revitalization Strategy in Hunters Point and Education

**Richmond**
4. Laying the Groundwork for a Strategic Plan to Align the Healthy Richmond Initiative with West Contra Costa Unified School District Goals and Priorities
Laying the Groundwork for a Strategic Plan to Align the Healthy Richmond Initiative with West Contra Costa Unified School District Goals and Priorities

Background
The Healthy Richmond initiative is one of 14 local efforts of The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities Initiative (BHC) to improve community health outcomes across the state over 10 Years. BHC aims to create places where children are healthy, safe and ready to learn. Moving from planning to implementation, the Healthy Richmond Hub Steering Committee—comprised of residents, municipal leaders, public institutions, businesses, health systems and nonprofit organizations—is supporting a collaborative hub structure to advance their vision and strategic plan. The strategic plan and its logic model focus on four outcome areas for the first phase of implementation.

A community-oriented schools framework recognizes sees school systems and environments cutting across multiple outcome areas, and that school sites are uniquely positioned to become hubs for community partnerships and services that integrate health, academics, social services, youth and community development.

The Richmond PLUS project explores opportunities and challenges to cultivating effective school-community partnerships based on a landscape analysis of existing efforts and linkages between education, public health and community development in Richmond. The initial findings lay the groundwork for further policy and implementation research over the next year to inform short- and long-term options to align Healthy Richmond outcomes with the educational goals and priorities of West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD).

Methodology
Between February and April 2012, key informant interviews were conducted with various school and community leaders to identify existing efforts in Richmond, in addition to a literature review of the community-oriented schools framework and emerging health and educational program initiatives relevant to Richmond including Linked Learning, Y-PLAN, and school-based health centers.

Initial Findings
- Identified six lead agencies, in addition to WCCUSD, currently working on school-community efforts in – or relevant to – Richmond
- Two strategies have emerged as priorities for minimizing the achievement gap: (1) deepening and expanding Linked Learning; and (2) strengthening support for the district’s six school-based health centers. In Richmond, there currently exists eight Linked Learning academies and three school-based health centers.
- Further research will focus on aligning and leveraging existing school-community efforts in Richmond that support stronger, reciprocal partnerships between the city, community partners, including youth networks, and WCCUSD to achieve the Healthy Richmond priority outcomes.
Background
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) emerged from state receivership in 2009 with substantial financial challenges and a vision to give each of its students a high-quality, equitable education. Reflecting community priorities was an important component of that goal. A listening campaign led to a year of strategic planning in which families, community leaders and staff participated in task forces to shape OUSD’s long-term vision. This work informed Oakland’s five-year strategic plan, approved by Oakland’s School Board on June 18, 2011. On August 24 of that same year, the Board approved restructuring criteria, acknowledging the potential that some schools would need to close. On October 26, the Board approved restructuring recommendations. On December 19, new school assignments were released for individuals at the closing schools.

The process prompted numerous interactions with the communities served by schools: some driven by OUSD, others not. We saw this as an opportunity to take a high-profile example of community participation, to examine what worked well and where there were opportunities for growth, and to suggest the implications of these findings for future district-led change.

Methodology
The research on this project followed two tracks. The first was to review material related to OUSD’s strategic vision setting and restructuring. Key sources related to OUSD’s restructuring efforts included interviews with key district stakeholders, Oakland School Board minutes, newspaper articles and editorials, and OUSD presentations, task force reports and strategy documents. The second was to study literature and speak to practitioners related to promising practices and lessons learned in similar efforts elsewhere. Key sources related to OUSD’s promising practices included interviews with academics and practitioners from other districts, studies of other school transformations, and change management literature.

Preliminary Findings
This study will be ongoing throughout the month of May. Preliminary findings are as follows:

- Community engagement is an activity that is undertaken at cost: both to the district and to community participants. All parties will benefit from an understanding of the value to be gained from the process and from transparency of outcomes.

- Community engagement is situated within the context of a wider system of change. As such, it has much to gain from the principles of carefully structured communication, well-defined roles and clarity of process that drive the transformation as a whole.

- Community is not homogenous and change is personal. As such, broad approaches may need to be tailored to local culture.
The Role of Career Academies in Realizing OUSD’s Full-Service Community School & District-wide Policy Goals: A Case Study of the Sustainable Urban Design Academy

Background

Initiatives to improve outcomes for Oakland youth are taking place at multiple levels in East Oakland, involving concurrent efforts by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), Castlemont High School and The California Endowment. At the district level, OUSD is implementing its full-service community schools (FSCS) vision throughout the district to improve student education outcomes and connections to community. At the same time, OUSD is promoting Linked Learning in high schools to improve student preparation for college, careers and a full range of post-secondary options. Key to the Linked Learning approach is support for industry-focused Career Academies that integrate real-world, work-based learning opportunities and rigorous classroom curriculum.

At the community level, The California Endowment has launched a 10-year effort in East Oakland as part of its Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative. The BHC initiative funds local community development and youth organizations to implement a comprehensive, place-based effort to improve community health and wellbeing. Key BHC outcomes include health-promoting land use and community development, improved neighborhood safety, and increased access to employment, particularly for men and boys of color.

This project explores ways that Career Academies at Castlemont High School, located within the BHC area, can strengthen school transformation, while also supporting and advancing broader community development efforts. It includes a case study of the Sustainable Urban Design Academy (SUDA), Castlemont’s newly-funded California Partnership Academy set to launch in 2012.

Methodology

Research included interviews with key community stakeholders, district officials, and Castlemont faculty and students. In addition, a literature review was conducted around full-service community schools, linked learning, and career academies.

Preliminary Findings

- Specific academy activities (31 out of 40) are directly aligned with and advance district and community efforts, and have significant transformative impacts on Castlemont youth.

- To advance district, community, and school goals, SUDA staff should clearly identify the program’s intended goals and outcomes and conduct a formative assessment of the program while in its early stages of implementation.

- Currently, schools are not explicitly identified in East Oakland’s BHC outcomes, but there are many opportunities for the BHC Initiative to directly engage with schools and OUSD Linked Learning efforts to strengthen and support the East Oakland hub’s community development goals.
Background
In 2010, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a project to transform the abandoned Hunters Point Naval Shipyard into a new waterfront community of homes, parks, businesses, and green technology. The redevelopment project will be the largest in the city’s history and aims to provide jobs, housing, and hope to a community that has been long-neglected. In addition to these benefits this revitalization effort will bring, the developer, Lennar Urban, is obligated by the City to implement a Community Benefits Plan with the aim of alleviating poverty, increasing economic opportunity, and improving the overall health and quality of life of the current residents.

The Community Benefits Plan includes funds earmarked for health and wellness, workforce development and education that will be dispersed over the next 20 years. As a lead agency on the decision-making committee that will inform disbursement of these funds, the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and the Redevelopment Agency sought the support of UC Berkeley’s Center for Cities & Schools to research promising practices and develop strategies to assist OEWD in its future collaboration with San Francisco Unified School District as it utilizes the education funds to support Bayview/Hunters Point youth from cradle to career.

Methodology
Research for this report included a literature review of promising practices to support community efforts to support youth intervention and cradle to post-secondary success. It also included interviews with key stakeholders in the Bayview/Hunters Point redevelopment area, including: community-based organizations, tenants associations, consultants, and residents. Interviews with school site and district employees included principals, district staff, social workers, nurses, and teachers working in Bayview/Hunters Point.

Initial Findings
To maximize efficiency and positive impacts on Bayview/Hunter Point youth, initial recommendations include the following:

- Conduct a resource inventory on what current capacities SFUSD, its Bayview/Hunters Point schools and the community have to support youth to reach key academic milestones.
- Ensure collaboration between implementation committees and funding entities to improve knowledge sharing and reprioritization over time.
- Increase collaboration with community-based organizations and service providers in Bayview/Hunters Point.

To support coordinated and strategic collaboration between multiple agencies and private developers, a series of graphic timelines and tools were developed to assist with funding alignment and timing to meet young residents’ academic, developmental and workforce goals.
**San Francisco: School Choice and School Quality in the San Francisco Bayview**

**Project Description**

Through community focus groups and targeted, semi-structured interviews with parents and other stakeholders in education, this research project will address pressing questions regarding the school choice process as it takes place in San Francisco’s redeveloping communities. The primary research questions are as follows:

- How do parents in Hope SF sites like Hunters View and Alice Griffith navigate the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) school selection process?
- What factors do parents and stakeholders identify as important in such a selection? How are these factors prioritized?
- By what metric do parents and community members evaluate the quality of a local school or the school their child attends?

This study hopes to expand the understanding of educational decision-making within the larger environment of school choice and economic redevelopment. Such research will have implications for the Hunters View and Alice Griffith redevelopment and community revitalization processes, deepen knowledge surrounding the variation within judgments of school quality, and speak to the education component of Hope SF activity more broadly.

**Sacramento: Aligning K-12 Education, Public Health and Neighborhood Revitalization Efforts to Support The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities Initiative in Sacramento.**

Starting in summer 2012, the PLUS Fellow will develop a strategic plan to support the alignment of SCUSD TCE-funded health and education programs with community-based efforts to realize the vision and goals of the Sacramento Building Healthy Communities Initiative. The strategic plan will include:

- Analysis of current funded educational and community-based public health initiatives to identify where linkages can or do exist;
- Identification of local needs and interests among key stakeholders for increasing alignment between programs; and
- Recommendations to create an aligned and cohesive funding and implementation strategy for TCE and the Sacramento CBO and educational community.
PLUS LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM - SEPTEMBER 2012

CC&S is pleased to announce a statewide convening of leading education and planning policy-makers that will be held in Sacramento in September 2012:

**Opportunity-Rich Schools and Communities: Health, Equity and Sustainability in California**

Join leaders from across California for a timely discussion on connecting important policy agendas to advance shared prosperity.

Topics for discussion:
- K-12 School Environments: How they impact students and communities
- The State Role: Supporting quality school facilities in sustainable communities
- Aligning for Shared Goals: Linking regional plans, municipalities and school districts
- Looking Forward: What should California’s next statewide school construction bond prioritize?

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

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