PLUS Leadership Initiative: Final Report

Deborah L. McKoy and Ariel H. Bierbaum

Fall 2012

CENTER FOR
CITIES & SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report offers a comprehensive overview of the first six years of the PLUS (Planning and Learning United for Systems Change) Leadership Initiative administered by the Center for Cities & Schools at UC Berkeley (CC&S). PLUS began as a concerted response to the growing recognition among planning and educational practitioners, policy makers and funding agencies that the complex challenges facing students, families and their communities in the Bay Area and across the nation will require a new generation of leaders. CC&S was uniquely positioned to understand the social, economic and environmental nature of these challenges and to offer a unique place-based approach to leadership development. The aim of such an approach is the development of leaders capable of overcoming the obstacles presented by the institutional status quo and of developing and championing the priorities, policies, practices, and procedures at the local, regional, state and national levels that have the potential to deliver and sustain positive systems changes to the benefit of all.

We begin by describing how PLUS used this research-driven approach to effectively respond to stakeholder needs and to forge a framework, develop tools, marshal resources, document results and execute a multi-year program dedicated to building the capacity of individuals, institutions and diverse networks to effectively support healthy, equitable and sustainable communities. The core of the report consists of six case studies documenting the results of city-school teams representing Bay Area communities including Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, and San Pablo. Each case study introduces key stakeholders, provides important background information, summarizes the experience of each PLUS team by year and project, and concludes with a snapshot of the successes enjoyed and challenges faced. The report concludes by offering a summary of the high-level lessons learned and what those lessons recommend in terms of next steps. A table summarizing the seven indicators of change for city-school initiatives developed by CC&S in support of PLUS and a list of reference materials completes the report.

Introduction

The Center for Cities & Schools (CC&S) is an action-oriented think tank working to promote high quality education as an essential component of urban and metropolitan vitality to create equitable, healthy and sustainable cities and schools for all. CC&S efforts are inspired by on-the-ground innovations in communities and regions across the country and by the pressing questions of leaders at every level of government. The CC&S team has worked extensively with educational and civic leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area and across the nation. Established in 2004 at the University of California, Berkeley, CC&S is an interdisciplinary initiative between the Graduate School of Education and the College of Environmental Design's Department of City and Regional Planning, and housed at the Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD).

In 2005, CC&S received a planning grant from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund to explore the relationship between city and school district collaborative policy making and practices in the Bay Area. Supported by additional funding from 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.

From a modest beginning with 25 city and school district leaders from 6 cities and 5 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. CC&S has developed a framework for understanding city-school collaboration that aims to merge systemic and localized measures of systems change. Originally conceived as the "Ten Mechanics of City-School Initiatives"[1] in 2010, further research and refinement has led to the "Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development."[2] This seven-step framework draws heavily from the

---

[1] McKoy, D.M., Bierbaum, A.H., & Vincent, J.M. (2010). *The Mechanics of City-School Initiatives: Transforming Neighborhoods of Distress & Despair into Neighborhoods of Choice and Connection*. Center for Cities & Schools Working Paper.
http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/PLUS_Mechanics_of_Change.pdf
[2] McKoy, D.M., Vincent, J.M., & Bierbaum, A.H. (2011). *Opportunity Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development.* A Working Paper for the What Works Collaborative.
http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/ccs_wwc_%20report.pdf.

lessons of the Bay Area PLUS teams, and provides the skeleton for the indicators presented at the end of this report.

To understand these seven steps and the subsequent indicators, the following report describes the background of PLUS, provides a research perspective and context for the work, and details case studies of the six PLUS teams working together between 2006-2011. Following the framework and indicators of change to measure city-school collaboration, the report concludes with next steps in the areas of research, policy, and practice aimed at building on the momentum and lessons learned from this multi-year initiative.

The PLUS Leadership Initiative Background

Why PLUS? The Stated Need from Practitioners and Policymakers[3]

Many public schools around the nation, in both central city and older suburban areas, are failing to meet the needs of their students: the achievement gap persists, school facilities are crumbling and often insufficient in size, and educators lack the financial and human resources to meet every student's needs. Although not a new concept, more and more researchers, policy makers, and practitioners are beginning to recognize that addressing these issues will require far more than changing classroom practices or simply working within the confines of the school.

Despite an 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 were unrelated. Policies in the areas of transportation, public health, and housing are often crafted without considering the unintended impact that they might have on local schools and the youth they serve. Affordable and high-quality housing, for example, is essential for both students and teachers, and yet rarely is this considered an educational issue or a factor impacting student achievement.

From 2005-2006, CC&S met individually with over twenty-five 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 these six communities. Two years of CC&S workshops, projects and public forums revealed that educational, community and civic

---

[3] CELP-PLUS Proposal to Walter and Elise Haas Fund (2005).

leaders were in need of professional development and resources to develop these new relationships and collaborative programs and policies aimed at creating long-lasting systemic changes that better support students, their families, and local communities. These interviews highlighted both the promising practices that were already underway as well as a set of core challenges that were impeding effective and sustainable collaboration efforts.

Specifically, program participants identified the following core challenges in their work to connect city agencies, community organizations, and schools:

1. Limited communication and knowledge of each partner's work;
2. Unclear or unstated goals for the collaboration;
3. Jurisdictional boundaries and different systems of accountability;
4. Lack of training and support in breaking down silos and "working outside the box";
5. Persistent lack of formal policy framework.

PLUS Goals and Methodology: A Response to Challenges from the Field

Based on interviews and focus groups with these leaders, CC&S crafted the goals and structure of the PLUS Leadership Initiative to respond to the core challenges identified. The goal of PLUS is to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive, interdisciplinary capacity building program that better prepares educational, community and civic leaders to create collaborative policies and practices. By design, then, such collaboration has the potential to create higher quality education and more vibrant, healthy communities in the inner Bay Area, and, ultimately, serve as a model to other communities and schools in California and beyond.

Critical to the theory of change of PLUS is the idea that supporting city and school districts around place-based interventions will offer more tangible opportunities for collaboration and help fill some of the largest chasms between city and school efforts to support students and families. Tactically, this meant inviting city and school district leaders to form PLUS teams. Each PLUS team identified a specific project or policy issue with which leaders were grappling. By engaging in this "project based learning," leaders grew to understand each other's work and cultures and went on to identify "win-win" solutions for place-based interventions. Often, teams grew to include other community-based and non-profit organizations that had a recognized stake in the project. These groups offered important insights and additional dynamism to the teams. However, the

core of each PLUS team was intentionally city and school districts that have the institutional and policy-making authority to initiate and sustain systems change.

To support each team, PLUS provides leaders with training, technical assistance, graduate student fellows, resources, and toolkits to connect policies and professional sectors. Likewise, PLUS engages university partners such as the Principal Leadership Institute to provide pre-professional development training to future leaders across campus. Each PLUS team received a specialized combination of the following five interventions[4] based on each team's unique needs:

1. **Technical Assistance and Coaching** from CC&S staff, and other consultants identified through CC&S;
2. **PLUS Fellows** representing a diverse and elite group of graduate student "consultants," who were carefully selected from planning, education, public policy, law, business, public health, and social welfare programs, and matched to each PLUS Team project based issue area and specific need;
3. **Public Institutes and Forums**, hosted twice per year, included participation by all sites to encourage and support cross-site learning;
4. **Publications/Resources** were made available to all PLUS Teams; publications included CC&S toolkits and reports and the customized PLUS Fellow project reports from across the region;
5. **Y-PLAN**, another initiative of CC&S, was integrated into PLUS projects where appropriate. Y-PLAN is an educational methodology and tool for engaging young people in community planning and development processes carefully aligned to the core curriculum. Many PLUS projects called for this kind of engagement, and Y-PLAN provided another avenue for meaningful city-school collaboration.

In addition, CC&S maintained its commitment to pre-professional development training. Each year, CC&S created a curriculum module and supported

---

[4] These interventions are an evolution of the original plan, based on feedback from the PLUS teams. In the initial three-year implementation period, PLUS proposed five interventions, including: (1) PLUS professional development institutes for team leads; (2) curricular and training modules for pre-professional development; (3) public forums and roundtables; (4) PLUS graduate student fellows program; and (5) promising practices web-based toolkit to guide and support current and future collaboration efforts. In 2008, PLUS team leaders and partners requested that CC&S combine (1) and (3)reflecting the fact that they would rather "go deep" by participating in fewer off site training sessions and events, while having greater support and coaching on developing successful and sustainable Collaborative Policy Projects through work with their graduate fellows. Additionally, PLUS teams expressed interest in hard copy documents, policy briefs, and in-person networking events as a way to share promising practices rather than online/web-based tools.

community-mapping projects for the students in the Principal Leadership Institute at the Graduate School of Education. CC&S also structured a seminar course for all PLUS Fellows, to ensure cross-site and interdisciplinary learning for graduate students.

During its first 4 years, PLUS evolved into a Regional Learning Network where city and school district leaders from across the Bay Area can share best practices, grapple with common questions, and collectively shepherd innovative collaborative policies and practices across the region. Coined by a PLUS team lead, the naming of PLUS as a regional learning network, highlights the emergence of a community of practice made up of city, school district and community leaders that transcends local boundaries.[5]

PLUS also learned in critical ways to respond to the dynamic needs of PLUS teams. In addition to consolidating institutes and forums, CC&S also realized that some PLUS teams required more coaching than originally anticipated. PLUS needed to be flexible enough to meet original project needs as well as leverage new collaboration opportunities in each site. At times, this required additional support from CC&S staff and other specialized research support, even resulting in additional PLUS projects in a given year.

PLUS recognized that it was not enough for a site to request a project. In order to be effective, institutions needed to be ready for intervention before tools like Y-PLAN could be successfully implemented and sustained over time. To this end, CC&S saw the opportunity to use individual PLUS Fellow reports as tools across sites and beyond. Moreover, CC&S was able to use those same reports as the foundation for national case studies and best practices on city-school collaboration. Thus, local PLUS projects not only informed each PLUS Team, but also provided CC&S with additional tools to further elevate the work of PLUS to the national level.

City-School Collaboration: What We Know from Research[6]

The PLUS Leadership Initiative is deeply grounded in the specifics of local city-school district collaborative questions. However, the methodology and theory of specific PLUS tools and interventions is based in a diverse set of literatures and research which helps to contextualize the initiative.

---

[5] Haas Report, 2009.
[6] Makkonen, R. (2010). *Examining a Regional Learning Network*. What Works – Research Design term paper.

Measuring Cross-Sector Change, the Building of a Learning Network, and Organizational Learning

Collaborative efforts like PLUS seek to create change across multiple sectors of a system, and thus must address inter-organizational structures, processes, and dynamics (Kreger et al, 2007). Measuring the impact of a multi-dimensional intervention like PLUS on these complex systems is challenging. While we can easily document the specific outputs of the PLUS methodology (such as number of institutes, trainings, research reports, etc.), there are less-easily measured changes that extend beyond such tangibles, changes that take place within the minds of city and district officials, for example, such as a new recognition of interdependencies, changing professional priorities, and/or new attitudes toward interacting with colleagues.

Collaborative work undertaken by PLUS teams involves coordinating the efforts of diverse organizations including public and non-profit groups. Agencies often express competing priorities and/or values; PLUS aims to document and measure the management of such disparate and interacting agendas, which has proven to be no easy task (e.g., Aiken et al, 1975; Provan and Milward, 2001). Because PLUS engages with real problems with which practitioners are actively engaged, processes and stakeholders evolve continuously and unpredictably and interact with and change their environments while they are at work (Innes and Booher, 1999; Crossan et al, 1999).

The PLUS Leadership Initiative's work as a regional learning network aims to support enhanced flows of information across diverse stakeholders. According to Innes and Booher (1999), the flow of information across a network can be facilitated through consensus-building activities that, for example, serve to gather information from the environment, make connections, and build trust and understanding of the shared context (p.418). The latter point is an important one, as perhaps the primary theoretical mechanism in play here involves bridging gaps to create social ties. Once established, these ties can bind network nodes together and essentially construct a new entity that can communicate and coordinate as one (Borgatti et al, 2009). This is the type of learning network that CC&S seeks to facilitate with its PLUS work.

Finally, PLUS aims to support the building of collaborative structures within large bureaucracies, which is no easy task and requires organizations to learn. Organizational learning is inherently dynamic, though. Not only does it occur over time and across levels, but it also involves assimilating new learning and

using what has already been learned. The concurrent nature of these organizational processes, which Crossan et al (1999) referred to as feed-forward and feedback, creates tension. First, the authors note that shifting from individual learning to group learning (feed-forward) may involve imprecise language; and in the case of particularly novel ideas, shared understanding may not evolve without shared action. And secondly, innovating within a highly institutionalized organization, particularly in resource-intensive areas like facilities and information technology (key mechanics of change for PLUS), may require abandoning the collective mindset and/or entrenched track record of the organization (Crossan et al, 1999).

Limitations of System-Change Studies

PLUS is an action research project, ultimately studying the processes of systems change. Many researchers have grappled with how to define and document systems change. In their research on evaluating systems-change initiatives, Kreger et al (2007) suggested conducting multi-level analyses that at least consider (a) events and trends, (b) patterns of interaction, (c) context and cultural or social models, and (d) the systems themselves. Figuring out the contribution of any particular agency may be impossible (Greenwood, 2008) and policy or program indicators also don't tend to show the causes of problems, only their existence (Innes and Booher, 2000). As a result, much of the previous work in the field has been descriptive, with data obtained via open-ended interviews, direct observations, follow-up questionnaires, and documentation of program activities/outputs (Kreger et al, 2007; Innes and Booher, 2000).

Various organizations have produced numerous handbooks intended to help document indicators of systems change, but few studies have quantified the "tipping point" that facilitates systems-change (Kreger, 2007). For example, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (Brunson, 2001) produced a learning guide for building capacity for local decision-making, identifying areas of systems-change that local governance partnerships should measure, including changes in decision making processes, service delivery, and financing and budgeting. While extremely comprehensive, such handbooks can only provide a general framework to inform an evaluation of dynamic interventions like PLUS. Accordingly, few studies have been able to demonstrate how collaboratives and their practices have created systems-change (Kreger, 2007; Kramer et al, 2005; and Nicola, 2005).

Much of the systems-change literature tends to focus on providing generalizable systems integration tools that only loosely address indicators of change. These reports result in tools like logic model templates and checklists intended to help document but not evaluate collaboration. Tools like the "Steps to Systems Change Spiral" by the Institute for Educational Leadership identify eight steps that communities must take in order to improve outcomes for youth and their families and provides general milestones for each step (Donahue, 2003). These tools are primarily concerned with providing a broad framework that has the ability to capture a wide array of localized initiatives that seek systems-change.

Studies of school-based cross-sector collaborations are more likely to provide specific indicators. For example, studies that document the benefits of the co-location of mental health services in schools identify both programmatic and organizational indicators necessary for impact (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008). These indicators, however, highlight qualities and strategies to facilitate change at the localized level and do not focus on examining how success at the local site contributes to broader systems-change.

Through an analysis of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, the Center for Schools and Communities identified a number of systems reform indicators (similar to PLUS) in areas including governance and leadership, policy reforms, accountability, resource development, communications, and professional development (2000). While some studies have identified promising cross-sector collaborations, Taylor-Powell et al (1998) noted that "often there is the expectation that successful collaboratives will lead to the institutionalization or routinization of change" (p 125). Unlike past initiatives, PLUS seeks systems-change through the institutionalization of city-school collaboration.

PLUS Leadership Initiative City-School Team Case Studies

Following are case studies of each of the six PLUS teams: Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, and San Pablo. Each case study begins with a short summary overview, key stakeholders, and general background on the projects. Next, each case describes the discrete PLUS projects, supported by PLUS fellows and CC&S faculty and professional staff. Each case concludes with successes, challenges, and key lessons specific to the local PLUS team.

Case Study 1: Berkeley

Key Stakeholders

- Berkeley Alliance
- City of Berkeley
- Berkeley Unified School District

Background

In June 2005 the Berkeley Alliance, a non-profit organization that "builds strategic community partnerships that strengthen capacity to effect change on critical issues related to social and economic equity in Berkeley,"[7] 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. Ultimately, BIRI partners aimed to change policies and practices to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development for all children and youth. The BIRI steering committee consisted of policy makers from the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), the City of Berkeley, UC Berkeley, and grassroots community partners. The Berkeley Alliance is

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. United in Action, a multiethnic and grassroots organization working to advocate for school reform in Berkeley developed and spearheaded 2020 Vision, and brought a platform to the school district and City of Berkeley, who signed on in June of 2008, jointly adopting the 2020 Vision for children and youth. This joint adoption and collaboration with a grassroots organization is an important step for Berkeley as, in the past, the community has struggled to sustain meaningful collaboration around citywide equity initiatives. While diverse groups often came together during planning phases of work, collaboration disintegrates during implementation as each group prioritizes its own funding constraints, institutional goals, and operational practices.[8]

---

[7] Berkeley Alliance website: http://berkeleyalliance.org/
[8] 2008-09 PLUS Fellow Report.

PLUS Project(s): 2006-2010

The overall purpose for the Berkeley PLUS projects was to provide technical assistance to the Berkeley Alliance to develop systems for evaluation and assessment of BIRI and then 2020 Vision initiatives. 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. PLUS also crafted recommendations to restructure the District's case management system that helps link students to health and education resources.

Baseline Planning Year: 2006-2007

In September 2006, a Community Design Team began their planning work to implement the vision of BIRI. The Team, comprised of representatives from BUSD, the City of Berkeley, UC Berkeley, community organizations, parents and youth focused on topics critical to the implementation of the initiative. Ongoing challenges included sustaining the commitment of all partners given different mandates, processes and missions; growing; sustaining political will; and securing resources and capacity.

Year 1: 2007-2008
Fellow: Laura Henry, Goldman School of Public Policy
A Youth Engagement Strategy for the City of Berkeley

As a strategy to better understand youth needs that BIRI could address, the Berkeley PLUS Team focused on the reinvigoration of the Berkeley Youth Commission. The 2007-08 PLUS Fellow project set out to answer two questions:

1. Which actors play a role in encouraging, shaping, or offering opportunities for youth engagement in Berkeley city policy making?
2. How can the City of Berkeley best serve youth engagement in the future?

The PLUS Fellow conducted an analysis examining how the City of Berkeley can best engage youth to help shape policymaking, and ensure that youth programs and services are more in-line with youth interests.

Based on the fellows' research, the report documented that youth engaged on the Youth Commission, the city's main advisory board, felt they have only "somewhat" of an average impact on policy, and several youth believed that their opinions are not valued. City policy makers also felt that many programs

are lacking in youth input and that programming is often based on little more than the assumptions of what youth want. In order to help youth advocate for policies and programs they want, youth need more training and increased communication to policymakers to enable effective youth engagement.

The primary recommendation was that the City of Berkeley was to target support for the Youth Commission by funding an increase of staff responsibility for the Youth Commission Secretary and fostering departmental reliance on the Youth Commission. Support from all departments serving youth and relationships to policy makers will help bolster the effectiveness of youth engagement citywide.

Year 2: 2008-2009
Fellow: Kristen Ferris, Goldman School of Public Policy
The Berkeley PLUS Project: Essential Structures and Strategies for Maintaining Collaboration within Berkeley's 2020 Vision

By 2008, 2020 Vision emerged as the organizing framework for city-school collaboration in Berkeley. Again, 2020 Vision is an institutional and community collaboration to close the achievement gap in Berkeley by 2020, eliminating the racial predictability of low performance.

The goal of the Berkeley PLUS project was to recommend structures that would effectively support and sustain collaboration across the many stakeholders of the 2020 Vision. The Fellow analyzed four promising practice initiatives from around the nation that are using a collaborative model to address educational inequities. The analysis identified five structural elements that were used across most or all promising practices to support collaboration and that were highly relevant to the 2020 Vision, including:

- A strong internal culture among partners
- Comprehensive evaluation and data systems
- Organizational capacity devoted to collaborative work
- Diverse leadership
- A place-based model

These common elements serve as criteria against which the report assessed the capacity of the 2020 Vision to sustain collaboration, identifying strengths as well as recommending future areas of focus. The report also recommended key areas

for development for the 2020 Vision team, in order to achieve and maintain an effective collaborative structure, including:

- A highly developed culture of shared accountability
- Building on outcomes to create an evaluation framework
- Strong infrastructure for data and evaluation
- Build additional capacity to support collaboration
- Recruit leaders from the business, university research, and health care communities
- Cultivate leadership of families/community members living in communities of need
- Consider the best way for place to play a role in the 2020 Vision

Year 3: 2009-2010
Fellow: Paul Perry, Goldman School of Public Policy
Berkeley PLUS Fellowship 2009-2010: Addressing Barriers to Student Learning through 2020 Vision and the Universal Learning Support System (ULSS)

As documented through the Year 2 fellow's work, alignment of data system and robust communications systems are key pieces to ensure the success of 2020 Vision. In 2009, the Berkeley Alliance was developing a pilot project for data sharing and collaboration with a subset of students within BUSD. This effort uncovered the strengths and challenges facing an already-existing program, the Universal Learning Supports System (ULSS), that brings together the relevant partners in the 2020 Vision process while simultaneously delivering on many of the goals of 2020 Vision. The Alliance realized that their goals for a data-sharing system could be achieved through their existing ULSS. ULSS is a comprehensive approach designed to universally address barriers to learning experienced by students. The PLUS project's goal for this year was to review ULSS and recommend ways to improve the system, allowing it to serve more students and thereby meet the goals of 2020 Vision.

The PLUS Fellow research articulated how ULSS can be an effective school-based mechanism for eliminating the achievement and health gap in Berkeley. Given that the structure is already largely in place and the fact that services are already being delivered to students with the highest levels of need, prioritizing ULSS and supporting it with further resources simply makes sense in light of the goals of 2020 Vision. PLUS ultimately presented the findings to BUSD in an effort to

catalyze a planning process in which ULSS would be strengthened and reformed (where necessary) in order to better address student needs.

Successes and Challenges

> #### SUCCESSES
>
> ✓ National best practice research deeply informed local work.
>
> ✓ Local research builds understanding and relationships. PLUS team members gained a better understanding of specific challenges facing staff and students at individual schools in Berkeley, and also built stronger relationships with 2020 Vision Planning Team members.

> #### CHALLENGES
>
> ✓ PLUS team lead was third-party intermediary, not a core city or educational leader. Unlike other PLUS projects, the Fellows' client in Berkeley was never a City or school entity, but another intermediary, the Berkeley Alliance. As a result, PLUS had limited interaction with school district staff, including the superintendent, and was not able to secure the political support needed to engage in systems change.
>
> ✓ Leadership turnover can disrupt policy and project work. While the Berkeley Alliance had initially employed a project director to maintain the connection and communication between the BIRI steering committee, advisory/work teams, stakeholders and consultants, frequent leadership turnover in the Alliance, City and schools prevented sustained city-school collaboration.

Case Study 2: Emeryville

Key Stakeholders

- Emery Unified School District
- City of Emeryville, Office of the City Manager
- City of Emeryville, Department of Community Services
- City-Schools Committee
- Partners for Community Life

Background

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 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.

Following low student academic performance and an impending fiscal crisis, EUSD was put into state administration in 2001. In 2002, the Emeryville Youth Services Advisory Committee (EYSAC), supported by the City Council and the state administrator developed the Youth Services Master Plan, which articulated the need and a vision for providing youth services to all Emeryville residents and students. In 2004, Tony Smith became the first Superintendent after state administration, and under his leadership and that of the City Manager John Flores, the vision of the Youth Services Master Plan was partially realized through a long-term joint use agreement for school recreation space, and ultimately evolved to include a physical development, the Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL). The Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) was 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, EUSD, and adjoining Oakland neighborhoods. Drawing from community surveys, youth input, and assessments of the school and city facilities, EUSD and the City spent years brainstorming and refining the vision. In 2005 and 2006, leaders explored acquiring the AC Transit bus yard adjacent to the school district buildings. In 2009, they retained Field Paoli, a planning and design firm to develop a conceptual plan. In 2010, the conceptual plan was further refined with input from the Nexus Partners, a group of planning and design consultants with

extensive experience in school-community spaces. In November 2010, the final bond measure needed to move forward with final design and construction passed by an overwhelming majority.

PLUS Project(s): 2006-2010

The overall purpose of the Emeryville PLUS projects were to provide 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 youth 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.

Baseline Planning Year(s): 2005-2007

In 2004, CC&S crafted basic fact sheets to help the Superintendent and City Manager garner broader support for the unconventional ECCL vision. Further, in the spring of 2006 and the spring 2007 (prior to the full launch of the PLUS Leadership Initiative), CC&S facilitated its first Y-PLAN process in Emeryville. Young people developed visions and proposals for the ECCL, on the AC Transit bus lot and as part of the Emeryville general plan update process. In 2007, as a result of the Y-PLAN work, the General Plan Update Committee created two youth positions on their committee, and the City-Schools Committee also identified ways for youth to serve on that governing body. Meanwhile, EUSD and the City were actively developing robust partnerships with many non-profit and private sector organizations across Emeryville and Alameda County to meet the needs of their students and residents. By 2007, City Manager Flores and Superintendent Smith had both left their positions.

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

Building on the Y-PLAN efforts of the prior two years and the continued Y-PLAN efforts with 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes in Emery Secondary School, the PLUS Team identified goals for the 2007-08 year, including:

- Ensure connectivity amongst City Government, the School Board, and the School District by continuing to develop relationships and a common language;
- Develop intermediary structures to support and sustain youth engagement, "so the young people can begin to develop tools, skills, and have the consciousness and care of adults to actually support them to be present and not to fail"; and
- Create different pedagogical ways of reaching learners.
- From these goals stemmed this PLUS Fellow's scope of work for 2007-08, including:
- Supporting youth participants in the General Plan Update committee by identifying appropriate methods of participation;
- Establishing goals, objectives, and desired outcomes for youth when they participate on these city committees; and
- Identifying opportunities for students to share their learning from participation with peers, teachers, and others in the school community.

The Fellow documented each committee's work and structure, analyzed youth participation in this context, and offered recommendations to enhance participation in the future. The report found that youth were not adequately supported in their roles on the committees, as they did not understand the material in order to participate. Three-hour meetings proved difficult for youth to remain engaged, and because they joined the committee in 2007, it was difficult for them to enter as equal partners.

Year 2: 2008-2009
Fellow: Ary Amerikaner, Goldman School of Public Policy and Boalt Hall School of Law *Governance Models for Highly Integrated City / School District Service Models*
ECCL faced ongoing challenges, including leadership turnover as the Superintendent resigned in fall 2008 due to impropriety. With another champion departing, there was substantial concern about whether the progress would continue if new people were elected to the City Council and/or the School Board since much of the progress was dependent on specific individuals. Further, because fewer than 20% of families in Emeryville have children, leaders had to frame the ECCL story as one that benefits the entire community, not just EUSD students and families.

In Year 2, with a number of strategies in place to manage the youth engagement questions, the PLUS team focused on policy-level questions about the ECCL, particularly the options for the legal shared governance structure. The City-Schools Committee created seven task forces to address specific issues on the planning and development of the ECCL. The PLUS Fellow worked most closely with the ECCL's Governance Task Force. The PLUS Fellow produced a policy and legal analysis of different contractual model(s) that could facilitate the innovative integration of services desired for ECCL. Simultaneously, Y-PLAN facilitated a leadership after school program, where youth from previous Y-PLAN cohorts developed a strategic plan summarizing all of their ECCL recommendations from the previous 4 years.

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

In Year 3, the PLUS fellow focused on questions of sustained governance that integrated the work of the previous two years. By 2009, the EYSAC had evolved into the Partners for Community Life (PCL), a group comprised of broad community representation that advises the City Council and the EUSD Board on implementation of the Education and Youth Services Master Plan and ECCL. The PCL represented the formal community engagement body, and the PLUS fellow's analysis laid out a plan to effectively institutionalize community engagement into the organizational structure of the ECCL. The Fellow was tasked to answer three questions:

1. How can the PCL function and evolve with development of ECCL?
2. When should a new role for the PCL be introduced/ transitioned into the ECCL?
3. How does the PCL continue to engage the community, particularly youth and underrepresented groups, with the development of the ECCL?

The PLUS Fellow reviewed promising practices from other cities and conducted interviews with key stakeholders in Emeryville. The report presented three key priority recommendations that would assist the PCL in sustaining community engagement beyond the ECCL planning and design phases.

1. PCL maintain its current position within City government as an advisory group, while focusing on strengthening its role as a 'facilitative leader' that fosters a collaborative mindset within the ECCL.

2. Define the PCL scope of work and responsibilities, as it relates to the ECCL, for the present and future.
3. Work through the present while preparing for the future. The project timeline does not allow much room for PCL member development during the current phases. So as the PCL works through the current timeline, lessons learned should be compiled to assist in preparing for future responsibilities.

Successes and Challenges

<div style="border:1px solid #000; padding:1em;">

SUCCESSES

- ✓ Cross-sector visionary leadership serves as inspiration. Superintendent Tony Smith was the first superintendent after the state takeover of EUSD. As a PLUS Team Leader, he understood that young people had an important role to play in the new vision for ECCL, and became the primary champion and inspiration behind ECCL.

- ✓ Core staff responsibilities help institutionalize city-school collaboration. In 2008, the City's Community Services Department hired a new staff person; his job description explicitly included his role as liaison with the school district and staff the City-Schools Committee. This new job description helped institutionalize the ongoing collaboration between the City and the EUSD.

- ✓ Local institutions can leverage state and national platforms to cultivate local support. Leaders were successfully able to frame ECCL as a unique initiative to garner outside attention, and ultimately build local support. For example, ECCL supported state legislation to overturn restrictions on joint development initiatives between municipalities and LEAs.

- ✓ Using Communications Strategies to Secure Funding. As part of this strategy, ECCL leaders understood how they would need to frame the story of ECCL to ensure voter support for crucial bond funds. ECCL leaders strategically placed youth engagement and other priorities on hold while it focused its energies on presenting the bond to voters as a redevelopment strategy to raise property values – and not as a city-school collaboration. As a result, the bond passed with over 70% of voter approval.

</div>

CHALLENGES

✓ A more dominant vision from one institution can subsume the leadership of other potential collaborators. At the inception of the project, the Superintendent and City Manager jointly led the vision. However, when the original city manager retired, visionary leadership for ECCL and City-School collaboration was held primarily with the Superintendent. Because the District had always taken the initiative and leadership on various projects, there was not enough space for the City to grow into a stronger leadership role.

✓ Leadership turnover can slow down processes. ECCL was possible due to strong City-School leadership. By the first year of PLUS, however, both City and School founding leaders had moved on. As a result, both institutions struggled to carry out the ECCL vision and institutionalize systems change.

✓ A focus on specific technicalities can detract from implementation of broader vision. While the City was fully committed to the vision for ECCL, staff was caught up in the logistics of implementation and technicalities of different structures, even before the money for ECCL was fully secured.

✓ Consistent and clear communication with the community proved necessary, especially given the large investment required for the ECCL. Many in the broader community continue to be highly skeptical of the vision, outcomes, and the expenditure.

Case Study 3: Oakland

Key Stakeholders

- Oakland Unified School District, Office of Community Accountability (2007-2008)
- Oakland Unified School District, Department of Complementary Learning (2008-2009, 2009-2010)
- Oakland Unified School District, Regional Governance Task Force (2010-2011)

Background

In 2006, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) was under state receivership for almost three years and fraught with numerous issues internally and externally. In an attempt to build better relationships with community based organizations and parents, OUSD created the Office of Community Accountability 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. The office worked closely with over 20 community-based organizations to identify community needs and craft policies and programs of collaboration with organizations that are already working to strengthen community-school relations. In 2007, the establishment the Complementary Learning Department (CLD) in OUSD reflected the district's public commitment to collaborative school-community partnerships that improve student success and support general 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 Projects: 2006-2011

The overall goal of the Oakland PLUS projects was to provide 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 supported CL by conducting an assessment of all out-of-school-time programs, creating a pilot for effective partnerships between school site leadership and community-based organizations, and identifying the role OUSD can have in partnering with The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative in East Oakland. In 2011, PLUS worked with OUSD's Regional Governance Task Force to develop goals and objectives into a regional governance structure that institutionalizes community engagement. PLUS successfully provided visionary leadership within different levels of OUSD the tools required to institutionalize community partnerships.

Baseline Planning Year: 2006-2007

In 2006, the City, OUSD, and Alameda County sought to formalize their collaborations by creating a joint powers authority (JPA) that would facilitate the creation of a data-sharing system. This system would allow for coordinated data analysis to inform data-driven policy and programming decisions across diverse agencies such as OUSD, Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, the Oakland Police Department, and the County Department of Public Health. Partners developed clear legal agreements through the JPA as well as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to support the implementation of collaborative work. Tensions persisted, however, around ensuring accuracy and confidentiality of student and family data, and establishing which entity owned the data.

Year 1: 2007-2008
PLUS Fellow: Lynn Wu, Goldman School of Public Policy and Boalt Hall School of Law
Oakland Unified School District: Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth with Interagency Data-Sharing - A report examining the planning for and implementation of the Youth Data Archive

In 2007-08, the PLUS Team prioritized the implementation of the Youth Data Archive (YDA), an integrated data management system linking longitudinal administrative and program data across agencies. OUSD and the City partnered with the SPHERE Institute (a non-profit that conducts public policy research to evaluate health and social service programs) to house the data, while the John W. Gardener Center for Youth and their Families at Stanford University would support data analysis requested by partner agencies. The goal of the YDA was to support streamlined, comprehensive care to Oakland youth and families while minimizing the duplication of services.

The policy question driving the PLUS Fellow's report was: How can agencies share data regarding service provision across district, county, and city agencies to serve youth most effectively and efficiently? The Fellow researched best practices in data sharing and management; interviewed partner agencies to understand data-sharing needs; and assisted in writing MOUs for agency partners and development materials to support interagency partnership.

By 2008, all participating agencies signed on to the JPA and had working MOUs with SPHERE and the Gardner Center. Privacy concerns, however, created initial hesitation in turning over data to a third party research organization, and different partners faced different legal restrictions. No clear protocol existed for participating agencies to make data requests, and no systemic way for agencies to use information from a data query to continue collaborating to create policies. At the end of the academic year of 2008, the Chief of Community Accountability departed OUSD to another school district, unfortunately leaving a leadership gap on this initiative.

Year 2: 2008-2009
PLUS Fellow: Mara Larsen-Fleming, Goldman School of Public Policy and School of Public Health
An Assessment of Unmet Need for Out-of-School Time Programs among Academically At-Risk Students in Oakland

Prior to her departure, the Chief of Community Accountability passed the PLUS Team reins to the Director of OUSD's Department of Complementary Learning (CL). CL houses and provides resources for all non-academic supports to OUSD students. CL was created to intentionally streamline resources that primarily engage with CBOs and city partners.

The 2008-09 PLUS Fellow was tasked with producing an assessment OUSD's existing out-of-school time (OST) programs, including after-school programs and summer learning program. The report found that OST offerings in OUSD were not fully meeting the needs of students who had fallen behind academically and identified these service gaps. The Fellow recommended ways in which OUSD could fill the gaps in OST programming for at-risk students. The challenge, however, was finding a way to distill learning and apply recommendations throughout OUSD and not just in CL. While not included in her final report, the PLUS Fellow also worked with CL to document their "school study process," an internal management process that sought to align the interventions CL provided in a single school; staff from across CL in OST, early childhood, nutrition, etc.

would meet to discuss the success and challenges at a given school, and brainstorm ways to improve OUSD service delivery as well as opportunities to better connect with school site leadership and community-based partners.

Year 3: 2009-2010
PLUS Fellow 1: Seenae Chong, Graduate School of Education
An Overview of Tools and Models in Partnership: Ideas for an Orientation

By 2009, OUSD had a new superintendent, Tony Smith, who shared the vision for OUSD to institutionalize community engagement and provide wraparound services for youth through a community school model also championed by the Department of CL. To help institutionalize community partnerships, CL requested a PLUS Fellow to create an orientation manual for CBO providers and principals on how to partner and navigate cultural differences between schools and CBOs. CL identified a need for an orientation that clarifies the district requirements for providers working on school sites and builds the capacity of both school site leadership and CBO providers to develop and maintain a "complementary" relationship to improve outcomes for children. The research questions that guided the project included:

- What tools and models should be included in an orientation on partnership?
- What type of orientation makes sense in the context of OUSD?

The Fellow conducted a national scan of promising practices to serve as the foundation for a community engagement infrastructure. Based on this research, the Fellow created an orientation manual and provided recommendations for the in-person orientation that would address three major areas:

- Defining a clear vision of collaboration
- Understanding and clarifying OUSD protocol and procedures
- Developing shared accountability and measures

Year 3: 2009-2010
PLUS Fellow 2: Sarah Sullivant, Goldman School of Public Policy
Collaboration for Healthy Communities: The Role of Schools in East Oakland

In 2009-10, CL also requested a PLUS Fellow for a second project connected to a multi-year, foundation-led initiative in East Oakland, The California Endowment's East Oakland Building Healthy Communities Initiative. The California Endowment has pledged to invest in efforts to improve the health and vitality of East Oakland

neighborhoods over a period of 10 years, beginning in 2010. Acknowledging the potential of the community to reverse "the social, physical, and psychological effects" of poverty and violence, the Endowment will work to identify and expand promising efforts to improve the well being of East Oakland families and youth.

While OUSD was officially involved in the California Endowment initiative, East Oakland partners were largely unaware of the work happening within CL and the role schools can have in partnering with communities. This PLUS Fellow would help it articulate a vision for the role of schools in healthy communities, and identify opportunities to build on existing efforts to link school, family, and community in common cause. The PLUS Fellow was tasked to begin to answer the following strategic questions:

- What is currently happening in Oakland schools in terms of collaborative partnerships, and what challenges do schools face to effective collaboration?

- What is the role of schools in a healthy East Oakland, and how can the district support and expand promising strategies for school-community partnership?

The Fellow documented promising practices in which a school can connect with a community and framed specific areas for deeper collaborations, including:

- Integrated services and partnerships within schools;

- Shared infrastructure and facilities that physically link schools to the community; and
- External engagement to strengthen neighborhoods and schools.

Year 4: 2010-2011
PLUS Fellow: Victoria Laws, Goldman School of Public Policy
A Community-Informed Proposal for Regional Governance in Oakland Unified School District

In 2010, OUSD launched a strategic planning process. The Superintendent formed 12 task forces to write specific parts of the plan, focused on key priority areas such as instruction, facilities, community engagement, and governance. At the request of the Superintendent, the 2010-11 PLUS Fellow worked with the Regional Governance Task Force to develop goals and objectives for a regional

governance structure. Over this year, the task force engaged more than 50 different organizations and hundreds of individuals through regional youth and family conferences, focus groups and one-on-ones including parents, teachers, police officers, family liaisons and CBOs.

The PLUS Fellow conducted an extensive review meeting, collected focus group notes, and worked with the Regional Executive Officers to develop goals and objectives for the governance structure. A core group of task force participants helped develop the following vision statement:

Regional Governance will provide a structure for building relationships among families, community, schools and representatives from the city, CBOs, the district, and others. Engagement and participation will lead to collaborative and authentic decision-making about resource allocation that reflects a shared responsibility for student outcomes with focus on equity and achievement.

Furthermore, the PLUS Fellow's report recommends a regional governance structure, which:

acknowledges existing organizational structure and adapts it to a more participatory model of engagement that empowers families, youth, and community residents to make decisions about resource allocation that are data-driven, promote equity, and positively impact student achievement. The scope of decision-making will be limited to resource allocation decisions that promote the availability of services for students and families that support a school site's development into a full-service community school, given the district's capacity to partner with service providers. The proposed structure includes various entities, among which youth and family representation will be prioritized.[9]

The report also identifies short-term next steps that OUSD can take to work towards the long-term goal of a new governance structure. These recommendations will ensure that any high-impact decisions that come out of budget proposals that pass summer 2011 will incorporate input from the families and communities that they will affect.

- Develop and implement internal staff structure to support a regional approach
- Generate inventory of all key stakeholders in each region

---

[9] Laws, V.C. (2011). *A Community-Informed Proposal for Regional Governance in Oakland Unified School District.* Center for Cities & Schools, PLUS Leadership Initiative Fellows Final Report

- Establish a process for membership on the Regional Advisory Council
- Adopt a contingency plan to cope with a potential budget crisis

Successes and Challenges

SUCCESSES

✓ Documentation provides continuity for changing leadership. Tangible products, such as data-sharing MOUs, orientation handbook, and fact sheets for the East Oakland Building Healthy Communities constituents increased OUSD's capacity to engage with diverse stakeholders.

✓ Leveraging opportunities for innovation under state receivership. CL was created as a result of state receivership, which eliminated bureaucratic processes that would have otherwise been in place. By having visionary and innovative leadership, CL effectively streamlined non-academic programs, creating a coordinated, wraparound approach for students. Because these programs were most likely to engage community and government partners, CL utilized PLUS to help identify areas of improvement in community engagement and collaboration.

CHALLENGES

✓ Cross-sector vision is less robust without equally present cross-sector partners. Oakland PLUS Projects were school district-centric despite focusing on community engagement strategies. PLUS primarily engaged with OUSD, and had less success in engaging the City. This is primarily due to jurisdictional and cultural issues within District which prioritized focusing on its internal processes, before engaging outward. While individuals within CL had various relationships with community organizations and other public sector agencies, these relationships were not systematized across the district. As a result, CL carried a lot of initiatives, and did not leverage other stakeholders' capacities to share the burden.

✓ Leadership turnover at both city and school district levels prevented deeper collaboration. Leadership turnover and politics within and between entities created a huge challenge for PLUS to engage stakeholders in a systems-level conversation.

✓ JPA was minimally effective at aligning partners' visions. The tensions around JPA brought to light the lack of consistent coordination between the different agencies that engage youth. While PLUS attempted to bridge these gaps, the nature of the JPA structure and data partnership with SPHERE/Stanford, limited the PLUS Team's ability to engage in a dialogue on the sustainability of the Youth Data Archive.

Case Study 4: Richmond

Key Stakeholders

- City of Richmond, Office of the City Manager
- West Contra Costa Unified School District
- Richmond Housing Authority
- Bay Area LISC
- Richmond Children's Foundation

Background

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. Stakeholders include the City of Richmond, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, the Richmond Housing Authority, Bay Area LISC, 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.[10]

PLUS Projects: 2006-2010

The overall goal of the Richmond PLUS projects was to provide 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.

---

[10] 2009-10 PLUS Fellow Report

Baseline Planning Year: 2006-2007

Since 2001, the leaders of the NURVE initiative successfully united many powerful stakeholders and secured several grants to reach NURVE goals. However, the partnership often fell short of its objectives due to frequent leadership turnover and little institutional memory. By 2007, although many of the stakeholders were still involved, several key individuals had left the planning table. Most of the capital projects had completed or were in the midst of independent planning and design processes, but opportunities for joint and/or complementary planning and implementation timelines were not.[11] In the summer of 2007, Bay Area LISC sought the support of CC&S as a neutral third-party intermediary to redefine NURVE's collaboration strategy and identify key areas of improvement.

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

The primary goal of the Year 1 PLUS project was to develop a collaboration strategy that would improve and realign relationships between NURVE partners so that NURVE's vision could be implemented. Varying dynamics, including lack of accountability, communication and transparency, led to frayed relationships that inhibited the implementation of the five capital projects despite secured funding.

Despite having secured the funding and buy-in from NURVE leaders for PLUS, leadership turnover and the lack of a clear structure was a major challenge for the PLUS project during its first year. The NURVE team needed several months to reorganize and revisit team priorities. After persistence from CC&S and Bay Area LISC, the 2007-08 PLUS Fellow eventually named the City of Richmond as the client. The fellow would develop a strategic plan and tools for working effectively. The strategic framework not only cites key project priorities but also provides clear entry points for future PLUS Fellows to continue work with CC&S, PLUS and NURVE.

After four months of intense research and various stakeholder interviews, the PLUS Fellow determined that three key priorities lie at the heart of NURVE's

---

[11] 2007-08 PLUS Fellow Report

success or failure: accountability, governance, and community engagement. The final report outlined a strategic plan for NURVE with the following three stages:

1. Developing measures of success and accountability;
2. Creating tools for strategic collaboration; and
3. Identifying and cultivating community leadership.

Despite the initial challenges, PLUS was successful in developing a tangible plan that outlined goals for collaboration, especially with schools and community. In conjunction with the City Manager identifying one key point person for PLUS, the NURVE work was centralized under management analyst LaShonda Wilson, which helped foster institutional memory, city ownership, and accountability.

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

The PLUS leadership team began to address issues outlined in the strategic plan from Year 1, and realized that each of the capital projects had conducted parallel outreach processes with the community; with little or no implementation in the neighborhood, the community's trust was tenuous at best. The Year 2 PLUS Fellow thus focused on two key questions:

1. How can NURVE leadership better engage community members in the NURVE project?
2. How can NURVE leadership create and implement collaboration and accountability structures across stakeholders, including community members?

To address these questions, the PLUS Team identified and developed four core areas of opportunity which guided *activities* for the 2008-2009 year:

1. *Project Transparency:* dissemination of information to the public and shared between NURVE capital project leads in a clear, effective, and accessible way *(E.g. creation of NURVE website concept/template)*
2. *Relationship-building:* creation of networks of support and leadership to leverage resources and bring people together *(E.g. youth engagement component)*

3. *Tools for Collaboration:* generation of new tools and processes to facilitate collaboration and coordination across stakeholders *(E.g. simplified Timeline)*
4. *Organizational Structures:* consideration of governance structures and operations to foster project sustainability and resilience *(E.g. documentation of project)*

CC&S had previously conducted an intensive summer internship Y-PLAN class at Richmond's Kennedy High School; CC&S continued to facilitate Y-PLAN at Kennedy High School, focusing project questions on NURVE. Still, city leaders did not completely understand how Y-PLAN could be used as a capacity building and community engagement tool, beyond youth engagement. Working with CC&S staff and the PLUS Fellow, proved fruitful, however. Y-PLAN students from 2009 formed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Council to ensure continued youth involvement on NURVE projects. By the end of the year, youth engagement started taking on institutional meaning as City leaders began to see youth and schools as key stakeholders in community development. The City Manager's Office, in particular, became a champion of the youth's recommendations and advocated for their adoption in City policy settings.[12]

Year 3: 2009-2010
PLUS Fellow: Kris Hartley, Department of City and Regional Planning
Making it Happen: Collaboration and Implementation in the Nystrom United ReVitalization Effort

By 2009, funding was in place for all but one of the capital improvement projects, and project renovations were moving forward – historic preservation of the Maritime Center had begun, park improvements were designed, and the school district had a clear implementation timeline for the elementary school renovation and new construction. Given these successes and construction starts that were set for spring 2010, NURVE stakeholders could take time to assess and document their progress in a more systematic way. The Year 3 PLUS Fellow thus

---

[12] Y-PLAN has been involved in Richmond, including Spring studios in 2008, 2009 and 2010 focusing on NURVE. From this initiative came student-generated recommendations about physical space, design and community programs. With Y-PLAN as a springboard, the Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Council was formed in summer 2009 by student participants from Kennedy High School. As many of the council's members visit the NURVE area for recreation, their involvement is important. The council represents a diverse cross-section of racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, closely resembling the demographics of the NURVE neighborhood. The continued involvement of the Youth Council and Y-PLAN is integral to the successful operation of renovated NURVE facilities, as these groups represent the residents, workers, parents and leaders whose decisions will affect the community. By giving institutional credibility to the opinions of youth, NURVE positions itself as an organization responsive to the needs of future generations (2009-10 PLUS Fellow Report).

set out to document the process of institutionalizing collaboration and to explore challenges and opportunities for the NURVE project in maintaining collaboration as it entered its next critical phase of development.

The Fellow found that it was evident that NURVE was at the height of its organizational effectiveness. Separate work groups addressed specific concerns, meetings were regularly scheduled and well attended, collaboration had been institutionalized through a Memorandum of Understanding and Joint-Use Agreement, and efforts had been made to involve the community in the complete process. In order to present the findings most effectively, the Fellow also examined them through the lens of CC&S's Ten Mechanics of Change and created a NURVE scorecard for NURVE leaders to be able to measure and track change.[13] After three years of PLUS, NURVE leaders were at a point where they wanted to measure and track systems change, to ensure that progress was being institutionalized beyond any one person.

[13] McKoy, Deborah L., Ariel H. Bierbaum and Jeffrey M. Vincent. *The Mechanics of City-School Initiatives: Transforming Neighborhoods of Distress & Despair into Neighborhoods of Choice and Promise*. Berkeley: Center for Cities and Schools, November 2009.

Successes and Challenges

SUCCESSES

- ✓ Tangible tools lead to sustained systems-level collaboration. While leaders from across institutions championed the NURVE vision, NURVE operationalized this vision for collaboration through the development of specific tools to guide cross-sector efforts, including: a clear strategic plan, cross-sector MOUs and JUAs, master timelines, and a scorecard.

- ✓ Successful utilization of tangible tools requires dedicated staff resources. Centralizing City management of NURVE with a specific staff person (analyst LaShonda Wilson) allowed for an increased systemization of information and a persistent relationship between City and the school district even in light of other leadership changes.

- ✓ University partners can inform local public practice and help rebuild contentious relationships. PLUS maximized its role as a university affiliated, third-party intermediary by providing evidence-based research to NURVE leaders in ways that other intermediaries could not. In addition to providing impartial relationship-building support, PLUS provided core research on joint use and youth engagement to better inform practice at the local level.

CHALLENGES

✓ **Frequent leadership turnover disrupts policy and planning.** The frequent leadership turnover presented a key challenge to PLUS to identify and solidify a project that maximized PLUS' resources. Many of the strategic tools PLUS developed were grounded in the challenges of this turnover, and focused on documenting policy and procedures, fostering institutional memory, and systematizing practice and communication.

✓ **Deep local work can get "stuck" in program work, lacking perspective for systems change.** While the specific project and program work is obviously the core outcome of NURVE, many stakeholders lost sight of the bigger picture of collaborative systems change. Because CC&S was new to NURVE, and not a founding partner responsible for a specific project implementation, the PLUS team could provide bigger picture support and framing to help support program/project level successes.

✓ **Not all third-party intermediaries are alike.** Funding structure shapes the nature of the intermediary's role and may compromise perception of neutrality.

Case Study 5: San Francisco

Key Stakeholders

- Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF)
- Interagency Council (IAC)
- Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH)
- San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)
- Mayor's Office
- The John Stewart Company
- Malcolm X Elementary School
- Development partners, HOPE SF

Background

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, addressing the issues of declining student enrollment and affordable housing. PLUS also developed a joint-use schools strategy to support the community use of schools that SFUSD, in partnership with DCYF, adopted and is currently implementing.

As a result, 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 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 Projects: 2006-2010

The overall goal of the San Francisco PLUS projects was to provide technical assistance to the various city agencies and SFUSD to develop collaborative planning and policies. PLUS projects focused on two main areas of work – joint-use policies and the housing-education nexus. PLUS aimed to support improved communication and coordination between all stakeholders as part of the citywide HOPE SF initiative. PLUS worked deeply in the Hunters View neighborhood to provide background research, draft an educational strategy, and facilitate Y-PLAN process at Malcolm X Elementary School as part of resident participation in the planning and redevelopment.

Baseline Planning Year: 2006-2007

DCYF and the SFUSD launched the SFUSD/CBO Task Force to help identify strategies to improve the frayed relationships between SFUSD and community-based organizations (CBOs). The Task Force was comprised of 15 civic, non-profit and private sector leaders, including CC&S. During the initial meetings that took place in 2005 and 2006, three working groups were established and tasked with identifying both short-term and long-term strategies for improving relationships between SFUSD and CBOs and services for children and youth.

Despite the Task Force's initial charge, the District's ongoing problems of declining student enrollment prompted the Task Force to identify a strategy to prevent families from leaving the District. DCYF focused on developing a public relations campaign, the *Permanent Campaign for Public Education,* to encourage teachers and families to stay in the District. This effort, however, was not designed to address the structural issues that contributed to families leaving the District, including the lack of affordable housing for teachers.

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

By redirecting the focus of the group's efforts to the underlying root causes of the problem of declining enrollment, the PLUS Leadership Initiative was able to transform the conversation from a messaging campaign into a housing policy discussion that illuminated how little the group knew about existing housing policies in the City. Through this process it became apparent that not only were

offices unaware of each other's policies, but that leaders had limited knowledge of each other's missions/goals, despite overlap.

The 2007-08 PLUS project included helping San Francisco to become a "family friendly city" by identifying why families were leaving the city and school system, and what housing policies were available to help reverse this trend. With decreasing enrollment and a limited housing market, the district was looking to work with city departments, such as the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH), San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), and the San Francisco City Planning Department to understand the demographic shifts impacting San Francisco and SFUSD. SFUSD wanted to understand the options for recruiting and retaining families, as well as teachers, including but not limited to: building affordable housing, providing mortgage assistance, and/or offering rental subsidies.

The goal of the 2007-08 PLUS Fellow was to help educate the District on how housing policies impacted declining enrollment. The Fellow found that families who want their children to attend a public school in their neighborhood lack the assurance that their children will be placed at the local school as a result of the open-schools policy. There also was a lack of collaboration between SFUSD, MOH and SFRA, despite each agency recognizing the positive effect of coordinating schools and city agencies. As part of the analysis, PLUS needed to broker relationships between SFUSD and MOH and SFRA.

PLUS was not only successful in educating SFUSD on the City's housing dynamics and but also in identifying projects that SFUSD and MOH could collaborate on, including HOPE SF. Modeled after the federal HOPE VI program, HOPE SF is a multi-stakeholder partnership with the goal of rebuilding San Francisco's most-distressed public housing developments and engaging residents in all phases of redevelopment. Launched in 2007 by Mayor Gavin Newsom, HOPE SF represents a unique opportunity to take a systemic approach to educational improvement and housing redevelopment. HOPE SF recognizes that creating vibrant mixed income communities requires high quality educational options for all families.

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

In 2008, the Hunters View HOPE SF development team (led by the John Stewart Company), SFUSD, and MOH commissioned CC&S to investigate strategies for

integrating education into the HOPE SF revitalization program at Hunters View. Based on the 2007-08 PLUS work, Hunters View HOPE SF provided an on-the-ground opportunity to better integrate the housing and community development initiatives with educational efforts across the city.

CC&S staff crafted a study that: provides an overall understanding of the current educational landscape at Hunters View; highlights opportunities to maximize resources and outcomes for all residents and families; and assists in creating an action plan for HVCP and their city and school district partners. The analysis supported several conclusions:

1. Hunters View HOPE SF requires a systems approach – that is, the effort will require city- and district-wide collaboration as well as the support and contributions of nonprofit organizations, university research units, and the Hunters View community;
2. Hunters View HOPE SF must simultaneously address educational opportunities and housing;
3. Hunters View HOPE SF must entail a lifelong learning ("0-25+") approach to education – that is, meaningful and successful education starts at infancy and continues through college and into one's adult life.

Drawing on these conclusions, CC&S proposed to improve access to quality schools, healthy and safe environments, good jobs, supportive social networks, and the accumulation of equity in housing by creating Hunters View Educational and Community Complex (HV-ECC). To guide stakeholders in building the Centers of Community Life, the CC&S identified three goals and corresponding short- and long-term strategies.

1. Provide high-quality school buildings, community facilities, and housing, and create clear physical connections to the surrounding neighborhood and city;
2. Align educational, community, and regional resources and services as standard operating procedure;
3. Ensure access to high-quality schools and educational opportunities for all students and families.

Through their action research, CC&S was able to secure buy-in from multiple stakeholders, including community members who had been traditionally disengaged from the planning processes. Further, through tools like Y-PLAN, children from Hunter's View adjacent Malcolm X Academy were able to design

what their vision was for the community. As an outside convener, CC&S was able to document and highlight positive things that were taking place in the community that had never been acknowledged before. The process of documentation not only allowed CC&S to develop relationships and working partnerships with stakeholders, but also validated the tireless work of local change agents.

Year 2b: 2008-2009
PLUS Fellow: CC&S Staff and Jordan Klein, Department of City and Regional Planning
San Francisco's Public School Facilities as Public Assets: A Shared Understanding and Policy Recommendations for the Community Use of Schools

Building on a 2007-08 joint publication with Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP) (a report entitled *Joint Use School Partnerships in California: Strategies to Enhance Schools and Communities* that documented effective joint use strategies, featuring one case study in San Francisco), DCYF and SFUSD commissioned CC&S to inform their ongoing joint efforts to improve policy and procedures relating to community use of SFUSD school facilities.

The resultant report presents research findings and policy recommendations from a yearlong investigation to establish a more effective "joint use" strategy in SFUSD, in order for SFUSD to both fully utilize one of its greatest assets – the facilities and grounds – while simultaneously helping to realize the goals of the district's strategic plan and coordinate with city agencies, other public entities, and community organizations that provide programs/services to children and families. SFUSD's Joint Use Committee accepted the report's recommendations and currently DCYF, in partnership with the District, is leading the implementation strategy. This change in District policy required a significant shift in the District's priorities and thinking around schools as public assets. This was possible due to the personnel within the District that were able to execute the joint use strategy into action.

Year 3: 2009-2010
PLUS Fellow: CC&S Staff and LeConte Dill, School of Public Health
Engaging Youth in Building Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Public Housing Developments in San Francisco

Following the development of the HOPE SF Educational Strategic plan, and the successful youth engagement strategy at Malcolm X Academy, MOH requested

CC&S' assistance in developing a citywide youth strategy, focusing on employing youth from HOPE SF sites. In 2009-2010, PLUS began to provide capacity-building support for development teams and city leaders on the HOPE SF Youth Leadership Academy, engaging young residents in the revitalization of their communities.

Building on the award-winning Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now), youth residents in these public housing sites were enlisted to help bridge historically divided institutions such as city agencies and resident groups. The HOPE SF Youth Leadership Academy engaged 11 adult allies from each of the contracted community development firms and 15 youth leaders from the four HOPE SF sites in work towards building equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities. Their work came to focus on physical and social connectivity, safe pathways and open spaces inside the development site, and healthy food access.

The 2009-10 PLUS Fellow documented the results of each site. Even though the Academy had each stakeholder represented at the table, attendance at Y-PLAN professional development workshops was inconsistent resulting in limited fidelity of the Y-PLAN model. Through the course of the year, it became evident that more on-site capacity was needed to offer technical assistance to both adult allies and youth. Despite the City adopting the vision to include youth in the planning process, local stakeholders were inadequately prepared to fully integrate youth, resulting in a disconnect between the Y-PLAN model and youth employment goals of the Academy. The work at Malcolm X Academy continued for a second year and high school aged youth from the Hunters View site also contributed to the design and planning of the development site.

Successes and Challenges

<div style="border:1px solid #000; border-radius:15px; padding:20px;">

SUCCESSES

✓ A commitment to incorporate research can transform policies and practices. DCYF and SFUSD embraced PLUS to support investigating and clarifying issue of joint use, and have used this research to transform their policies and procedures. The initial PLUS research on housing policies that support families and teachers catalyzed ongoing relationships through the HOPE SF initiative.

✓ Youth engagement can inform policies and build bridges across agencies and in communities. The children at Malcolm X Elementary School crafted visions for the planning of the Hunters View community. Their presentations have brought together residents, SFUSD staff, city leaders, and other project stakeholders in a constructive forum.

✓ Incremental conversations can lead to sustained relationship-building. The divides between SFUSD and MOH were relatively wide early in the PLUS Initiative. Leaders admitted near ignorance about each others' work, and were hungry for collaboration. Through incremental conversations, collaborative projects, and joint research individual and institutional cross-sector relationships have developed and continue to deepen.

</div>

CHALLENGES

✓ Large number of stakeholders and their complex relationships make communication, coordination, and collaboration difficult. HOPE SF is a huge undertaking with many and diverse stakeholders. Managing logistics with and goals of diverse institutional cultures and individual personalities can be challenging.

✓ Stakeholder capacity for collaboration is variable. Given the diversity of stakeholders, it is not surprising that they do not all hold the same strengths and levels of capacity. Agencies have different cultures, timeframes, and priorities. Likewise, individual staff members bring particular skills based on an area of expertise. Finally, some are working at "higher level" policy development, while others are at the more neighborhood/project level.

✓ Local politics require incredible sensitivity and savvy in planning and implementation. HOPE SF is a citywide mayoral initiative that engages almost every city department and will dramatically impact the lives of hundreds of residents. The complexity of this type of endeavor cannot be understated for both professionals and residents. Likewise, current policies and projects need to be understood in their historical context and the meaning that elected leaders and local residents place on the process.

Case Study 6: San Pablo

Key Stakeholders

- San Pablo City Council
- Helms Community Project/Community School
- West Contra Costa Unified School District

Background

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 supportive environment that would support student learning by collaborating with city agencies and community organizations to offer an array of support and involvement services. HCP partners with nearly thirty community agencies as well as the City of San Pablo Parks and Recreation, local colleges and universities, businesses, various city agencies, and several elected officials.[14] After 10 years of work as the Helms Community Project, Helms Middle School became the Helms Community School, reinforcing close ties with community non-profit organizations and the City of San Pablo. Helms Community School also moved into a new building. 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 Projects: 2006-2010

The overall goal of the San Pablo PLUS projects was to provide technical assistance to create systems and structures to provide opportunities for data tracking and evaluation of HCP. CC&S also facilitated Y-PLAN to support the design and development of the community center and surrounding recreational areas.

Baseline Planning Year: 2006-2007

The PLUS Team identified the following needs in order to institutionalize cross-sector collaboration and create systems and structures that provide leaders with opportunities to evaluate HCP:

---

[14] 2007-08 PLUS Fellow Report.

- Data support: a streamlined database that tracks student use of services;
- Documentation: strategic documentation to share the results of their work with others;
- Technical assistance with community mapping projects: assistance from CC&S staff in structuring mapping projects with HCP staff and using online resources and tools.

While there was a high level of community involvement and support at the local level, school district officials questioned the sustainability of the "community schools" model, as HCP had no data or documentation to demonstrate its effectiveness.

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

During the 2007-08, the PLUS Team identified a data management project as the focus of the PLUS Fellow. The HCP project director, LaZena Jones, faced challenges articulating the breadth of services and integrating services onto the school campus, as she lacked a coherent system to track student participation and link that to school-based data. The PLUS Fellow worked on answering the following question: What is the appropriate and secure data system for HCP to report, assess program effectiveness, and sustain and garner further support from its stakeholders, which include but are not limited to the WCCUSD, Helms Middle School administration and personnel, students and parents, funders, and service providers? Specific objectives included:

- Compiling a list of HCP stakeholders' desired outcomes and indicators;
- Creating a strategic plan for the HCP reporting system, which includes recommendations for a data management tool, using stakeholders' outcomes/indicators list and existing data, and a security clearance access system;
- Supporting HCP's use of the data reporting system in their communications to WCCUSD.

The report also documented what institutionalization means for the PLUS Team and identified multiple indicators (e.g. recognition and funding) of progress and related obstacles and opportunities. In addition, the PLUS fellowship afforded the Team and others an opportunity for an in-depth look at several challenges

facing community schools, such as aligning partners' vision or sharing physical space. Finally, the report produced a set of recommendations intended to help the Team sustain or expand their wraparound services for students, their families and their community. Tracking and evaluation of students and programs, strategic storytelling, and a joint use Community Center emerged as three opportunities for further institutionalization.

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

The new City Council in San Pablo and Mayor Leonard McNeil was supportive of community schools, broadening existing momentum for city-school collaboration. The city co-wrote grants with the School District, matched grant monies, and earmarked city funds for after-school academic enrichment programs – in spite of initial debate as to whether the City should help fund programs that service children from outside of the City.[15] PLUS was able to help HCP school and city leaders to start thinking strategically beyond programs, and about space and the built environment,[16] particularly as the WCCUSD undertook design and construction of a new Helms Middle School campus.

The PLUS Fellow worked with HCP Director LaZena Jones and San Pablo Mayor Leonard McNeil on engaging stakeholders to identify ongoing challenges with the work at Helms, developing a strategy for joint use, improving communication and marketing and identifying opportunities for more formal institutionalization opportunities.

The Fellow produced a report with key recommendations, including the need to engage a broader group of stakeholders on a more ongoing basis to develop a joint use plan and a shared governance structure. While a group of stakeholders in the city, county and district have been identified, communication largely occurred on an individual level – and was not institutionalized. By broadening

---

[15] The city now awaited the construction of the new Helms Middle School facility (funded by a bond secured by the WCCUSD in 2002), which will include San Pablo's Community Center building—funded, in turn, by the City and situated on land granted by the school district. Now referred to as San Pablo's Center of Community, the center is the product of a ten-year program needs assessment conducted among school service providers and stakeholders under the direction of the former principal and with the collaboration of the City and the Helms Community Project. The resulting facility is designed to enable small learning communities to function within the larger school and also to include space for community service providers to work.

[16] 2007-08 PLUS Fellow Report,

engagement around Helms, support can grow outside of HCP Director Jones and Mayor McNeil, both of whom drive much of the work at Helms. Developing a joint use agreement focused on scheduling, maintenance and other logistical issues would help address this issue.

Year 3: 2009-2010
PLUS Fellow: Reino Makkonen, Graduate School of Education
PLUS San Pablo 2009/10: Coordinated Information and Knowledge Sharing

By 2009, Helms Middle School was set to move into a new building in the summer and fall of 2010 and the adjacent land for the joint use community center was under design. In 2009, CC&S also facilitated Y-PLAN with 8th grade Helms and 9th grade Richmond High School students, who grappled with designs and site planning for the new community center and playfields, and presented their visions to the WCCUSD architects and leaders.

Despite this multifaceted work and a strong relationship with the City of San Pablo, HCP continued to face challenges coordinating information and communicating with WCCUSD. At its core, HCP is a network of diverse partnerships and services, and district leadership has tended to be relatively disconnected from HCP's work and successes. As a result, HCP runs the risk of marginalization within the district. Building upon earlier PLUS work, the 2009-10 PLUS San Pablo fellowship sought to address this data/communication issue. Based on a review of relevant literature and case studies and interviews with key school and district stakeholders (both inside and outside WCCUSD), the fellow's final report focused on ways to improve HCP's information coordination and knowledge sharing and establish stronger, bridging ties with the district.

The PLUS Fellow identified several steps that HCP can take to more effectively collect and share information and monitor program participation and progress:

- Establish a system of creating and maintaining electronic attendance records, either through existing district systems or relying upon templates based on other cities;
- Work to update Helms Middle School's web site to include HCP content; and
- Connect with WCCUSD's emerging effort to develop a new district data warehouse.

The information and communication gap between HCP and WCCUSD could also be bridged through relationship building and the adoption of common language. HCP and WCCUSD have similar goals — notably leveraging resources and partnerships to support students and connecting classroom learning with real-world applications outside of school. The new Helms principal and the HCP director could work together to establish stronger, more consistent ties between HCP and the district, by:

- Shifting HCP terminology to better align with district priorities like *linked learning* and *community partnerships*;
- Allotting regular time to meet with WCCUSD colleagues from the Linked Learning/Pathways Program and the Academic Intervention/Bright Futures and Information Technology offices to bring them up to speed about HCP's efforts and hear more about what the district is doing; and
- Establishing horizontal ties with principals and core staff at other San Pablo schools.

Successes and Challenges

SUCCESSES

- ✓ Political will is critical. Members of the city council and the Mayor became champions for the collaboration between HCP and San Pablo.

- ✓ Leveraging cross-sector resources improves services delivered to families and students. Because Helms Middle School serves students from San Pablo and Richmond, some city leaders expressed concern about funding programming that served non-San Pablo residents. Ultimately, the city, district, and HCP were able to pool resources across agencies and foundations to provide the highest level of service that benefited students and families.

- ✓ A place-based focus can enhance programmatic efforts. While HCP began as a service-delivery model, PLUS helped facilitate MOUs and JUAs between the District and the City's Department of Parks and Recreation to incorporate community and youth input on design and built-environment issues into the development of the new Community Center. This added dimension provided additional opportunities for collaboration and relationship building, and a tangible way to engage Helms students in the transformation of their school community.

- ✓ Tracking data is key to ensuring institutional support and systems change. HCP learned to enhance their data collection and program evaluation. Further, PLUS supported HCP staff to link these data systems directly to the school site and WCCUSD. By identifying common data and evaluation metrics, HCP demonstrates their value-add to students and families and to the core academic priorities of school and district.

CHALLENGES

✓ **Partnership growth lacked strategy.** While many HCP partners had been involved since its inception, HCP leaders did not have the capacity or resources to manage partners and identify clear roles and tangible outcomes. This often meant "too many cooks" planning programs and supporting evaluation efforts.

✓ **Lack of data infrastructure stalled collaboration.** PLUS city-school collaboration questions about service collaboration and capacity were at a stalemate due to the lack of a data-tracking infrastructure. Data technology-tracking infrastructure was so lacking that it was a barrier to even start a conversation about collaboration because there was no existing administrative capability.

✓ **Lack of a clear, compelling "story" fostered invisibility at the district level, making HCP more vulnerable.** While the City was HCP's most powerful champion, this was not enough to secure full support from the District. HCP lacked a district champion who could galvanize support within the District and provide HCP with the proper administrative and technical support it could have used to enhance programming.

✓ **Jurisdictional issues can impede collaboration.** The WCCUSD school attendance boundaries are not aligned with city boundaries, which caused ongoing tension between City Council members as Richmond residents accessed HCP and other San Pablo resources. As a result, HCP leaders struggled to make the case for City investment and change the nature of the conversation.

Conclusion, Key Lessons, and Next Steps

The PLUS Leadership Initiative has evolved over five years of engaged research to both meet the needs of local city and school district leaders, and to challenge their barriers for enhanced city-school collaboration. CC&S' facilitation of this regional learning network has fostered relationships, published groundbreaking research, and brought a national spotlight to the tireless efforts of cities and school districts across the Bay Area working to improve neighborhood and student outcomes.

Key Lessons

Following, we outline some specific lessons for the PLUS Leadership Initiative that also may inform similar initiatives across the country.

Working as a university-based third-party intermediary uniquely positioned CC&S to support PLUS Teams

Not all third-party intermediaries are alike. Funding structure shapes the nature of the intermediary's role and may compromise perception of neutrality. However, working as a university/research-based third-party intermediary, CC&S could employ the PLUS Initiative in two key ways:

Define/Reframe the Problem: PLUS is unique in how it identifies the root cause of a problem, and educates clients by reframing the problem in a way that necessitates the enlistment of others. Pushing leaders to consider a place-based framework was key to moving projects and attendant collaborations forward;

Broker New and Foster Existing Relationships: PLUS is unique as a third party convener in how it develops and brokers relationships between stakeholders. Stakeholders view PLUS as a neutral body and thus come to the table less guarded than if a politicized entity had convened the group.

PLUS teams also describe how the connection to UC Berkeley provides additional weight of reputation and status, which helped move collaborative work forward. Despite this unique position, CC&S experienced some limitations, particularly when the PLUS team and CC&S did not have complete mission alignment. For example, the Berkeley PLUS team's 2020 Vision initiative lacked a place-based component, which limited the effectiveness of PLUS and other CC&S resources.

Committed, visionary leaders strive for meaningful partnerships, see the value of research and documentation and seek external support

From its inception, PLUS understood its efforts only inasmuch as they served the interests and needs of cities and school districts. Visionary leadership not only saw the importance of cross-sector collaboration, but also understood the value of reaching out to a university/research-based partner, such as UC Berkeley.

CC&S identified specific and strategic ways to promote collaboration in PLUS teams

PLUS' success in large part came from the attention CC&S took to actively listen to team needs, customize tools, and constantly iterate based on changing circumstances. A one-size-fits-all model was not suitable for the dynamic nature and specific conditions of each locality, and CC&S' flexibility and resourcefulness was key to providing meaningful ongoing support to all PLUS teams. PLUS identified a few specific strategies and tools that enhanced city-school collaboration:

Technical Assistance, Research, and Documentation: PLUS teams with assistance from PLUS Fellows served a dual purpose to document strategies while developing the foundation for collaboration between agencies that had rarely collaborated in the past. Providing best practices research from the region and across the country provide inspiration and guidance for local PLUS teams;

Formalized Agreements and Tools for Internal Communication Strategies: Data-sharing MOUs and JUAs can help prepare leaders to engage in longer-term conversations and planning. Organization and project charts help teams transcend their own agency divides and focus on the collaborative project at hand. PLUS teams used diverse ways to maintain consistent communication, from weekly emails, shared calendars, and monthly cross-agency meetings;

Coherent Data to Support External Communications: Without data (and instruments to record data), leaders cannot effectively tell the story of an initiative. Partners implemented unique communications strategies to gain public support, including garnering national attention to elevate the initiative locally. Communications and public relations strategies are tools to ensure sustainability;

Youth Engagement as a Vehicle for Collaboration: PLUS provided appropriate avenues for leaders to meaningfully engage youth in planning and development

processes. Youth participation also brought together leaders across cities and schools.

Next Steps

Through this first five years of the PLUS Leadership Initiative, CC&S has documented key changes in specific places across the Bay Area. We have also reaffirmed the key components of a research-based intervention like PLUS:

1. A focus on place and the built environment makes collaboration tangible;
2. Public agencies and community-based organizations have a role to play in cross-sector collaborations;
3. Young people play an integral role in crafting visions for change in their communities and as a way to bring diverse stakeholders together.

Moving forward, PLUS will evolve to continue to meet the needs of local communities, to document and translate these accomplishments for state and federal policy leaders, and to facilitate cross-sector collaboration that strives to meet the above 3 benchmarks.

Indicators of Change

Seven Steps	Description	Potential Indicators
1. Get to Know Your Educational Landscape	Understand local educational policies and demographics	Problem/mission statement of initiative is broad enough to address root cause of problem
	Inventory educational and workforce assets	Infrastructure exists to inventory all assets across jurisdictions
	Assess physical school infrastructure	Infrastructure exists to inventory: • Physical conditions of existing schools • Level of identified but unmet improvements needed • School building utilization by students, defined by enrollment to capacity • ratio • Locations of planned new schools • School closure plans • Joint-use (or similar) agreements for community use of schools
2. Engage Schools, Families, and Young People in Planning and Development	Identify multiple ways for LEA personnel to engage in the planning process	Number of non-LEA initiatives that actively partner LEA personnel (e.g., place-based initiatives)
	Identify opportunities for students and parents to engage in the planning process	Number of initiatives that actively engage parents and students
	Connect young people's participation to classroom learning	Number of initiatives that use "linked learning"
	Ensure meaningful and sustained engagement of LEA personnel, students, and parents with appropriate capacity building tools	Number of initiatives and length of sustained LEA, student and parent engagement Number of these initiatives that have instituted LEA, student and/or parent leadership positions during the initiative
3. Establish a Shared Vision and Metrics Linking High-quality Education to Economic Prosperity at Community and	Cultivate leadership and champions	Each sector has at least one stable system-wide leader (i.e., low turnover)
	Adopt the vision statement formally across institutions	Joint mission statements, MOUs that identify each institution's role
	Develop common indicators to measure change, foster	Adoption of regional indices (e.g., EOI) Data-sharing protocols across sectors that are

Seven Steps	Description	Potential Indicators
Regional Levels	shared accountability, and increase the effective use of scarce resources	mutually beneficial
4. Support the Whole Life of Learners through Services and Amenities	Provide comprehensive social services aligned with educational needs and opportunities	Number of initiatives that align cross-sector resources to serve a community
	Provide quality amenities to attract families and enrich students' lives	Number of initiatives and range of amenities that are integrated (e.g., co-location of services) Number of families served vs. families in need
	Harness public and private funding to align program operations for efficiency	Number of public-private initiatives Number of initiatives that resulted in consolidated funding streams/new offices within government in partnership with the private sector
5. Align Bricks and-Mortar Investments for Regional Prosperity	Establish schools as centers of opportunity-rich communities	Number of community-school initiatives (e.g., Full Service Community Schools)
	Ensure family-oriented, mixed-income housing	Number of comprehensive housing initiatives (e.g., HOPE, Choice Communities)
	Pursue joint development	Two or more entities have partnered to plan, site, design or build (e.g., public-private partnership)
6. Maximize Access to Opportunity through Transportation	Make areas surrounding schools pedestrian and bicycle safe	Number of Safe Passage programs/ "Safe Routes to Schools"
	Align transit options to support school choice and extracurricular opportunities	Modified transit schedules and/or stops to accommodate students' transportation needs
	Create incentives for multimodal transportation choices by students and families	Availability of free/low-cost transit passes to students and their families
	Site schools to maximize multimodal transportation access	Use of "smart growth" strategies in planning new schools or redevelopment

Reference Materials

Aiken, M., Dewar, R., DiTomaso, N., Hage, J. and Zeitz, G. (1975). *Coordinating Human Services*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Borgatti, S.P., Mehra, A., Brass, D.J. and Labianca, G. (2009). Network analysis in the social sciences. *Science* 323, pp. 892–895.

Brunson, P. (2001). *Building capacity for local decisionmaking: Learning guide #4—Strategies to achieve results*. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (2008). *Community schools: Working toward institutional transformation*. Los Angeles, CA: Center for Mental Health in Schools.

Crossan, M.M., Lane, H.W. and White, R.E. (1999). An Organizational Learning Framework: From Intuition to Institution. *Academy of Management Review* 24(3), pp. 522-537

Donahue, P. (2003). *Systems improvement: A primer for creating and sustaining systems of care that work for children, youth and families*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Greenwood, T. (2008). Bridging the divide between community indicators and government performance measurement, *National Civic Review* 97(1), pp. 55–59

Innes, J.E. and Booher, D.E. (1999). Consensus building and complex adaptive systems: A framework for evaluating collaborative planning, *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65(4), pp. 412–423.

Innes, J.E. and Booher, D.E. (2000). Indicators for sustainable communities: A strategy building on complexity theory and distributed intelligence, *Planning Theory & Practice* 1(2), pp. 173–186.

Kramer, J. S., Philliber, S., Brindis, C. D., Kamin, S. L., Chadwick, A. E., & Revels, M. L., et al. (2005). Coalitions models: Lessons learned from the CDC's community coalition partnership programs for the prevention of teen pregnancy. Journal of Adolescent Health, 37, S20–S30.

Kreger, M., Brindis, C., Manuel, D., & Sassoubre, L. (2007). Lessons learned in systems change initiatives: Benchmarks and indicators. *American Journal of*

Community Psychology, 39(3), 301-320.

Meister, G. (2006). Theories of change for community interventions in education. In K. Fulbright-Anderson, & P. Auspos (Eds.), *Community change: Theories, practice, and evidence* (pp. 323-385). Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute.

Nicola, R. (2005). Turning Point's national excellence collaboratives: Assessing a new model of policy and system capacity development. Journal of Public Health Management Practice, 11(2), 101–108.

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families. (2000). Pennsylvania's Outcomes Framework: *Improving outcomes for children and families through a shared community agenda*. Harrisburg, PA.

Provan, K.G. and Milward, H.B. (2001). Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public-Sector Organizational Networks. *Public Administration Review* 61(4), pp. 414–423.

Taylor-Powell, E., Rossing, B., & Geran, J. (1998). *Evaluating collaboratives: Reaching the potential*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension.