



Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships

The Community Schools Strategy

Atelia Melaville • Reuben Jacobson • Martin J. Blank

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Coalition for Community Schools

c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
4455 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20008

(202) 822-8405

E-mail: ccs@iel.org

Web site: www.communityschools.org

Martin J. Blank
Director

Reuben Jacobson
Senior Associate for Research and Strategy

Shital C. Shah
Manager of Policy and Partnerships

Maame Ameyaw
Coordinator, Communications and Operations

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About the Coalition for Community Schools

The Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K–16, youth development, community planning and development, higher education, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as a strategy to mobilize school and community resources to make schools the centers of the community where students succeed and families and communities thrive.

About the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, DC, that works to build the capacity of people, organizations, and systems—in education and related fields—to cross boundaries and work together to attain better results for children and youth. IEL envisions a society that uses its resources effectively to achieve better futures for all children and youth.

About The Stuart Foundation

The Stuart Foundation is dedicated to transforming public education and the child welfare system so that all youth can learn and achieve in school and life. The Foundation is a partner and convener in melding the resources, thinking, and energy necessary to create and sustain system-wide change in California and Washington. It invests in programs and practices that serve as scalable and sustainable models and that inform policy.

Ordering Information

Single copies of this report are available for \$12 prepaid. All orders must be received in writing by fax, email, or mail. Bulk orders are available at a reduced rate. The full report is available to download free of charge at www.communityschools.org.



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Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community School Strategy is the second document in a series titled, *Building Capacity for Community Schools*. The purpose of this series is to help practitioners and policymakers develop the capacity and the resources to create more effective community schools around the country.

Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships would not have been possible without the extraordinary commitment of the many school and community leaders working to make the community schools vision a reality for students, families, and communities across the country. Their belief in the community school, as the best vehicle for organizing the assets and expertise of schools and communities to support student success, is at the heart of the work of the Coalition for Community Schools. The time and know-how they shared with us were vital to the development of this guide. We are proud to identify these individuals as our partners. A complete list of individuals who shared their stories and ideas and reviewed the guide can be found [here](#).

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Ira Harkavy
Chairman, Coalition for
Community Schools



Lisa Villarreal
Vice-Chair, Coalition for
Community Schools



Martin J. Blank
Director, Coalition for Community Schools
President, Institute for Educational
Leadership

INTRODUCTION

It is nearly impossible to imagine that, in just three years, a school that had experienced a dropout rate of 84 percent by grade 10 managed to transform itself into a school with a graduation rate of 100 percent. But that is the story of Cincinnati's Oyler Community Learning Center, which is one in a system of community schools that has helped raise the citywide graduation rate from 51 percent in 2000 to 83 percent in 2009. With the school board's 2002 commitment to make every school a community school, Cincinnati has built citywide structures that foster the collaborative provision of high-quality learning opportunities and supports for students. Cincinnati is one of dozens of communities across the country that is scaling up a system of community schools.

Why? In simplest terms, the community schools strategy provides a coherent framework for all children to succeed in college, career, and life. More pragmatically, in today's test-oriented school culture, an effective community school offers the opportunities that all children deserve and helps remove barriers to learning; it ensures a foundation for principals to lead, teachers to teach, and students to learn.

A thriving system of community schools focuses joint community and school resources on student success. Making that happen at scale is the subject of this guide.

Dr. Jerry Weast, former superintendent of the Montgomery County, Maryland, schools, emphasizes that change is about creating structures and cultures that advance change. That notion applies here. Typically, some structures need to be put in place to support a system of community schools, but, unless a culture is in place to support all children,

community schooling efforts will fall short of their goals.

The community schools strategy can have its broadest, deepest, and most sustainable impact when a school system and all of its community partners use the strategy in many schools. A multisite effort embeds the vision of a community school in the principles and practices, beliefs, and expectations of its schools, partner agencies, families, and community members. As the effort scales up, the community schools vision becomes the new culture. In that new culture, individuals and organizations alike share the work, responsibilities, and benefits of improved results for children, families, schools, and communities.

There is no one path for advancing a community schools agenda. Sometimes a citywide organization such as a United Way chapter, a county or city, a non-profit agency, or a school district steps up to create an opportunity for collaboration and provides an anchor presence in a set of schools. Often, a local community school serves as a template for expansion. Many schools already operate with some of the typical elements of a community school—after-school programs, health and mental health services, parent leadership, service learning, a preschool program, a tutoring or mentoring program, and/or adult education programs—but they do not undertake such activities with the explicit goal of fostering synergy among partners and the school to achieve better results. This guide helps you determine your current status, work from your assets, and build toward your shared vision of a system of community schools.

The Guide: The What, Why, and How of Scale-Up

A scaled-up system of community schools refers to a *vertical network* of schools from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in a single attendance area with all schools linked *horizontally* across one or more school districts. What does it take to build a scaled-up system of community schools? That is the question posed by school leaders, service providers, and government officials around the country as they come to appreciate the value and importance of community schools.

Scaling Up School and Community

Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy builds on both practice and research to describe the what, why, and how of system-wide expansion of community schools. The guide is written for a wide audience and for communities at different points in planning for, implementing, and sustaining a community schools strategy. It targets grass-roots advocates, including parents, students, teachers, and community partners; school district, civic, business, and government leaders; and funders at the local, state, and national levels.

For those already working to build a scaled-up system of community schools, ***Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships*** offers insights and field-based guidance immediately useful in deepening and sustaining your work. For those whose efforts focus primarily on establishing individual schools, ***Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships*** provides an opportunity to think about why and how to take on a scale-up effort. Others with no earlier involvement in community schools leadership will be encouraged to consider the logic of

community schools and see the value of beginning with a systems approach.

The guide is organized as follows:

- **Part One** lays out the rationale for a community schools strategy. It describes what a community school looks like and its advantages over traditional schools.
- **Part Two** describes the essential characteristics of an effective scaled-up system of community schools. It draws on systems theory to help think about how complex organizations such as community schools work and suggests a framework for creating the culture and functional capacity needed to create and sustain a scaled-up system.
- **Part Three** outlines a 6-stage spiraling strategic process to help schools and communities steer their scale-up work.
- **Part Four** tells the scale-up story of selected communities, permitting readers to see the spiraling process in action.

Brief sketches from the field illustrate specific stages, barriers to progress, and solutions. Various tools are referenced throughout the text; the tools are accessible with a simple click and are also presented in the Appendix as well.

PART ONE: THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGY

Ours is a robust, youthful, and determined nation. When families, schools, and community partners join together in common purpose, we can ensure that America's promise—equal opportunity and freedom with responsibility—stays strong.

Since our founding, public education has been charged with imparting both the democratic spirit and can-do skills each generation needs to capitalize on and expand our nation's many opportunities. In every era, schools have played a central role in meeting the charge. Today is no different. Fully preparing our young people for tomorrow is a task that belongs to all of us.

based on a culture that builds collective trust and promotes a set of core principles (Figure 1),ⁱ including high expectations for schools and students, reliance on family and community strengths, and the development of the whole child as critical factors for student success. A set of structural elements, including *partnerships*, alignment of funding streams with the natural assets of communities, and the integration of academic learning with essential supports and opportunities, helps diverse communities craft their own vehicle for change. Further, it recognizes that parents and care givers play a critical role in their children's social, emotional, physical, and academic development while intentionally supporting parents/care givers in their role as their child's chief advocate.

A Vision and a Vehicle for Change

A community schools strategy is a collaborative leadership approach designed to ensure that *every* student graduates from high school ready for college and/or career and prepared for a successful life as a family member and citizen. It offers a vision of schools, communities, and families linked in common purpose.

Experience demonstrates that the effectiveness of a community schools strategy is

Figure 1. Community School Core Principles

- **Shared vision and accountability for results.** A clear, mutually agreed-upon vision focused on results drives the work of community schools. Agreements enable partners to hold each other accountable and move beyond “turf battles.”
- **Strong partnerships.** Partners share resources and expertise and collaborate to design community schools and make them work.
- **High expectations for all.** Community schools are organized to support learning. Children, youth, and adults are expected to learn to a high standard and to become contributing members of their community.
- **Community strengths.** Community schools marshal the assets of the entire community, including the people who live and work there, local organizations, and the school.
- **Respect for diversity.** Community schools know their communities. They develop respect and a strong, positive identity for people of diverse backgrounds and are committed to the welfare of the whole community.
- **Local decision making.** To unleash the power of local communities, local leaders make decisions about their community schools strategy while people in individual schools respond to their unique circumstances.

The Scale-Up Imperative

A community schools strategy can have its broadest, deepest, and most sustainable impact when a school system and its community partners use the strategy in several schools, across one or more districts. A multisite effort embeds the vision of a community school in the principles and practices, beliefs, and expectations of its schools, partner agencies, families, and community members. As the effort scales up and collective trust grows, the vision of a system of community schools becomes the new culture—one in which individuals and organizations alike share the work, responsibility, and benefits of improved results for children, families, schools, and communities.

Thousands of schools across the country have already adopted some variant of a community schools strategy for better meeting student and family needs, and they are seeing a difference in a wide range of indicators that spell school success. However, the advantages of community schooling are not consistently available to students throughout their education from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. To wrap their arms around all their children, communities must expand and sustain a scaled-up system of community schools across neighborhoods and throughout districts.

Clearly, the most important reason to scale up community schools—sometimes referred to as full-service community schools or community learning centers—is the mounting data showing that community schools work.ⁱⁱ They not only improve test scores but by also ignite the interest and energy of students, teachers, families, and community members in learning and working together. Stated another way, the vision-based culture and collaborative

leadership structure created by a community schools strategy sets the stage to achieve—on a large scale—the essential elements that, according to current research, are needed for long-lasting reform: leadership, parent and community engagement, professional capacity, a student-centered learning environment, and instructional guidance.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second reason to scale up is that a community schools strategy provides a much-needed and effective way to organize fragmented services and to integrate funding streams, permitting scarce dollars to generate a greater impact. Students and families gain access to services when they need them, and more expensive crisis intervention is avoided. According to a recent Coalition for Community Schools study, every dollar spent by a school system to implement a community schools strategy leverages at least three dollars in federal, state, and local funding and in philanthropic and community partner resources.^{iv} Other estimates are even higher.

The third reason to scale up is that the 2010 Census shows continuing growth in the diversity of America's student population. The corresponding increase in the number of students whose first language is not English calls for schools that fully engage, challenge, and support these students and their families. A community schools strategy recognizes the tremendous strengths of parents as taxpayers, civic leaders, and advocates.

The fourth reason to scale up is that the policy environment is ripe for expanding community schools. At the federal level, the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, Race to the Top Fund, School Improvement Grants, Title I, and the Invest in Innovation Fund i3 all contain elements of the community schools strategy. P-

20 Councils at the state level and in some localities also call for expanded partnerships and resource alignment. They all require a vehicle—which a community schools strategy provides—to help schools and community institutions knit their wide-ranging assets into measurable improvements.

Finally, an emerging body of knowledge provides a useful evidence base for how to scale up and sustain the community schools strategy. Two decades of experience in a growing number of multisite initiatives provide a strong foundation on which other communities can build. National models that employ a community schools strategy offer additional knowledge, including Schools of the 21st Century, Communities in Schools, university-assisted community schools, Children’s Aid Society models, and Beacon Schools. Their lessons and insights inform this guidebook.

What a Community School Looks Like

A community school *is a place and a set of partnerships* connecting school, family, and community. A community school is distinguished by its integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services, and community development. Its curriculum emphasizes real-world learning through community problem-solving and service. By extending the school day and week, it reaches families and community residents. The community school is uniquely equipped to develop its students into educated citizens ready and able to give back to their communities and to strengthen families and communities.

Community schools are built on a fundamental premise—that *every child and every school is capable of excellence given the right conditions for learning*. A community schools strategy creates the structure and culture needed to

ensure fulfillment of the following six conditions:

- Early childhood development programs are available to nurture growth and development.
- The school offers a core instructional program delivered by qualified teachers; instruction is organized around a challenging curriculum anchored by high standards and expectations for students.
- Students are motivated and engaged in learning—in both school and community settings— before, during, and after school and in the summer.
- The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
- Parents, families, and school staff demonstrate mutual respect and engage in effective collaboration.
- Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.

Of course, schools cannot create these conditions on their own. They require strategic partnerships among schools, partner agencies, families, and community members. A community schools strategy leverages, coordinates, and maximizes resources, often including a coordinator to manage day-to-day activities at each school site.

Partnerships with community agencies, cultural institutions, colleges and universities, foundations, and others expand the number and type of learning opportunities available to help children master skills and content. These opportunities are directly aligned with the children’s academic curriculum while

broadening their interests and developing their talents. By engaging families and community partners with school staff in designing and participating in activities, a community schools strategy fosters shared ownership and collective trust. Referring to a community schools coordinator on loan from a community partner, one principal described that individual's function by stating, "We are joined at the hip. We work together to make sure every student gets what they [sic] need. She works on the social supports and I work on the instruction and together, we make it work." Support for students extends to support for families.

The Advantages of Community Schools

Many schools have created partnerships with various community institutions. But it is the partnerships forged around the principles of community schools and committed to creating the conditions for learning that make the difference. As a result, partnership-based community schools offer three distinct advantages over traditional public schools by:

- Providing learning opportunities that develop both academic and non-academic competencies
- Building social capital—the value attached to the social networks and relationships that support learning and create opportunities for young people while strengthening their communities^v
- Garnering additional resources that directly support schools' teaching and learning goals while reducing demands on school staff^{vi}

While much-touted school reform efforts largely focus on in-school improvement, a

community schools strategy builds on research that has demonstrated the important connection between in-school and out-of-school factors in student achievement. In-school factors are concerned with the quality of instruction and curriculum. It is commonly accepted that an effective teacher is the most important in-school factor affecting student achievement,^{vii} but students also need a challenging curriculum that engages them as active learners in real-world problem-solving.^{viii} Often, in the schools serving our neediest children, the curriculum is narrow and neither rigorous nor engaging.^{ix} Classes are often unmanageably large, and instructional materials and supportive technologies are frequently limited. Worse still, neither the school climate nor adult behavior adequately communicates the expectation that every student will succeed.

Out-of-school factors that affect a student's ability to learn include residence in a high-poverty neighborhood, an unmarried teen mother, irregular attendance, and the ripple effects of family substance abuse and mental health issues, unemployment or frequent mobility, social isolation, poor health care and diet, and lack of educational support. Each of these factors has a pronounced impact on a child's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

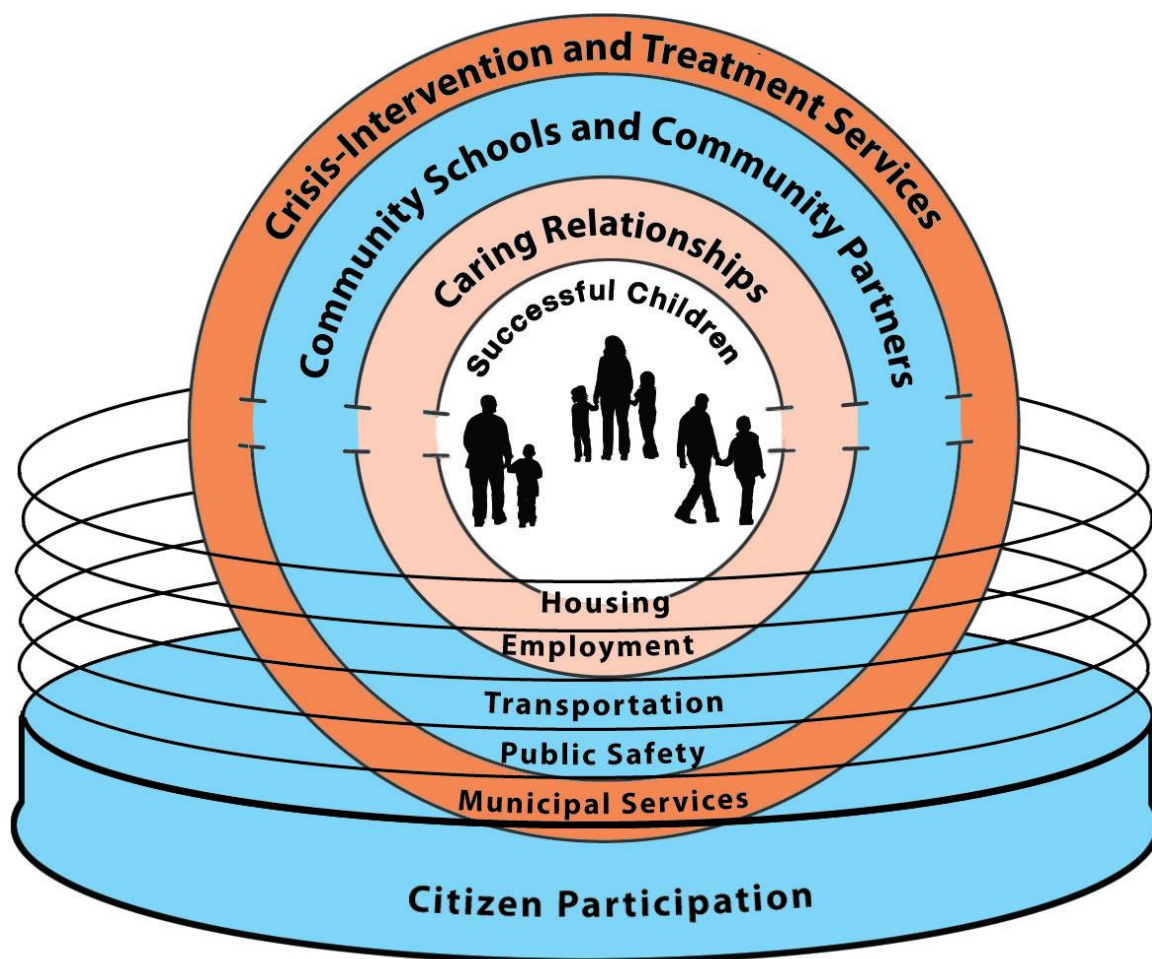
Issues as basic as whether a child attends school regularly or has an adult at home to encourage him to do his homework or to applaud her best efforts all affect school performance. Research shows, for example, that chronic absence is prevalent for young children. "Every year, one in 10 kindergarten and 1st grade students misses a month of school with excused and unexcused absences. By middle and high school, the rates of chronic absence are far

higher.”^x A study of students in kindergarten through grade 5 in New York City showed one in five students chronically absent.^{xi} These absences affect academic achievement, leave children unable to read well by the end of grade 3,^{xii} and can set a pattern of poor attendance and academic failure for older students, fueling the dropout rate.

Community schools identify resources that help address out-of-school factors and connect home, school, and community in ways that make student success possible. Families become their children’s most important influence and are encouraged to become school decision makers. By paying attention to both

academic and non-academic learning, community schools reach the whole child and encourage the growth and development of a range of reinforcing competencies—social, emotional, physical, and academic. In community schools, engagement precedes achievement—and intensifies it—in classrooms and community-based learning opportunities. Relationships with caring adults help young people build networks of support, develop important social skills, and expand their horizons. In community schools, students come to school because they want to learn; what is more, they are ready to learn.

Figure 2. A Community Where Learning Happens



Toward a Community Where Learning Happens

An individual community school lays the foundation for success; just ask any child, family, teacher, or community partner who is a participant. The challenge is to extend the community schools logic—and the conditions for learning—across school boundaries so that *all* children and their families in a community may benefit. When schools and community partners take steps to link individual community schools into coordinated systems, the systems become the building blocks of a fully engaged child- and family-centered community. Together, they build an infrastructure of support and opportunities to create the conditions for learning across entire localities. The result is the development of “communities where learning happens”—every day, for every child.

Figure 2 depicts a community where learning happens.

In communities where learning happens, there is a broad foundation of citizen participation. Families and community partners stand together to promote action on child, school, and family issues. Children and families are not isolated but rather are surrounded by interconnected rings of learning and support. First in importance are relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers who share information and often offer a helping hand—monitoring children’s safety and sending messages about the importance of education. At the same time, students are closely connected to their community schools while the schools are linked to other helping institutions such as houses of worship and community organizations, libraries, health clinics, and volunteer agencies—all of which enable

students to explore and participate in the larger community. In addition, crisis intervention and treatment services are readily available to support students and families as needed.

Ideally, the interconnected rings of learning and support are held together by a sturdy infrastructure in the form of good jobs, effective transportation, affordable housing, and public safety. **Every child should live in a community where learning happens**, but many do not. These are the types of places that are envisioned in a variety of efforts to revitalize our nation’s neighborhoods (e.g., Promise Neighborhoods and the White House’s Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative). Community schools should be at the core of such efforts, just as public schools have always been the centerpiece of strong communities.

Figure 3 illustrates the connections between an individual community school, a system of community schools, and a community where learning happens.

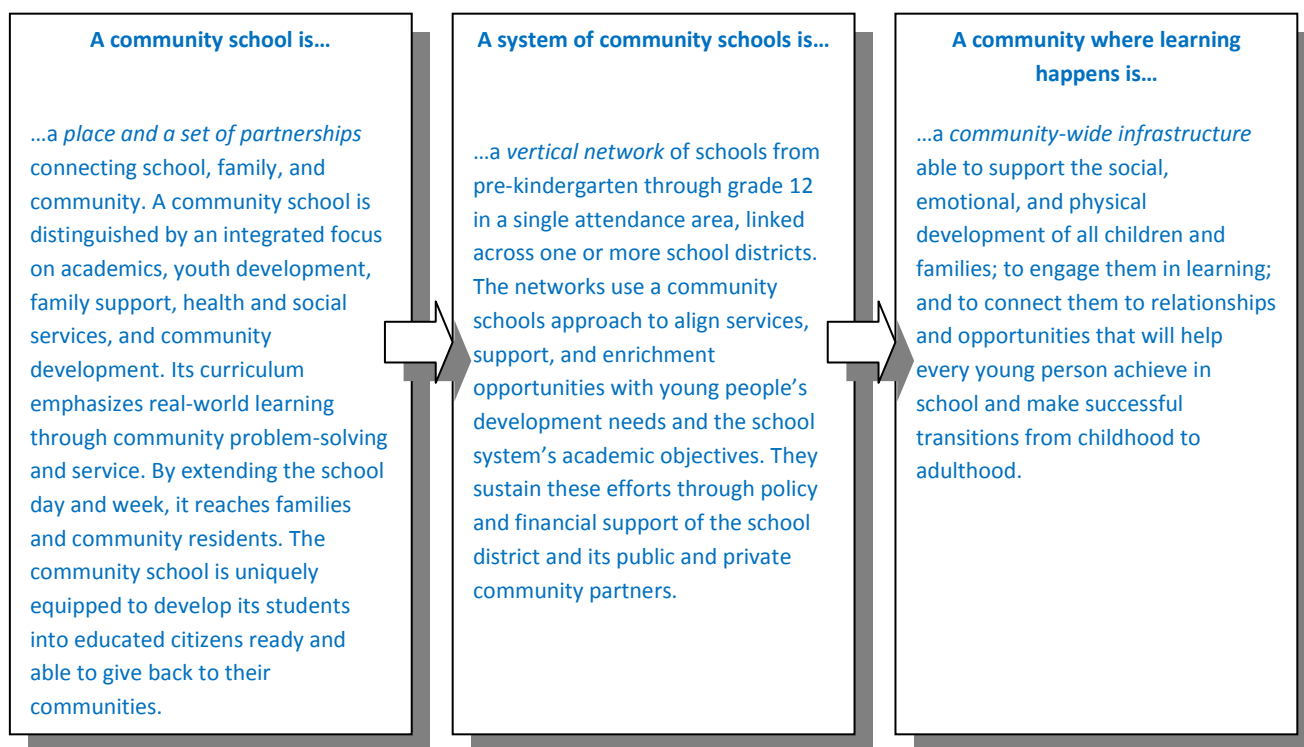
A scaled-up system of community schools does not spring up over night. We are well aware of the difficulties faced by well-funded, comprehensive community initiatives that have sought to change the way education, health, and social services are designed, delivered, and evaluated. These important efforts have clearly demonstrated that systems transformation takes time, coupled with a guiding vision and the capacity to build and sustain new relationships, policies, and practices. A 2010 study of two decades of comprehensive community initiatives notes that progress grows out of “better alignment of mission, action, capacity, collaboration and learning.”^{xiii} We also see the need for greater effort to understand how complex systems—such as communities

and community schools—operate and where and how they respond to change.

In contrast to many comprehensive community change initiatives, community schools partners have focused on a single entry point—public schools—as a strategic way to build more responsive communities. The most successful initiatives forge relationships and craft

collaborative agendas that are “plausible, doable and testable.”^{xiv} The lessons learned by many of these initiatives have helped shine a light on the various “moving parts” of a community schools strategy. Part Two of the guide looks at how these various components work together.

Figure 3. A Fully Developed Community School Vision



PART TWO: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCALE-UP

In simple terms, “scale-up” means adapting an innovation—such as community schools—for *widespread and supported application, with the goal of producing robust, meaningful, agreed-upon outcomes*.^{xv} In the case of community schools, it requires much more than simply increasing the number of community schools. The critical challenge is to find ways to create many community schools across one or more school districts and to develop structures with sufficient capacity to sustain, expand, and continuously improve community schools networks.

Part Two presents some basic facts about how systems operate and emphasizes the importance of attending to both culture and structure in systems change efforts. It outlines the characteristics of a successfully scaled-up system, including shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability. Based on extensive field experience, we present a **Collaborative Leadership Structure** to show how leadership roles and responsibilities may be distributed to build a community schools culture and the functional capacity needed to create and sustain such a scaled-up system. A **Systems Benchmark Chart** defines what must be in place for a scaled-up community school initiative to succeed (see Appendix).

Systems Basics

A **system** is a collection of parts that interact and function as a whole. Systems consist of elements and interconnections; they have a purpose,^{xvi} and they exist within a political, social, and cultural context. **Infrastructure** refers to a system’s basic features. It forms the base or foundation of a system and consists of

the structural elements that support the entire enterprise.

Systems exist everywhere. A system may be a hard-wired physical organization such as a computer, or it may be a social, relationship-based organization such as a community school. In either case, a central tenet in systems thinking is that all parts of a system are interdependent. They are composed of numerous feedback loops that interact at several levels rather than in a strictly linear arrangement. The relationships form a complex, layered web.

Given the nature of systems structures, actions affecting one part of the system often do not produce orderly, predictable results. Tugging on one part of the web is likely to cause unanticipated reactions elsewhere in the system. *Effectively changing a system requires an awareness of how the various parts of the system work together and the leverage points most likely to produce desired change. Integrated action across several functional areas is needed to move and sustain complex organizations.* These two insights are fundamental to systems understanding—whether change takes the form of a solution to a specific problem within a system or aims to scale up community schools.

Attempts at systems change fail when there is a misalignment between *assumptions* about systems operations and *how systems work in practice*.^{xvii} Change agents often focus on the most obvious elements of the system they want to change by, for example, latching on to a “silver bullet” that calls for reorganizing their governing board, enacting new policies, or spending more money. All of these modifications may be important, but change agents mistakenly assume that anyone of these

isolated adjustments will produce system-wide change. Many initiatives expect improvement to come from simply working harder, forgetting Einstein's definition of insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result."

Still another insight derived from systems thinking suggests that the most important dimension of system operations is the one most frequently overlooked—a system's operating culture. Culture includes the values, expectations, and tacit assumptions that drive behavior and practice throughout the system and shape the system's ability to achieve its purpose. While this controlling paradigm is less obvious than the other dimensions, it is, in fact, often the most crucial determinant of system change.^{xviii}

Part One stressed that the time-tested effectiveness of a community schools strategy is based on a culture that fosters collective trust and promotes a set of core principles built around high expectations for schools and students, the potential strengths of family and community, and the development of the whole child. Without question, the change required for permanently transforming traditional schools into a district-wide system of community schools will occur only if the principles of community schools are deeply embedded in collaborative leadership structures and a culture of collaboration.

The Characteristics of an Effective Community Schools System

No doubt about it—system building is complicated work. Before starting down that road (more in Part Three), you need to have a good idea of the system you want to create. Community schools focus on the well-being of

children, families, and communities so that students succeed in school, graduate, and go on to satisfying roles as parents, workers, and citizens. What type of system can create these results on a large scale?

Research suggests that an effectively scaled-up system of community schools exhibits four characteristics: shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability.^{xix}

- **Shared ownership.** Responsibility for a community schools initiative rests with school systems and their community partners—local government, community-based organizations, public and private agencies, institutions of higher education, parent and neighborhood groups, business and civic entities, and others with an interest in the development and well-being of children, families, schools, and communities. Together, these partners engage in collaborative decision making and take ownership of their efforts to help all students succeed. School and community partners share resources, information, and accountability for results with the intention of fundamentally transforming the current education system. Because they command different resources, expertise, and connections, they develop a balance of power and equal voice among partners, even though their resources may not all carry the same dollar value.

Shared ownership evolves and shifts to a broader group as stakeholders negotiate a shared vision, develop an operating framework, distribute leadership, clarify their respective roles

and responsibilities, and do the hard work involved in scaling up a system of community schools.

- **Spread.** In effective scale-up, innovations *spread* into structures, processes, materials, beliefs, norms, and principles. The spread is vertical and horizontal—both *up and out*. Vertical spread requires a scaled-up system to instill community schools principles throughout a community’s educational pathways, from early childhood programs to higher education and career training, the district office, the school, and the classroom. Horizontal spread reaches out geographically to encompass more and more schools and neighborhoods across the jurisdiction. A rollout strategy identifies sites and links them in clusters or feeder patterns that make sense given community needs and readiness.

Spread also refers to systematic growth in the public’s favorable perception of community schools across various sectors of the community. Such spread occurs as initiatives release data showing measurable progress toward results and provide opportunities for the public to participate in discussions about the expansion of a community schools initiative.

- **Depth.** Effective scale-up requires *deep change* that alters attitudes, behaviors, assumptions, and expectations about teaching and learning and child and youth development practices— within classrooms, school buildings, and districts as well as among community

partners. Top-down innovation is sometimes required, but the adoption of such innovation can often be mechanical, superficial, and fleeting. To create systems that support community schools and educate our most vulnerable children, people at all levels—from teachers and social workers to principals and agency managers and on to institutional leaders—need the opportunity to “dig deep” and explore the core principles of community schools. Participants need to change attitudes and assumptions, policies and practices that may conflict with or water down what community schools hope to accomplish.

Depth is achieved by efforts at the community and school-site levels to embed community school principles in the strategic planning of school districts and community partners.

Professional development for school staff and partners helps translate these principles into everyday practice while technical assistance builds the capacity of initiatives at the community and school-site levels to promote alignment and stay focused on the long-term vision.

- **Sustainability.** Implementation is the beginning, not the end, of successful scale-up. Effective scale-up creates an enduring system of community schools that survives leadership changes and other “rough weather.” Durability grows out of an infrastructure that supports a collaborative system based on a long-term vision, continually

measures progress against a clear set of benchmarks, and develops the ability to finance the functions of community schools. Moreover, to ensure continuation and expansion, community schools must marshal the capacity to capture and retain the political support of key sectors of the community—parents and residents, voters, taxpayers, and policymakers.

The Structure and Functions of System Building

Communities across the country have shown that, to build a system with the characteristics of shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability, school and community leaders must develop collaborative leadership structures with the capacity to carry out key functions. This finding confirms a fundamental insight of systems thinking: *Integrated action across important functional areas advances and sustains complex organizations.*

Most initiatives have developed a collaborative leadership structure that helps them execute and integrate key functions system-wide. Typically, the structures connect community-wide and site-level leadership, often through an intermediary entity.

- **Community-wide leadership** (e.g., school districts, government, United Way chapters, businesses, community- and faith-based organizations) is responsible for overall *vision, policy, and resource alignment*. It creates the context and capacity for expansion. It serves as a networking vehicle for policy development and communication in which several leaders of community

initiatives decide why and how to align their resources to build and sustain a system of community schools.

- **School-site leadership** (e.g., parents, residents, principals, teachers, community partners, and young people) is responsible for *planning, implementation, and continuous improvement*. Leaders ensure that implementation satisfies local needs, aligns with the school's academic mission, and generates practice knowledge and data to inform improvements in community-wide policy and site practice.
- **An intermediary entity** (an organization or a working group composed of key leaders and managers from one or more partner agencies) provides *planning, coordination, and management*. Leadership powers the work by ensuring communication between community-wide and school-site leaders and by facilitating operational functions at all leadership levels and across school sites. It convenes school and community partners, provides strategic planning, and ensures that what happens at the community leadership level empowers students, families, and practitioners at school sites.

Figure 4, **A Collaborative Leadership Structure for Community Schools**, depicts how leadership is shared. It shows that, while each leadership group has its own key roles and responsibilities, they all work to build capacity in each functional area. A continuous flow of communication and efforts to align the work of both school-site and community-wide leaders is facilitated by

intermediary leadership to keep the initiative on track.

Participants in the collaborative leadership structure generally focus on the following seven functions: results-based vision, data and evaluation, finance and resource development, alignment and integration, supportive policy and practice, professional development and technical assistance, and broad community engagement.

Results-Based Vision

A results-based *vision* fuels the initiative, providing the big-picture motivation for scale-up efforts. For community schools, the long-range vision calls for building out the conditions for learning into a “community where learning happens.” In an effective scale-up initiative, the system operating culture—assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and stakeholder values—are consistent with the driving vision.

A results-based framework, including indicators, is used to measure student, school, and community progress in key areas of learning and development. It is also used to track operational progress in creating a shift in ownership, depth, spread, and sustainability.

Data and Evaluation

This function focuses on the collection and analysis of information. It illuminates implementation by tracking the initiative’s indicators (e.g., attendance, partnership effectiveness, and achievement) and collects data on community assets and social and political context in order to identify areas of need, opportunity, and success. It also integrates different databases for improved decision making while ensuring the requisite confidentiality.

Finance and Resource Development

This function ensures that existing school and community resources are identified, coordinated, and used to leverage new dollars to achieve results, fund continuous improvements, and sustain expansion. For leverage to occur, leaders must be connected to a broad range of potential resources and agree on assumptions and expectations about collaborative responsibilities and outcomes.

Resource development also entails mobilizing a community’s human and social capital so that children and youth benefit from connections to caring adults and neighborhood, civic, and business groups and develop a clear sense of their importance in and responsibility to their community.

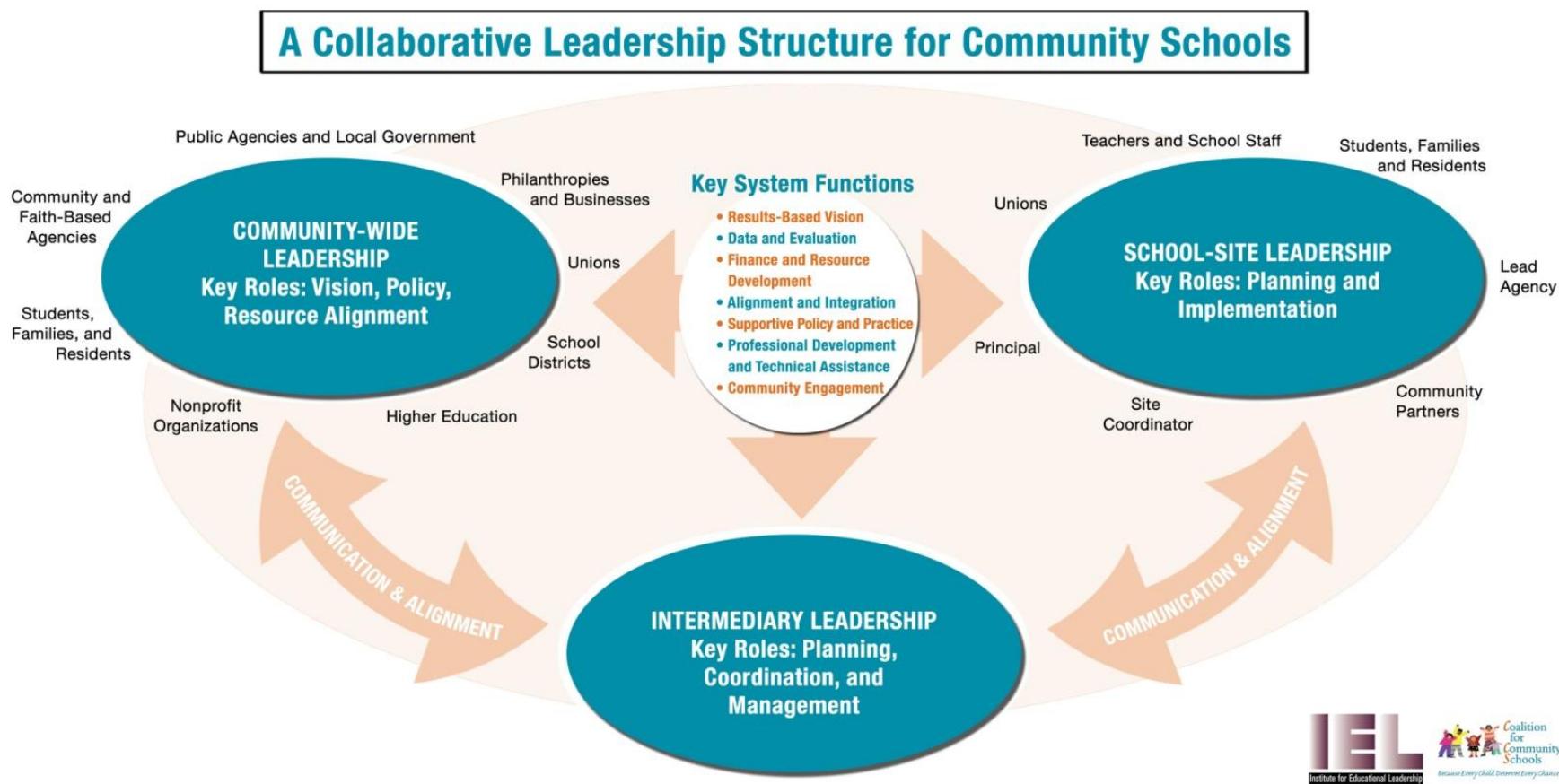
Alignment and Integration

This function spreads and deepens the commitment to community schools norms in the policies and practices of systems across the community as well as in individual school sites.

Alignment activities ensure that the initiative’s results-based framework, school district strategic planning, curriculum and instruction, and partners’ system rules and resources are in accord with and supported by the initiative’s overall vision and system norms. It involves working with other related initiatives to support shared goals and facilitate overall progress.

Integration requires school-site leaders to design explicit practice and policy connections among programs and activities that result in progress toward site-level results. It involves integration of the efforts of all practitioners working with students regardless of organizational affiliation.

Figure 4. A Collaborative Leadership Structure for Community Schools



Supportive Policy and Practice

This function ensures that school districts' and partner agencies' financial, administrative, operational, and strategic policies support community schools and that schools and partners advocate for and enact policy changes in response to site-level needs. It also requires local leaders to communicate regularly with state and federal leaders to advocate for policies that promote community schools.

Governance structures must support—and the system's operating culture must expect—regular communication between community and site leaders. Community leaders must align partner rules and resources insofar as possible to meet site needs, and site leaders must communicate policy and practice needs based on data and evaluation. Data and evaluation techniques that gather practice knowledge or information on gaps between policies and practice must be sensitive to how system norms—attitudes, values, assumptions, and expectations—affect the implementation of policies and practices.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance (TA)

This function plays an essential role in embedding a community school's culture within the larger community by transmitting values and attitudes, assumptions, and expectations consistent with a community schools vision. It promotes the creation of policies and practices that foster the conditions for learning and the principles of community schools. In addition, professional development and TA help schools and community partners build effective relationships.

Broad Community Engagement

This function focuses on building the political will to fund and sustain scale-up by developing a broad-based commitment to “communities where learning happens” as well as the social connections, both formal and informal, that translate into political and financial support. Community engagement activities ensure that the voices of youth, families, and residents are fully heard, that system practices and policies reflect community needs and preferences, and that the community increasingly adopts and spreads the initiative's norms.

Summing Up

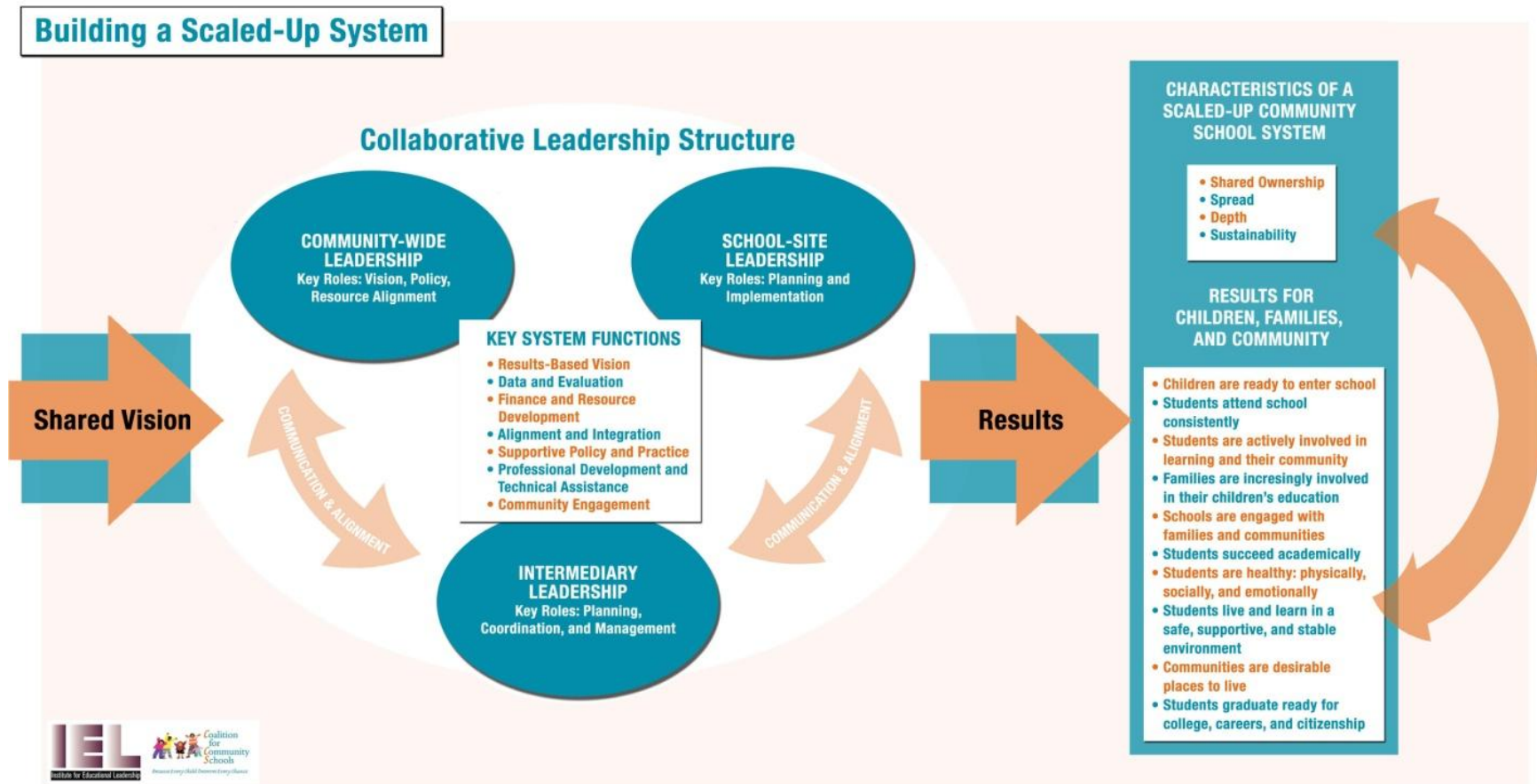
Figure 5 shows how the basic principles of community schools drive the development of a collaborative leadership structure that enables local leaders to carry out a set of key functions that leads to two results:

- (1) An effective, scaled-up system of community schools
- (2) Improvements in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Both sets of results are mutually reinforcing—a growing and more effective system serves more children, schools, and families and produces results; in turn, the results set the foundation for further expansion, sustainability, and even greater results over the long term.

Part Three presents a 6-stage process for use by communities in systematically achieving the benchmarks and building the capacity needed to scale up community schools.

Figure 5. Building a Scaled-Up System of Community Schools



PART THREE: HOW TO SCALE UP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS EFFECTIVELY: A 6-STAGE STRATEGY

Drawing on the experience of many community schools initiatives over nearly two decades, Part Three outlines a process to create an initiative with the wide-ranging capacities needed to create a scaled-up system of community schools. It introduces a 6-stage spiraling process for moving toward a scaled-up system (see Figure 6).

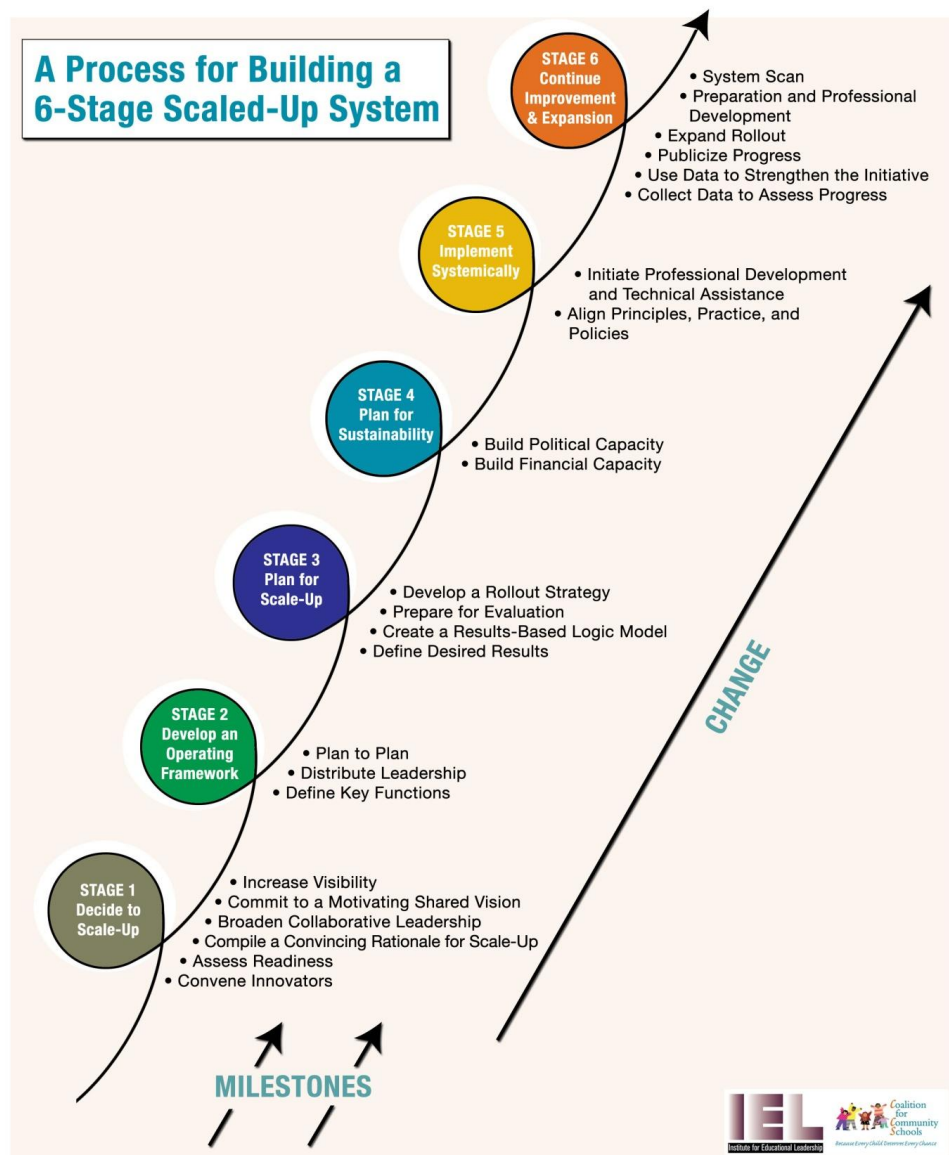
Rather than providing a rigid formula or lockstep set of requirements, the Scale-Up Spiral helps school systems and communities at many different starting points begin building collaborative leadership and functional capacity—while staying focused on long-term results.

Each stage of the spiral outlines a set of milestones that, according to experience, community schools

partners will likely need to achieve in order to build a scaled-up system. The sequence can help community leaders see at what stage they are initiating the process and determine what they must do to keep moving forward.

In broad terms, partners come together to build a shared vision, develop a plan, take action, and then revise, improve, expand, and sustain their efforts. This approach is familiar to people who

Figure 6. A Process for Building a Scaled-Up System



have already worked to develop a single community school as well as to those organizing a number of community schools within a school district or across several districts serving a local jurisdiction.

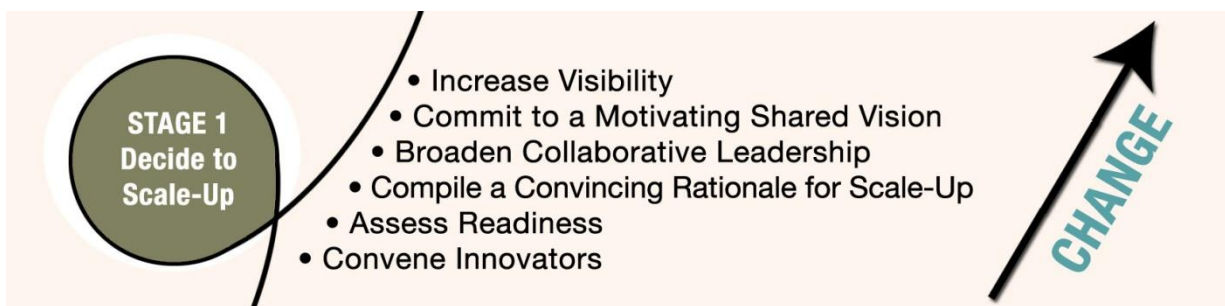
The spiral acknowledges what community schools leaders know well; that is, systems change is not linear. School and partner efforts move back and forth across stages and milestones as circumstances dictate, revisiting earlier stages while moving forward. The spiral also moves upward rather than just in a circle. The upward movement suggests that community schools are always improving their performance, learning from experience, and attaining better outcomes for children and youth—not just doing the same thing over and over.

The “big picture” purpose of upward movement is, of course, to create a scaled-up system characterized by shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability—with the capacity to improve results for large numbers of children, families, schools, and communities.

Here is an outline of each stage:

- An **Overview** lists major milestones, summarizes the characteristics of the stage, and suggests how that stage relates to building a more effective system.
- **More on Milestones** offers general guidance for approaching each milestone. Rather than providing step-by-step instructions that might suit some communities but not others, it recognizes that every community’s political, economic, and social context is unique.
- **Stories from the Field** provide some of the experiences, challenges, and solutions on which the stages are based.
- **How You Know If You Are Making Progress** outlines benchmarks to help leaders at the community and school-site levels as well as intermediary entities track their capacity across key functions.
- **Pitfalls** call attention to common missteps that can derail an initiative.

STAGE 1: DECIDE TO SCALE UP



Overview

Stage 1 begins to develop the first characteristic of effective scale-up: a shift in ownership and activity across several functions, including leadership development, data collection, alignment of shared goals, and efforts to build broad community engagement. At the end of Stage 1, an initiative emerges with shared ownership, a motivating shared vision, and growing capacity to broaden community support.

Initially, a small group of innovators interested in expanding community schools—citizens, funders, school leaders, state and local policymakers, participants in similar community initiatives, and providers—comes together to ask, What is our community’s capacity to launch a successful scale-up effort? To evaluate community readiness, the innovators need to share personal, community-based, and organizational knowledge. Their conversations create learning communities in which innovators from a variety of sectors engage as equals—despite differences in the types of authority and resources they command. Based on their findings, the innovators develop a rationale for scale-up and use their contacts and talking points to recruit additional stakeholders.

As the initial group of innovators expands, new participants get to know each other and share

knowledge and their dreams of what a system of community schools might look like. They visit local community schools or jurisdictions where community schools are beginning to scale up. They consider how a commitment to scale-up is likely to affect their personal and organizational interests. Eventually, the group reaches agreement on a broad vision for scale-up. The initiative goes public with its vision by developing a marketable brand and using local success stories to broadcast the idea of community schools and deepen community knowledge and support.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Convene Innovators

Some things to think about:

Innovators are people who see the value in a new idea and take the lead in helping others see its advantages. School superintendents, United Way and other non-profit officials, community leaders, government representatives, members of faith communities, college and university educators, and participants in similar initiatives are just some of the people who have led the way in the initiatives profiled in Part Three. Innovators also may be mid-level staff in various organizations who see the value of community schools and want to promote the concept to organizational leaders.

In many communities, innovators may already have worked together to develop one or more community schools or other collaborative efforts. In other cases, they will start from scratch. It is helpful to engage people who demonstrate the following:

- A sense of urgency that communities need to do more to help children succeed
- An ability to see the glass half-full rather than half-empty
- A facility for working with others
- Openness to new ideas

Provide an “open mike” for innovators to vent concerns about school outcomes. Brainstorm ideas about expanding community schools. Participants need an opportunity to get to know each other and to begin thinking not only about what their community needs but also about how they can work together. To build a strong foundation for future scale-up efforts, it is important to look for ways to:

- **Share leadership.** Take turns hosting and facilitating each meeting. Make sure that all participants, including those who cannot tap organizational resources, have an opportunity to share leadership roles. Anticipate any special costs and discuss an equitable way to meet them. Assure participants that, at this stage, no long-term commitment is required.
- **Broaden perspectives.** Organize field trips to community schools, show videos about community schools, and invite students, staff, parents, and others to talk about the changes they envision. Encourage stakeholders to share personal and organizational

stories about why community schools and scale-up interest them.

- **Dream big.** Ask a variety of big-picture questions. What would I want a full-fledged system of community schools in my community to look like? What might some of the possible results be? The idea is to generate enthusiasm and to think as broadly and expansively as possible.
- **Acknowledge self-interest.** Throughout the early stages, participants—including school districts—need to voice their concerns about community schools, recognize their advantages, and work through both personal and organizational costs and benefits. Separate, facilitated conversations at the site, organizational, and system levels may make it easier for stakeholders to speak candidly.
- **Encourage honest, shared exploration.** Look for common ground, but disclose concerns. Most concerns will not be deal breakers, and many will be resolved as participants continue to share information. Fully voicing any remaining concerns—and keeping them on the group’s radar screen—will help manage any potentially negative effects.

NOTE: Change starts with leadership and vision, not with money. Participants may take turns hosting conversations and providing facilitators if needed. They have the knowledge and experience to help make their case. While innovators need to be alert to possible funding streams, they do not need to concern themselves primarily with finances at this stage. The absence of funding does not provide an excuse to say “we can’t do this.”

THE CHICAGO CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Polk Bros. Foundation led the way in community schools development in Chicago, funding three pilot sites in 1996 with encouraging results. When Arne Duncan became CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, the Polk Bros. Foundation, with the support of other funders, played a lead role in convening a group of philanthropic and community leaders to convince Duncan to scale up the community schools strategy. Together, they committed to the Chicago Campaign to Expand Community Schools to organize 100 community schools in Chicago over a seven-year period. A group of foundations underwrote the initial planning and development work and funded individual community schools; the school system matched city funds to support the first 38 schools. The campaign achieved its seven-year goal; today, Chicago boasts over 140 community schools. Following on the heels of the Chicago Campaign, the Federation for Community Schools, an Illinois collaboration, was organized to advocate for community schools across Illinois.

- **Acknowledge power differentials.** Differences in relative power, expectations, and expertise among partners represent a major hurdle for many collaborative efforts. Anticipate these differences and begin early to mitigate them.

While sustainable community schools strategies inevitably demand leadership from several organizations and agencies, they can begin with the vision of an individual superintendent or other community leader. Finding and engaging that leader can be the work of community schools advocates at different levels, as demonstrated by experience in Chicago.

Milestone #2: Assess Readiness

Some things to think about:

A main objective of Stage 1 is to determine your community's initial readiness for scale-up and to identify areas of strength and weakness. To what extent can the scale-up effort draw on the strategic leadership, existing infrastructure and management functions, technical and financial resources, staff, and networks of other groups

and agencies? Are people ready for change? Pay attention to both the external environment in which scale-up will occur and the internal, organizational environments that will influence the direction and energy of scale-up efforts.

Know what is involved. A systemic community schools expansion is no small undertaking. Take time to consider the characteristics of effective scale-up presented in Part Two so that all participants have a realistic view of what is involved. Upfront agreement on the importance of each characteristic will make it easier for members to work together in succeeding stages.

Gather the facts. The “Assessing Readiness: Questions to Help You Get Started” box can help guide conversations and evaluate readiness. Assessments should be honest, confidential, and extend over several sessions. Reasonable give and take should be encouraged so that everyone can accept the group's answers. However, answers need not be exhaustive, and it is not necessary to delve into issues that address organizational costs and conflicting ideas about how to move forward. The same topics of leadership, commitment,

Assessing Readiness: Questions to Help You Start

- **What's the need?** What do the data (disaggregated by race, gender, school district, and neighborhood) say about children's readiness for school and their performance in school? Does performance vary across the community?
- **Demographic shifts.** What do recent data reveal about the changing face of the student population in your school district? Are you ready for change?
- **Current community schools activity.** How many schools in your district define themselves as a community school or by some similar name? Can you identify community partners already working with schools that may participate in a community schools scale-up?
- **What's working?** In what ways have existing schools succeeded? What would other schools like to replicate?
- **Leadership and constituency.** To what extent are high-level leaders in the district and in the public, private, and non-profit sectors aware of community schools? What constituent and special interest groups could be mobilized to encourage district-wide support? Are there individual school board members or other local elected officials who might be especially responsive to the community schools approach?
- **School system capacity and commitment.** Does your district encourage creativity, support innovation, and seek external resources? Does it have a policy governing relationships with community partners? How is the district organized to connect with community partners? Does your district have an office of community partnerships?
- **Collaborative strength.** What has been your district's and community's involvement in collaborative initiatives? Have the efforts been positive, lasting? Which of the initiatives still exist? Could they help convene a community schools conversation?
- **Related initiatives.** What groups in the community are engaged in work related to community schools? Is there a P-20 Council, a mayor's cabinet or cross-sector group, or an after-school, school-based health clinic, mental health clinic, mentoring, or other type of programmatic network? How might they be a resource for a community schools strategy?
- **Political and economic context.** What conditions in your community might argue for the development of a community school? How can you highlight the benefits of community schools to address the realities of your current situation?

and other characteristics of a sustainable system will be considered in more depth as the scale-up process evolves.

Evaluate your findings. Do the facts point to sufficient community desire and organizational capacity to build a large-scale system of community schools? If not, look at the areas in which capacity seems weakest and consider steps that could improve readiness in those

areas. If the current political and economic context is not favorable, consider how you might keep interest alive until the environment changes. The profiles in Part Four show how some communities formulated plans to move forward.

EXPANDING INTENTIONALLY

The COMPASS community schools initiative in Pennsylvania's Greater Lehigh Valley spans two counties and three school districts and serves 12 schools. Functioning as an intermediary, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley works with several lead agencies and has built partnerships with leaders in the business community, medical/health community, local family centers, preschools and daycare centers, after-school programs, and higher education community service departments, among others. Nearby districts—both urban and rural—have expressed interest in making similar community services available in their schools. The United Way chapter and its partners are excited about the possibility of sizeable expansion. At the same time, they realize that they need to expand intentionally and assess their own readiness before they launch a regional scale-up. Are the appropriate people at the table? What new challenges will arise with implementation in rural areas? What commitments are school districts willing to make? What changes in leadership need to be addressed? Partners are looking at these issues and taking appropriate steps. For example, to encourage continuing commitment in a district that will be hiring a new superintendent, community schools leaders met with school board members to suggest questions to ask candidates in order to evaluate their support for community schools expansion.

ALIGNING WITH REFORM INITIATIVES

The emergence of the Providence (Rhode Island) Full-Service Schools Initiative is partly the result of an effort to build on and connect with five ongoing initiatives. Between 2001 and 2007, the United Way's Community School-RI initiative funded four middle school demonstrations in four Rhode Island cities. Supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Opportunity Zones (COZ) provide families with improved access to services in and near schools. The Afterzones Initiative, led by the Providence Afterschool Alliance, has helped build a citywide system to support and sustain high-quality after-school programs, and, since 2000, the Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative has worked to expand family economic and early grade school success in three Providence neighborhoods. In response to these initiatives, the Providence Public Schools crafted its full-service community schools strategy and started with funding from a federal Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grant in partnership with local community-based organization Dorcas Place Family Services.

Now that the superintendent of the Providence Public Schools (PPS) has hired Rebecca Boxx, former Dorcas Place program director, as the director of Full-Service Community Schools for PPS, Boxx is drawing on her Dorcas Place experience to develop a comprehensive and sustainable community schools strategy. She is developing institutional buy-in from district leaders, engaging leaders from related initiatives, and working through the Mayor's Cabinet, which brings together leaders of several agencies and institutions.

CONVERGING IDEAS

In 1998, elected and community leaders in Multnomah County, Oregon, were searching for ways to address critical issues and rebuild the fabric of the county's communities. A Community Building Initiative convened by the County with representatives from the city of Portland, the state, and business and community organizations articulated two clear goals: supporting education and improving the delivery of resources for students and their families. At the same time, parallel ideas were emerging in a city-led After-School Cabinet and from the community itself, as several school principals were opening their doors to community partners and advocating for public support of promising efforts.

With the convergence of ideas from different constituencies, the various leaders and innovators created a joint committee across the two groups in order to harmonize plans in the design of a single shared model. After research, visits to other cities, and much discussion, the leaders agreed to a community schools strategy as the most advisable way to address community building and after-school risk concerns. Thus, what is now a 60-site community school effort involving six school districts was born. The city and county invested public dollars in community schools as a vehicle to further their own missions, and leaders from the Community Building Initiative Sponsor Group became the core leadership group that drove the development of the first eight SUN Community Schools.

The initial phase of the SUN Community Schools gained the considerable support of policymakers, principals, and parents. Demand for additional community schools grew rapidly. Despite tough financial times, local leaders began to look to expand the effort. In the first few years, the number of sites grew from 8 to 19 through grants and alignment of similar school-based efforts into the community schools model. On the county end, a thorough analysis and planning exercise in 2002–2003 led leaders to conclude that it would be more effective and efficient to redirect existing funds allocated to fragmented family and youth programs into one aligned service system. The shift was part of a comprehensive retooling of the county's youth and family service system into the SUN Service System, with community schools at the heart of that system. That planning effort set the stage for the phase-in of an additional 41 SUN Community Schools over the past eight years.

Milestone #3: Compile a Convincing Rationale for Scale-Up

Some things to think about:

If the facts suggest that your community is ready for scale-up, compile your findings into a series of talking points or other presentations for use in convincing others of the merits of community schools. Try to convey not only the facts but also the shared beliefs and attitudes about community schools. Refer to the principles of community schools, the conditions for learning outlined in Part One, the rationale put forth by the Coalition for Community Schools, and the experience of other communities.

Presentations need not be lengthy or “slick,” but they must be coherent and compelling if they are to attract new participants. The case for scaling up community schools must:

Develop a clear and succinct rationale for community schools as an innovation that works. The information in this guide can help you explain the rationale for community schools and how they work.

Highlight ongoing work at schools. It is likely that the presence of a community school in your area has fueled your interest. Use that experience and the voices of principals, teachers, community partners, students, and families to help make the case.

Make the case attractive. Your talking points should describe how scaling up community schools meets each of the following tests for a successful innovation:^{xx}

- **Advantages.** The community will benefit along several dimensions.
- **Compatibility.** Changes will be compatible with public education’s core mission and values.

- **Simplicity.** The ideas underlying community schools are easy to understand.
- **Try-ability.** Community schools lend themselves to phased-in implementation.
- **Observability.** Positive results are visible.

You may want to refine the above list as you more fully develop your scale-up vision and phase in the community schools strategy, drawing in new champions and building broad community support.

Show that now is the time for scale-up. Use the facts you have gathered to assess both internal and external readiness.

Milestone #4: Broaden Collaborative Leadership

Some things to think about:

Reach out. Given that adoption of the community schools strategy is a whole-community, system-wide undertaking, innovators need to expand and strengthen the leadership base of their scale-up initiative. Participants need time to build trusting relationships with the people they are most likely to influence.

- **Use existing peer relationships.** Engage colleagues in your own organizations or neighborhoods and/or peers in other organizations. Identify colleagues whose community standing and resources can strengthen your collaborative work.
- **Engage school leaders.** Although schools are only one partner in a scale-up initiative, they are to a large degree first among equals. Seek out potential advocates and major players at the district and site levels, including

influential parents, teachers, support personnel, and union members.

- **Reach out to families.** Recruit organizations that represent families, including education organizing groups, grass-roots neighborhood groups, parent universities, and PTAs.
- **Seek out other collaborative efforts focused on improving community conditions.** Scope out stakeholders in public, non-profit, faith-based, and collaborative initiatives to determine if their objectives for health, housing, economic development, workforce training, and youth development and family support complement the scale-up initiative. Involve early childhood initiatives as well as service learning and after-school initiatives.
- **Look for leaders of other key institutions.** United Way chapters, local governments, higher education policymakers, major CBOs, and other organizations can influence community decision makers.
- **Do not overlook the business community.** The expertise, resources, and political support of corporate champions can be invaluable.
- **Keep trying!** Do not let “skeptics” and “laggards” derail the initiative. Constituency building is an ongoing process. Continue to recruit newcomers.

Build internal relationships. The commitment to shared ownership that characterizes effective scale-up begins in Stage 1. Continue to build trust and shared understanding as the group of innovators expands. It is important to recognize, however, that the sense of urgency and degree of optimism may not be uniform within the group. Therefore, make explicit efforts to air concerns by:

- ❖ Meeting regularly
- ❖ Sharing leadership
- ❖ Visiting community schools
- ❖ Dreaming big
- ❖ Acknowledging self-interest
- ❖ Encouraging honest, shared exploration

What’s in It for Us?

- Participants should have a clear sense of how involvement in community schools scale-up can support their professional and organizational goals. For *individuals*, how might participation strengthen their personal networks, build skills, and provide leadership opportunities?
- For *schools*, what district-wide, cross-system benefits and efficiencies are possible when a large number of schools and partners work toward shared goals?
- For *other participants*, how does scale-up make sense given their respective organizations’ mission and vision? Is there a close fit? What conflicts, if any, might arise with existing commitments? How might participation increase organizations’ operational opportunities and build internal capacity? What opportunity costs might be involved?

LOCALLY FOCUSED EVENTS FOR SCALE-UP

Leaders from Lincoln, Nebraska, directly experienced the benefits of learning from other community schools. Early in Lincoln's community schools planning process, a group of about 60 leaders—including the superintendent, mayor, and others—visited Kansas City to learn about its community schools initiative. "Trips are a great way to get people to buy in to an idea. Also, when you travel together you bond around a shared experience. When you get back home you know your team better and you talk about how you can make the work we're doing better," said Cathie Petsch, co-coordinator of the Lincoln Community Learning Centers. She sees tremendous value in meeting people involved in similar work in different communities. "You learn so much from each other and use each other as resources and sounding boards."

AVOIDING DUPLICATIVE LEADERSHIP COALITIONS

When Tom Brady, superintendent of the Providence Public Schools, decided to scale up community schools, he recognized that he needed someone inside the system who would embody the system's commitment to engaging with the community. It was then that he hired Rebecca Boxx. Building on related initiatives in Providence, including the highly regarded Providence After School Alliance and Promise Neighborhood, Boxx decided to work through an emerging interagency cabinet organized by then-Mayor David Ciciline. Current Mayor Angel Taveras has retained the cabinet, which, among other benefits, provides the community schools strategy with direct connections to major institutions. As a leadership group, the cabinet helps guide the strategy and mobilize the resources and political will of a variety of organizations.

Milestone #5: Commit to a Motivating Shared Vision

Some things to think about:

“At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, ‘What do we want to create?’ . . . [A] shared vision is a picture that everyone in the company [enterprise] carries in their heads and hearts.”

(Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*)

Participants in the scale-up initiative have imagined and dreamed together about what a system of community schools can accomplish. Now, they need to commit to a broad vision of the system of community schools they will build together, and they must express that vision in easy-to-understand words. Much more than a writing exercise, the vision embraces the ideas and commitments that fuel creation of the scaled-up system. It provides the touchstone that the initiative must regularly revisit to make certain that it remains true to its mission while moving toward the results and indicators to be specified in Stage 3. To help you distill a powerful and motivating statement of purpose, refer to the talking points you developed earlier. Such a vision statement might reflect the following:

- The school system’s mission to educate **all** students successfully
- Community partners’ commitment to share accountability with the school system
- A scaled-up system of community schools as the building blocks of a community in which every child learns every day

With your vision carefully crafted, what was once an exploratory group is ready to emerge as a full-fledged initiative. Participants become partners. The practical details of how to implement the vision will be developed as the initiative continues its work in subsequent stages.

Milestone #6: Increase Visibility

Some things to think about:

By now, your initiative has developed a motivating vision and a commitment to shared ownership, but any scale-up effort needs a community-wide base of support and strong leadership. Now is the time to start promoting the benefits of scale-up to a broad set of constituencies throughout the community. Consider ways to:

- **Promote existing community schools.** Many communities interested in scale-up may already operate one or more community schools. Use what the Macarthur Foundation calls a “fast start approach” by selling the community schools idea to a larger audience within stakeholder organizations and publicizing the success of existing community schools to the broader community.
- **Use media contacts.** Request interviews on local radio talk shows, speak at local civic organizations, and invite press contacts to visit a community school.
- **Arrange visits to existing community schools.** When people see community schools in action, they begin to understand their power and potential. Organize and publicize site visits to community schools for potential champions of the community schools concept. Talk about what community

schools could offer if available on a larger scale.

- **Create “brand awareness.”** The larger community must recognize and identify with the scale-up initiative. Partners in Portland’s SUN Initiative learned early that distilling the group’s vision into an easily recognized name and logo not only increased visibility but that the process of finding a name also built ownership at all levels.
- **Think regionally.** Efforts to increase visibility within a region or a locality can pay off by, for example, connecting your initiative to other initiatives from which you can learn, building peer- to-peer networks, and sharing the cost of technical assistance with or directly linking it to system- wide scale-up. As the experience of Pennsylvania’s Greater Lehigh Valley attests, state partners can be particularly helpful in developing regional visibility.

EVERYTHING IN A NAME

In Multnomah County, Oregon, community school leaders wrestled for months to come up with a name that would set their initiative apart from other school partnership projects. Finally, they decided to ask the County Youth Advisory Council to suggest a name. And thus Schools Uniting Neighborhoods was born, with the easy-to-remember acronym SUN Schools. The name succinctly captures the shared vision of the initiative and suggests potential and optimism. According to Diana Hall, program supervisor, this unique identifier has been pivotal in building community awareness and broad-based sustained support. Though everyone may not know what SUN stands for, most people know what it means—a source of support and positive experiences for young people, communities, and families.

STATE SUPPORT FOR SCALE-UP

State entities can play an important role in convening partners and developing strategies to build support for community schools expansion. A sold-out, day-long retreat organized in 2009 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in partnership with the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and the Coalition for Community Schools, brought together a diverse group of school and community partners from across the state to learn how to begin to scale up community schools. Organizers reached out to school district personnel, CBOs, public agencies, teachers, higher education faculty and administrators, child care agencies, and state children’s cabinet members. A keynote address by the Pennsylvania’s Secretary of Education was followed by a panel of local school superintendents and community leaders who explained why and how community schools are part of their core district agenda. The retreat helped participants see community schools in action and visualize the possibility of change in their own communities. Equally important, it reinforced local leaders’ commitment to strengthening and expanding community schools.

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

At the end of Stage 1, look for these benchmarks of progress in key functions:

Stage 1: Decide to Scale Up			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership	☐ An initiative is established that creates organized opportunities to meet, facilitates discussions, forges relationships, and provides continuous opportunities for feedback and reflection.		
Results-Based Vision	☐ A convincing, evidence- based rationale for scale-up is clearly articulated. ☐ A clear and inspiring vision for a scaled-up system drives the initiative.		
Data and Evaluation	☐ Partners use data to inform their decision to move forward.		
Finance and Resource Development			
Alignment and Integration	☐ The initiative collaborates with other community reform initiatives working to achieve similar goals.		

Stage 1: Decide to Scale Up

	Community	Intermediary	Site
Supportive Policy			
Professional Development and Technical Assistance	☐ Partners participate in site visits, community forums, and other opportunities designed to familiarize them with the principles and practices of community schools, outline the assumptions and expectations of community-wide and site partners, and build common ground across the initiative.		
Broad Community Engagement	☐ The system-wide initiative's name and logo are recognized and used throughout the community. ☐ Communication with the public occurs regularly through open meetings, social networking sites, television and radio spots, newsletters, flyers, posters, and so forth. ☐ Open meetings present community-wide data and invite feedback. ☐ Site visits to community schools for elected officials and potential partners as well as for initiative leaders, family members, and residents are well attended and designed to build community		

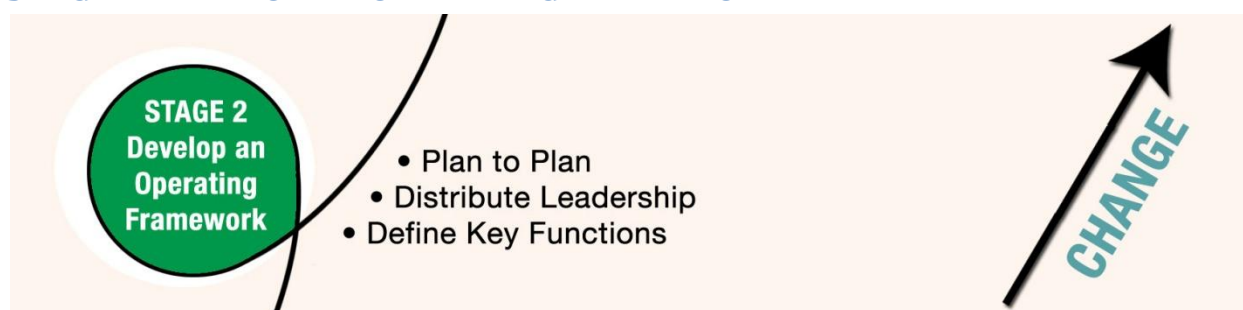
Stage 1: Decide to Scale Up

	Community	Intermediary	Site
	support. ☐ Two-way communication with state and federal officials is ongoing.		

Pitfalls

- ❖ Not taking the time to scan the environment to see what else is happening that could support or derail a community schools strategy.
- ❖ Failing to reach out to key leaders of other collaborative efforts whose assets are vital to the success of the community schools scale-up effort.
- ❖ Overlooking what is already happening in particular schools that could demonstrate the power of a scaled-up system of community schools.
- ❖ Neglecting the value of a powerful vision for mobilizing the entire community.
- ❖ Not being transparent about the work and aggressively seeking out additional stakeholders.

STAGE 2: DEVELOP AN OPERATING FRAMEWORK



Overview

In **Stage 2**, the focus shifts to the **shared ownership** of a scaled-up community schools system. Community schools initiatives are organized in many ways (as demonstrated in Part Four), but their basic infrastructure typically connects community-wide and site activities through an intermediary responsible for planning, management, and coordination. Using the **Collaborative Leadership Framework** presented in Part Two as a guide, school and community partners focus on developing strategic leadership and a multilevel communication and accountability structure. Partners discuss how to meet the future needs of the initiative's core functions and begin to clarify roles and responsibilities of community-wide and site leaders. They also start to plan for intermediary management and coordination.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Define Key Functions

Some things to think about:

Clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms. In Stage 1, policymaking partners began to create the context for change. Now, new questions arise. Who should do what? By when? The **Collaborative Leadership Framework** in Part Two describes the partners and functions that,

according to experience, are required as scale-up progresses. The framework will help you understand the sequence of actions needed for implementing your vision of a scaled-up system and then help you consider how best to get the job done.

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

To strengthen fidelity to the community schools collaborative model and capacity among site partners (particularly principals, non-profit lead agencies, and site coordinators), SUN developed an inter-organizational accountability checklist. The checklist emerged as an idea from the SUN Districts Council, an operations-level group that includes representatives of affected school systems, the city of Portland, and Multnomah County. As intermediary for SUN, the county designed the tool by drawing from existing partnership agreements and partner input. Such a tool has proven valuable in keeping the work of the SUN collaboration at all levels on track, ensuring progress toward its broader vision. The checklist focuses on items such as vision, operational structures, leadership integration, and communication.

Provide extended opportunities for partners to discuss key functions. Partners need to see that their participation is valued. They also need to agree to support activities in their respective areas of influence and expertise. A review of the comprehensive benchmark list organized by function and leadership level at the end of Part Two can help partners understand how an organizing framework can facilitate their work.

Milestone #2: Distribute Leadership

Some things to think about:

Assess and build leadership capacity. The initiative has already begun developing community-wide leadership. Now, look at ways of both furthering leadership at the community level and building functional capacity at the school-site and intermediary levels.

Community-Wide Leadership

Key role: Vision, oversight, and resource and policy development

Identify strengths and weaknesses. Consider whether your current community-wide leadership group represents the major players from all sectors of the community with access to the resources needed to influence public opinion. Ask if anyone else should be involved; make plans to engage those individuals. Does your current community-level leadership include the following:

- Influential public and private sector representatives granted decision-making authority by their respective institutions?
- Representatives of local and state government bodies and agencies, philanthropies and businesses, school districts, higher education institutions such as community colleges,

community- and faith-based organizations, and civic groups, along with student, family, and community leaders?

- Champions with access to information that can significantly affect scale-up planning and the ability use the information to sustain the initiative?

School Site–Level Leadership

Key role: Implementation, practice knowledge, data, and policy feedback

Include site leaders in scale-up planning.

Communities with already operating community schools enjoy the strong site leadership of principals, site coordinators, and site teams composed of school and agency staff, parents, students, and community members. It is important to involve these leaders in scale-up planning. Their input will ensure that the initiative's first steps reflect on-the-ground knowledge about what is needed and what works. In addition, it is helpful to draw in leaders from potential community school sites as rollout strategies are developed and sites for scale-up are identified. In Stage 5, those leaders will be responsible for implementing the initiative's work at community school sites and gathering the information needed to demonstrate progress. The development of early ownership builds later capacity.

Intermediary Entities

Key role: Management, strategic planning, communication, alignment, and feedback

Develop clear criteria for selecting an intermediary. Your initiative may already have developed mechanisms for managing, planning, and communicating across a relatively small

number of existing community schools. Does this arrangement provide the capacity needed to develop a substantially scaled-up system? The choice of a skilled intermediary depends on the following:

- **Legitimacy** in the community. Will the intermediary adhere to its stated mission and professional standards?^{xxi}
- **Credibility** as a change agent. Does the intermediary have a successful record in working on collaborative initiatives?
- **Community relationships**. Does the intermediary enjoy productive relationships with the school district and other partners?
- **Technical capacity**. Does the intermediary demonstrate strong administrative and management capacity in planning and evaluation, finance, resource development, marketing, and communication?
- **Staff**. Are the people who will do the work politically astute, flexible, and skilled in balancing top-down and bottom-up decision making?

Consider the range of possibilities for intermediary entities. Community schools initiatives have developed successful

intermediary relationships with a wide variety of entities, including the following:

- Community planning councils
- Higher education institutions
- Local education funds
- Local governments
- Non-profit organizations
- School districts
- United Way chapters

Working groups of mid-level managers redirected from the organizations noted above and other partner agencies may also serve as the intermediary—whether independently or as support to one of the aforementioned groups. Typically, mid-level managers are well-connected, multiskilled professionals who are empowered by a consortium of organizations to advance an initiative’s work. These managers bring their organizations’ unique perspectives and skills to the work and rapidly find and build on common ground. In the best cases, cross-agency management models encourage the type of collaborative relationships that community schools seek to promote. The successful involvement of intermediary entities requires the following:

Key Characteristics of Intermediary Leaders

A look at the characteristics of people who support community schools at the intermediary level suggests a set of criteria for consideration when filling this crucial capacity-building role. Intermediary leaders have an intuitive understanding of the “small p” political environment in which they operate and know how to support and move key leaders. They know how to articulate a clear message that focuses public interest on the initiative. Their eclectic backgrounds cut across education, social welfare, and community development, giving them an interdisciplinary perspective.

Some might say that intermediary leaders are “unique heroes.” The rise of community schools across the country belies this notion. Every community can point to boundary-crossing leaders with the right mix of political and technical skills to make community schools a reality.

- Clarity about which participants will be accountable for which functions and the steps to be taken to ensure that these responsibilities are a priority for the respective participants
- Sufficient involvement of school district leaders to align community schools activities with the other work of the school district

Be flexible. In the initial stages of developing a scale-up initiative, the arrangement for an intermediary may be informal, with one or two organizations taking the lead. Over time, community leaders may recast the arrangement to meet changing needs. Ultimately, regardless of the organization selected, the intermediary needs to earn the trust of community leaders.

ALIGNMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP NETWORKS

In Cincinnati, Ohio, district-level delivery of enrichment services is the work of partnership networks rather than of a single intermediary organization. A Cross-Boundary Leadership Team consists of leaders of networks concerned with a range of needs and opportunities from after-school and mental health services to physical health to tutoring and mentoring. To ensure coordination with the curriculum and increase efficiency, organizations interested in partnering with the public schools become part of a partnership network that responds to specific school needs. Site-based governance teams and resource coordinators at individual community schools work with the partnership networks to select the providers most suited to meet the needs and culture of a given school. Such an approach gives the provider “exclusive rights” to a school, prevents service overlap with other providers, and ensures that all schools have equitable access to services. The networks support implementation in line with school plans, provide ongoing quality control and professional development, and develop business plans and financing strategies to sustain their work. Some networks are staffed by volunteers; others have sought foundation support as non-profit entities.

COORDINATING PARTNERSHIPS AT THE SYSTEMS LEVEL

In Multnomah County, Oregon, the SUN Service System builds partnerships at three levels. A Coordinating Council provides system-level governance, guidance, policy recommendations, and support to the community schools initiative. It orchestrates policy alignment among agencies and organizations to reduce duplication of effort, streamlines service delivery, and strengthens impact. The Coordinating Council nurtures relationships with primary partners to keep them engaged, including local school boards, local municipalities, CBOs, and businesses. The development of the Coordinating Council grew out of an original group of city and county and school district leaders who realized that a more permanent and broad-based body was needed to deepen partnerships and guide the system’s development.

A midlevel operations team is “the glue,” says Diana Hall, program supervisor for the SUN Service System. When the composition of top-level leadership on the Coordinating Council changes, staff at the “operations level” – such as Peggy Samolinski and Diana Hall (employed by Multnomah County) and Mary Richardson (employed by the city of Portland)—provide and consistency to the work. They helped develop the initiative’s top-down and bottom-up alignment and communication by working closely with members of the Coordinating Council as well as with principals and SUN Community School managers at the site level (the third level). The third level identifies needs, develops partnership opportunities, and implements activities at individual schools.

Milestone #3: Plan to Plan

Some things to think about:

Identify resources for key planning functions.

Until now, resource needs have been minimal. As the initiative begins to take shape, however, implementation planning must begin in earnest. Individual partners need to identify, integrate, and align existing resources to support planning functions, although partners do not need to develop funding strategies to sustain a scaled-up system until later in Stage 4.

For now, if an intermediary is selected, partners must decide how to underwrite its work—whether by contributing services and redirecting or detailing staff, channeling funds through an existing funding stream, or seeking out a foundation grant.

Formalize intermediary role. A formal agreement needs to spell out the intermediary's role and responsibilities with respect to the

school district and other partners. The agreement should state how partners will oversee the intermediary's performance and, if necessary, either replace the intermediary or redirect its work in the event of unacceptable performance. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and interagency agreements should clarify how partners will share financial accountability.

Develop an initial work plan. In preparation for scale-up planning, the intermediary should develop a work plan for presentation to the partners for their approval. Planning will likely occur over several months. By now, initiative leaders should all agree on the importance of the key functions that will build and sustain their work, including the demonstration of results, the collection of useful and reliable data, and ongoing evaluation. These functions will play an important part in Stage Three.

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

Remember that the power of this 6-stage strategy comes from its iterative design. Each stage builds on the work of each preceding stage.

Although every stage brings a new set of benchmarks by which to measure progress, that does not mean that work in earlier stages is finished.

Continued attention to benchmarks from earlier stages develops capacity throughout the system. At the end of **Stage 2**, look for the following new benchmarks of progress in key functional areas.

Stage 2: Develop an Operating Framework			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership	☐ The collaborative leadership group has defined key roles, responsibilities, and communication methods. ☐ Accountability for achieving indicators in functional areas is distributed among partners. ☐ An intermediary entity with norms, experience, and capacity consistent with the initiative's vision agrees to provide planning, management, and coordination across the initiative. ☐ Partners continue to expand participation and develop trust and ownership in a community- wide vision.		
Results-Based Vision			
Data and Evaluation	☐ Data collection and evaluation are		

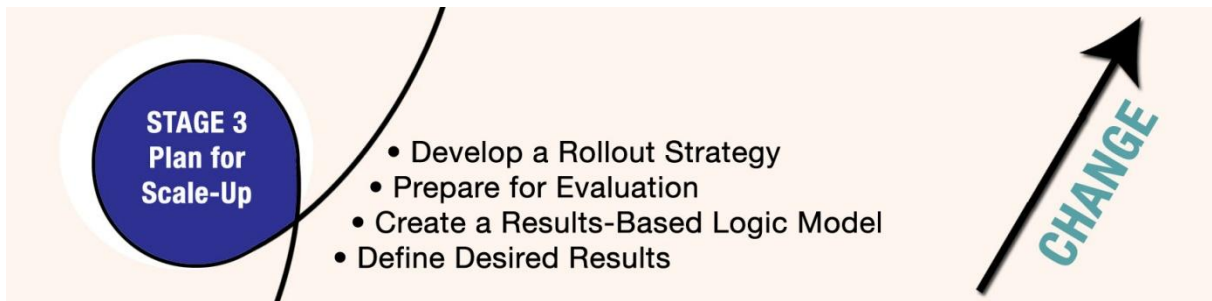
Stage 2: Develop an Operating Framework

	Community	Intermediary	Site
	included as budget line items.		
Finance and Resource Development	☐ Funding and resource arrangements for further planning are negotiated and MOUs established.		
Alignment and Integration			
Supportive Policy			
Professional Development and Technical Assistance			
Broad Community Engagement			

Pitfalls

- ❖ Putting too much leadership responsibility on a single individual or organization.
- ❖ Not thinking through how the same functions apply to various leadership levels even though functions will not receive equal attention at the same time.
- ❖ Ignoring the importance of defining benchmarks for partners' accountability to one another.
- ❖ Putting too much emphasis on dollars at the outset of planning and forgetting to look at how existing planning, research, and program development assets may be redirected to support the initiative.

STAGE 3: PLAN FOR SCALE-UP



Overview

Stage 3 begins to develop the second characteristic of effective scale-up—**system spread**. Activities across a variety of functions lay the groundwork for adequate depth of practice and sustainability in later stages.

Planning is based on the initiative’s broad vision of a scaled-up system of community schools and how that vision aligns with the school system’s strategic plan. To support both the implementation and evaluation of a scaled-up system of community schools, the initiative specifies clear results and develops a results-based logic model to show how inputs interact and lead to agreed-upon results. With the participation of site leaders, the initiative designs a rollout strategy to create a network of schools connected across the community by, for example, geography, economic need, or school level.

Stage 3 addresses virtually every functional area of the scale-up initiative. Collaborative leadership develops as sites become involved in the initiative and intermediaries step up their management and coordination efforts. Data collection, professional development, technical assistance and policy support, efforts to align and integrate efforts across the initiative, and community engagement are all in play.

One notable exception is finance. In Stage 2, partners took steps to fund an intermediary and underwrite Stage 3 planning costs; they also agreed to include costs for data and evaluation as an ongoing budget item. In Stage 3, the initiative temporarily leaves aside financial considerations in order to help partners concentrate on building a system designed to work. How to pay for such a system is, of course, vitally important. Stage 4 addresses the development of long-range financing and how to garner political support for sustained funding.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Define Desired Results

Some things to think about:

In **Stage 1**, stakeholders negotiated a broad vision for a scaled-up system of community schools. Now, they need to specify long-term results that address children and families, schools, and communities as well as the indicators used to measure progress toward results. In general terms, system results include the familiar characteristics of shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability, although partners must craft highly specific, measurable results. The Coalition’s **Results Framework** (Figure 7) spells out seven broad results linked to the conditions for learning.

Many communities develop similar lists that include the following:

- Children are ready to enter school.
- Children succeed academically.
- Students are actively involved in learning and in the community.
- Students are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy.
- Students live and learn in stable and supportive environments.
- Families are actively involved in children's education.
- Communities are desirable places to live.

Given the long-term nature of the results, it is essential to develop indicators to measure progress toward each result. Some results related to, for example, immunization rates, test scores, or school attendance rates are probably available through schools or community partner agencies. Other results, such as service delivery or parent attendance at adult education classes, are linked to other types of data collection. Initiatives may want to begin to structure interagency agreements needed for data sharing.

The challenge in specifying results is to be comprehensive without requiring the collection of an unwieldy mass of data. The overarching consideration is to determine which specific results bring schools and community partners together around a shared vision. For example, attendance and chronic absence affect the school, family, health, and student engagement dimensions.

USING RESULTS TO DRIVE PROGRAMMING

The Greater Lehigh Valley United Way COMPASS Community Schools initiative uses Results-Based Accountability planning to drive its work.¹ The approach to planning starts with the end in mind. What results does COMPASS want for children and youth? What indicators require measurement? Planners map backwards to develop programs and services to achieve results. Lehigh Valley finds the approach particularly useful because it leads people to think about who is responsible for a particular indicator and what organizations need to join forces to “turn the curve” in a positive direction on a particular measure. The Results Leadership Group provided training to selected COMPASS staff in planning systems. COMPASS Director Jill Pereira is a strong believer in results-based accountability and planning.

Figure 7. Results Framework

RESULTS	INDICATORS THAT ALIGN WITH EACH RESULT	
Children are ready to enter school	- Immunizations - More children with health insurance - Children in expected height and weight range for their age - Availability of early childhood education programs	- Attendance at early childhood education programs - Parents read to children - Vision, hearing, and dental status
Students succeed academically	- Reading on grade level by third grade - Daily attendance - Early chronic absenteeism - Tardiness - Truancy	- Standardized test scores - Teachers support students - Grades - Graduation rates - Dropout rates
Students are actively involved in learning and their community	- Students feel they belong in school - Availability of in-school and after-school programs - Students feel competent - Schools are open to community	- Attendance at in and after-school programs - Partnerships for service learning in the school/community - Post-secondary plans
Students are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally	- Asthma control - Vision, hearing, and dental status - Physical fitness	- Nutritional habits - Positive adult relationships - Positive peer relationships
Students live and learn in stable and supportive environments	- Students, staff, and families feel safe in school - Families provide basic needs	- Incidents of bullying - Reports of violence or weapons
Families are actively involved in their children's education	- Families support students' education at home - Family attendance at school-wide events and parent-teacher conferences - Family experiences with school-wide events and classes	- Family participation in school decision-making - Trust between faculty and families - Teacher attendance and turnover - Faculty believe they are an effective and competent team - Community-school partnerships
Communities are desirable places to live	- Employment and employability of residents and families served by the school - Student and families with health insurance	- Community mobility and stability - Juvenile Crime

Milestone #2: Create a Results-Based Logic Model

Some things to think about:

A results-based logic model will help you map the strategies your community will use to achieve its desired results. Also described as a theory of action or a theory of change, the logic model specifies the work you want your partners to accomplish. As with the previous milestone, partners should collaborate to identify the activities, supports, programs, and structural changes (e.g., extended school day) they want to pursue, along with the resources they can bring to the table to support new opportunities.

Creating a results-based logic model is a vital step in developing a community schools strategy and distinguishing community schools from other schools. In a typical school, partnerships, resources, and activities often emerge haphazardly.

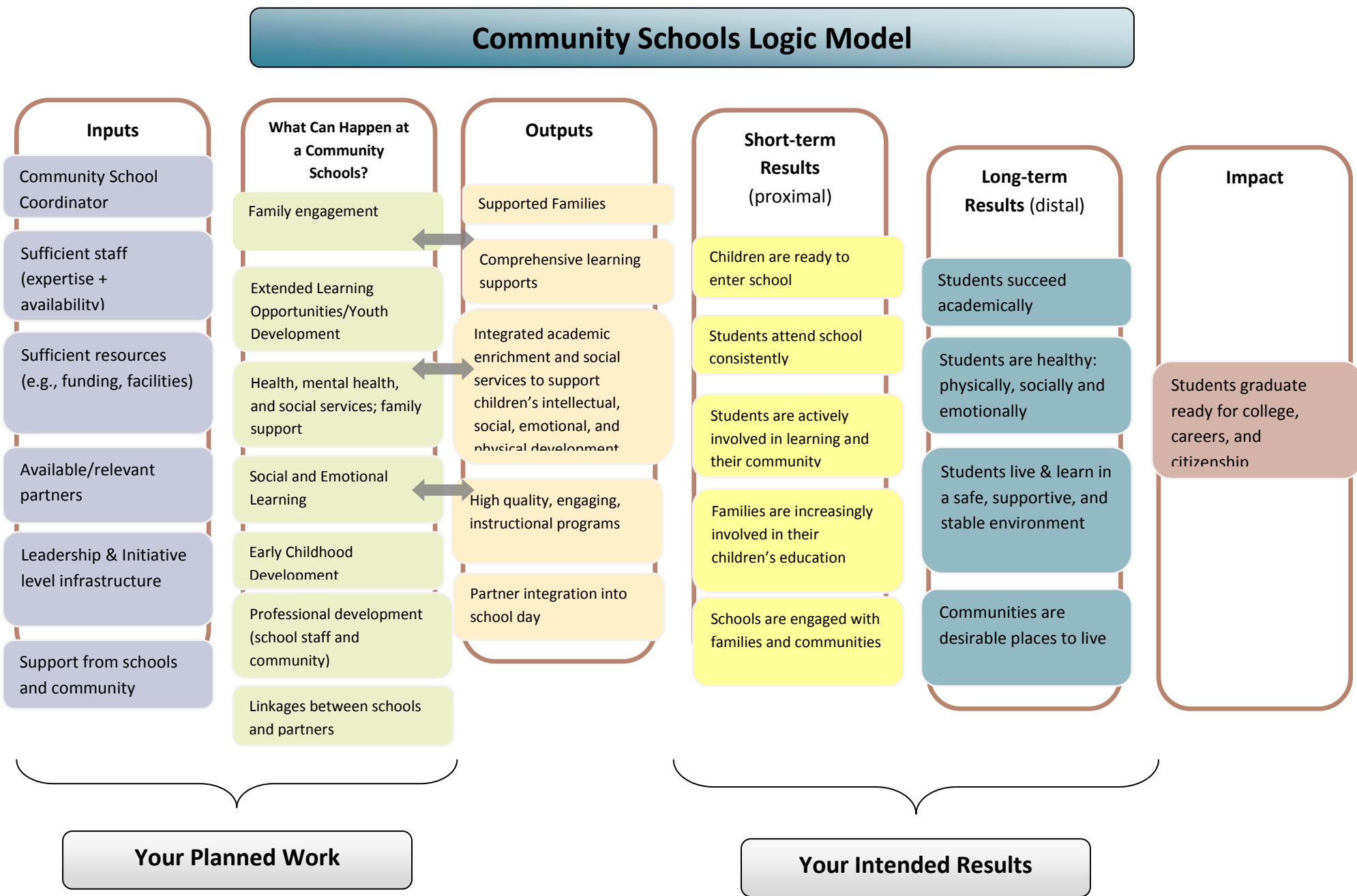
In a community school, partners organize themselves and their activities around a results-based logic model and build toward attaining specified results.

A results-based logic model guides planning, implementation, and evaluation by:

- Illustrating how a change in school conditions leads to interim results for students, families, and communities and how improvements lead to community-wide results
- Permitting new constituencies to understand how and why community schools work while defending against unrealistic demands for results by showing incremental achievement
- Graphically showing what types of activities show progress in which indicators and how continuing activity creates long-range results

The Coalition's **Results-Based Logic Model** provides an instructive example (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Community Schools Results-Based Logic Model



Milestone #3: Prepare for Evaluation

Some things to think about:

Make evaluation part of your planning.

Evaluation should not be the last consideration in a scale-up initiative; indeed, it should inform the effort from the outset. The Results Framework and Results-Based Logic Model provide the foundation for the evaluation.

Seek out technical assistance for the evaluation. Skilled technical assistance can help make sure that the Results-Based Logic Model meets the tests of a well constructed theory. Is it:

- **Plausible.** Does it make sense?
- **Workable.** Are the human, social, and economic resources available to achieve it?
- **Measurable.** Can we show progress and learn from it?^{xxii}

Early help from an experienced evaluator—someone from a partner’s research office, a local higher education institution, or third-party organization—builds in-house evaluation capacity, an essential function in managing an initiative’s work across networked schools.^{xxiii}

For example, the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative engaged a professor at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa to conduct its evaluation; Evansville, Indiana, has engaged an evaluator to assess the several programs in the district and community that support community schools.

Decide what information you need to collect.

How will you show progress toward indicators set forth in your results-based logic model? In addition to tracking indicators, your initiative should ask questions about its collaborative processes. Funders and researchers interested in identifying effective scale-up initiatives often encourage evaluation designs that focus on the following:^{xxiv}

- Participation—baseline information on age, gender, race/ethnicity, language, family structure, and so forth
- Degree of participation by students, families, and community members in various activities
- Internal and external conditions affecting student performance
- Impact across sites

DEVELOPING EVALUATION CAPACITY

In Evansville, Indiana, a “culture of evaluation” built on the principles of accountability, data-driven decision making, and continuous improvement has evolved with the city’s scale-up of its community schools initiative. Evaluation succeeds in Evansville because of leadership support, partnerships with external evaluation experts, and a department of the school district dedicated to evaluation and research.

Early on, a community partner with evaluation expertise volunteered to develop an evaluation protocol at Evansville’s first school site, Cedar Hall Elementary. The protocol focused on program evaluation and school-related indicators. Later, with the formation of a community-wide leadership structure called the School-Community Council and the community schools initiative’s expansion to 13 sites, the evaluation underwent redesign to look at all 13 schools. It added community-related indicators to school factors and examined the new council’s functional effectiveness. Finally, the school district’s full commitment to make every school a community school called for an evaluation to track alignment between the district’s school improvement plan and the “whole child” approach of community schools. Related work is underway on a Response Intervention Framework designed to increase social and emotional support to improve academic performance.

In addition to continuously refining its evaluation design, Evansville has significantly expanded its ability to use and share data. With a data warehouse that collects cross-district student information, Evansville tracks students within schools as they advance through the system. Rather than expecting partners to “fish” for data on their own, the district executed MOUs that stipulate the information requested by a partner and the justification for the request. Release forms for personal data are fully disclosed to parents before they are signed and then kept on file.

Milestone #4: Develop a Rollout Strategy

Some things to think about:

Decide on the focus, direction, and scope of site-level expansion. Eventually, a scaled-up system of community schools should spread up and out, both geographically and by grade level. Depending on available resources and needs assessment information, any or all of the following site selection criteria might apply:

- **Student need.** Poverty, low achievement, English as a second language, and other student concerns are likely to be primary considerations in every rollout strategy.
- **School readiness.** Schools that have already put in place many elements of a community school—willing leaders, strong partners, and staff dedicated to coordination—may provide the best opportunities for rapid scale-up.
- **High-needs neighborhood.** A focus on schools within a specific geographic area offers the opportunity to replicate “a community where learning happens”—neighborhood by neighborhood—according to need.
- **Grade level** (elementary, middle, high school). High-need sites that are linked by school level across the district or within neighborhoods provide opportunities for cross-school planning for curriculum and instruction aligned with community schools.
- **Existing connection to early childhood programs.** Linking schools that enjoy strong partnerships with early childhood providers ensures that children entering school are ready to learn and that relationships with parents are already strong—important

conditions that set the stage for higher student achievement in later grades.

- **Feeder pattern.** Rollout that begins in the early grades provides community school benefits to cohorts of children throughout their school careers, from elementary to middle to high school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD: A KEY PART OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SYSTEM

In Multnomah County, Oregon, community leaders believe that making connections with early childhood initiatives is an important part of a scaled-up community schools system. With “thinking money” from the Kellogg Foundation, Multnomah County is one of three communities working on ways to make strategic connections between community schools and families with very young children. A study team composed of representatives from Head Start, child care and early intervention initiatives, the public libraries, and other agencies and community partners is looking at how early childhood education and community schools are purposefully related and what practices and policies need to be in place to support a smooth transition from preschool into the elementary grades. One simple step has been the addition of a question on community school registration forms asking parents how many preschool-age children are at home. With that information, community school leaders can work with school staff to build supports for young children who are not yet in their school building but will be in future years.

Build a working budget for an individual community school. Community schools require a full-time community school coordinator and some flexible funds for attracting partners and supporting key positions. The expectation is that additional opportunities and supports will emerge from relationships with community partners and more efficient use of school resources. School districts provide space at no cost in the belief that schools are public facilities and that partners dedicated to the mission of the schools should not be charged for use of the facilities.

Chicago started with \$100,000 at each school; Multnomah County with \$110,000, plus a part-time case manager. Salaries for community schools coordinators should at least equal the salaries of starting teachers and be sufficient to attract candidates with substantial experience.

Develop a site selection process. To set the stage for success, the site selection process should ensure that prospective community schools demonstrate the basic leadership capacity for transformation into operating community schools. School data and partner knowledge, school visits, and conversations with principals, staff, parents, and teachers should inform the initial assessment. Some initiatives, such as Chicago’s Campaign to Expand Community Schools, have provided planning grants to interested schools; others have selected sites with a history of school and community partnerships. This is the time to begin engaging site leaders in continued planning for the implementation that will begin in Stage 5.

Select a site coordination approach. An important question for a community schools initiative is where to lodge responsibility for day-to-day management of school sites. Should

a community partner, often called a lead agency, assume primary responsibility? Should the school system assume primary responsibility? This important question raises issues of power, control, and vision; the answer depends largely on community context.

Considerations for site coordination. In recent years, community schools have typically relied on the community partner or “lead agency” approach to coordination. With this approach, a community partner, typically identified by the initiative with the concurrence of the school, hires and supervises a site coordinator in consultation with the school principal. Like an intermediary at the community level, a site-level lead agency is usually a well-known, experienced, and highly credible partner. Depending on its organizational mission—for example, community development, health care, youth development, or the arts—the lead agency shapes its unique vision in terms of its organizational resources, relationships, and expertise. Many lead agencies bring additional resources from their own organization to the community school and capture funds from public and private sources not otherwise available to schools.

The lead agency approach is often a natural choice when site coordination is funded by organizations (e.g., city and county governments and United Way chapters) that routinely work with community agencies and do not typically fund school systems. This approach offers the further advantage of demonstrating the school system’s ability to work with community partners as well as its commitment to community engagement, collaborative partnerships, and promotion of community schools.

It should be noted, however, that the process of building effective relationships between lead agencies and schools is not without challenges. Differences in culture, goals, staffing standards, and other factors can affect these relationships, but experience shows how to avoid and resolve issues:

- Involve the school principal in selection of the lead agency
- Include the school principal in selection of the community schools coordinator
- Secure agreement for the coordinator to serve on the internal school leadership team so that he or she is seen as central to the mission of the school
- Provide joint professional development for principals and coordinators
- Seek trouble-shooting assistance from the initiative's intermediary or other resource when tensions arise

While many community schools initiatives take a lead agency approach, some communities determine that the school system's direct management of a school site is preferable, particularly when community partners are unsuited to the lead agency role or direct school system oversight is likely to strengthen buy-in at the school site. Direct management also makes sense in communities such as Evansville, Indiana. In Evansville, the school district is deeply committed to community schools, community engagement, and collaboration. Lodging both the intermediary and lead agency roles within the district is deemed the most efficient way to spread, deepen, and sustain the expansion of community schools.

"A PERFECT PARTNERSHIP"

In Pennsylvania's Greater Lehigh Valley, the concept of community schools "fits perfectly for us," says Art Scott, president of Northampton Community College (NCC), a lead partner agency in the COMPASS initiative. He believes that community schools and community colleges share similar goals: to educate the workforce, improve quality of life, and ensure economic development. Therefore, participation is a win-win. "We want our buildings to be open 24-7, and we want community groups to use our facilities," he explains, because "we'll be able to provide better collegiate-level instruction if we understand better the families that we serve."¹ Accordingly, NCC is a lead partner agency at Fountain Hill Elementary, a school largely characterized by a recently arrived Latino population. NCC pays a portion of the community school coordinator's salary and benefits while the United Way covers a large share of the salary; the school district contributes to benefits. In addition, NCC has recently become the lead partner agency for the community school initiative in the rural Bangor Area School District. NCC is interested in increased enrollment in higher education among the rural district's population.

Deciding how best to provide site coordination in your community requires consideration of the following questions:

- Is capacity sufficient among potential lead agencies in your community to plan, manage, and evaluate school-site activities to ensure alignment with the community-wide initiative?
- What are the institutional concerns and preferences of initiative partners and potential local public and private funders?
- What message will the decision about site coordination send to community partners, families, and the broader public with respect to the school system's commitment to work in partnership with the community?
- Which approach is better suited to tapping grass-roots capacity and creating long-term political support for expanding and sustaining community schools?

A few examples follow:

- In Multnomah County, Oregon, when the city of Portland and the county decided to pursue a community schools approach, they believed strategically and politically that they could not give money directly to the school system for on-site management. The county historically has worked through contracted private non-profit agencies and community-based organizations. Instead, leaders adopted a model with a non-school lead agency at individual school sites—an approach that has resulted in strong and sustained cross-sector buy-in, a rich pool of expertise,

diversified funding, and strengthened community engagement.

- In Chicago, then-school CEO Arne Duncan recognized that CBOs had the expertise and resources needed by the school system. He therefore decided to fund CBOs to coordinate community schools and provided additional enrichment during scale-up of an initial pilot. Many of the community partners have brought valuable services and opportunities into the schools through their own fund-raising and community mobilization efforts.
- In Evansville, Indiana, the school system is the intermediary for the entire initiative and oversees day-to-day management of school sites. The structure of the school district's central office underscores the district's commitment to community schools and collaborative work. Most notably, an associate superintendent for families, schools and community partnerships, supported by a director of full-service community schools, coordinates the work of the initiative, which represents a "big table" of more than 70 partners.

Establish a timeframe for rollout. It is essential to specify the number of community schools that will be phased in and to determine the criteria by which individual schools will be eligible to receive scale-up resources and services (e.g., professional development and technical assistance). Phase-in may need to be adjusted later when a funding strategy is fully developed. At this point, however, it is important to focus on the design of an effective system rather than on its cost.

Multnomah County started with 8 pilot schools (sufficient to draw the attention of policymakers) and then scaled up to what is now 60 community schools.

Determine how to provide technical assistance at the site level. A certain amount of technical assistance will be needed to initiate scale-up at individual sites. Therefore, it is critical to identify the experts skilled in fostering collaborative arrangements. [National experts](#) can help build local capacity.

What It Takes to Be an Effective Community School Coordinator

Community school coordinators play a unique role. Ideally, they are by nature boundary-crossers. They are able to work in the school and the community and bridge the culture of each. They have the skills to reach in to teachers and other school staff and to reach out to families, residents, and community groups. They possess the planning and organizational ability to bring together school staff and partners to focus on results. No doubt, the job is challenging, but the emergence of community schools across the country suggests that the talent is out there. Here is the skill set to look for:

- Strong planning, coordination, and communication skills
- Political awareness
- Experience in several community sectors, including but not limited to schools
- Solid grounding in developmental theory and experiential learning
- The ability to see the “big picture” yet attend to details
- An ability to listen, connect people, and make things happen

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

By **Stage 3**, it should be obvious that community-wide leaders and intermediary entities address the same functional areas. Increasingly, the same will hold true for site leaders as well. For all three groups, however, their roles and responsibilities differ dramatically. Community-wide leaders are primarily responsible for vision, policy, and resource alignment. Intermediary entities are primarily responsible for planning, coordination, and management. Site leaders focus on site planning, implementation, and continuous improvement. The indicators by which each group can measure its progress focus on the same functional areas but reflect differences in roles and responsibilities.

At the end of **Stage 3**, look for these new indicators of progress in key functional areas.

Stage 3: Plan for Scale-Up			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership		☐ Staff convenes discussions among community and site leaders to ensure buy-in to the community - wide vision, results framework, and rollout strategy.	☐ Site leaders participate in planning for results frameworks and rollout strategies. ☐ Lead agencies and local partners establish relationships based on a shared vision.
Results-Based Vision	☐ A community-wide results and indicators framework is in place and used to track progress. ☐ A rollout strategy, including a plan and time line for selecting community schools, is in place.	☐ Staff guide the development of a results and indicators framework.	
Data and Evaluation	☐ Partners facilitate data sharing through interagency agreements and necessary policy change.	☐ Data-sharing agreements are negotiated to allow all partners to review school and community-wide data on agreed-upon results/indicators. ☐ Evaluation strategies are designed to	

Stage 3: Plan for Scale-Up

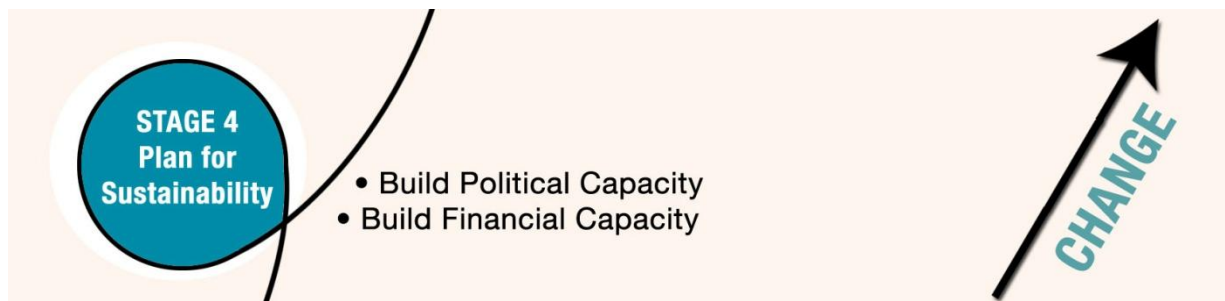
	Community	Intermediary	Site
		assess the systemic effectiveness of the initiative (creating a shift in ownership, spread, scale, and sustainability) as well as progress toward results for children, families, schools, and communities. ☐ Evaluation designs include comparison schools and show longitudinal trends to the extent practical.	
Finance and Resource Development			
Alignment and Integration	☐ Community partners participate in developing the school system's strategic plan. The school system's plan reflects the results framework. ☐ The results framework supports the school system's strategic plan.	☐ Conversations are convened to ensure that district school plans incorporate community schools principles as related to the results-based framework. ☐ RFPs and MOUs underscore the importance of alignment of resources to attain specified results.	
Supportive Policy			
Professional Development and			

Stage 3: Plan for Scale-Up			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Technical Assistance			
Broad Community Engagement			

Pitfalls

- Underestimating the importance of using results and related indicators to drive the work of the community schools initiative at the community and site levels.
- Saying “we will get to evaluation later” when everyone is looking for early data, even though such a response may be inappropriate..
- Lacking a clear set of criteria for the selection of potential community schools for communication to all stakeholders.
- Overlooking the importance of determining whether a community partner or the school coordinates community and school resources at the site level.

STAGE 4: PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Overview

By now, planners have translated their broad vision of a scaled-up system of community schools into a practical plan for rollout. Planning during **Stage 4** focuses on the fourth characteristic of effective scale-up—**sustainability**. The initiative looks closely at the financial, human, political, and social resources required to implement rollout and to sustain growth and development amid competing political demands. Financial and political support is essential to scale-up, and each depends on and promotes the other. When stakeholders are in full agreement on the need to achieve agreed upon results and the ability of community schools to achieve them; when the initiative ensures transparent accountability; and when the community is aware of and supports community school scale up, key policymakers are more inclined to look carefully at their existing resources and use them in different ways.

School and community partners must project the funding levels needed to scale up a system of community schools and support the initiative's continuing work. More specifically, stakeholders must develop a long-range financing plan to support community schools coordinators, identify partner resources, leverage additional funding, and align assets.

The rollout plan developed in Stage 3 may require revision in accordance with financial realities, but it should not undermine the major functions of the initiative.

At the same time, the initiative must build adequate political capacity to ensure policy and resource support for its work. Partners must marshal support within their respective organizations, including the school district, and continue to foster collaborative leadership and community engagement. Renewed efforts to build relationships with state and federal partners and with like-minded reform efforts must also continue. In addition, it is particularly important to assemble networks of champions to support scale-up efforts. All of these activities position the initiative for successful implementation in Stage 5 and for long-term sustainability.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Build Financial Capacity

Building the financial capacity of a community schools initiative poses three sets of challenges: the cost of planning and management at each school site; the cost of program and service delivery at each site; and costs to support the collaborative.

The Coalition report, ***Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success***, provides detailed examples of how some community schools have creatively funded their work and lists common federal funding sources.

Some things to think about:

Calculate costs for school-site planning and management. Calculation of these costs during development of the rollout strategy determines the number of schools in the initial scale-up effort. Being clear about the costs for community school coordinators is essential.

Calculate costs for programs and services. Most community schools make strategic use of existing resources provided by the school and community partners and draw on funds allocated from new grant programs. In particular, current school funding streams, e.g., Title I, School Improvement Grants, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, English Language Learners, and others, provide possible sources of funds, along with grants to community partners from various federal, state, and local agencies and local private sources, including United Way chapters and business.

Whatever the funding source(s), it is important to recognize that development of a comprehensive set of supports and opportunities takes time and requires a long-range plan to guide the leveraging and alignment of existing resources. It is unreasonable to expect a school-based health clinic or mental health counselor, for example, to be located in every school over the near term. Nonetheless, faith-based institutions, business and civic groups, garden clubs, and block clubs can offer community schools their assets in the form of human and social capital.

These organizations and their members are a vital part of the system of support that community schools must mobilize to support student success.

Be entrepreneurial. Encourage partners and community members to think outside the box.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

In Evansville, Indiana, one of the benefits of partnership has been the development of a bulk purchasing model. As a group, the school district, city and county government, and 70 local organizations now bid on and purchase copy paper, fuel for car pools, and other consumables. By joining together to purchase items in bulk, partners benefit from the most competitive prices and then direct the savings to the schools. The community-minded leadership of School Superintendent Vince Bertram was vital to tapping the power of group purchasing.

Support the collaborative leadership structure through intermediary services and other costs.

The costs related to building the initiative's capacity extend to all the key functions needed to develop a scaled-up system of community schools. Included are the cost of personnel and related assets redirected to support the collaborative leadership structure, e.g., planning, data systems, and professional development staff.

FINDING RESOURCES TO FUND COORDINATORS OVER TIME

Cincinnati uses a building-block approach to develop its community learning centers. As resources become available, it is putting in place various services through its partnership networks, e.g., school-based mental health services, school-based health clinics, and extended learning opportunities before and after school and during the summer. It is also adding resource coordinators as funds become available, with the aim of placing a coordinator in each school.

Currently, 44 of the district's 51 schools have full-time mental health counselors who provide direct services as well as broader support around mental health issues; there are 10 school-based health centers and 32 schools with aligned after-school programs. At this point, 28 resource coordinators are financed through an array of public and private funds, including support from the school district's Title I budget, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Community Learning Center Institute, and private donors.

BLENDING FUNDING STREAMS TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

The Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation is unique in directing all its federal funding streams (Title I, Safe Schools Healthy Students, Title III, 21st Century Community Learning Centers) to support its vision for community schools. Instead of relying on a system of individual grants, Superintendent Vince Bertram and Associate Superintendent for Family School and Community Partnerships Cathy Gray have blended the various federal funding streams into a single source to support their overarching goal. Their integrated approach is supplemented and supported by the integration of the opportunities and supports available through a wide array of community partners.

GOVERNMENT AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

The distinguishing trait of the SUN Community Schools initiative is the financial investment by local government—Multnomah County and the city of Portland, including Portland Parks and Recreation and the Portland Children's Levy. Together, they provided the large share of cash contributions—\$5.3 million in support of SUN Community Schools— in the 2010–2011 school year. Each school is able to fund a SUN site manager through a community partner and offers academic support along with family engagement opportunities. SUN site managers broker resources and service opportunities from an array of community partners.

Milestone #2: Build Political Capacity

Some things to think about:

Political capacity refers to the willingness and skills of people to take the action needed to achieve agreed-upon results—in this case, a scaled-up system of community schools. Stage 4 activities accelerate the growth of political capacity within schools and across neighborhoods.

Develop site teams, the core of site-level implementation. School-site teams must consider how the principles of community schools can help schools achieve their mission. If some school sites have not yet assembled site teams, the relevant principals and site leaders might benefit from assistance in organizing such a team. The participation of school and community partner staff, families, residents, and students builds personal, organizational, and neighborhood support for community schools. Members work to:

- Identify issues
- Select a set of priority results as their main focus
- Plan and implement activities aligned with the curriculum and school improvement plan in order to make measurable progress
- Revise their work for continuous improvement

Support activities that provide roles for families and community residents. The initiative's results-based logic model—and the tailored versions of the model to be developed by school sites in Stage 5— should specify activities that are designed to build on families' strengths and engage families in decision making about their child's learning. It is essential to tap networks in which parents and

community members are already connected (e.g., community organizing groups, faith-based organizations) and to seek new people and connections.

Listen more, talk less. Parents and residents bring to community schools an essential and diverse set of cultural and personal strengths, perspectives, and knowledge. Find ways for parents and community members to share what they know about their community and its challenges and to craft solutions that work for them. It is essential that community schools *not* replicate traditional parent education groups that tell parents what planners believe they need to know. Ultimately, parents and community members are the central players in advocacy efforts to scale up and sustain community schools. Policymakers will want to hear from them about how community schools are making the difference in their lives and the lives of their children.

Parent participation succeeds when it involves the following:

- Broad outreach
- Honest respect
- An open-door policy
- An emphasis on action

Develop champions. A scaled-up system of community schools needs a host of champions. School superintendents, United Way chapters, local government agencies and CBOs, principals and teachers, and community members are just some of the leaders who began their community schools work as innovators. Now viewed as champions, they can open minds and move the community.^{xxv}

In addition, other champions must be cultivated to ensure sustainability. Look for leaders at the community level—in the school system, higher education institutions, business and civic

organizations—and in neighborhoods—in family and community organizations and faith-based institutions. Often a personal experience or one-to-one contact with a community schools advocate can convince a potential champion about the merits of a scale-up initiative and draw that individual's participation in advancing community schools.

Champions are typically highly motivated self-starters, but not all champions have the time to participate in a new venture. The following approaches may prove useful in motivating champions to participate on an ad hoc basis and eventually become fully engaged in your initiative:

- Identify champions' skills, resources, and interests
- Specify what you need; potential champions can tell you how they can help
- Recognize the critical value of their efforts
- Provide feedback
- Ask for their observations and input
- Invite additional contributions

Reach out and communicate. Communicating with the leadership networks of the community schools initiative, maintaining contact with leaders of other institutions, and keeping the public apprised of progress are other essential elements of building political capacity. When Evansville decided to propose a major bond issue to fund its community schools initiative, it engaged the support of the entire community.

Effective strategies at every stage of the 6-point process involve carefully targeted communications:

- **Publish a brief newsletter.** Particularly at an initiative's outset, a newsletter is a simple and useful vehicle for describing the activities and achievements of community schools. Hard data lend themselves to future reports and stories.
- **Reach out to the media.** The local education reporter and the publisher of the newspaper and its editorial board will likely be interested in your story. Make your case clearly and passionately. Provide opportunities for visits to school sites and for conversations with teachers and parents.
- **Connect with local civic and business groups.** Kiwanis, Lions, Jacks and Jills, Chambers of Commerce, and other business groups are often interested in education issues and may be receptive to your story.
- **Develop a web site for the initiative.** High school and college students might assist with the design and maintenance of a web site while intermediary staff and leaders provide the content.
- **Produce a video.** The story of a community school makes a compelling video. High school students or members of youth organizations might be persuaded to produce a video about the initiative.

KNOW THE QUESTIONS; FIND THE ANSWERS

Unambiguous communication is essential. Straightforward answers promote confidence and encourage buy-in. In Cincinnati, Ohio, before deciding to participate in the community schools initiative, prospective community partners wanted basic information about their likely roles and responsibilities. According to leaders in Cincinnati, common questions included the following:

- Will the district support school hours that expand the traditional school day?
- Will services be available to the larger community?
- Will on-site space be available to partners? Who or what will cover rent and overhead?
- Will partners at the site level be selected by community members or by the district?
- What financial plans are in place to sustain the initiative both system-wide and at individual sites?

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2003, a \$70 million referendum to support public education in Evansville, Indiana, failed by a three-to-one margin. To turn that figure around, a determined superintendent decided that the district needed to make a stronger case for community schools. He also gave the community an opportunity to buy into the initiative and express its concerns. At the same time, he reached out to the business and labor communities and met regularly with their representatives to build mutual respect and trust. Five years later, 71 percent of Evansville's registered voters passed a \$140 million referendum in support of community schools. Says Superintendent Vince Bertram, "The community has stepped up because it's no longer 'us versus them.' We *all* share responsibility for our kids."

CONTINUING EXPANSION IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

While highly successful, community leaders in Multnomah County, Oregon, have reached only 60 of the 150 schools in their six target districts; so expansion is always on their minds. As part of an expansion strategy, the SUN Coordinating Council organized an "every school a community school" work group to help think through how such an approach might be implemented. From that process, they decided that the co-chairs of the coordinating council—then-Director of County Human Services Joanne Fuller and business leader Bill Scott, along with other council representatives—should conduct a series of individual meetings with key stakeholders to deepen their understanding and commitment to SUN Community Schools. The response was positive. While a plan for expansion is still unfolding, it was the coordinating council's outreach that has proven vital to expanding local commitment to sustaining the SUN initiative and creating a climate for future growth.

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

At the end of **Stage 4**, look for these indicators of progress in key functional areas.

Stage 4: Plan for Sustainability			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership			
Results-Based Vision	☐ Partners continue to expand their participation and develop trust in and ownership of a community-wide vision.	☐ Staff facilitate expanded participation, trust, and ownership in a scaled-up vision of community schools.	
Data and Evaluation			
Finance and Resource Development	☐ A long-range financing strategy is in place. ☐ Reliable funding streams are coordinated to sustain priority programs and services at community schools. ☐ Community partners play a significant role in identifying and leveraging new revenue sources. ☐ Financing decisions ensure that expansion does not threaten core components of the initiative. ☐ Resources are earmarked to finance a community school coordinator position at each site.	☐ Technical assistance helps partners develop a long-range financing plan to harness existing public and private resources and to secure new funding sufficient to meet projected costs of scheduled expansion.	☐ Site-level partners play a significant role in identifying and leveraging local revenue sources, including in-kind contributions from partner agencies. ☐ Grant money is sought and used strategically to leverage additional resources.

Stage 4: Plan for Sustainability

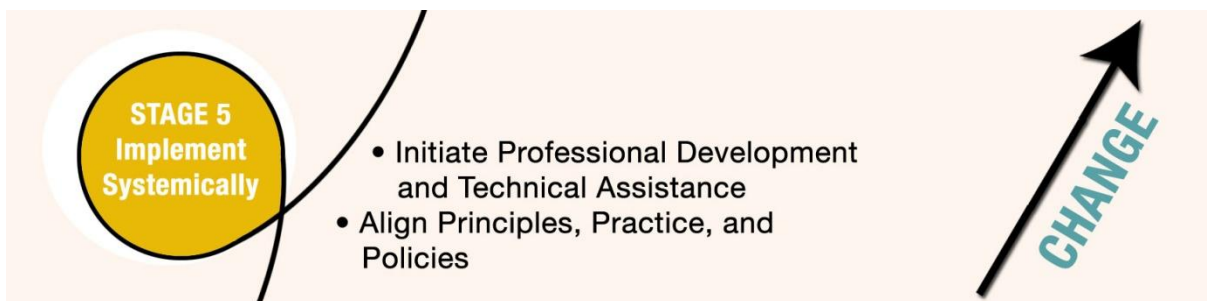
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Alignment and Integration	☐ RFPs, grant opportunities, and other potential funding requests developed by school districts, United Ways, local government, and others are aligned with the initiative's results framework.		☐ School improvement plans provide for the coordination of school district resources to achieve agreed-upon results.
Supportive Policy	☐ A statement of support for community-wide results and the expansion of community schools is included in the strategic plans of major partners (school board/district, city, county, United Way, community foundation, other funders). ☐ The school district has set forth administrative guidelines enabling the effective operation of community schools. ☐ Partners amend policies within their own organizations to support scale-up.		
Professional Development and Technical Assistance		☐ Intermediary staff coordinate technical assistance to help the initiative implement and sustain its expansion plan. ☐ Technical assistance and professional development respond to needs identified by participants.	☐ Community issues that affect schools (e.g., safety, housing, immigration policy) are tracked, evaluated for their impact on the initiative's work, communicated to the initiative, and considered for community-wide

Stage 4: Plan for Sustainability			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
		☐ Staff ensure that participants and technical assistance providers jointly design, implement, and evaluate training. ☐ Two-way communication with state and federal officials is ongoing.	action.
Broad Community Engagement	☐ A strategy for finding new champions has been designed and implemented. ☐ An increasing number of people are active advocates for community schools.	☐ Communication with the public occurs regularly as planned.	

Pitfalls

- ❖ Thinking that running a community school is all about money and programs rather than about focusing on the importance of mobilizing families, residents, business and civic organizations, and the broader community in support of agreed-upon results.
- ❖ Not being willing to ask the hard questions about how existing resources are used, whether they are achieving the desired results, and whether something needs to change.
- ❖ Not realizing that building a system of community schools is inherently more a political than technical challenge.

STAGE 5: IMPLEMENT SYSTEMICALLY



Overview

Stage 5 focuses on the third characteristic of effective scale up—**depth**. Efforts began in Stage 1 to ensure that leaders at all levels share the defining vision and principles of community schools and consistently align policies and practices to reflect that vision. Effective scale-up requires a level of change that recasts attitudes, personal interactions, and expectations about learning and development. Site implementation depends on activity in several functional areas, notably professional development and technical assistance, as well as on alignment and integration of policies and practices.

Stage 5 also highlights the difference between a project-based versus a strategic approach to change. A project-based approach concentrates on implementing a given set of activities. A strategic approach works to sustain a long-term vision.

Clear communication ensures that everyone understands the rules that govern community schools and the activities that support school goals. Clear communication also ensures that practice knowledge at the site level is conveyed to policymakers so that they remain responsive to the need for appropriate policy change.

Stage 5 ushers in programmatic implementation. Even as this milestone is reached, community school leaders must continue to pay attention to the hard part of change—helping participants at all levels make the transition to new ways of thinking and behaving. Stakeholders continue to deepen their understanding and commitment to community schools principles as implementation proceeds and issues arise. Stage 5 activities enable the scaled-up system of community schools to move from an external reform to the heart of communities where learning happens.

DEEPENING THE PRACTICE

In Multnomah County, Oregon, efforts are ongoing to build the collaborative capacity of partners and staff at each SUN Community School. At the beginning of each year, county-level SUN staff convene district-wide meetings in each district to bring together district leaders, principals, site managers, and agency staff. They revisit roles and responsibilities, contracts, and agreements for each SUN Community School. The meetings provide an opportunity to learn about available resources, share “what works,” build relationships, and discuss challenges and solutions. At one such meeting, site managers from several schools expressed concern about their inability to communicate quickly with other staff during after-school hours. District leaders responded by providing walkie-talkies at each site to ensure effective communication.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Align Principles, Practice, and Policies

Some things to think about:

Site leaders—including principals, site coordinators, and site teams composed of school and partner agency staff, families, community members, and students—need flexibility to identify and meet local priorities. Community leadership groups and intermediaries should seek to unleash the problem-solving capacity of students, parents, educators, and community partners at individual schools.

Yet, most sites will need support to align their work with the initiative’s vision and desired results.

Encourage local sites to adapt the initiative’s desired results. Every site should establish its own results and indicators that are linked to the initiative’s system-wide results; in fact, site-specific results and indicators may be an integral part of the school improvement plan. Not every site will have the need or capacity to address simultaneously all the results and indicators specified in the initiative’s results-based framework (Stage 3). In any event, sites’ selection of their own list of urgent results and indicators will help focus their work and engender a deeper commitment to it. Site teams should frame the types of activities likely to move them forward. Their reliance on an activities framework will enable them to select effective community partners and use new grant resources as effectively as possible. In addition, the results-based framework will help sites identify the data required to demonstrate and measure progress. Data might take the form of test scores, grade 3 reading levels, attendance rates, and health indices and could include surveys, pre-post-assessments, student grades, and participant records.

Intermediary staff may assist with development of the site-level results framework by:

- Providing initial guidance for site leaders not previously involved in crafting the community-wide framework
- Creating opportunities for sites to consult with other sites involved in developing or adapting their own frameworks

- Developing interagency agreements to ensure that the activities of community partners are consistent with a site's result-based framework and aligned with district goals
- Negotiating data-sharing agreements with partners and the release of information with families
- Reviewing contractual agreements with partners on a regular basis

Enable effective site-level management.

Professional development and technical assistance targeted to principals and coordinators is essential to ensuring ongoing linkages between school families and the community, along with connections with their peers. Research and experience strongly suggest that community schools perform best with an **on-site, full-time coordinator**.

Ensure alignment between the initiative and school sites. School sites need a central source of information and guidance as well as a way to communicate progress and resolve problems. Regular communication between and among site coordinators and intermediary staff can help identify and distinguish between implementation issues that need technical assistance and issues that require a policy response from community leaders. Intermediary staff can be especially helpful in ensuring a timely two-way flow of information, particularly in Stage 6 as field experience increases and evaluation data are collected. As the number of school sites grows, some localities assign a “**point person**” within the intermediary to link sites across the district to community-wide support and to ensure that leaders attend to policy-relevant information. Much more than a mere conduit, point people are positioned to spot early weaknesses in

implementation and identify common cross-site issues.

Set the stage for success. As implementation unfolds, schools and community partners must learn how to share space, personnel, authority, and accountability. The following suggestions might be useful:

- Invite the entire school (families and their students) to learn about community schools and to be a part of the school's role in a scaled-up community schools initiative.
- Create opportunities for conversations with staff whose routine may be affected by new activities. The conversations should draw in support personnel such as custodians, food service workers, and bus drivers as well as professional staff and demonstrate that everyone plays an important role in community schools.
- Open up planning for the results-based framework to the entire school. Post updates on the planning process and acknowledge participation through whatever communication channel is most appropriate.
- Work with partner staff to understand school rules and to help school staff tap community partners' expertise.
- Clarify site coordinators' responsibilities and lines of authority.
- Ensure that other school staff understand the coordinator's role and affiliation so that differences in hours and reporting requirements do not become issues.

Milestone #2: Initiate Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Some things to think about:

Site practitioners need to apply community schools principles to every aspect of their work. As rollout continues, it is likely that assumptions and behaviors that run counter to community schools principles will emerge, along with gaps in expertise. Left unaddressed, these issues can affect implementation. To deal with problems before they reach a crisis, it is essential to deliver technical assistance at the school site while embedding the community school vision in professional development programs for principals, teachers, and other school staff.

Use professional development and technical assistance resources earlier rather than later.

Professional development activities can assist classroom teachers and principals, mid-level administrators such as instructional supervisors and curriculum developers, and policymakers in achieving the following:

- An improved understanding and application of community schools principles as related to methods of teaching and learning
- Developing a closer connection between the schools curricula and community school programs and services
- Building capacity in areas such as evaluation, community building, and finance

Embedding the community schools vision and practice into principal and teacher preparation is a particularly challenging task for local initiatives, but it is nonetheless essential to developing a pipeline of practitioners skilled in implementing the community schools strategy. More opportunities for such preparation may

be opening up as schools of education consider clinical approaches to principal and teacher preparation. Community schools coordinators must also participate regularly in professional development.

Co-construct professional development and technical assistance. Technical assistance that calls for experts to tell participants what they ought to know likely will be less effective than developing a plan “co-constructed” by both parties. Work and learning should meet local needs and build ownership, reflecting the collaborative nature of community schools.

Build helping networks within and across school sites. In well-developed community schools, new practitioners may be paired with seasoned staff members who serve as coaches and mentors. Web site contact and periodic meetings can foster peer-to-peer relationships across sites and spur improvements that do not depend on formally scheduled professional development activities. It is useful to consider:

- Connecting new and experienced schools in order to build a peer learning community, especially through a principals’ forum that can explore the impacts of different leadership styles on community schools
- Providing secure “chat rooms” for practitioners—without supervisors’ participation—for discussions about progress and obstacles, issues, and solutions within and across sites and initiatives
- With permission, summarizing and archiving concerns and suggestions and communicating issues, as needed, to policymakers for their action

- Organizing webinars on issues identified by sites

Schedule early to become part of the school's core mission. Even a small amount of release time for educators and the staff of community partners can help targeted individuals benefit from field trips, classroom observations, and joint planning sessions. Before school schedules fill up, site team members can offer to support school improvement planning by:

- Requesting and locking in specific blocks of time for professional development
- Participating on school curriculum and planning teams
- Assisting in developing all-school professional development activities
- Seeking funds from schools and community partners early in the school year so that cross-site teams may attend regional, state, and national conferences
- Enabling teams to work together in advance of conferences to improve conference learning and strengthen cross-site implementation

BUILDING CAPACITY IN LEAD AGENCIES

In the Greater Lehigh Valley, the United Way's role as intermediary has evolved as the initiative has expanded. Says Marci Ronald, who recently directed the COMPASS initiative for the United Way, "We're providing not just the funding, but also the training and technical support that's necessary to get it done. Doing both can be a tricky dance."

The COMPASS model calls for a lead agency to partner with a school, hire a community schools coordinator, provide key resources and services, and manage daily operations. One evolving challenge has been the selection of agencies capable of taking on the work of the lead agency— —or grooming agencies for that role. When one lead agency did not have in place the systems needed to write a short-term contract to hire new staff under a mini-grant, the United Way stepped in and hired the person directly. In another case, a lead agency prohibited staff from driving parents to appointments and other events, citing insurance limitations. With the United Way's input, the school principal identified and agreed to use discretionary funds to provide transportation.

Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) can also help by spelling out the various roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the United Way, the school district, and the lead agency. When problems arise, the MOA provides a starting point for respectful but candid conversation that leads to the identification of needed changes and the offer of coaching. Eventually, a formal and streamlined approach to technical assistance will assess strengths in key areas and then deliver assistance before problems arise.

CONNECTING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS TO THE CURRICULUM

In Providence, Rhode Island, the Full-Service Community School (FSCS) initiative has developed a planning tool called an "integration grid" to ensure that after-school and wraparound activities support the school's instructional focus. Each month, classroom teachers identify one or more targeted learning objectives based on the state's common core standards. FSCS staff then develop a program plan for the entire month that aligns and supports the standards in the following areas: academic enrichment, family literacy, behavioral supports, health and wellness, family engagement, and early childhood.

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

At the end of **Stage 5**, look for these new indicators of progress in key functional areas.

Stage 5: Implement Systemically			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership			☐ Leadership development opportunities for parents/family members and residents enable them to carry out their leadership tasks.
Results-Based Vision			☐ Planning and implementation at every school site are aligned with the community-wide vision. ☐ To organize its work, every site develops a results and indicators framework based on the community wide framework. ☐ Priority is given to specific results based on site needs, with indicators used to track progress.
Data and Evaluation			☐ Based on results and indicator frameworks, site teams make decisions about which data are most relevant and useful to collect. ☐ Policy barriers based on confidentiality and other requirements are communicated to community-wide leaders for action

Stage 5: Implement Systemically

	Community	Intermediary	Site
			(Stage 6).
Finance and Resource Development	☐ Reliable funding streams are coordinated and sustain priority programs and services at community schools.		
Alignment and Integration	☐ Partners enact policies and provide resources to ensure that sites targeted by the initiative's rollout strategy work together to achieve results.	☐ Technical assistance aligns policies and integrates practices across sites in order to build functioning networks of community schools. ☐ Regular review of MOUs and results and indicator frameworks ensures that the staffing and delivery of all partners' activities at each site are integrated with school plans and the priority results of community schools.	☐ Sites connected by the initiative's rollout strategy collaborate with each other in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities. ☐ Site partners, within and across linked sites, participate in developing the school improvement plan that reflects each site's results framework. ☐ Sites integrate the activities of other community reform initiatives aimed at achieving similar results. ☐ The school and its partners integrate academic and non-academic supports, services, and opportunities to attain agreed-upon results. ☐ Instructional content and methods, during and after school hours, reflect community school principles in support of selected indicators.

Stage 5: Implement Systemically

	Community	Intermediary	Site
Supportive Policy	☐ The district has set forth administrative guidelines enabling the effective operation of community schools. ☐ Partners, including the school board, enact specific policies to support and sustain community schools. ☐ Partners act to change policies within their own organizations to support scale-up. ☐ School board and/or district policy allows community partners to use school facilities at no charge to implement activities aligned with site-level results.		☐ A clear and coherent set of practices and policies with respect to site-level implementation guides both school staff and community partners and fosters integration between in-school and after-school activities. ☐ Personnel policies of school sites, lead agencies, and partner agencies are aligned and reviewed regularly to foster positive working relationships across shared staff.
Professional Development and Technical Assistance	☐ The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated into higher education and district-run educator preparation professional development for principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, nurses, and others. ☐ The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated into professional development for partner staff. ☐ Joint, ongoing professional development for school and partner	☐ Technical assistance helps sites develop a results and evaluation framework. ☐ Staff organize pre-service training for community school coordinators and facilitate their continued training in appropriate, district-led professional development. ☐ Technical assistance and professional development respond to needs identified by participants. ☐ Staff ensure that participants and technical assistance providers jointly	☐ School staff and site-level partners participate in joint professional development and planning time designed to deepen integration between in-school and after-school teaching and learning. ☐ Community school coordinators receive pre-service training from the initiative, and site-level partners participate in relevant school-run professional development activities. ☐ Technical assistance facilitates the work of school-site teams.

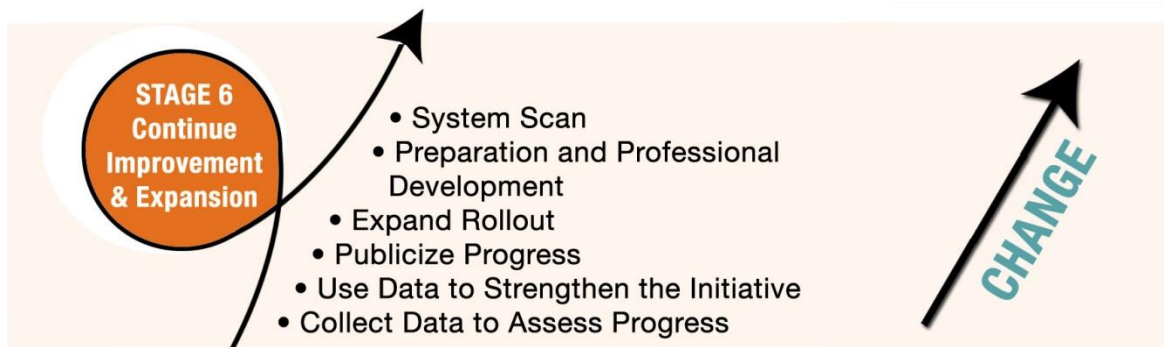
Stage 5: Implement Systemically

	Community	Intermediary	Site
	staff is available; policies encourage and enable participation.	design, implement, and evaluate training.	☐ Participants and technical assistance providers jointly design, implement, and evaluate training.
Broad Community Engagement			☐ The community school promotes itself as the hub of the neighborhood and uses the name and logo of the initiative to build its own identity. ☐ Expansion sites host visits for elected officials, partners, family members, neighborhood residents, and representatives of other schools to showcase accomplishments, recruit champions, and develop peer networks. ☐ Community issues that affect schools (e.g., safety, housing, immigration policy) are tracked, evaluated for their impact on the initiative's work, and considered for local action. ☐ Parents and residents represent the concerns of community schools and their neighborhoods in decision-making forums at all levels (e.g., neighborhood associations, housing commissions, city council, and school board).

Pitfalls

- ❖ Not creating a mechanism that enables school-site teams to communicate policy challenges that influence their ability to achieve the results they seek.
- ❖ Cutting corners on the quality and quantity of coordinators in an effort to establish new community schools more quickly.
- ❖ Overlooking the need to embed community school principles and practices in school systems' and community partners' professional development programs; failing to provide professional development opportunities for community schools coordinators.
- ❖ Developing one-size-fits-all professional development and training for sites without their input.

STAGE 6: CONTINUE IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION



Overview

Stage 6 develops all the elements of effective scale up—**shared ownership, system spread, depth, and sustainability**. The objective is “to raise performance through a never-ending process of fine tuning policies, practices and outcomes to better achieve stakeholders’ visions and respond to environmental factors.”^{xxvi}

Leaders and participants at all levels work together to assess progress and make needed changes in the scale-up strategy as well as in school-site policy and practice. School sites collect and use the data to improve local practice while the initiative surveys and acts on multisite information to strengthen its systemic work, publicize progress, and expand rollout. System scanning efforts in Stage 6 identify areas in the scale-up spiral that need to be revisited in order to bring to fruition the vision of a community where learning happens and the capacity of the system to support this work. Subsequent passes through each stage move more efficiently as leaders apply knowledge and expertise gained the first time through. Stage 6 also brings the initiative full circle to Stage 1 and its focus on shared ownership and broad community engagement. With more community schools in operation, the initiative redoubles its efforts to communicate its

accomplishments throughout the community. New partners and enhanced public recognition add to the political will and financial support needed for further expansion.

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Collect Data to Assess Progress

Some things to think about:

Prepare staff for data collection. In Stage 5, sites developed their own results and evaluation frameworks, including indicators, activities, and data collection methods consistent with the initiative’s community-wide framework. For data collection to succeed, site staff need to keep adequate program records and use survey, questionnaire, and other methods consistently and as intended. An erroneous assumption about the skill of the data collection staff can be costly. Given that data collection is a resource-intensive effort, a team-based training session with opportunity for input is a good way to build ownership and an ongoing support structure that can minimize trouble down the road. The best data are collected by staff who:

- Understand the value of the data
- Work in teams
- Receive support and recognition

Milestone # 2: Use Data to Strengthen the Initiative

Some things to think about:

Translate data into usable information. Use what you learn from the basic evaluation questions outlined in Stage 3 to ask more questions about individual school sites and across the initiative. The answers will help generate the action needed to improve the scale-up effort. Consider asking, for example:

- Are we reaching and keeping the intended students and families in the numbers and with the impact we hoped for? If not, why not?
- What internal and external factors may be affecting participation? Which factors can we address?

- What internal and external factors may be affecting impact? What needs to change?
- What are the differences across sites? What accounts for them?
- What additional implementation supports are needed in key functional areas?

Plan action steps. Summarize what you have learned. Look for positive trends. Ask what requires action. Establish priorities. Determine what can be improved internally and what changes require policy changes, technical assistance, or the involvement of other sites. Get started.

Strategies for Engaging Staff in Data Collection

- **Communicate value.** When people are convinced that continuous improvement data will be used to improve their work, rather than simply to grade it or add to it, they are more likely to give the task their best effort. Before data collection begins, it is helpful to give staff examples of how data collection has resulted in unexpected or counterintuitive findings—and how those findings have led to beneficial changes in policy and practice.
- **Work in teams.** Ideally, teams rather than single individuals should follow clearly established data protocols. Although specific point people will be responsible for the overall effort at sites and at the systems level, team members will need assistance to find all the information they need. Involving the teams from the outset will save time and ensure better results. Teams should have a picture of the entire process, from data collection and review to analysis and distribution; they also need to understand how people can benefit from the collection of data. Help teams see that their work is important and that assistance is available as needed.
- **Provide support.** Short and easy-to-complete collection instruments should include written, step-by-step instructions and due dates. Make sure that teams understand and are comfortable with computerized data collection. Involve teams in establishing timeframes that are reasonable given their other duties. While initial training can minimize difficulties in data collection, time for review and revision should also be a part of the process. If the collected data are neither consistent nor accurate, they have no value.
- **Recognize contributions.** Finally, recognize the important contributions made by the data collections teams. Initiatives can do this in e-mails; web postings, or newsletters. Include useful facts from data collection efforts as soon as possible. Follow up with opportunities for sites to learn from and use the data collected by the teams.

Use communication mechanisms. Use the mechanisms you established in Stage 5 to ensure a regular, two-way flow of information between and among sites and the initiative. Communication should include not only evaluation data but also relevant practice knowledge and field experience that can shed light on concerns, strengths, and opportunities—within the initiative, at school sites, and in the surrounding community. To ensure useful information and to build connections between site and initiative leaders, consider the following:

- Prepare periodic reports organized into overarching issues and recommendations for policy action per the reported problems and requests of sites
- Present the reports periodically for discussion with school-site coordinators, parents, or other site team members
- Communicate intended actions to affected sites

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DATA AND INFORMATION

Continuous improvement depends on the ability to drill down to see what is happening in classrooms and to children and families. In Evansville, Indiana, district leaders wanted to understand why students missed 10 or more days of school. When they looked at high-absentee students in schools with very low poverty rates, they found that time spent on vacation was the primary reason for poor attendance. For high-absentee students in high-poverty schools, the reason was head lice. By asking a specific question, staff used district data to generate useful information and tailor improvement strategies to fit different circumstances.

Milestone #3: Publicize Progress

Some things to think about:

Call attention to positive trends. While scale-up efforts are unlikely to achieve significant changes in standardized test scores or other long-term measures in the first year or two of operation, do not make excuses. Instead, at the initiative and site levels, make sure that the community sees what you are accomplishing. Seek out partners with marketing and public relations expertise to convert initial data into a few simple charts that show movement in the right direction. Use the information in community engagement efforts as well as internally to remind teachers, students, and families that they are participating in change.

Develop a coordinated campaign. Consider developing a working group with marketing expertise to launch a comprehensive communication strategy, building on Stage 1's logo and "brand awareness" work. Traditionally, communication campaigns include a variety of methods, including speaker bureaus, brochures, videos, and media coverage. More recently, initiatives incorporate social networking techniques—free, online methods to build awareness and support. Ask parents, community partners, residents, and especially students the best way to communicate to a broad audience in *your* community.

COMMUNICATION POWER

Communication power means being able to tell your story in a compelling and forceful way.^{xxvii}

- In Providence, Rhode Island, FSCS staff developed a variety of easy-to-understand graphs and charts to show clear evidence of the positive relationship between its focus on family engagement strategies, a decline in chronic absenteeism, and various

measures of increased parent capacity to support children's academic success. In addition, findings highlighted "what went right" such as effective recruitment and strong parent participation and pointed to "what needs to change," including greater family awareness of available resources, improved recognition, and the need to communicate in several formats and reinforce key messages.

- In the Greater Lehigh Valley's COMPASS initiative, an end-of-year Community School report card is developed by the site-based leadership team (composed of the community school coordinator, lead partner, principal, and other partners) from each COMPASS Community School. The data provide information on the number of students in before-school, after-school, and summer school activities; adults in adult education; and more. The report card also measures how well the initiative provided services to the highest-need students and families, including the number of programs/strategies connected to the academic curriculum, programs targeted to students performing below grade level, and more.^{xxviii}

Communicate effectively. Whether your large-scale communication strategy is "old school" or online, makes sure to:

- **Define your audience.** Whom are you interested in targeting? Older community residents? Families without children? Homeowners? People who speak English as a second language? Partner organizations can share access to their e-mail list serves to target groups potentially interested in community schools. Identify online social

networks that appeal to your target audience(s). Examine sites such as Facebook; Gather.com; LinkedIn; and others for chat rooms where people talk about education, family, and community challenges.

- **Craft a take-away message that is short, clear, and memorable.** Partners with communication expertise can help initiatives design and produce video messages and manage feedback. One suggestion is to give community school students or family members disposable cameras or camcorders to take pictures of their world and what is important to them—in their communities and in their community school. The common themes that emerge can be distilled into a powerful message.
- **Involve community school students and families as much as possible.** Developing a large-scale communication strategy should be part of—not separate from—the real-world, hands-on learning and relationship building that are at the core of community schools. Initiatives need to tap the knowledge, insight, and enthusiasm of their students in order to tell stories that ring true while helping students connect their classroom experience to opportunities for improving a range of literacy and critical thinking skills. In addition, communication strategies should provide students with a chance to practice new skills in, for example, web site design and maintenance.

The Most Effective Messages*

- **Tell a story.** People are wired to learn through stories. When people listen to a story, they use their ears, eyes, and heart.** Community schools are full of stories. Which story best describes the evolution of your community schools strategy?
- **Provoke emotion.** Make sure that your message speaks to the heart. What does it make your listener feel? Curiosity, surprise, compassion, outrage, delight? Messages that provoke a strong response in the emotional center of the brain are perceived as important and remembered. They also help initiate action.
- **Keep it short and simple.** Less is more. Know the message you want to convey and the emotion you want to provoke. How can you do that as simply as possible? Look for design help from local arts groups and universities. Consider “serializing” a story message. Provide a compelling beginning to pique interest; the rest is follow-up.
- **Make it easy to find and share.** Technically, your message should be easy to open and share with others. Include instructions for downloading and uploading information. Find ways to motivate people to forward your message to others in their network. Something as simple and straight forward as “If you care, please forward!” can work.
- **Encourage back-talk.** Input and participation are your goals. Provide easy links to sites where people can make comments about what they have seen and communicate with other people. Include sites such as Twitter that invite short responses, along with blogs that allow for commentary and reflection. Show your audience what other people are doing in their communities and how to initiate similar activities.
- **Feedback fast.** Let people know you’re listening to what they have to say; find ways to build on your basic message. Share some of the comments you pull from their input. Follow up with “behind the scenes” photos and videos that help people see what went into crafting your first message. For example, include a series of portraits of individual community school participants with simple, relevant quotes. Assess progress toward desired results on a regular basis.

*Adapted from Ralph F. Wilson, “The Six Simple Principles of Viral Marketing in Web-Marketing Today, February 1, 2005, <http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt5/viral-principles.htm>; also Thomas Baekdal, “Seven Tricks to Viral Web Marketing,” November 23, 2006, www.BAEKDAL.com/articles/Branding/viral-marketing-tricks.

**“The Oldest Art Helps New Science,” in The MITRE Digest, May 2002. www.mitre.org/news/digest/archives/2002/storytelling.html. MITRE is a federally- funded research and development center with expertise in systems engineering, IT, management modernization, and information visualization.

Milestone #4: Expand Rollout

Some things to think about:

Keep at it. Make sure the challenges—and satisfactions—of implementing the first round of school sites keep you pushing forward. Use the rollout schedule and timeframe developed in Stage 3 to stay on target. However, take time to look at data across sites to identify any factors that might affect site selection. Be alert to the need for additional or different types of professional development, technical assistance, and/or policy support that could enhance rollout and implementation at future sites.

Most important, bear in mind that, if the scale-up initiative is to succeed, new stakeholders and new school sites will need to develop a sense of shared ownership, a deep commitment to community schools principles, and a willingness to expand their capacity with respect to financial matters and community engagement.

None of this work can be rushed. There is good reason to believe, however, that subsequent sites in your community will develop faster because of the foundational work you have already completed. The principles of community schools are already embedded in the structure and culture of a scaled-up system. The results are impressive and critical to our shared future: Successful children, families, schools, and communities.

CONTINUED GROWTH

Rollout strategies emerge in a variety of ways. In Multnomah County, Oregon, the SUN Community Schools secured a commitment of reallocated county dollars to create 23 additional community schools in 2004. Over time, a variety of grants, district contributions, and a new allocation from the Portland Children's Levy permitted SUN to grow to more than 60 schools.

Cincinnati's school board has set forth a vision for all schools to become community learning centers. The Community Learning Centers Institute, which serves as the local intermediary, and community partners are gradually moving in that direction and plan to place a full-time resource coordinator in every school; they are already 40 percent there, with coordinators in 22 schools. At the same time, through community partnerships, they have placed mental health counselors in schools, established school-based health centers, and added a variety of supports and opportunities for students. Still, the overall goal is for schools to function as community learning centers.

In Evansville, Indiana, the school district has embedded family and community engagement in its strategic plan and expects all schools to be community schools. Evansville has made a strong commitment to integrating federal funding streams with the work of community partners, preparing principals to function as leaders, and developing an evaluation strategy that captures data on indicators for success.

Milestone #5: Preparation and Professional Development

Pay attention to the preparation and professional development programs that the school system offers for principals and teachers and do the same for community partners. Successful scale-up demands that education and community leaders learn about the principles underlying community schools and target appropriate preparation programs to teachers, principals, social workers, health professionals, youth development workers, and others.

To make community schools work at scale, the academic programs that train community school personnel must transmit the knowledge and skills needed to build community and school partnerships. One possibility is to have community schools function as professional development schools linked to schools of education. For example, the Edison Community School in Portchester, New York, serves as a professional development school that operates in partnership with Manhattanville College to offer teacher preparation in a community school setting. Teachers learn to teach and to work effectively with families and the community. The growing emphasis on clinical preparation of teachers may open the door for community school leaders to be trained directly in community schools.

Milestone #6: System Scan

Sustaining a scaled-up system of community schools requires constant attention. Leaders should not take their eyes off key systemic challenges that can derail change efforts. Regular system scans across all four characteristics of effective scale-up—shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability—can help identify areas that need attention. The

Community School System Benchmarks Chart (Appendix) lists expected areas of accomplishment as you build the collaborative leadership infrastructure. Here are some questions to get you started. After you answer each one, consider how you can strengthen each area.

Shared Ownership

- Are the initiative's vision and principles of community schools understood by all stakeholders at a deep level and used to inform funding, policy, and practice decisions?
- Do key leaders demonstrate sustained participation and commitment?
- Is shared ownership evident in the operation of the initiative's Collaborative Leadership Framework as well as in its design?

Spread

- Does the scale-up initiative increase the number of community schools vertically (throughout the educational pathway) and horizontally (across several schools and school districts)?
- Do professional development and marketing activities ensure a flow of people steeped in the community schools strategy?

Depth

- Does the initiative empower students and their families to be their own agents of change?
- Do professional development programs incorporate the vision and principles of community schools for educators, social workers, youth development staff,

- health and mental health providers, and everyone else working with children and youth?
- Do we have appropriate data? Do we use the data effectively?
- Do our data collection systems permit school-site personnel to track students on key indicators of success and allow policymakers to make informed policy and resource alignment decisions at the community level?

Sustainability

- Does our strategy continuously engage new organizational and community leaders so that community schools remain a priority during leadership transitions?
- Is a constituency for community schools evident and sufficient to leverage redirected funding for community schools?
- How clearly do partner agencies' policies foster collaborative work, resource sharing, and strategies to support agreed-upon results for children, schools, families, and communities?

How You Know if You Are Making Progress

At the end of **Stage 6**, look for these new indicators of progress in key functional areas.

Stage 6: Continue Improvement and Expansion			
	Community	Intermediary	Site
Collaborative Leadership			
Results-Based Vision			
Data and Evaluation	☐ Relevant data on participation, operation, and outcomes inform policy and practice decisions to improve site-level implementation and expansion activities.	☐ Staff deliver technical assistance to sites to design and implement effective data collection. ☐ Staff analyze and package data for various audiences.	☐ Sites regularly collect, analyze, and use relevant information on participation, implementation, and results to make continuous improvement in practice and recommendations for policy change.
Finance and Resource Development			
Alignment and Integration	☐ The district uses data collected by the initiative to improve the school system's strategic plan. ☐ Partners regularly scan the initiative's operation across all functional areas to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and overall	☐ Staff assist partners and site leaders in conducting regular system scans at their respective levels and monitor performance across networks of community schools.	☐ Sites regularly scan initiative operation across all functional areas as well as external environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Stage 6: Continue Improvement and Expansion

	Community	Intermediary	Site
	effectiveness in scale-up. ☐ The school district uses data collected by the initiative to improve the school system's strategic plan.		
Supportive Policy	☐ Partners solicit and are responsive to resource and policy requests based on site data and practice knowledge. ☐ Partners change policies within their own organizations to support scale-up. ☐ A clear and coherent set of practices and policies with respect to site-level implementation guides both school staff and community partners, fostering integration between in-school and after-school activities.	☐ Sites package data-based findings into appropriate recommendations for changes in policy, resources, and/or training and professional development.	☐ Sites communicate policy, resource, and professional development needs to community-wide leadership based on data collection; they regularly scan across all functional areas.
Professional Development and Technical Assistance			
Broad Community Engagement	☐ Published data on the performance of each community school and on system-wide expansion are easily accessible to the public and policymakers.		

Pitfalls

- ❖ Relying on inaccurate or incomplete data
- ❖ Failing to organize data into issues that are prioritized and addressed
- ❖ Underusing the site management team as a source of information and insight into community conditions and school-site operation
- ❖ Delaying the release of information on progress until “hard data” on test scores are available
- ❖ Overlooking positive trends and the cumulative impact of small improvements
- ❖ Neglecting routine scans of system functional areas to indicate where work needs to be strengthened

Summing Up

Congratulations! You’ve worked through the 6-stage spiral to scale-up your community school initiative. As you’ve learned, your work doesn’t end now. Take time to reflect and celebrate. Then, assess your progress using the Systems Benchmarks Chart (Appendix) and revisit areas for improvement.

PART FOUR: CASE STUDIES OF SCALING UP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

Considerable practice knowledge has been developed by communities in rural, suburban and urban settings. Their collective work illustrates a coherent strategy to unite discrete programs and splintered community efforts into a powerful means to improve results for children and families, schools, neighborhoods. They have started from scratch and built systems of community schools and many are in their second or third iterations, always seeking to fine-tune and improve their overall strategy. Their stories show that communities begin their system-building efforts in many ways—sometimes by implementing only one or just a few sites—or by addressing only some of the conditions for learning. No place or story is exactly the same but each contributes to a better understanding of how places are organized to support students, families, and communities.

Wherever communities begin, we hope the stories that follow will encourage them to think strategically about large scale expansion from the get go.

CINCINNATI, OHIO: One Brick at a Time—How a Facilities Master Plan Enhanced Collaborative Decision Making

Cincinnati's Community Learning Center Initiative (CLC)—a core feature of the Cincinnati Public Schools' (CPS) 10-year, \$1 billion Master Facilities Plan—is built on a shared philosophy among school and community partners: schools are a hub of the community, and their purpose is to revitalize learning and transform the community. According to Darlene Kamine, formerly a consultant to CPS and now head of the Community Learning Centers Institute, "Commitment to that philosophy has been laid one brick at a time" through ongoing community engagement and an infrastructure grounded in collaborative decision making.

The groundwork for the CLC began in the late 1990s when leaders of the CPS, the CPS Board of Education, and the community began developing their initial concepts about community schools—motivated by an Ohio Supreme Court decision that found conditions in Ohio schools so deplorable as to fail the constitutional requirement for an adequate public education. Jack Gilligan, former Ohio governor and member of the CPS Board of Education, visited Children's Aid Society community schools in New York City and Local Investment Commission community schools in Kansas City, Missouri, to see how those jurisdictions were using school buildings as centers of the community. Seeing communities' potential for organizing supports for students, Gilligan encouraged the district to adopt a community schools strategy. He said:

The park board, the recreation commission, the board of health, the library board—all of them are doing things in the neighborhood but not always in a coordinated fashion. To get them thinking in terms of not just doing their own thing their own way but coming into a community effort and joining a community effort—that will make the total impact greater than the sum of the parts.

Concurrently, then-CPS Superintendent Steven Adamowski was thinking about schools as joint-use facilities. He was inspired by then-U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley's vision of schools as centers of community.^{xxix} Adamowski also understood that reconnecting the community was essential to the school district's successful revitalization; he saw the rebuilding of physical facilities as a catalyst for engagement. The CPS, however, lacked the capacity to lead a neighborhood-by-neighborhood community engagement process in the district's 52 neighborhoods. Therefore, Adamowski and the CPS Board of Education asked the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in Cincinnati to manage the process. Eileen Cooper Reed, then executive director of the CDF in Cincinnati and now a CPS Board of Education member, secured funding from the Knowledge Works Foundation to ensure the independence and integrity of community engagement.

The broad vision laid out by Cincinnati's leaders was refined through years of dialogue, debate, and decision making among residents, parents, and school leaders at community engagement sessions in each neighborhood. Ultimately, the system for effective and sustainable CLCs was born.

The CPS and community partners launched a plan to create state-of-the-art learning environments for all students in new or rebuilt schools. The CPS saw schools as public assets wherein community resources could be directed to student, family, community, and economic development. Kamine, a former juvenile court magistrate, developed the initial community engagement strategy while at the CDF and then became a consultant to the CPS. She led the effort to build and implement the CLC Initiative's infrastructure.

In 2001, the CPS Board of Education, motivated by a desire to revitalize Cincinnati, adopted a vision for a district-wide redevelopment of all schools as centers of their respective neighborhoods. Each school would be the neighborhood hub, open to community agencies and community members for health care, recreation, social services, and cultural events during and after the school day. Campaigning on the vision for schools as the centers of community, the CPS approved a \$1 billion levy in 2002. The levy supported a 10-year Master Facilities Plan to construct new schools, renovate existing schools, and provide space for neighborhood activities in all schools.

The CLCs are a joint enterprise of the CPS and community-based public and private partners. Operationally, the CPS's central administration provides core support, but decision making occurs at the site level under the authority of each CLC's Local Schools Decision Making Committee (LSDMC). Each LSDMC and site-level governing body select partners, consistent with the unique vision developed through the community engagement process. To facilitate the equitable allocation of and access to partners and resources, leaders developed CLC Partnership Networks, networks of community

partners that brokers and coordinates services to schools requesting a variety of services—health, mental health, the arts, and so forth.^{xxx} These collaborative leadership structures have enabled CPS to rely on community partners and local site teams to improve results for children. For example, when Superintendent Mary Ronan wanted to create an additional month of learning for elementary school students—called the Fifth Quarter—community partners were already organized to support the CPS and its students through the CLCs. They immediately began working with selected schools and the CPS to plan expanded summer learning opportunities by using new and existing resources.

In 2005, Rockdale Elementary School—the first CLC school—opened its doors, reflecting the vision of the entire community in its curriculum, physical design, and enrichment activities offered through a variety of partners. Partnerships that emerged from the community engagement process led to a co-located comprehensive health clinic; daily extended-day programming; a full-time, on-site mental health provider; and year-round programming for students, families, and the neighborhood.

As part of the Master Facilities Plan to build or redesign all 52 CPS schools as CLCs, every school participates in a community engagement process wherein community members and school stakeholders identify their needs and assets and develop a strategy for rebuilding the school as a CLC. The result? Each school has or is developing a new or renovated facility with supports for students, families, and neighborhoods provided by the Cross Boundary Leadership Team (CBLT).^{xxxi}

The CPS has come far in its efforts to make every school a CLC. The *Louisville Courier-*

Journal recently recognized the success of the Oyler Community Learning Center. In addition, Winton Hills Academy was a semifinalist in 2008 for the Richard Riley Award for outstanding schools as centers of community, and the Ethel Taylor Academy received the 2011 Coalition for Community Schools Award of Excellence.

Most significant, the CLC strategy has been integral to the CPS's dramatic success. From a ranking of "academic emergency" and a 52 percent graduation rate in 2002, Cincinnati Public Schools was the only urban district to achieve an "effective" rating from the Ohio Department of Education in 2010. High school graduation rates have soared to over 80 percent and continue to rise.

Currently, 38 schools fund and coordinate after-school programs. Forty-seven have fully implemented mental health partnerships, and 10 operate school-based or linked health centers. Two have co-located full-day, year-round early childhood education centers funded and operated by a private partnership. Two hundred business partners are integrally and consistently involved through a business mentoring program that was an outgrowth of the CLCs. A new museum school, a neighborhood Montessori program, and two pre-kindergarten–12 schools are the product of Cincinnati's direct engagement in the redesign of its schools as neighborhood hubs.

The ideal CLC has a resource coordinator; in fact, 22 schools have created that position, funded by the Greater Cincinnati Community Foundation, Greater Cincinnati United Way, CPS Title I funds, the Community Learning Center Institute, and private donors. Work is ongoing to secure financing for coordinators at all CLCs.

The CLC financing philosophy is unique. While the CPS guarantees the use of its facilities and covers maintenance and overhead costs, funding for partners does not depend on school budgets. That is, to ensure consistency and sustainability, partners are expected to reallocate existing resources and find their own sustainable business models through third-party billing, grants, or other revenue streams.

From the outset, teachers and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) have been strong CLC partners. Educators were important participants in each school's community engagement process and helped set the direction for the schools' transformation into CLCs. Julie Sellers, current CFT president, used to teach in a CLC and, as an enthusiastic supporter, recognizes that the CLC approach empowers teachers to contribute to schools' overall strategy as they perform their most important job: instruction. Sellers describes the added value of CLCs:

...[O]ne great benefit of the CLCs is that they increase attendance because students are getting their health needs taken care of at the school instead of staying home... A lot of our families do not have transportation to go to the clinic, the doctor, the free store, or the food bank. This really is an easy way to provide needed services... As a teacher at a CLC, you see the parents in the building more often, so you can develop a better connection with the family. As parental involvement increases, students become more successful. The parents build relationships with the teachers through the CLC's community activities. Then, when a teacher calls, they already have a relationship and

parents are less intimidated and more supportive of the school.

addition, Kamine has visited leaders at the state level and in other Ohio cities.

The CPS and the community are committed to the CLC vision. In 2010, the CPS Board of Education passed Policy 7500: Community Learning Centers, which strengthened the initial guiding principles formulated nearly a decade earlier. The policy states:

The Board of Education believes that each school should also be a community learning center in which a variety of partners shall offer academic programs, enrichment activities, and support to students, families, and community members before and after school as well as during the evenings and on weekends throughout the calendar year.... The Board envisions each CLC as the neighborhood's center of activity.

Policy 7500 has helped make the CLCs a sustainable component of Cincinnati's strategy to improve its schools, its neighborhoods, and the city. Cincinnati continues to address the constant challenge of funding, especially for resource coordinators, who are essential to the successful administration of schools as CLCs. Efforts to help city leaders understand the inextricable link between school success and the success of the city through neighborhood learning centers will further maximize the investment in CLCs.

Cincinnati continues to grow and provide an example for new community schools initiatives. For example, representatives from Cleveland recently visited Cincinnati to learn about CLCs as the Cleveland Metropolitan School District works to develop its own community schools; in

EVANSVILLE, INDIANA: From One School to an Entire District

The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) (a school district in Evansville, Indiana) launched its community schools initiative in one school and has since expanded it to include all 34 schools under its jurisdiction. Demonstrating the community's commitment to community schools, the school district has embraced the community schools strategy despite considerable turnover in superintendents. Superintendent Dr. Vince Bertram took the community schools strategy to a new level by engaging the community in listening sessions and responding to the community's concerns.^{xxxii} He made Family, School, and Community Partnerships a core element of the EVSC strategic plan. Even with Dr. Bertram's recent announcement of his departure, the Board of School Trustees remains committed to finding a new leader who will continue to expand the community schools initiative.

Starting at Cedar Hall Elementary

In 1991, a group convened by the [United Way of Southwestern Indiana](#) reported that drug and alcohol abuse and support for families leaving welfare were major concerns in Evansville. When research indicated that after-school programming was a successful response to these problems, the group identified four high-risk, high-poverty EVSC elementary schools for enhanced after-school programming: Cedar Hall, Lincoln, Delaware, and Culver. In partnership with the United Way and with additional funding from the Lilly Endowment, each school began to develop after-school programs in partnership with youth-serving agencies.

In 1994, seeing the success of these collaborative efforts in the elementary schools,

Cedar Hall Principal Cathlin Gray drew on the work of Joy Dryfoos to develop a vision of a full-service school infrastructure. Dryfoos advised the Evansville leadership team to visit communities across the country that had instituted full-service schools. Inspired by its visit, the team began to create the Cedar Hall Model. Soon, community collaborations at Cedar Hall offered GED classes, pre-school programs, counseling and in-house therapy, social work services, and community beautification programs as well as after-school programs in partnership with the YMCA, YWCA, 4-H, and Girl Scouts, just to name a few.

In 1995, Gray took a decisive step to take the Cedar Hall Model community-wide. She convened a meeting of community members and potential partners to form what became the district's first school-based Site Council. Meeting weekly, the council used Kretzmann and McKnight's *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* to conduct a comprehensive survey of the community's assets and challenges. Formal partnerships took shape, focused around a central goal: to meet the needs of Cedar Hall students and families effectively and efficiently. Some early Site Council members included the United Way, the Southwest Indiana Mental Health Center, the local neighborhood association, the Salvation Army, juvenile court, St. Mary's Hospital, the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Indiana Division of Family and Children, and Lampion, a family and child service agency.

Starting in 1996, Cedar Hall's efforts began to spark interest throughout the school district. That year, the EVSC Board of School Trustees passed a formal resolution that designated Cedar Hall as the first full-service community

school. The resolution underscored Cedar Hall's significant impact on the lives of children and families. The following year, Cedar Hall and the United Way co-sponsored a conference for stakeholders from across the state to help them learn about school and community collaboration as seen through the eyes of national experts.

Cedar Hall was starting something big and people around the state were watching. In 1999, the Indiana Department of Education supported an evaluation of the full-service strategy at Cedar Hall; the following year, Senator Evan Bayh recognized the school with a visit. Cedar Hall began to receive more national grants and national recognition based on its successful outcomes.

Expansion Begins

In 2000, a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant enabled five district schools, including Cedar Hall, to hire site coordinators to expand their after-hours activities into year-round enrichment programs, offering activities after school, on weekends, and during the summer. With the support of their site coordinators, the schools began to form their own site councils, mirroring the Cedar Hall approach. A special feature of the grant allowed the schools to institute social work services through St. Mary's Healthcare Services. St. Mary's created a Mobile Outreach Health Clinic and began delivering health services to underserved communities in the Evansville area.

The success of Cedar Hall's full-service model was becoming increasingly evident. A state-funded program evaluation of Cedar Hall found that test scores increased by nearly 15 percent in the school year immediately following implementation of the full-service model.^{xxxiii}

Moving Forward with the Superintendent's Leadership

Determined to find a better way to maximize community resources and seeing the success of Cedar Hall, school officials worked to expand the model. Then-Superintendent Dr. Phil Schoffstall envisioned a community-wide meeting place for organizations concerned with children and families. In 2000, he promoted Principal Gray to the central office as the Title I director and charged her with systematically expanding the full-service community schools model across all EVSC schools. In 2001, the district expanded the model to 10 schools through a second 21st CCLC grant. In 2004, EVSC received a Safe Schools Healthy Student grant that helped expand the strategy into all district schools.

The work was growing and showing great success. Community partners were joining Evansville's community schools movement. Still, the work needed to be more intentional and required a higher level of coordination. In 2001, community partners and the EVSC formed the School Community Council (SCC). The SCC's mission is "to establish school sites as places of community to enhance youth and family development." Community agencies work together at the SCC level, much like site councils work at the school level, to integrate resources targeted to children and families. The SCC developed a detailed strategic plan that specified goals, objectives, and outcomes. Subcommittees, or Strategic Goal Teams, began addressing topics such as cultural diversity, access to services and programs, health and wellness, and evaluation. In the years since the SCC's formation, the council has grown from 50 to more than 70 members.

The Welborn Baptist Foundation began supporting the SCC's work in 2001, allocating funds to create the infrastructure needed to support the expansion of the community schools strategy throughout the district, with a focus on health and wellness. In 2002, Bart McCandless was appointed superintendent. In one of his earliest decisions, he elevated Evansville's SCC initiatives to a new level by creating the position of assistant superintendent of federal projects, with Gray in that role. She assumed responsibility for all school-financed health and social services, after-school programs and related activities, and the coordination of federal, state, and other monies. This organizational shift bundled the funding and coordination of school-managed resources, allowing the school district to use its funds strategically to coordinate with community partners.

Today, EVSC blends a variety of federal funds to support its community schools, including Title I; Title I School Improvement Grants; 1003 G—School Improvement; Special Education; Title II—Professional Development; Title III—English Language Learner; Title IV—Safe and Drug Free; Even Start and Head Start; Centers for Disease Control; 21st Century Community Learning Centers; Carol M. White Physical Education Grant; Grant to Reduce Alcohol Abuse; Safe School/Healthy Students; McKinney Vento Homeless Grant; and Full-Service Community Schools grant. EVSC demonstrates that funding can support a district's community schools strategy in lieu of creating programs to fit the available funding. In this way, EVSC is always moving toward its goal of creating more community schools.

In spring 2007, Dr. Vince Bertram was appointed EVSC superintendent. The SCC played

an active role with the school board to ensure that the new superintendent would support the drive toward community schools. Bertram fulfilled the council's expectations. He immediately engaged the community in over 250 listening sessions, even midnight sessions so that parents who worked two jobs could participate. Out of those sessions, the district developed a strategic plan that addressed five core areas: early childhood education, technology, professional development, innovative school models, and family, school, and community partnerships. Bertram also established the position of associate superintendent for family, school, and community partnerships, raising the status of community schools even higher in the district.

Evansville Today

Evansville has achieved its goal of systematic adoption of the partnership approach in all district schools. All EVSC schools are on the continuum of community schools development. Significantly, the community schools strategy has become fully integrated into the district from the central office down to the individual school. Associate Superintendent Cathy Gray said:

We want to change the way we do business as a corporation and change how we think about communities and schools working together. This is about a process, about collaboration. Each school has its own identity, so it's important to create an infrastructure where we open the doors to community collaboration and see what comes up at each site.

Evansville's community schools effort continues to enjoy vigorous support from its superintendent.

Speaking at a U.S. Department of Education briefing in February 2011, Bertram said, “Education is a complex enterprise. Meeting our children’s academic, social, emotional, and health needs is a shared responsibility. That is why family, school, and community partnerships are at the core of our district’s strategic plan, and we are dedicating substantial resources to support this work.”

As with most initiatives, EVSC is constantly evaluating and reassessing its work. In spring 2011, EVSC hired a director of full-service community schools, another position that will support the district’s strategy.

The school district and community partners are reassessing the composition and responsibilities of the SCC, with a focus on creating a robust steering committee that will set the agenda for the community schools strategy. By constantly assessing progress and deeply engaging the community, EVSC is revising its leadership plan and action steps to ensure that community schools continue to be the centerpiece in helping students succeed for years to come.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI: Schools Enhancing Community Welfare

The story begins not with a grant, funder, educator, or elected official. The story begins with an individual who had an idea. Bert Berkley, a Kansas City-area business leader, believed that the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS)—a major funder of human services—needed to do better for Kansas City’s children and families. Berkley had the opportunity to put his belief into practice when Gary Stangler, then DSS director, encouraged Berkley to devise a reasonable alternative to traditional service delivery. Berkley struck upon a simple, powerful idea: form a citizen board committed to system reform by means of community engagement, collaboration, and broad participation.

It was unclear what would result from Berkley’s idea. The citizen group, called the Local Investment Commission (LINC), had no state statutory authority, no clear charter, no logic model, no data system, no web site, and no email. LINC, as Berkley later wrote in *Giving Back: Connecting You, Business and Community*, had the remarkable opportunity “to find its own way.”

Initial organizational work began in 1992 with the hiring of Executive Director Gayle A. Hobbs, who set up shop in borrowed office space with a laptop computer, a card table, and lawn chairs. (She still leads the effort today.) The result is a neighborhood-based decision-making process that led to the restructuring of existing services targeted to low-income families. As Communications Director Brent Schondelmeyer states:

[LINC] was an outgrowth of community interest and not in response to a grant opportunity or anything like that. It was just people thinking or sitting around thinking, surely we can do better by our community.

The LINC commissioners—the board of directors—were recruited by Berkley based on nominations from the community. Out of concern that they would dominate discussions and the agenda, providers and elected officials could not sit on the board. LINC grew in spurts in response to a community need.

During the 1990s, LINC initially developed its organizational culture and community presence around welfare-to-work, which was the major federal domestic policy issue of the decade. LINC obtained federal waivers that it used to develop a community-based, community-designed welfare-to-work system. That effort, which drew significant national attention, unfolded before the 1996 adoption of landmark federal welfare reform and its promise to “end welfare as we know it.” LINC continues its work in this arena.

At the same time, LINC recognized that any meaningful effort to improve community welfare would need to involve a significant presence within schools and therefore a partnership with school districts. LINC discussed the establishment and support of “school-based or school-linked” services. Hobbs said:

In order to get better results, we had to be able to touch families close to where they work, deliver services in the appropriate time, to be convenient or accessible, and also that, the focus to be on children. To help children you had to help the families, to get healthier

families you had to have healthier neighborhoods.

The framework for LINC's work as a "community schools" model gradually began to emerge in the early 1990s through an ongoing association with Martin Blank of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. Blank had helped LINC with its initial organizational development. As an intermediary, LINC carries out four critical functions: (1) engaging, convening, and supporting diverse groups and communities; (2) establishing quality standards and promoting accountability; (3) brokering and leveraging resources; and (4) promoting effective policy measures.

LINC worked with a handful of site coordinators who directed Caring Communities—LINC's name for its community schools initiative. The coordinators had some flexible funds to spend on supportive services and were expected to organize site councils consisting of families, neighbors, and other interested parties. Much of LINC's early work focused on providing school-based health services at selected high schools, with funding leveraged primarily from federal Medicaid dollars for administrative case management.

In 1999, LINC underwent a dramatic transformation. That year, the Kansas City School District, the region's major urban school district, settled a long-running, expensive school desegregation case. A central feature of the court-supervised desegregation effort was the establishment of magnet schools intended to attract students from neighboring school districts. The 1999 settlement of the federal case resulted in a substantial reduction in school district funding amid an enormous increase in the school transportation budget. At

the same time, success in creating racially diverse schools was modest at best, and the existing system of before- and after-school child care faced imminent collapse. The future looked grim.

LINC, by this point, had built a reputation for bringing together diverse partners to design, develop, and manage large-scale systems. This reputation was founded on the success of LINC's early welfare-to-work efforts. Moving into school-age child care made perfect sense. And, given that a critical factor in a successful welfare-to-work system was the provision of safe, secure, accessible, and affordable child care, the prospect of delivering school-based care was an effective way to serve a large number of children, tap into new funding, and expand Kansas City's network of community schools.

LINC was selected by the state of Missouri to develop an out-of-school-time system for the Kansas City School District by tapping new funding sources. Drawing on its strong partnership with the Missouri DSS, LINC initially turned to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds and, later, a Child Care Development Block grant. LINC made a straightforward case for funding: continuing success of welfare-to-work depended on the availability of affordable child care for TANF participants. Under TANF rules, individual families could apply for child care subsidies and seek high-quality child care, which often was in short supply and inconveniently located. LINC proposed an alternative. It would apply on behalf of all eligible families—with eligibility determined on the basis of children's free or reduced-price lunch status—and use the subsidy to provide school-age child care at schools attended by the children.

Tying out-of-school time to TANF funding was a huge step. It provided LINC with core funding of about \$4.8 million annually, allowing it to develop out-of-school-time programs in almost every elementary school and assign a full-time site coordinator to each affected school to manage and direct the effort. The resources were sufficient for LINC to operate a low-cost, affordable, and readily accessible program while meeting state licensing standards and staffing ratios.

The new effort transformed LINC—already recognized for its welfare-to-work initiative—into a major community institution. The number of LINC Caring Communities sites grew from 18 schools in four districts to more than 70 sites, the majority within the Kansas City School District.

In 2006, the arrival of a new school superintendent with little understanding of LINC’s long-standing partnership with the school district gave rise to a contract dispute between LINC and the district. The Kansas City School District, which once counted over 70,000 students, saw dramatic year-to-year declines in enrollment that leveled off at under 20,000 students—half the district’s size at the time that LINC began its efforts in the district. At the same time, LINC was able to transfer Missouri DSS funds to serve eligible families in school districts located in inner-ring, increasingly low-income suburbs. Therefore, LINC exited from the Kansas City School District and expanded into the adjoining school districts. LINC has now established new school district partnerships and expanded existing ones.

It is hard to see LINC as a whole because it bridges so many school districts and political boundaries. It has a significant presence in seven school districts and a recognized

functional presence in a three-county area (Jackson, Clay, and Platte) as the state’s recognized “community partner” for eight state agencies. In 2009, a new Kansas City School Board and superintendent invited LINC to return to the school district. LINC has since re-established its presence there.

LINC operates one of the country’s most extensive community schools initiatives. Combined enrollment (2010 figures) at its Caring Communities sites totals approximately 30,000 students; if LINC were a unitary school district, it would be Missouri’s largest. Student demographics are 50 percent African American, 16 percent Hispanic, and 32 percent white. Of these students, 71.9 percent qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. At each school, LINC provides funding, support staff, data systems, and training in over 60 low-income neighborhood schools through partnerships with seven school districts. At each school, LINC organizes parents, neighbors, and businesses into site councils that are charged with directing neighborhood-level efforts.

LINC sees the wide-ranging network of community schools as an emerging “delivery system” that provides localized services and supports for children, families, and neighborhoods through, for example, parenting classes, computer and computer literacy classes, health education, adult literacy classes, and food and emergency assistance. LINC also uses school buildings to serve the immediate neighborhood by offering additional services in the schools. In one instance, LINC is locating an office in a school to help TANF recipients obtain training, jobs, and supportive services. That school has the region’s highest number of TANF recipients in a neighborhood where limited public transportation often constrains access to

social services. LINC's 2010–2011 budget of \$17.7 million is a significant increase from \$6.1 million in 1998, the year just before LINC started to provide out-of-school-time care in the Kansas City School District.

LINC's wide-ranging presence in terms of geographic coverage and scope of services is unmatched in the community. LINC increasingly sees itself as a "distribution network" for service delivery, information, opportunity, community organizing, and engagement.

Its community school presence enables LINC to address broad, significant community issues. Two notable examples are LINC's work on foreclosure issues in the Kansas City area and its information campaign on the \$1.2 billion sale of a non-profit health care system to HCA, the result of which was the creation of two health care foundations with assets of \$650 million available to address community health care needs.

LEHIGH VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA: Building Out Regionally—COMPASS Schools and the United Way Of Greater Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

The United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley (UWGLV) finds itself on the cusp of a great challenge and opportunity. After working for six years to expand community schools in three school districts, UWGLV has received a request from one of those districts to scale up the community schools strategy in all of its schools while a fourth district wants to join the initiative. How did UWGLV get to this position, and how is it responding to these scale-up opportunities?

UWGLV serves the area between Philadelphia and New York City, including the urban hubs of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton as well as rural areas. It launched its community schools initiative in 2005. Known as COMPASS (Community Partners for Student Success), the initiative is a core component of the United Way's region-wide strategic community impact plan. According to Vice-President for Community Impact and initial COMPASS Director Marci Ronald, COMPASS is "a marriage of shared community responsibility. It takes shared leadership and good chemistry."

The COMPASS strategy grew out of community stakeholders' concerns about outcomes for youth and families. In 1997, the United Way convened community leaders and partners across Lehigh and Northampton counties, including representatives from the departments of health and human services, school districts, institutions of higher education, and local businesses and corporations. The leaders formed a collaborative called the Lehigh Valley Council for Youth, which focused on best-practice models and strategies to boost support for students and schools in the region. Out of its deliberations, the council created Family Centers, wraparound services, positive behavior intervention and support programs, parent

engagement, and other programs that promoted developmental assets in selected schools.

In 2004, the collaborative decided to think more comprehensively about its strategy and created a blue-ribbon panel that included Joy Dryfoos, a well-known community schools researcher, to evaluate its progress. Thanks to the generous \$100,000 commitment of a local philanthropist, the Lehigh Valley Council for Youth held a small conference in 2005 with 40 education and community leaders from across the area to launch the community schools strategy. The event included presentations by representatives of the Coalition for Community Schools and the SUN (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) Community Schools in Multnomah County, Oregon.

The council started crafting its community schools initiative by inviting four area school districts to participate. In wisely deciding to build on the success of its earlier work, it launched the first community schools in the Bethlehem Area School District in sites that had already adopted aspects of community schools strategies. At the same time, Lehigh and Northampton counties and the United Way planned to create one to two community schools in each of four focus districts as a way to start building the strategy from the ground up. They quickly expanded into the nearby Allentown and Bangor school districts. Bangor Superintendent John Reinhart explained why his district was interested in the community schools strategy, saying, "Our schools can't offer all things to all people. We have to look to the community. I think community schools can offer real leveraging power...it's a better way to handle the issues we face." Allentown Superintendent Dr. Karen S. Angello added, "We have benevolence in the Lehigh Valley; benevolence of heart, benevolence of skills, benevolence of funding. So why are we doing this? Because we have the ingredients. Community schools are all about aligning

resources...to benefit our children and their families.”

The fourth district chose not to commit to the initiative. It was in the midst of internal transitions and wanted to consider how the community schools strategy would meld with its existing work. That district is preparing to introduce the components of community schools in the 2011–2012 school year.

Late in 2006, the Lehigh Valley Council for Youth decided to reorganize its partnership structure to align with the new focus on community schools. It expanded its membership to include the heads of the Lehigh and Northampton County Departments of Human Services, lead executives from community-based organizations, and program providers. Together, this new collaboration of community leaders formed the COMPASS Council, with the intention of building a community schools initiative. They discussed issues of membership, name and branding, purpose, structure of meetings, communication, and resource development. From these leadership deliberations, COMPASS was launched in January 2007.

The United Way is the intermediary organization that administers COMPASS; it champions the initiative and builds awareness and community participation. UWGLV also works closely with lead agencies selected to manage operations at each site, providing ongoing training, technical assistance, and oversight. In addition, it provides core funding and receives contributions from each county’s department of human services, from corporate foundations, and from school districts under Title I, Safe Schools/Healthy Schools, and, the state accountability block grant.

At the school site, the United Way and a lead partner share the cost of supporting a full-time community schools coordinator. The United Way has selected a unique array of lead partner agencies, including the Boys and Girls Clubs of

Allentown, Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley, Northampton Community College, and Lehigh University, to participate as lead agencies. Early on, leaders decided to develop their own capacity to deliver training and technical assistance; in 2006, the United Way named a full-time director of training and technical assistance to support community schools through on-site training and technical assistance as well as implementation of the COMPASS model. COMPASS’s director is responsible for administration of the initiative, coordination of support for the schools, budget management, and resource development. A part-time administrative staff member assists the director.

COMPASS was awarded three VISTA volunteers who will join the initiative in July 2011. One volunteer will be placed in each of the three partnering school districts and will focus on building capacity for volunteer engagement at each school, alignment of program providers with each district’s academic vision and curriculum, and development of a consistent message and media presence within each district via a web site and newsletters.

The COMPASS Council continues to serve as the initiative’s community leadership group. It meets four times a year and is responsible for the initiative’s vision and strategy. In addition, the COMPASS Partnership, which comprises all members of the COMPASS Council and any other individual interested in learning about the COMPASS network, meets twice a year. Lead partners may attend the semiannual meeting, along with other program providers who want to learn how to connect to COMPASS. The purpose of the meeting is to showcase the COMPASS sites’ innovative programming and to motivate interested parties to explore ways to create lasting and meaningful impact.

The United Way’s regional focus, demonstrable improvements in several measures at COMPASS schools, and partnership efforts with state education leaders—amid a challenging

economic climate and a school population with wide-ranging needs—have set the stage for expansion. Marci Ronald describes COMPASS's scale-up plan as "very organic." She says, "As dollars—steady dollars—became available, the collaborative has thoughtfully considered how, when, and if to expand." COMPASS's receipt of significant dollars from the United Way's pool of undesignated funding from the 2008–2011 investment cycle significantly contributed to the initiative's growth. In addition, Lehigh and Northampton counties have provided their respective schools and districts with some funding. Consequently, the initiative has expanded into 12 schools across three districts.

In 2008, COMPASS reassessed its work once again and developed a strategic plan to respond to a shifting environment. It focused on clearly articulating the initiative's priorities, vision, and mission. In a case of unfortunate timing, however, the COMPASS strategic plan was largely put on hold when the United Way launched its own strategic planning process. However, through the efforts of COMPASS leaders in dialogue with the United Way Board of Directors, COMPASS community schools became a focus of the United Way's strategic plan.

COMPASS now operates in 12, and soon to be in 13, of 42 high-poverty schools with academic achievement concerns; it reaches 8,000 students in elementary, middle, and high school. "In just three years," says Ronald, "we've had tremendous growth, success, and energy around what it takes to engage CBOs, schools, districts, and others to work together, for the long term, around a common mission for students in our community." Nearby districts, both urban and rural, want a similar set of community schools services in their schools; the United Way and its partners are encouraged by the possibility of a sizeable expansion.

As of spring 2011, COMPASS continues to work with the Allentown School District to understand the reality of what scale-up could mean. In fact, in partnership with the Allentown School District, UWGLV/COMPASS has submitted a proposal to the Social Innovation Fund of the Corporation for National and Community Service, requesting \$1 million for each of the next three years. United Way has committed \$500,000 to the project and has agreed to raise an additional \$2.5 million over the next three years. The funds are expected to leverage \$10.3 million for use in transforming five current School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools in Allentown into COMPASS Community Schools. In addition, despite financial constraints and budget cuts, Allentown Superintendent Gerald Zahorchak has created a new administrative position within the district to oversee and coordinate all before- and after-school programs and other opportunities and services across the district. The COMPASS Community School model is seen as the vehicle for effective and efficient coordination.

The Bethlehem Area School District recently inquired about how it might identify all programs and services offered within its jurisdiction, along with the full range of unmet needs. Part of Superintendent Joseph Roy's plan for maintaining or increasing growth and opportunity revolves around the question, How do we increase the number of community schools in the district?

The Bangor area continues to make steady progress in understanding the demands of a rural district. It is working on the details of a five-year plan to implement the community schools strategy more fully across all five of its schools. The Easton Area School District (EASD) continues to build the infrastructure to support COMPASS goals.

As a first step, the district has aligned itself with the important (and new in 2011) COMPASS-led Early Childhood Education effort, whereby COMPASS is working with a lead partner in Easton on the transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten.

The United Way is using the partnership to educate and inform the Easton community about the COMPASS work on a larger scale. A local political figure representing parts of EASD has recently inquired about how the community schools model could be incorporated into state legislation promoting urban development. That inquiry holds promise for COMPASS's further expansion.

Looking ahead, COMPASS Director Jill Perriera says, "We are keenly aware of the window of opportunity that is now wide open for COMPASS to look at a more comprehensive regional scale-up of community schools in the Lehigh Valley. Partnerships have been energized and strengthened by new leadership at all levels and are being guided by the power of leveraging resources and aligning efforts in the interest of student and family success and achievement."

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: Lifting the Vision of Community Schools Across a District

In July 2010, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) joined the ranks of school districts that have declared the full-service community school strategy as a core part of their school reform agenda. Community schools are becoming such an important focus to OUSD that visitors to the district's website are greeted by the tagline, "Oakland Unified School District: Community Schools, Thriving Students." OUSD reached this point through decades of community organizing efforts, strong nonprofit partners, assistance from a local community foundation, a committed group of local funders, careful planning in partnership with the community, and the vision of its new school leader, Superintendent Tony Smith.

In 2001, Tony Smith was working for the Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES) as Director of the Emeryville Citywide Initiative. The state of California took over Emeryville Unified School District (EUSD), a small district with less than 1,000 students that borders Oakland, Berkeley, and the San Francisco Bay, and is the home of PIXAR, for low performance in 2004. BayCES was charged with helping EUSD and Smith introduced the community school strategy as one element to turn around the district. It worked. EUSD got off the state receivership list faster than any other district had at that point and the school board hired Smith as its superintendent. Smith convinced the Emeryville Board of Education and the City Council to adopt the community schools approach as a means to disrupt the predictive power of race and demographics on student achievement.

After seven years at Emery, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) hired Smith as the Deputy Superintendent for Innovation and Social Justice, where he continued to advocate for the community school strategy in a number of different ways. First, San Francisco included a network of community schools as part of its 2008-2012 Strategic Plan. Further, Smith helped write a successful New Day for Learning grant for the Mott Foundation which incorporated the community school strategy. After over five years of state receivership, nearby Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) hired Smith as their first post-receivership, locally selected superintendent in May 2009. (SFUSD Superintendent Carlos Garcia, continues the vision for community schools across the district by using federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) monies to fund 10 community school coordinators as part of the district's strategic plan.)

Over this same period, Lisa Villarreal, Program Officer for The San Francisco Foundation (TSSF) and Vice-Chair of the Coalition for Community Schools, had been having regular discussions with Smith provided seed funding in each of his previous districts to support the community school strategy, and provided some of the earliest grants to support the full service community schools planning in Oakland. Smith first met Villarreal while attending a National Community Schools Forum during his tenure at Emeryville and wanted to learn more about community schools. The relationship between these two leaders led to years of discussion about the power of community schools to transform communities.

As he had done before in SFUSD, Smith brought his passion for community schools to his new role in Oakland. Oakland's children, like those

in many urban areas, face numerous disparities. Smith, citing data from a 2008 Alameda County [report](#) often says that an African American child born in West Oakland, two miles away from Oakland Hills, a predominantly white area, is:

1.5 times more likely to be born premature, seven times more likely to be born into poverty, two and a half times more likely to not be vaccinated when they enter kindergarten, four time less likely to read at grade level by grade four, and six times more likely to be pushed out or to drop out of school before they graduate....That basically ends up with African Americans born in West Oakland having 15 years less life expectancy than white kids two miles away.

Oakland has a number of assets, including many different CBOs, on which to build a community school strategy. OUSD had already created the Department of Complementary Learning to better coordinate supports and partnerships in schools. As part of the Department's efforts, they raised the number of children being served by summer school from 800 to 8,000 and the number of schools with after school programs from 32 to 90. They also increased the number of partners working with the schools and expanded the number of school-based health clinics through a \$26 million school bond. The school board was attracted to Smith's focus on the whole child which was aligned with these existing activities. He was a natural fit for the community.

As one of his first acts as superintendent, Smith spoke with community members to discover which strategies were improving the lives of children. According to Smith, people saw "a lack of coordination, no alignment of services,

and we weren't able to leverage the incredible resources that were available for all the kids." He saw that there were a number of organizations that were using elements of the community school strategies and an array of other partnerships, but he characterized their efforts as "hit and miss, or in pockets." Smith committed to taking these efforts to address children's myriad needs to a new, more coordinated level. He said:

We all have to come together in terms of children and families, particularly for those kids who have been least well served by the system. We just think that being a full-service community district or a district of full-service community schools is the way to go.

Smith included the community school framework as a central part of the district's [strategic plan](#) to improve schools and communities which he proposed to the Board of Education. Smith acknowledged the importance of having a Board that is committed to improving outcomes for children. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the plan to make Oakland a full-service school district and incorporated the framework into its five-year strategic plan. Gary Yee, President of the Oakland School Board explains, "When the child comes to school, he should be getting cues from the neighborhood that says 'we all care and support you!' That's why I think this full service community school is so important."

Smith's vision and the Board of Education's support paved the way for a scaled up system of community schools across the district. Smith stated:

That's who we are [a full-service community school district], and what

we're about now. With the passage [by the School Board] of this content, this work plan, it is now the sole work of the [Oakland] Unified School District. We are in the process of becoming a full-service community district that engages deeply with family and the communities we support.

Unique in Smith's framing is the concept of creating a full community schools district complete with the policies and practices that support community schools on the ground

One of OUSD's first steps was to change its tagline to "Community Schools, Thriving Students." This new tagline is displayed on their website, business cards, and official documents, communicating the district's new strategy and message into the community.

The district has taken part in unprecedented steps to engage the community and plan thoughtfully. To design its community school initiative, OUSD organized a [full service community schools task force](#) comprised of 25-30 people from OUSD and the community. It included representatives from the Oakland Community After School Alliance, East Bay Asian Youth Center, the Oakland Unity Council, among others (a full list of the Task Force is presented on the [website](#)), and met weekly for over seven months. To engage the community, the Task Force visited existing FSCS sites to understand lessons learned, consulted with key stakeholders to capture their perspective on what a FSCS district should look like, and held numerous community gatherings to listen to people's ideas about community schools. [The Urban Strategies Council](#), a local highly respected community intermediary facilitated the development of the FSCS plan.

Community organizations and businesses support the district's efforts. According to Joseph Haraburda, President, Oakland Chamber of Commerce, "The business community is completely behind the idea of full service schools and supports the district's effort to accomplish that." Nicole Taylor, President and CEO, East Bay Community Foundation adds, "Tony is really galvanizing a great cross-section of folks in the city. Not just folks within the school district, but business leaders, non-profit leaders, parents and families." Taylor and the East Bay Community Foundation organized funders in Oakland to rally behind the community school strategy. Numerous funders now support the community schools work including Bechtel, Chevron, Kaiser Permanente, Rogers, and more every quarter.

OUSD also launched a website, www.thrivingstudents.org, dedicated to communicating how the district is working towards becoming a full-service community school district. The website a list of task forces, highlights work that is being done along the way, presents meeting times, documents, and summaries, and provides ways for visitors to contribute to the design of the initiative through email, Facebook, and Twitter.

OUSD is planning to merge the offices of Complementary Learning and Family and Community into the Department of Partnerships for Families, Schools, and Community, thereby institutionalizing FSCS within the district, buttressed by district staff and funding. It is aligning its departments to support the FSCS strategy. Human Resources; Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction (LCI); and, Facilities are examples of some departments that are exploring how they can support the FSCS vision. For example, LCI is

going to provide professional development to principals on how to share resources, develop trust, and lead in a FSCS. The Task Force is also working with Facilities to resolve issues around custodial staff working during the expanded hours required of FSCS.

The Full Service Community School's Task Force completed its work and timeline and the work of this and all the other task forces rolled up into a draft strategic plan which was unanimously approved by the Board of Education in June 2011, with implementation starting in fall 2011. Like many other developing initiatives, they will start in the schools that already have the culture of partnerships and integration in place and will work with other schools to prepare them for partnership, increased supports, and community involvement. The Oakland work represents one of the most complete plans for creating a scaled up strategy for community schools that has yet been developed. The challenges of implementation await. Go to www.thrivingstudents.org to see the task force working documents and videos about the Oakland FSCS initiative.

The Bay Area has become an area of incredible growth of the community school vision. Nine local school districts are watching what Oakland is doing and hope to develop similar plans for community schools to present to their boards of education.

PORTLAND/MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON: More Than a Promise— Where Learning Happens

Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) represents one of the nation's most powerful visions of a community schools system. Built by county and city leaders in partnership with six school superintendents, SUN has grown from 8 schools in 1999 to 60 schools in 2011, with an emerging plan to make every school in Multnomah County, Oregon, a SUN Community School.

In 1998, Multnomah County knew that it was facing an uphill battle against shrinking budgets, increased demand for services amid growing cultural and linguistic diversity, a widening achievement gap, and no clear sense of where and how resources supporting school-age youth and families were used. At the same time, leaders from both the city of Portland and Multnomah County recognized that responses to local conditions were emerging from several fronts: a county Community Building Initiative, a city After-School Cabinet, and school-based grass-roots efforts that forged partnerships with community organizations to meet students' needs. City and county leaders merged these various efforts and led a joint planning process to design a model to meet the community's needs. Although family-oriented services were already available in the community, leaders realized that increased access to services through school-based centers would enhance service availability while providing a valuable platform for community engagement. Visibly co-locating services in schools would counteract the isolation of schools and help voters, the majority of whom did not have children in public school, appreciate the centrality of

schools and their importance to the entire community. Leaders acknowledged:

We had several motivations for going this route. We wanted to meet families where they are—in the neighborhood—and provide services in a place that was familiar and non-stigmatizing—the neighborhood school. We knew that school personnel were likely to be able to identify students who could use extra support before these students were in crisis, so that resources could be spent on enrichment and prevention.

Drawing on national research and the opportunity to visit the Children's Aid Society, a large service provider in New York City with over 20 years' experience in implementing and supporting community schools initiatives, city and county leaders chose the full-service community schools model as the vehicle for partners to achieve their shared vision and individual missions. The partners' vision for community schools was broad: comprehensive services to increase educational success and self-sufficiency for children, families, and community members provided through a system of community schools.

From their joint planning effort, leaders created the SUN Community Schools Initiative, with youth suggesting the name SUN. The initiative launched eight community schools in 1999, funded by the city and county. The initiative's pivotal decision to fund non-profit partners as the lead agency responsible for organizing community schools in part reflected the fact that the county historically did not fund school systems. This decision has proven prescient as non-profit partners have generated additional resources to support SUN Community Schools.

At the leadership level, the Community Building Initiative Sponsor Group evolved into the SUN Sponsor Group, incorporating members of the After-School Cabinet to form the initiative's governing body. The Sponsor Group comprises leaders from the city of Portland, Multnomah County, the city of Gresham, six school districts, the state of Oregon, businesses, and community organizations.

Local leaders, such as Lorenzo Poe, the then-director of the Multnomah County Department of Community and Family Services, also knew that the initiative "needed to do more than promise to do good and avoid evil." Thus, the Sponsor Group agreed on a results-based vision that called for improved attendance, behavior, parent involvement, and achievement. Later, as the initiative evolved, the Sponsor Group developed outcome targets to help gauge success and ensure accountability.

The Sponsor Group selected the county as the initiative's intermediary, or managing, partner, taking advantage of its capacity to convene partners, manage contracts and other administrative issues, and link to county-funded services, including anti-poverty, health, mental health, library, and juvenile justice services. In its first year as intermediary, the county convened separate monthly meetings of school principals, site managers (the term for local site-based community school coordinators), and lead agency supervisors (responsible for overseeing site managers) to provide technical assistance, encourage peer networking, and gather input on effective practices. In addition, joint meetings of these stakeholders from the eight initial sites took place several times a year. Over the last 12 years, the county has expanded the technical assistance and program development structures and resources available

to stakeholders and has added a table for district liaisons from each of the six school districts to address systemic operational issues.

SUN Community Schools expanded rapidly as it gained visibility. It received significant financial support when it was added as a line item to the 2000 city and county budgets. Between 2000 and 2002, SUN relied on 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, Safe Schools grants, and the restructuring of an existing high school family resource center to add new community schools. By 2003, SUN had more than doubled in size and grown to 19 schools across five districts serving 9,721 children and 44,000 other people. When voters passed the Portland Children's Levy in 2002, SUN added 4 sites during the 2003–2004 school year.

In 2004, SUN Community Schools grew significantly as a result of policy and system alignment efforts on the part of Multnomah County in partnership with the city of Portland. The county adopted a School-Age Policy Framework in 2003 that created a system for the delivery of social and support services that lead to educational success and self-sufficiency for children, families, and community members. The system, which is now known as the SUN Service System, built on SUN Community Schools and identified community schools as its cornerstone strategy. In implementing the system, the county redirected funds to increase the number of SUN Community School sites, and the city of Portland aligned 13 existing Parks and Recreation community schools that were not previously SUN Community Schools with the SUN model, resulting in 46 total sites.

The value of community schools and their effectiveness in engaging community became evident when county funding for SUN was threatened in 2006. Over 500 parents, students, and community members attended a county

budget hearing to testify on behalf of SUN Community Schools and to sustain the community schools strategy. The community won. SUN Community Schools continued to receive funding, and a new governance body for the initiative was formed—the SUN Service System Coordinating Council.

The council includes representatives from SUN partner organizations, including the director of the Multnomah County Department of Human Services, high-level school district administrators, the director of the Portland Children's Levy, the director of Portland Parks and Recreation, and members of the Coalition of Communities of Color, community partners, and others.

From 2005 to 2010, more champions rose to support SUN Community Schools as school districts and public leaders identified the community schools initiative as a main strategy for achieving their respective core missions. The collaboration secured grants from federal and local sources and identified educational funding to increase the number of sites. As intermediary, the county supported the development and strengthening of collaborative leadership and its commitment to collective impact by, for example, staffing the SUN Service System Coordinating Council. The county also ensured communication across and between all levels of the initiative, convened partners, coordinated strategic planning, conducted an evaluation and specified accountability measures, provided technical assistance and training, and managed program development—all of which are critical to the ongoing collaboration.

By the start of the 2010-2011 school year, SUN Community Schools counted 60 schools and served close to 20,000 children and adults. Its scaled-up success is visible and sustained. Despite leadership transitions, the initiative has grown because of its broad political support. Since SUN's creation, the system has seen the arrival of four county commissioners representing both political parties, along with the arrival of three mayors. SUN has critical financial and political support. According to Lorenzo Poe:

It has become a model that in the city of Portland and in Multnomah County, you cannot run for public office unless you embrace SUN as a model. You cannot run for school board unless you clearly articulate your support of SUN as a model and how it in fact supports the academic achievement of students. When you run for office, I can guarantee you that there's a number of organizations that ask every candidate the same series of questions, and it all centers around that.

This support will help ensure SUN's impact well into the future. SUN is planning to scale up into every school in Multnomah County—over 150 schools—permitting it to extend its reach to the entire county and making it the nation's first all-county community schools initiative.

SOUTH KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON: Doing the Work Better and Faster; Expanding in King County, Washington

For Deborah Salas, executive director of the Community Schools Collaboration (CSC) in South King County, Washington, scale-up has meant “learning to do the work better, faster and more efficiently.”

Unbeknownst to Salas, what would become her community schools journey began in 1998. At that time, representatives from Casey Family Programs met with representatives from the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD)^{xxxiv} to discuss ways to remedy an unacceptable drop-out rate and the high number of out-of-home placements. The participants decided to focus on the city of Tukwila—just outside Seattle—because of its small size (five schools), history of collaboration, rapid urbanization, and King County’s highest rate of children living out-of-home (one in nine). Casey hoped to learn from Tukwila and then expand its work in new communities. Tukwila is one of the nation’s most diverse school districts; among its 2,800 students, 1,500 refugee and immigrant youth speak over 70 languages.

Casey Family Programs and PSESD added the Tukwila School District, the city of Tukwila, and the Washington State Department of Children and Families to the CSC as founding partners. Together, they established the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration (TCSC) as a public/private partnership. Leaders from the respective organizations devoted two years to conducting internal conversations to ensure that each partner had an equal voice, a share of funding responsibility, and no staffing issues. As part of the process, the partnership conducted

19 focus groups with families, students, educators, public agencies, and local government and secured additional funding from the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation. The partnership developed a strategic plan built on the following vision: “To establish Tukwila as a model community that maximizes resources to improve its schools, neighborhoods, and economic environment through a coordinated collaboration of local schools, government, businesses, citizens, and foundations.”

In 2001, the TCSC was formally introduced; a Collaborative Executive Leadership Team comprised of representatives from the founding partners governed the enterprise, with PSESD’s children’s foundation serving as the fiscal agent. That same year, site-level operations began in all five Tukwila schools: three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The TCSC funded eight staff in each school (a full-time site manager, three part-time group leaders, and four part-time youth leaders). Deborah Salas was among the initial site managers, and she recalls that two of the youth leaders were high school students who themselves needed support and enrichment. Site managers at each school forged partnerships with groups such as Tukwila Parks and Recreation, the Tukwila Public Health Department, Washington Reading Corps/AmeriCorps, Smile Mobile dental services, and 4-H. Initial programming focused on after-school and summer academic and enrichment activities. Quarterly literacy events offered families opportunities to learn with their children, and an annual health fair with immunizations addressed student health concerns.

In short time, TCSC leaders and staff saw the need for more expertise and began looking for partners that could provide greater capacity in the schools. In an area with few community-based providers, the TCSC took a broad approach and looked for partners in arts, cultural, and faith-based organizations as well as through contracts with skilled individuals. It also recognized the need for ongoing training of both TCSC and school staff. As a result, the TCSC launched a Continual Quality Improvement (CQI) process and identified areas for professional development.

As its work grew, the TCSC expanded its vision and developed a multipronged strategy not just to support students but also to strengthen families and enhance school effectiveness. The TCSC realized that high school as well as elementary school students needed enrichment opportunities and social supports and that all students would benefit from special assistance at academic transition points.

Typical of growing systems, the TCSC recognized—after three years—that it needed to perform its work more effectively and efficiently. One challenge in particular underscored the need for improvement: the TCSC was experiencing difficulty in communicating to funders the collaborative’s unique partnership and leadership structure. The TCSC project coordinator worked for Casey, the school-site managers worked for PSESD, and other staff were on the city of Tukwila’s payroll. The arrangement was workable but did not lend itself to easy explanation. So, the Collaborative Executive Leadership Team decided to restructure the initiative by forming an independent not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. A community board of directors oversaw the work of the reconstituted

organization, which was now positioned to receive additional funding from local funders, such as the Stuart Foundation, the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, and others. The five founding partners served on the new governing board as the TCSC recruited additional members. In 2004, the new community board added to the original partners a parent from the community, a local business consultant, and the leaders of community-based organizations. It formulated a cohesive management vision, naming Salas the first TCSC executive director and developing a fund-raising strategy. Since then, the TCSC has expanded its partnerships, deepened its work, and continued to see success.

By 2007, the TCSC had improved graduation and attendance rates and saw a decrease in drop-out and mobility rates. It received the Coalition for Community Schools National Award for Excellence and was gaining visibility in the region among funders and community leaders. At the same time, it drew the attention of John Welch, superintendent of the nearby Highline School District, and of the city of SeaTac. With the Stuart Foundation’s and Seattle Foundation’s support of community schools in the region, the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration became the Community Schools Collaboration, reflecting its new regional focus. The TCSC’s first effort at expansion began with the Highline School District. Believing that community-based organizations command the strength to support efforts to improve student achievement, Highline’s leaders identified SeaTac and White Center as the communities with the greatest need for support. According to Superintendent John Welch, “We really need our communities to rally around our kids’ education and just support kids overall so they

can be successful in school and life and that is what community schools are all about.”

Regional scale-up has been intentional in all three communities, with clusters of schools organized around elementary, middle school, and high school feeder patterns. Within the clusters, schools work with and learn from each other, and students and families may progress through schools that employ a community schools approach. From 2008 to 2010, the CSC expanded into 16 campuses and 20 schools and began to address transitions across grade levels and the alignment of extended-day activities with student supports. Extended-day activities are organized around youth development assets and grade-level standards. In addition, teachers or CSC staff who have worked with an education coach coordinate many of the activities.

Salas notes that the CSC has expanded its family engagement “by developing partnerships with culturally based community agencies [e.g., Somali Community Services Coalition, Para Los Niños, and PACIFIKA], partnering with the parent-teacher organizations and reaching out to families in their own language.” The CSC has expanded health services to include physicals, immunization services, dental screenings, and vision care through partnerships with individual doctors, dentists, the Swedish Hospital, King County Public Health, HealthPoint Community Health Centers, Washington Smile Partners and the Smile Mobile, and LensCrafters.

The CSC has re-branded itself with a new logo and web site and is now developing a new strategic plan that makes community schools the centerpiece of education reform, building deeper alliances and sustainability strategies. It is working with a cradle-to-career network on benchmarks and transitions in a child’s

developmental path and putting the community schools strategy out front.

The pace of change has been exhilarating as the initiative’s budget has grown from \$600,000 to over \$2 million in just a few years, and that figure does not count the more than \$1 million in leveraged programs and services delivered in CSC community schools. The CSC is reaching out to nascent initiatives in Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver, Washington, to help them build and strengthen their own community school initiatives. Still, the challenges facing the CSC remain daunting, particularly as difficult economic times challenge families. With scale-up continuing into new communities with different demographic and political dynamics, leaders have learned about the importance of patience and flexibility. But, for Deborah Salas, the payoff lies in watching community schools become “not just a program but the life and breath of our schools.”

In 2010, after more than 10 years of hard work, the CSC reflected on its system-wide operations and took even greater steps in scaling up and improving its work. It co-founded the West Coast Collaborative of community schools initiatives, a group funded by the Stuart Foundation to share best practices with one another.

TULSA, OKLAHOMA: Learning from Other Initiatives and Planning for Sustainability

Community leaders in Tulsa, Oklahoma, recognized that the supports made available to preschool-age children failed to make a difference in children's lives once the children entered grade school. The leaders therefore began searching for a way to connect the same types of student and family supports to the schools. After intentional research on best practices, they discovered the community schools strategy and began a journey around the country to learn from others as they planned for a sustainable strategy. Today, community schools are embedded in two Tulsa school districts (Tulsa Public Schools and Union Public Schools), and other Tulsa-area school districts have begun to inquire about community schools. Under the umbrella of the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative, community school leaders have built collective trust among school leaders and community partners; as a result, many more students in Tulsa are succeeding.

In 2005, the Metropolitan Human Services Commission (MHSC) decided to make educational improvements one of its priorities.^{xxxv} The MHSC is a collaborative of leaders established and supported by the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa (CSC), city of Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) and Union Public Schools (UPS), Tulsa Area United Way, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Health Department, Tulsa Technology Center, and Tulsa Metro Chamber of Commerce.

The MHSC had been involved in several activities to support children and families, especially in the areas of child abuse prevention, family support, and early childhood development. Members recognized that, despite these activities, the supports were not following children into the school system. In addition, too often, the gains made in the early years evaporated when children reached school age. Consequently, the MHSC sought to identify a positive school reform and revitalization strategy that would involve the whole child, from the prenatal period through post-secondary education and into the workforce.

The MHSC engaged the CSC to research and present options for developing new strategies to increase the likelihood of success for all children in the education pipeline. The CSC hired Jan Creveling, a respected former Junior League vice president who had worked on MHSC and CSC initiatives, to identify an education improvement strategy appropriate for Tulsa. Creveling began an 18-month process of gathering and analyzing research. She investigated the Beacons model, family resource centers, and other supportive strategies across the nation. After studying various approaches to education reform, Creveling and the CSC determined that community schools offered an overarching framework for all the other programs under consideration.

Creveling and the CSC set out to learn as much as possible about existing community schools. She and Phil Dessauer, the CSC's executive director, attended the Coalition for Community Schools National Forum in Chicago in spring 2005. At the forum, Creveling and Dessauer were surprised and encouraged when they met the principal and assistant principal of Roy Clark

Elementary School, a Union Public School in Tulsa.^{xxxvi} They, too, were attending the forum to learn about community schools. Following the forum, Creveling visited Washington, DC, to meet with Coalition staff, who recommended that she accompany a team to the Coalition's National Forum in Baltimore the following year. Upon her return from Washington, Creveling made a formal presentation about her research and recommended that the MHSC begin designing a community schools initiative. The MHSC supported the recommendation and directed Creveling to initiate the needed planning.

Creveling began her efforts by contacting other community school leaders around the country to learn from their experiences. She asked, What lessons did you learn? What should we avoid? What have been your successes? What do you wish you'd done differently? And, if you were starting today with what you know now, what would your initiative look like? Given that Creveling had been involved in other efforts that could not be sustained, she focused on sustainability from the beginning of the planning process.

Creveling assembled a team of 32 community representatives from a variety of sectors to attend the Coalition for Community Schools National Forum in Baltimore in spring 2006. With a plan to learn from others, each representative of the Tulsa delegation was encouraged to attend specific workshops and report back to others in Tulsa on what they learned. Upon their return from Baltimore, attendees began to formulate the vision, mission, core beliefs, governance structure, and core components of a Tulsa community schools initiative.

Given that the Tulsa and Union schools were not only MHSC members but also parties to the decision to investigate a new school reform strategy, UPS Superintendent Dr. Cathy Burden and TPS Superintendent Dr. David Sawyer started hosting listening sessions that enabled the Tulsa delegation to present its findings and proposals to others. Dr. Burden invited all UPS Title I elementary schools to the sessions with the aim that all UPS schools would become community schools; Dr. Sawyer invited everyone from the TPS elementary schools most interested and experienced in community partnerships (based on attendance at listening sessions and leadership experience in working with community resources) to establish the first TPS elementary community schools.

Concurrently, the CSC began to build the infrastructure needed to coordinate and manage the community schools initiative, which was soon called the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI). The CSC created the TACSI Resource Center, a "central clearinghouse" staffed by the CSC, to plan, implement, and administer the initiative. Creveling agreed to serve as senior planner in charge of the TACSI, and, in 2006, the CSC hired a school liaison to work with designated community schools.

Since 2006, TACSI has followed a uniform process at each new community school to initiate planning. The planning process is organized around a resource inventory that covers the seven core components of the community schools framework: early care and learning, health/health education, mental health/social services, family/community engagement, youth development/out-of-school time, neighborhood development, and life-long learning. Schools begin the process by identifying initiatives and partners already involved within their school community in order

to align strategies, avoid duplication of effort, and generate buy-in from the school and community organizations. Each community school must identify three priority needs to ensure that TACSI meets at least one of them each year and remains responsive to individual schools' needs.

In 2007, TACSI created a Management Team of leaders from participating school districts and other key stakeholders to help implement and align the TACSI strategy with that of the school districts and the University of Oklahoma community schools system. The team also develops policy guidelines for community schools.

Through a large steering committee established in 2009, the broader community is now engaged in planning and guiding the TACSI; it meets monthly to help guide and support strong community relations. The committee comprises approximately 20 members, including funders, school board members, representatives overseeing each of the seven core components, and individuals with a history of supporting Tulsa-area education and planning initiatives.

CSC staff serve as the intermediary for TACSI and oversee the TACSI Resource Center. The CSC employs the community school coordinators in the TPS sites, whereas coordinators in the UPS sites are district employees. The CSC and school principals supervise TPS and UPS coordinators in an arrangement consistent with the desires of each district as specified from the outset of the initiative.

After learning about planning for sustainability at a Coalition for Community Schools National Forum, TACSI planned the community schools initiative in three-year increments in order to

remain sensitive to changing environments. This approach has helped TACSI stay focused while planning for scale-up.

As part of its planning, TACSI outlined the structure, activities, and normative elements of its community schools initiative in what it describes as Community School DNA. The structural elements for each fully developed community school depend on the principal's strong leadership as well as on a coordinator and site team to ensure the delivery of a set of holistic programs, services, and opportunities; family and community engagement; and community-based learning. The normative elements are democratic leadership, program coherence, parent responsibility, and professional capacity. Together, the aligned DNA elements create and support the conditions for learning.

In addition, TACSI characterizes its schools along a continuum of community schools development according to the following stages (in ascending order): inquiring, emerging, mentoring, and sustaining. In adapting these stages from the Children's Aid Society community schools stages of development, TACSI has been able to map expectations for new and growing community schools as they scale up.

In 2007, after thoughtful deliberation and learning from experienced community schools initiatives around the country, TACSI launched 18 community schools in the Tulsa and Union school districts. It planned the phased-in implementation of the community schools strategy, starting with elementary schools and then moving to middle schools in later years, thereby providing a vertically aligned continuum of supports. TACSI assumes that it will have to adopt a different approach for the

post-elementary level. It plans to explore the relevance of some of its assumptions in a startup effort at the UPS's grade 6 and 7 center during the 2011–2012 school year.

In the initial year of community schools implementation, principals relied on Resource Inventories to evaluate a school's capacity and determine its suitability for designation as a community school. Based on the inventories, TACSI started with 2 “mentoring” schools, each with a full-time community school coordinator; by the end of the first year, 5 community schools were at the mentoring level and had a full-time coordinator. In the TACSI model, “mentoring” schools demonstrate the school climate and culture conducive to partnerships and thus are considered to be prepared for a coordinator. Thirteen other schools, referred to by TACSI as “emerging,” started to develop the climate and culture of community schools and, during the first year, began to move along the community schools continuum. All 18 schools learned from one another, participated in professional development activities, and received technical assistance over the next two years. In 2009, 7 more schools joined TACSI as “inquiring” schools” in the earliest stages of developing into community schools.

An essential component of TACSI's scale-up and sustainability strategies is a rigorous evaluation of the implementation and impact of community schools. The TACSI partnered with the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa's (OU-Tulsa) School of Education to begin evaluating the model. Assistant Professor Curt Adams first studied the governance structure of each community school and found that high-implementing community schools (“mentoring” schools) achieved the greatest success with students and families. For leaders of the

initiative, this finding confirmed the effectiveness of the TACSI model. In a second study, Dr. Adams and his team examined cross-boundary leadership, another key ingredient of the strategy, and found that collective trust among leaders and school personnel was essential to success. A third study found that, on state achievement tests, grade 5 students in high-implementing TACSI community schools were outperforming by 30 points grade 5 students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch in non-community schools. Leaders were surprised and delighted to see that the initiative was making a noticeable difference in so little time. Each study has helped TACSI expand the initiative by using the best data available for decision making.

OU-Tulsa has been involved in developing TACSI from the initiative's outset. Pam Pittman, head of the university's Community Engagement Center, has served on the Management Team since its inception, and the OU-Tulsa clinics have always played an important role in providing supports in community schools. Using a university-assisted community schools model, OU-Tulsa provides supports to students starting in grade 9 and continuing through college. The university's [diagram](#) of the P-20 Pipeline in Tulsa illustrates the relationship: TACSI provides support at the beginning of the pipeline, from early childhood education and elementary school through middle school, and OU-Tulsa supports students from high school through their experiences as life-long learners.

In 2009, TACSI was awarded a grant from the Institute for Educational Leadership, in collaboration with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to participate in the Early Childhood and Community Schools Linkages project (Linkages). The project goals are (1) to ensure that all

children are prepared for success in school and life; (2) to enable all schools to be prepared for the youngest children; and (3) to demonstrate that community schools are effective vehicles for promoting access to and continuity of high-quality programming across early childhood education programs and the early grades. Tulsa, and indeed the state of Oklahoma, has a history of strong and broad early childhood education support. The Linkages grant enabled TACSI to deepen its connection to existing early childhood efforts in Tulsa and to create important linkages to elementary schools scaling up to become community schools.

As mentioned, TACSI's plan for scale-up is well aligned with participating school districts' objectives. To scale up effectively, the Management Team decided (1) that every community school must write the community school strategy into its site plans and (2) that districts must include the strategy in district strategic plans and vision. TACSI worked with both the UPS and TPS to ensure that community schools were aligned with the student achievement approach in each district's strategic plan. The student achievement goal in the [TPS 2010–2015 strategic](#) plan sets forth the following objective:

Expand the concept of community schools to appropriate scales of growth within the District. A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Community schools combine the best educational practices with a wide range of vital in-

house health and social services to ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn.

Encouraged by the strength of its strategy and the high level of community support, TACSI has most recently been working to expand the number of community schools. Every Title I elementary school in UPS is a community school. As the result of a recent school consolidation plan, the TPS is closing several schools, and Superintendent Keith Ballard is committed to transforming all remaining schools into community schools. Broken Arrow and Sand Springs, two nearby districts, have approached TACSI and are in the initial phases of developing their own community schools initiatives. TACSI has also been helping Metro Tech become a community school. Metro Tech is an alternative high school located in Oklahoma City, about 100 miles from Tulsa.

TACSI is reaching out to state political leaders, courting the support of Governor Mary Fallin and the new Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi. TACSI escorted Barresi on a site visit to Kendall-Whittier Elementary, a TACSI school, and a representative from the governor's Tulsa office has visited the school.

TACSI continues to enjoy the support of school, community, and government leaders who view community schools as a central strategy to improving outcomes for children, families, and communities. Thanks to thoughtful planning and learning from others, TACSI is growing and providing an example for others.

APPENDIX

Community School System Benchmarks

Community School System Benchmarks

Community school systems are made up of community-wide, intermediary, and school site leadership teams. These collaborative leadership structures work across seven functions: results-based vision, data and evaluation, finance and resource development, alignment and integration, supportive policy, professional development and technical assistance, and community engagement. Benchmarks for each function help community and school site leaders as well as intermediary entities track their capacity-building as they work to scale up community school systems.

		Community	Intermediary	Site
Structural	Collaborative Leadership	☐ An initiative is established that creates organized opportunities to meet, facilities discussions; develops relationships; and provides continuous opportunities for feedback and reflection. ☐ Leadership levels, key roles, responsibilities and communication methods are established. ☐ Agreement on management approaches using intermediaries and/or lead agencies is reached. ☐ Accountability for achieving indicators in functional areas is distributed among partners. ☐ MOUs are reviewed periodically and adjusted as appropriate. ☐ Partners continue to expand participation, develop trust and ownership in a community-wide vision.	☐ An intermediary organization with norms, goals and experience consistent with the initiative's vision provides planning, management and coordinates work across the initiative. ☐ Staffed by individuals with visibility and credibility in the school district and community.	☐ Relationships with lead agencies and locals partners based on shared vision are established. ☐ Site teams representing school and partner staff, families and community members lead school site team. ☐ Skilled, full-time coordinators are in place.

Community School System Benchmarks

		Community	Intermediary	Site
Functional	Results-Based Vision	• A clear and inspiring vision for a scaled up system drives the initiative. • A convincing, evidence based rationale for scale up is clearly articulated. • A community-wide results and related indicators framework is in place and used to track progress. • A roll out strategy, including a time-line for spreading community schools across the school system is in place.	• Staff continue to expand participation, develop trust and ownership in a community-wide vision. • Intermediary staff provide the TA and manage the data collection necessary to develop a results and indicators framework. • Staff convene discussions among community-wide and site leaders to ensure buy in to community-wide vision and results framework and to identify a roll out strategy. • Lead agency or other management support is provided to sites.	☐ Planning and implementation at every school site are aligned with the community-wide vision. • Relationships with lead agencies and local partners based on shared vision are established. ☐ At every site, a results and indicators framework based on the community-wide framework organizes the work. ☐ Site leadership platforms are developed and participate in planning results frameworks and roll out strategies. ☐ Priority is given to specific results based on site needs and indicators are used to track progress. ☐ Memoranda of agreement are reviewed periodically and adjusted as appropriate.
	Data and Evaluation	• Data collection and evaluation are included as budgetary line items. • Partners facilitate data sharing through interagency agreements and necessary policy change. • Relevant data on participation, operation and results inform policy and practice decisions to improve implementation and expansion activities. • Partners use data to inform their vision and evaluation to hold themselves accountable for initiative results.	☐ Staff provide appropriate TA to sites to design and implement effective data collection. ☐ Data-sharing agreements are negotiated to allow all partners to review school and community-wide data on agreed-upon results/indicators. ☐ Evaluation is designed to assess the systemic effectiveness of the initiative (creating a shift in ownership, spread, scale and sustainability) as well as progress toward results for children, families, schools and communities. ☐ Evaluation designs include comparison schools and show longitudinal trends to the extent practical. ☐ Staff analyze and package data and make it available to appropriate audiences.	☐ Site teams make decisions about which data are most relevant and useful to collect based on result and indicator frameworks. ☐ Policy barriers based on confidentiality and other requirements are communicated to community-wide leaders for action. ☐ Relevant data on participation, implementation and results is analyzed and used to make continuous improvement in practice and recommendations for policy change.

Community School System Benchmarks

		Community	Intermediary	Site
Functional	Alignment and Integration	- Community partners participate in developing the school system's strategic plan. The school system plan reflects the results framework. - RFPs, grant opportunities, and other potential funding requests developed by intermediary and or lead agencies are aligned with the initiative's results framework. - Data collected by the initiative is used by the district to improve the school system's strategic plan. - The initiative collaborates with other community and school reform initiatives working to achieve similar results. - Partners enact policies and provide resources to ensure that sites connected within the initiative's roll out strategy work together to achieve results.	- Conversations are convened to ensure that district school plans incorporate community school principles and relate to the results based framework. - RFPs and MOUs underscore the importance of alignment with results. - Regular review of MOUs and results and indicator frameworks ensures that the staffing and delivery of all partners' activities at each site are integrated with school plans and community school priority results. - TA is provided to align policies and integrate practices across multiple sites in order to build functioning networks of community schools.	- Site partners, within and across linked sites, participate in developing the school improvement plan which reflects the site's results framework. - School improvement plans coordinate school district resources to achieve agreed upon results. - The school and its partners integrate academic and non-academic supports, services and opportunities to attain agreed upon results for the initiative. - Instructional content and methods, during and after school hours, reflect community school principles and advance selected indicators. - Sites integrate the activities of other community reform initiatives working to achieve similar results. - Sites connected by the initiative's roll out strategy collaborate with each other in planning, implementing and evaluating activities.

Community School System Benchmarks

		Community	Intermediary	Site
	Supportive Policy	- A statement of support for community-wide results and the expansion of community schools is included in the strategic plans of major partners (school board/district, local city, county, United Way, community foundation, and other funders). - Partners solicit and are responsive to resource and policy requests based on site data and practice knowledge. - Partners, including the school board, enact specific policies to support and sustain community schools. ☐ Partners act to change policies within their own organizations to better support scale up. - The district has administrative guidelines enabling the effective operation of community schools. ☐ School board and/or district policy allows community partners to use school facilities at no charge to implement activities aligned with site level results.	Facilitates two-way communication between site and systems-level partners. Assists sites to package data-based findings into appropriate recommendations for changes in policy, resources or additional training and professional development.	- A clear and coherent set of practices and policies with respect to site level implementation guides both school staff and community partners and fosters integration between in-school and after school activities. - Sites communicate policy, resource and professional development needs to community-wide leadership based on data collection and regularly scans across all 4 system dimensions: norms, governance, rules and resources. - Personnel policies of school sites, lead agencies and partner agencies are aligned and reviewed regularly to foster positive working relationships across shared staffs.

Community School System Benchmarks

		Community	Intermediary	Site
Functional	Financing and Resource Development	- Community partners play a significant role in identifying and leveraging new revenue sources. - Funding arrangements for further planning have been negotiated and MOUs established. - Financing decisions ensure that expansion does not threaten core components of the initiative. - Reliable funding streams are coordinated and sustain priority programs and services at community schools.	- Provides TA and works with partners to develop a long range financing plan to harness existing public and private resources and to secure new funding sufficient to meet projected costs of scheduled expansion. - Grant money is sought and used strategically to leverage additional resources.	- Site level partners play a significant role in identifying and leveraging local revenue sources including in kind contributions from partner agencies. - Grant money is sought and used strategically to leverage additional resources. - Resources are earmarked to finance a community school coordinator position at each site.
	Professional Development (PD) and Technical Assistance (TA)	- The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated in higher education and district-run educator preparation and professional development for principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, nurses, and others. - The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated into professional development for partner staff. - Joint, ongoing professional development for school and partner staffs is available and policies encourage and enable participation. - Partners participate in site visits, community forums and other opportunities designed to familiarize them with the principles and practices of community schools, the assumptions and expectations of community-wide and site partners and to build common ground across the initiative.	- Organizes pre-service training for community school coordinators and facilitate their continued training in appropriate, district-led professional development. - Coordinates technical assistance to help the initiative implement and sustain its expansion plan. - Technical assistance and professional development responds to needs identified by participants. - Ensures that participants and TA providers jointly design, implement and evaluate training.	- School staff and site level partners participate in joint PD and planning time designed to deepen the integration between in-school and after-school teaching and learning. - Technical assistance facilitates the work of school site teams. - Community school coordinators receive pre-service training from the initiative and site level partners participate in relevant school-run PD activities. - Participants and TA providers jointly design, implement and evaluate training.

Community School System Benchmarks

		Community	Intermediary	Site
Functional	Community Engagement	- The system-wide initiative has a name and logo that are recognized and used throughout the community. - Communication with the public via various media occurs regularly through open meetings, social networking sites, TV, radio, newsletters, flyers, posters, etc. - Community issues that impact schools (e.g., safety, housing, immigration policy) are tracked, evaluated for their impact on the initiative's work, and considered for community-wide action. - Site visits to community schools for elected officials and potential partners as well as for initiative leaders, family members and residents are well attended and designed to build community support. - Open meetings present community-wide data and invite feedback. - An increasing number of people are advocates for community schools.	- Communication with the public is planned for, occurs regularly, and is adequately staffed. - Data on the performance of each community school as well as on system-wide expansion are published and made easily accessible to the public and policy makers.	- The community school promotes itself as the hub of the neighborhood and utilizes the name and logo of the initiative in building its own identity. - Leadership development opportunities for parent/family members and residents enable them to carry out their leadership tasks. - Community issues that impact schools (e.g., safety, housing, immigration policy) are tracked, evaluated for their impact on the initiative's work, communicated to the initiative and considered for local action. - Expansion sites host visits for elected officials, partners, family members and residents and other schools to showcase accomplishments, invite champions and develop peer networks. - Parents and residents represent the concerns of community schools and their neighborhoods in decision-making forums at all levels (e.g., neighborhood associations, housing commissions, city council, and the school board).

ⁱ For example, see C.M. Adams (2010). *The Community School Effect: Evidence from an Evaluation of the Tulsa Area Community School Initiative*. Tulsa, Oklahoma: The Oklahoma Center for Educational Policy: University of Oklahoma; A.S. Bryk, P.B. Sebring, E. Allensworth, S. Luppescu, and J.Q. Easton (2009). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

ⁱⁱ For example, see the Coalition for Community Schools Research Brief 09, <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CCS%20Research%20Report2009.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ A.S. Bryk, P.B. Sebring, E. Allensworth, S. Luppescu, and J.Q. Easton (2009). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

^{iv} M.J. Blank, R. Jacobson, A. Melaville, and S.P. Pearson (2010). *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

^v For a description of social capital in the community school, see D. Kirp (2011). *Kids First: Five Big Ideas for Transforming Children's Lives and America's Future*. New York: Public Affairs, pp. 106-107.

^{vi} M.J. Blank, A. Melaville, B.P. Shah (2003). *Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership. p. 7

^{vii} For a discussion of teacher impact, see http://www.ewa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=research_teacher_effectiveness2.

^{viii} A. Melaville, A.C. Berg, and M.J. Blank (2006). *Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

^{ix} See for example: D. Srikantaiah (2009). *How State and Federal Accountability Policies Have Influenced Curriculum and Instruction in Three States*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy.; J.M. Bridgeland, J.J. Dilulio, and K.M. Morison (2006). *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

^x www.attendanceworks.org.

^{xi} Kim Nauer, Andrew White, and Rajeev Yerneni (2008). *Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families: Community Strategies to Reverse Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades and Improve Supports for Children and Families*. New York City: The New School.

^{xii} According to a 2010 Annie E. Casey Foundation report, reading by grade 3 is a powerful proxy for the long-term academic success of our young people. L. Fiester (2010). *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

^{xiii} Anne C. Kubisch, Patricia Auspos, Prudence Brown, and Tom Dewar (2010). *Voices from the Field III: Lessons and Challenges from Two Decades of Community Change Efforts*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, p. viii.

^{xiv} James Connell, and Adena Klem. "You Can Get There From Here: Using a Theory of Change Approach to Plan Urban Education Reform." *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 1532-768X, vol. 11, no.. 2000, pp. 93-120.

^{xv} Eva L. Baker. "Principles for Scaling Up: Choosing, Measuring Effects and Promoting the Widespread Use of Educational Innovation." In Barbara L. Schneider, and Sarah-Kathryn McDonald, *Scale-up in Education: Ideas in Principle*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.

^{xvi} Donella H. Meadows. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*, edited by Diana Wright. White River Junction, VT: Sustainability Institute, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008, p. 11.

^{xvii} Foster-Fishman et al., p. 202.

^{xviii} Meadows, p. 17.

^{xix} Adapted from Cynthia E. Coburn. "Rethinking Scale: Moving Beyond Numbers to Deep and Lasting Change." In *Educational Researcher*, vol. 32, no.6, pp 1-12.

^{xxxxx} Adapted from Everett M. Rodgers. *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. New York: Free Press, Simon & Schuster, 1995.

^{xxi} David L. Brown. *Creating Credibility: Legitimacy and Accountability for Transnational Civil Society*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2008.

^{xxii} Connell and Kubish.

^{xxiii} Hunter, p. 184.

^{xxiv} Granger: Connell and Kubish.

^{xxv} Adapted from the Alzheimer Association's Champion Campaign.

http://www.alz.org/co/in_my_community_participate.asp.

^{xxvi} Continuous improvement, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/W8961E/w8961e08.htm>.

^{xxvii} Mark Friedman. *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities*, www.resultsleadership.org.

^{xxviii} Sarah Pearson. "Community Schools the United Way,"

[http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Community%20Schools-%20The%20United%20Way%20-%20Short .pdf](http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Community%20Schools-%20The%20United%20Way%20-%20Short.pdf).

^{xxix} http://resources.knowledgeworks.org/press_room/press_releases/press_release.asp?prID=2.

^{xxx} The CLC Partnership Networks are a collaboration of agencies, organizations, and other resources committed to the mission, vision, and goals aligned with the CPS Community Learning Centers, CPS Strategic Plan, and relevant regional initiatives. A network leader is assigned to each partnership network to facilitate collaboration, build capacity, and provide ongoing support for implementation at the site level.

^{xxxi} The CBLT brings together leaders of the partnership networks and key funders to ensure coordination, promote interdisciplinary approaches to maximize positive outcomes, and create models for financial sustainability.

^{xxxii} Bertram resigned as EVSC superintendent in spring 2011 to become executive director of Project Lead the Way and was replaced by Dr. David Smith. Smith has held several positions in EVSC, most recently as assistant superintendent of human resources and business affairs. He has pledged to continue to support community schools as a central feature of EVSC's strategic plan.

^{xxxiii} Diehl, Daniel (2003). "Program Evaluation: Cedar Hall Elementary Full-Service Model of School Reform, Evaluation Period August 1999 to August 2003." Evansville, IN: p. 19.

^{xxxiv} PSESD provides support services, professional development, and other support for all school districts in King County.

^{xxxv} The MHSC coordinates funding and assists with planning and policy decisions among its partners. It is staffed by the Community Service Council, a local non-profit research and planning organization.

^{xxxvi} Roy Clark is a 2011 National Community School of Excellence award winner.