Building Community Schools:
A Guide for Action

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The Children's Aid Society

National Center for COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Foreword

Community Schools Make a Lot of Sense

The community schools strategy has always made a lot of sense to me. My late wife, Judy, was an early childhood educator and I learned from her how important parental engagement and strong support services are to helping our children succeed in school. After her death, "Judy Centers" were established in schools across Maryland to provide these vital services to our state's at-risk children. Judy Centers honor my late wife's name and contributions to early childhood education—but they also honor her mission.

I saw the same mission in Joy Dryfoos' landmark book on the subject, *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families*. After I read her strong, research-based case for comprehensive and integrated supports for children's learning and development, I contacted her and asked her to show me one of the successful schools she wrote about.

And that is how, in October of 2001, I found myself in the welcoming foyer of Intermediate School 218 in New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood. From that foyer, I could see a neon sign announcing the Family Resource Center and another sign for the Student Wellness Center. I spent two hours touring the school—meeting the principal, teachers, students, parents and staff of The Children's Aid Society (CAS). I learned that the partnership between the New York City Department of Education and CAS was already ten years old, clearly the product of a long-term change strategy rather than a time-limited project.

During my visit, I was impressed by the number and energy of the parents who were participating in an English language workshop in the Family Resource Center; the enthusiasm and focus of the students and their teachers; the seamlessness of the partnership; and the commitment and vision of the principal, who described the importance of the partnership with CAS to the life of the school.

One other memory stays with me to this day. At the end of the visit, Joy Dryfoos and I were saying goodbye to our hosts and I asked the CAS team one last question: Why are you bringing all of these supports and services into a middle-class school? Wouldn't these resources be put to better use in a high-poverty school? I quickly learned that I.S. 218 was indeed a high-poverty school. The reason I thought otherwise was that the students' basic needs were being met—and, as a consequence, they were happy, healthy, and ready to learn. It's a sad commentary on the state of so many of our public schools that many of us would be surprised to see such well-prepared students in a high-poverty school; but it's also a testament to the power of the community schools approach. I came away from my visit even more convinced of the importance of that approach to the future of America's schools.

Since that time, I have championed the cause of community schools among policy leaders and I have been heartened to observe how this common-sense idea resonates with policymakers at city, state and national levels. I have also been impressed by the readiness of schools and community partners to implement this strategy in their local areas. For example, more than 400 applicants competed in 2008 to share in a $5 million U.S. Department of Education discretionary grants program for Full-Service Community Schools, and a similar competition in 2010 also generated a substantial response. I continue to be convinced that the community school approach is a powerful reform strategy, and I will keep working to see that it has an important place in federal education policy.

Meanwhile, I am grateful to The Children's Aid Society for its leadership role in promoting the community schools strategy in New York City, nationally and even internationally. I share their vision of "every school a community school," and I look forward to the day when all our students have access to the kinds of supports, services and opportunities I saw at I.S. 218 that bright fall day ten years ago. ■

Steny H. Hoyer
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
October 2011

Introduction

Every School a Community School: The Vision Becomes Reality

Like Congressman Hoyer, I became acquainted with community schools through a study visit. I had occasion to learn firsthand about The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') community schools as a funder when I worked for the Wallace Foundation in the 1990s. During my initial tour of Intermediate School 218, I was immediately impressed with two things: the students looked engaged and happy, and there were a lot more adults in the building than I had seen in other schools. I wondered what was happening here, and how we could make it happen in more places. Several years later, I decided to accept an offer from CAS to work on that very issue—*how to make community schools happen in more places.*

Since then (2000), the number of community schools nationally and internationally has increased exponentially, in part because of our efforts, but also because the strategy represented by community schools—of extending the hours, services and partnerships of schools and of organizing these additional resources around the goal of student success—is more relevant than ever. Most of the educational reforms of the past decade have at best produced only modest results, in large measure because they have focused almost exclusively on the instructional side of the teaching-and-learning equation. While strengthening instruction, aligning assessments and improving teacher effectiveness are all critical elements of school reform, these approaches fall into the "necessary but not sufficient" category. Instructional reforms can be successful only when they are combined with the comprehensive and integrated approach of the community schools strategy. We now have the results that prove this claim—results from our own work in New York City, from community school initiatives around the country and from the work of our international colleagues as well. And we have compelling new research, based on analysis of seven years of data from the Chicago public schools, which outlines the essential ingredients of school improvement—an analysis that supports the comprehensive and integrated approach of the community schools strategy.

Community schools have always rooted their work in a solid body of research about what it takes to promote student success, including parental involvement in children's education, rich and engaging out-of-school experiences, student wellness and family stability. More recent (2010) and equally rigorous research by Anthony S. Bryk and his colleagues at the Consortium on Chicago School Research added grist to this conceptual mill by identifying the five essential ingredients of school improvement: principal leadership, coherent curriculum, professional capacity-building, student-centered school climate and authentic family and community engagement. This firm theoretical grounding can now be coupled with a strong base of empirical evidence indicating that, in the presence of a "whole child" approach to education, all children can succeed and thrive.

Because the community schools strategy, on its face, makes sense—and because the evidence shows that it works—an increasing number of schools in the United States and abroad have adopted this strategy. According to the Coalition for Community Schools, a national alliance of more than 170 organizations, at least 5,000 U.S. schools have been transformed into community schools. And through our national and international work at CAS' National Center for Community Schools, we now estimate that at least 27,000 additional schools worldwide are pursuing this approach. Global forces that are driving this change include new immigration patterns, income-based achievement gaps, post-conflict political changes and the push for democratization in post-Communist countries. We explore these and other issues in the Fourth Edition of our *Building a Community School* guidebook.

You may notice that this edition is called *Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action*, and the name change from earlier editions has a specific meaning. The community school movement has entered a new, mature stage. Colleagues seeking to embrace the strategy are now planning at district, city or county levels, and are creating whole systems, rather than just one or a handful of community schools. A key reason for this interest in a systemic approach is recognition of the "P-20" continuum (or pipeline) in youth development, in which P stands for pre-natal or pre-kindergarten and 20 represents the age at which many young people enter the world of work. A P-20 perspective recognizes that all academic levels are connected and contribute to the ultimate goal of education—that of preparing young people for productive adulthood.

Systems of community schools offer a proven vehicle for establishing the authentic educational linkages implied in the pipeline concept:

▸ By offering high-quality early childhood programs in elementary school buildings, community schools help young children make a smooth transition into kindergarten, ready and eager to learn.

▸ During the early elementary grades, community schools make sure that young children attend regularly and are on track academically, which is significant in light of new evidence about the importance of grade-level reading at this stage of children's education.

▸ Community schools help students make a successful transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school, by addressing both academic and non-academic needs. These include social, emotional and physical development and the acquisition of age-appropriate life skills, such as time management and study habits.

In addition, community school systems can help counter several negative trends among school children. For example, chronic early absence (missing 10% or more days in a single school year) has recently been identified as a national problem with repercussions that can haunt a child's educational career. An estimated 10% of kindergarten and first grade students nationally are chronically absent, according to a 2008 report by the National Center for Children in Poverty. A companion report by the Center for New York City Affairs found that, in New York City alone, 90,000 children in grades K–5 were absent for a month or more of the 2007–08 academic year. According to this report, "Chronic absenteeism is disproportionately a problem in elementary schools that serve mostly poor black and Latino children. It contributes to the achievement gap between these children and their white and

middle-class peers." The report points out that chronically absent poor children in kinder-garten had the lowest performance in reading and math in the fifth grade. Community schools show consistently higher attendance rates than peer or comparison schools, and consistently lower rates of chronic absenteeism—because these schools are designed to address the root causes of absenteeism, such as health problems and family instability.

Another problem addressed by community schools is summer learning loss. In general, low-income students lose about three months of grade-level equivalency during the summer months while middle-income students lose only about one month. This cumulative discrep-ancy also fuels the achievement gap. A lack of summer learning opportunities is especially to blame and, here again, community schools offer a solution. They provide extended learning time and expanded learning opportunities: before and after school, weekends, holidays and summers. For example, by hosting full-day summer camps with engaging, age-appropriate curricula at most of our community schools, CAS keeps students stimulated and learning all summer long in an enjoyable, less formal environment.

The third major problem that community schools are well positioned to address is the increase in the nation's high school dropout rate. In America today, 1.3 million students fail to graduate each year; this means that—according to the influential *Diplomas Count 2010* report—more than 7,200 students drop out every day. High school students living in low-income families drop out at six times the rate of their more advantaged peers, according to a U.S. Department of Education report. According to data collected by the Urban Institute, "graduation rates are significantly lower in districts with higher percentages of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches."

These recent studies point to an enormous equity issue. Whether the focus is chronic absence, summer learning loss or the high school dropout rate, the overarching story is the dis-proportionate effect on low-income and minority children and youth. The strategy is a response rooted in social justice because it expands opportunities for such students to engage in learning and to overcome a range of health and economic barriers to success. While this strategy works for all children, it is particularly important in our most impoverished neighborhoods.

Ten years ago, in the preface to the third edition of CAS' *Building a Community School* manual, we wrote:

"…it is absolutely possible to radically transform America's schools into powerful institu-tions that offer children, their families and entire communities true hope for a better future."

Today, community schools here in New York City and across the country are confirming the truth of this statement. We invite you to read further to learn why this transformation is the solution we need, and how we can work together to realize the vision of *every school a community school*. ■

Jane Quinn
Vice President for Community Schools
Director, National Center for Community Schools
The Children's Aid Society, New York
October 2011

About Community Schools

Transforming Public Education

The Children's Aid Society Community Schools: 20 Years of Growth and Learning

Transforming Public Education

1. What are Community Schools?

A leading urban school superintendent described community schools as "a strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success." This simple definition summarizes 20 years of research and practice. Through extended hours, services and relationships, community schools reconceive education as a coordinated, child-centered effort in which schools, families and communities work together to support students' educational success, build stronger families and improve communities.

The foundations for community schools can be conceptualized as a Developmental Triangle that places children at the center, surrounded by families and communities. Because students' educational success, health and well-being are the focus of every community school, the legs of the triangle consist of three interconnected support systems:

► **A strong core instructional program** designed to help all students meet high academic standards;

► **Expanded learning opportunities** designed to enrich the learning environment for students and their families;

► **A full range of health, mental health and social services** designed to promote children's well-being and remove barriers to learning.

Managing the corners of the Triangle is the critical piece of coordination—because at these junctures the community school ensures a coherent and integrated set of services for children and their families.

The Developmental Triangle

Integration

CORE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Community

Family

Child

Integration

Integration

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES
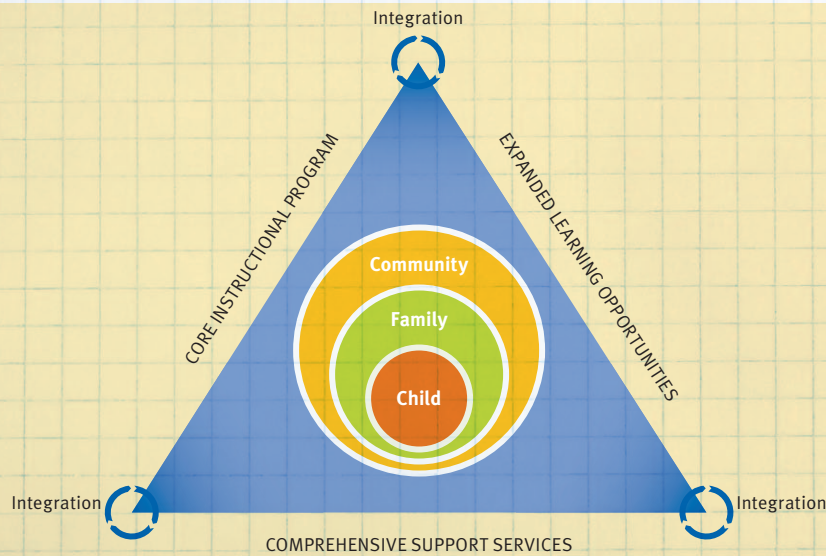
Community schools are the products of explicit partnerships between the school and other community resources. Recognizing that no entity acting alone can improve educational outcomes for all students and that integration is crucial to the success of the strategy, the partners develop a set of shared goals and a system to accomplish those goals. They also share leadership and accountability for results.

Sometimes called "full-service" schools or community learning centers, community schools develop an array of partnerships—in the areas of health, social services, academics for children and adults, sports, recreation and culture—transforming schools into vital hubs that benefit students, their families and the surrounding community. These benefits are substantiated by solid research that demonstrates improved student learning, health and attendance, stronger family engagement, improved school climate and safer neighborhoods, among other results.

2. Key Elements of Community Schools

Every community school partnership shapes its programs and services to the needs of its own community and students, but all models share many basic elements. Among the most prominent are:

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

A community school offers a revolutionary vision of the roles parents and community can play in education and of the role a school can play in its community. Among an initiative's primary goals are the education of children and their healthy development. Students are

freer to learn because the school's many services and supports work together to remove obstacles to their education; teachers can better focus on the curriculum because their students are healthier, have improved attendance and fewer social/emotional problems that interfere with the classroom's focus. The core academic curriculum is rigorous, coherent and integrated with extended learning and enrichment opportunities so that children have many hours for education and many ways in which to learn.

SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community school partners—school staff and administrators, agency staff, parents and members of the community—are united in a common goal: to maximize students' learning while optimizing their health and well-being, and strengthening their families and neighborhoods. All partners understand that the involvement of parents is a critical foundation for children's achievement. Programs to attract parents, establish a welcoming climate for them, and help them learn how to be involved in and supportive of their children's education are fundamental to the community school concept. Adult education courses further engage parents (and community members) in their own learning. Likewise, members of the community—residents, business owners, elected officials, service providers, community-based organizations—are part of the planning for the initiative, are kept informed about the school and contribute expertise and resources where needed.

EXTENDED HOURS AND EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Before- and after-school, weekend, summer and holiday programming expand children's learning opportunities while coordinating with the students' school-day curricula to create a coherent educational experience. Students use these hours to explore subjects not covered during the day or to gain new skills. The out-of-school time climate may be less formal, but should be of quality, instructional and allow children to apply what they have learned in class, perhaps through hands-on projects, academic competitions or art projects. Teachers ought to play a critical role in designing these programs and community school staff should often observe classes so they can track the needs of particular students and tailor their activities accordingly.

PARTNERSHIPS

Community schools are planned, implemented and maintained by the members of active, coordinated partnerships dedicated to improving student achievement, health and well-being. Each partnership establishes a common mission and vision, mutually agreed-upon goals and shared decision making. The partnerships must include school leadership and other representatives of the school, parents, community-based organizations and community leaders. The various community school models have different infrastructures and governance mechanisms that organize and delineate the responsibilities of the partners. In the lead-partner model, developed and advanced by The Children's Aid Society (CAS), and now followed by several thriving initiatives, a single community partner is recognized by school administrators and other partners as the one agency that deals directly and daily with the school leadership; the lead partner maintains full-time presence in the school.

SITE COORDINATION

Nearly all models of community schools employ a site coordinator, whose role involves joint planning with school staff and subsequent recruitment, management and coordination of partners. Although many titles are used to describe this role—Community School Director, Site Coordinator, Resource Advocate—the essential function is to ensure the responsiveness of community resources to the documented needs of students and their families as well as the alignment of their supports and services to the school's core instructional program. (Please see appendices A and B.)

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT ALONG THE PATHWAY TO PRODUCTIVE ADULTHOOD

Community schools often include pre-K, Early Head Start, Head Start, Even Start or other programs for children below kindergarten age—and some include even earlier support for pregnant families, such as doula services and parenting education. But community school advocates recognize that a good start is not enough. Young people need abundant opportunities to learn and access to "whole child" supports throughout their childhood and adolescence. The community schools strategy is adaptable to all levels of education reform, and CAS, along with many other colleagues, applies this strategy in elementary, middle and high schools, ensuring that young people and their families make smooth transitions from one level to the next. Many community high schools not only help students apply for and get accepted into college but also make efforts to support their college success.

WELLNESS

Community schools are designed to operate as networks that address the multiple emotional, social and health needs of children and their families along a wellness continuum. In the CAS model, for example, health and social services are school-based or school-linked and fully integrated into the life of the school; mental health or social problems are not treated separately from health problems. Instead, the school partners look at a student and family holistically and work together to develop solutions. The emphasis on wellness promotes a healthier, more positive school climate as well as improved student health.

SUSTAINABILITY

Leaders of community schools, both of individual schools and of community school initiatives, need to consider how to sustain their work, even at the earliest stages. Sustainability means more than fundraising—it means making permanent changes in daily practice and in institutional arrangements. But it also means allocating or generating human and financial resources—that is, organizing resources in new and more effective ways. One of the many benefits for schools of working with community partners is their ability to bring non-education dollars into schools, through such vehicles as Medicaid reimbursement and United Way allocations. Many community schools have found The Finance Project's sustainability planning framework and tools to be useful in the essential and ongoing tasks of making their changes permanent. (Please see Sections 2–10.)

WHOLE SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

Through their attention to school climate and to the school as a wellness environment, and through what one prominent researcher calls "new institutional arrangements," community schools become more than the sum of their programmatic parts. While, compared to traditional schools, community schools do indeed offer a wide array of programs for students and their families, the real hallmark of a community school is the transformational effect of all the ingredients as they interact with one another, every day.

3. A Brief History of Community Schools

The community school strategy has its roots in the late 1800s and the establishment of the first urban settlement houses, which offered critical learning and development opportunities as well as health and social services to newly arrived immigrants in urban neighborhoods. This movement was led by the pioneering efforts of Jane Addams, an outspoken advocate for the poor. In the early 1900s, educators and social reformers who believed that schools were not functioning as fully as they might—among them education reformer John Dewey—worked to bring additional resources into America's public schools, placing them at the heart of community life. Dewey wrote an influential essay in 1902 entitled *Schools as Social Centres*.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation played a key role in supporting second and third "generations" of community schools through its substantial investments in community education in the 1930s and again in the 1960s (and continuing for several decades). A historical analysis commissioned by the Mott Foundation and prepared by John S. Rogers, entitled *Community Schools: Lessons from the Past and Present*, notes the influence of the Mott Foundation's earlier investments on the creation, in the late 1990s, of the Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. Rogers also observed that earlier community school efforts did not take hold permanently for two major reasons: their work was not adequately integrated with the core mission of schools, and their proponents did not have a robust political strategy. Both of these problems are being addressed very intentionally by leaders of the current community schools movement.

This fourth generation of community schools seems to have gained momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the development of several national models (Beacons, Bridges to Success, CAS community schools and university-assisted community schools)—all of which appear to have been created in direct response to research about the educational struggles of children living in poverty and concerted calls to action by advocacy and philanthropic organizations. It was in this larger context that CAS launched its community schools efforts in New York City.

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OPENS NYC COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Following a five-year assessment of the area, CAS opened its first community schools in 1992 and 1993 in Washington Heights. This northern Manhattan neighborhood houses a burgeoning immigrant population that the agency had identified as critically lacking in social supports and quality public education. Over the next 18 years, CAS added new schools in Washington Heights, East Harlem, the South Bronx and Staten Island—all under-served New York City neighborhoods. As of the spring of 2011, there were 21 CAS community schools in New York City.

These schools combine a full-service model with a lead-agency infrastructure, following a simple formula: educational excellence paired with expanded opportunities and extended hours, as well as critical health and social supports and services. Together, these elements build on a foundation of intense engagement with parents and communities to promote educational success.

Responding to widespread interest in its schools, in 1994 CAS founded the National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools [now the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS)], to help others implement the strategy.

In 1997, CAS became one of the three founding partners of the Coalition for Community Schools, an alliance of national, state and local organizations that helps build awareness and understanding of community schools, advocates for supportive public policies and helps promote research and disseminate knowledge among its members and other organizations. CAS remains an active partner and supporter of this coalition.

A number of different community school models have taken hold in the U.S. and in other nations in response to particular local and national priorities. What they share is a mission: to change the role of education in the lives of students, families and communities, so that under-served youth may be empowered to overcome obstacles and become happy, healthy and productive adults.

4. Research Supports the Community School Strategy

Strong research undergirds the community schools strategy for education reform. While improving the educational and developmental outcomes for children by creating new educational institutions that combine essential supports for learning makes intuitive sense, it is, in fact, anchored by a solid base of research and current knowledge about child development, school improvement, parent engagement and child health. Here is a summary of the basic tenets of community schools and the research data that support these principles.

Community schools bring together multiple partners within the school to help maximize and remove obstacles to student learning. The work of these partners—parents, community members and service providers—is thoroughly interwoven and directly affects student achievement. Strong leadership drives the work of the strategy's multiple partners.

Bryk's Essential Supports

STUDENT SUCCESS

| STUDENT-CENTERED SCHOOL CLIMATE | HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | COHERENT, ALIGNED INSTRUCTION | MEANINGFUL PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT |

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP DRIVES CHANGE
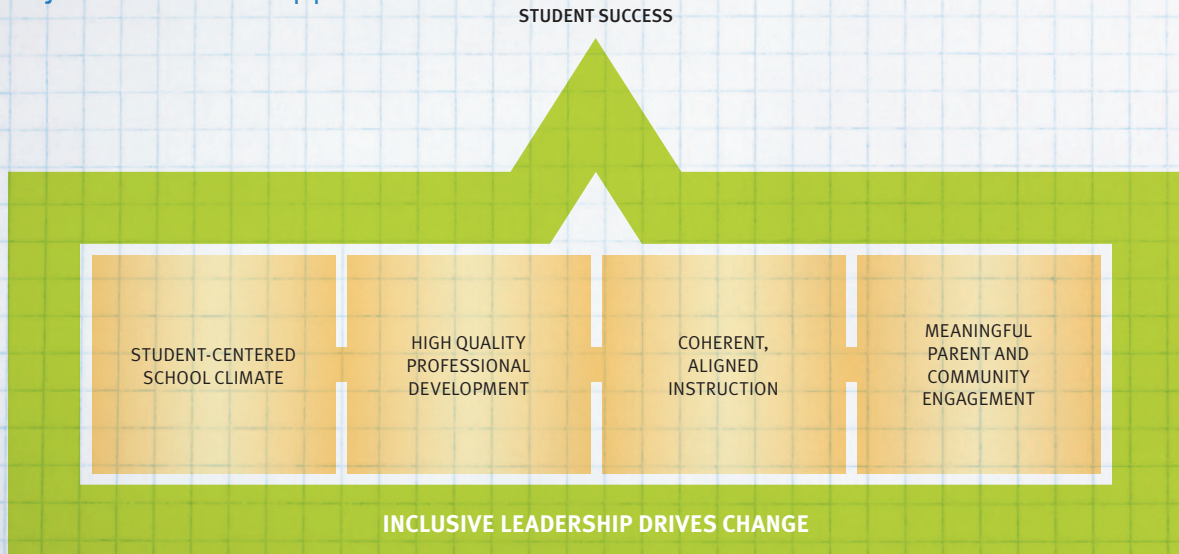
▸ In a long-term study of 200 Chicago public schools, education expert Anthony S. Bryk and colleagues (2010) identified five essential supports for student success: strong school-parent-community ties; enhanced professional capacity; a student-centered learning climate; a coherent instructional system; and leadership that drives change and enlists teachers, parents and community members to help expand the reach of the work and share overall responsibility for improvement. Bryk found that the value of the supports lies in their integration and mutual reinforcement. No one part of this strategy can be counted on to achieve the goal of school improvement and student success. To illustrate the point, Bryk uses the analogy of cake baking where all the essential ingredients—sugar, eggs, oil, flour and baking powder—must interact with one another. Leave out one and the cake will look or taste flat.

Community Schools provide on- and off-site health, mental health and social services to students living in low-income communities, which often lack such resources.

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▸ If students are not motivated and able to learn, says health and education researcher Charles E. Basch (2010), then their "educational progress will be profoundly limited." Low-income urban minority youth are disproportionately affected by seven "educationally relevant health disparities": poor vision, asthma, teen pregnancy, aggression and violence, lack of physical activity, lack of breakfast, and untreated inattention and hyperactivity. Basch warns that no educational innovation can succeed if these health disparities are not remedied. His research strongly supports the community schools' inclusion of health care as a critical component of student success.

Community schools engage parents and community members as essential partners in children's education. They employ multiple strategies for educating and involving parents as early as possible and for maintaining their engagement.

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▶ Research conducted over 40 years confirms that family engagement improves students' educational outcomes. Recommended by the Harvard Family Research Project as a reform strategy, family engagement should be systemic, integrated and sustained—the very approach promoted in community schools. Family engagement must not be treated as an incidental add-on; rather, it must be understood as a shared responsibility in which families and schools play complementary roles in children's educational success. Family engagement must also be continuous, from birth through young adulthood, and must support student learning in multiple settings. A 2010 Harvard report further indicates that family engagement facilitates teacher retention. "Where teachers are able to communicate with parents and develop trusting relationships," the report states, "they are more likely to remain teaching in their schools."

Schools cannot succeed on their own; community school partnerships bring critical resources into schools in order to meet students' academic, health, family or emotional needs and to help free teachers to teach. Partners are integrated into the school day or out-of-school time sessions, based on those needs, and are coordinated by the lead agency or organizing committee.

▶ Turning around struggling and failing schools involves more than just the people inside a school's walls. "Schools cannot do everything themselves and expect to do it well," education journalist Laura Pappano (2010) observes. "Partnerships need to have a purpose. They need to be well articulated." She details the huge problems faced by both large and small urban schools and notes the kinds of partnerships that are helping to turn these schools around. Well-structured partnerships linking schools with corporations and nonprofits have contributed to turnarounds in Cincinnati and Hartford, two of Pappano's closely observed sites—which, not coincidentally, both have robust community school initiatives.

Below, we provide additional research data that support the guiding principles of effective community schools:

Community schools make the most of our children's non-school time by providing high-quality, supervised after-school experiences that extend learning opportunities and enable students to develop their talents, form positive friendships and connect with their communities.

▶ Researcher Reginald Clark (1988) has documented the importance of having children participate in constructive learning activities during the non-school hours. He found that economically disadvantaged children who spend 20–35 hours of their free time each week in engaged learning (such as reading for pleasure or playing strategy games) earn better grades in school than their more passive peers.

▶ Stanford University education professor Milbrey McLaughlin (2000) reports that adolescents who participate regularly in community-based youth development programs (including arts, sports and community service) have better academic and social outcomes—as well as higher education and career aspirations—than other teens.

▶ In several studies spanning more than a decade, Deborah Vandell (1999) documented a host of positive benefits of children's participation in high quality after-school programs, including improved grades, work habits, emotional adjustment and peer relations.

- According to a report published by the Washington D.C.-based organization, *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids* (1998), the peak hours for violent juvenile crime and victimization are between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the hours when most parents are at work and children are out of school.

- The after-school hours are also the peak time for adolescent sexual activity to take place. Furthermore, research shows that being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that 8th graders will smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs (Richardson, 1989).

Community schools provide young people with enriched educational opportunities while also developing and strengthening their physical, emotional, social and moral competencies through a variety of supports and services.

- Extensive research on child and adolescent development indicates that young people need ongoing guidance and support in all of the developmental domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, moral and vocational) if they are to achieve productive adulthood. (See for example, Eccles, 1999.)

- In his preface to the Carnegie Corporation's 1992 report, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*, noted child psychiatrist James Comer states, "We must attend to all aspects of [young people's] development. Adequate development makes adequate education possible, which in turn facilitates participation in the mainstream economy and the ability to fill family, community, and citizenship roles."

Community schools offer parents an active role and a voice in their children's education. They also provide a place where parents can improve their own lives.

- Multi-year research conducted by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University (1995), and by Anne Henderson and her colleagues at the Center for Law and Education (1995), has documented the importance of parental involvement in children's education as a key factor in promoting academic achievement. These studies indicate that children do better in school when their parents regularly support, monitor and advocate for their education.

- In a study of school and family connections in the middle grades, also conducted by Epstein (1995), parents reported that they seldom heard from their children's schools and that they themselves contact school staff infrequently. The study identified a clear need for middle schools to establish comprehensive efforts to increase parental involvement.

Community schools view children and families holistically. They bring many essential services together under one roof and offer an effective, coordinated response to children's and parents' needs.

- Several studies have documented how the fragmentation that characterizes much of America's service delivery system for children and families limits program effectiveness. (See, for example, Hodgkinson, 1989.)

- Researcher Joy Dryfoos (1994) synthesized a complex body of research on reducing risk and promoting resilience among children and adolescents. She concluded that the single most effective intervention was the development and implementation of schools that integrate the delivery of quality education with the provision of health and social services.

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Weiss, H.B., Lopez, M. E., and Rosenberg, H. (2010). *Beyond Random Acts: Family, School and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

Community schools gather many of the adults who are important in a child's life—parents, teachers, principals, health professionals and youth workers.

▸ A 13-year study in 10 varied communities (Ianni et al., 1990) found that child and adolescent outcomes were enhanced in communities where the key developmental influences (home, school and community) combined to provide young people with consistent messages, opportunities and supports.

▸ Resilience theory indicates that children who have consistent access to adult guidance and support have better outcomes, such as enhanced college and career aspirations, and a lower incidence of at-risk behaviors (Benard, 1991).

▸ A number of studies reveal that early adolescence is a time when youth wish to form close relationships with adults outside the family, even as they are seeking a certain amount of separation from parents. Many young people turn to their peers for guidance, but only if they do not have opportunities to bond with caring adults (Eccles, 1999).

5. Models of Community Schools in the United States

The community school strategy combines a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources, in an effort to provide the essential ingredients that students need to thrive. The strategy makes sense for any socioeconomic group, but leveling the playing field for the most vulnerable is where its biggest value resides.

There are a number of different models of community schools operating across the United States, as well as many hybrids—initiatives that have chosen characteristics of more than one model and adapted specific features to suit their own communities' needs. The Coalition for Community Schools (CCS), a national alliance of more than 170 organizations that advocates for community schools, recognizes the following distinct models in the nation; they share a dedication to the goals of giving every child the best possible chance to succeed. These descriptions are based on the Coalition's definitions of the models.

BEACON SCHOOLS

Beacons are school-based community centers serving children, youth and adults that operate in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends, school holidays and vacations and during the summer. The model originated in New York City and has been replicated widely in other parts of the U.S., with support from the Youth Development Institute. Beacons provide opportunities for youth to improve their learning and development, provide support services for the community and foster closer connections between home and school. Beacons are led by community-based organizations with expertise in youth and community development.

www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/beacon_program.shtml

National Community School Partners
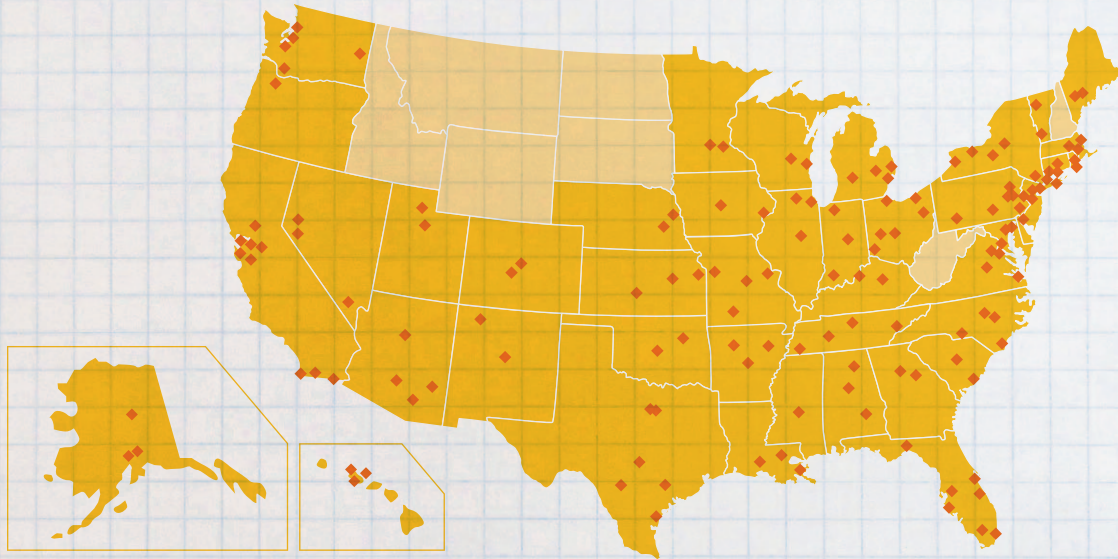
ALABAMA
Birmingham
Huntsville
Montgomery
ALASKA
Anchorage
Fairbanks
Wasilla
ARIZONA
Clifton
Phoenix
Sedona
Tucson
ARKANSAS
Harrison
Little Rock
Waldenburg
CALIFORNIA
Berkeley
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Oakland
Redwood City/
Half Moon Bay
San Diego
San Francisco
S. San Francisco
San José
Stockton
COLORADO
Denver
Jefferson

CONNECTICUT
Bridgeport
Danbury
Hartford
New Britain
New Haven
Stamford
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Washington
DELAWARE
Wilmington
FLORIDA
Dade City
Hollywood
Kissimmee
Miami
Orlando
Tampa
Tallahassee
GEORGIA
Atlanta
Decatur
HAWAII
Honolulu
Pearl City
Waipahu
ILLINOIS
Chicago
Peoria
Rockford
INDIANA
Evansville
Hammond
Indianapolis

IOWA
Davenport
Des Moines
KANSAS
Kansas City
Topeka
Wichita
KENTUCKY
Lexington
Louisville
LOUISIANA
Baton Rouge
Lafayette
New Orleans
MAINE
Lewiston
St. Paul
MARYLAND
Baltimore
Prince George's
County
MASSACHUSETTS
Boston
South Boston
Roslindale
MICHIGAN
Clinton
Detroit
Flint
Grand Rapids
MINNESOTA
Minneapolis
St. Paul
MISSISSIPPI
Jackson

MISSOURI
Jefferson City
Kansas City
St. Louis
Springfield
NEBRASKA
Lincoln
Omaha
NEVADA
Carson City
Las Vegas
Reno
NEW MEXICO
Albuquerque
Farmington
NEW YORK
Buffalo
Long Island
New York City
(Brooklyn, Bronx,
Queens, Staten Island,
Manhattan)
Port Chester
Rochester
Rome
Syracuse
Westchester/
Putnam Counties
(White Plains,
Mt. Vernon, Peekskill,
Sleepy Hollow)
Yonkers

NEW JERSEY
Edgewood
Orange
Newark
Paterson
NORTH CAROLINA
Charlotte
Durham
Raleigh
Wilmington
OHIO
Akron
Cincinnati
Cleveland
Columbus
Dayton
Toledo
OKLAHOMA
Oklahoma City
Tulsa
OREGON
Portland
PENNSYLVANIA
Allentown
Bethlehem
Lancaster
Lehigh Valley
Mon Valley
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh
RHODE ISLAND
Providence
Warwick

SOUTH CAROLINA
Charleston
Columbia
TENNESSEE
Jackson
Knoxville
Memphis
Nashville
TEXAS
Arlington
Austin
Corpus Christi
Dallas
Houston
San Antonio
UTAH
Ogden
Salt Lake City
VERMONT
Burlington
North Bennington
VIRGINIA
Alexandria
Arlington
Norfolk
Richmond
WASHINGTON
Seattle
Spokane
Tacoma
Tukwila
Vancouver
WISCONSIN
Madison
Milwaukee

CAS-NCCS (communities that have benefitted from NCCS services, as of August of 2011)

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

As of the spring of 2011, CAS' lead-partner model serves New York City public school children at 21 community schools located in the low-income and underserved communities of the South Bronx, East Harlem, Staten Island and Washington Heights. The schools combine strong academic curricula with school-based or school-linked health and social services as well as extended learning opportunities that all together remove obstacles to children's learning and promote their success and well-being. The strategy has demonstrated positive outcomes in strengthening education and improving the well-being of families and communities since the opening of its first school in 1992. Thousands of schools across the U.S. and the world have adapted the CAS model, many with the technical assistance of CAS through NCCS.

www.nationalcenterforcommunityschools.childrensaidsociety.org

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

Communities in Schools (CIS) is a national organization based in Arlington, Virginia, with nearly 200 local affiliates whose shared mission is to bring needed student support services into schools, connect young people to caring adults, ensure that youth stay in school, develop skills and contribute to their communities. CIS provides a flexible approach for state and local governments interested in building school-community partnerships; it encourages innovation and the sharing of best practices. CIS' stay-in-school approach is replicated in 25 states, where CIS organizations work to secure state support for local initiatives.

www.communitiesinschools.org

SCHOOLS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Based in New Haven, Connecticut, the Schools of the 21st Century (21C) is a model for school-based child care and family support services that transforms the traditional school into a year-round, multi-service center providing high-quality, accessible services from early morning until early evening. Eliminating the distinction between child care and education, 21C recognizes that learning begins at birth and occurs in all settings. The model includes supports for parents, safe and enriching out-of-school time environments, and assistance so that children's basic needs may be met, allowing them to develop properly and succeed academically. 21C collaborates with James P. Comer's School Development Program (SDP) to form the Comer/Zigler Initiative (CoZi). This initiative offers a set of comprehensive family support services linked to the school through a child-centered, collaborative decision-making structure.

www.yale.edu/21c/index2.html

UNITED WAY BRIDGES TO SUCCESS

This school-community initiative was pioneered by the United Way of Central Indiana in Indianapolis. Bridges to Success (BTS) promotes the expansion of extended services in schools through the leadership of local United Ways. School site teams—including businesses, religious organizations, parents, social service providers and school personnel—bring critical resources to students and families. Created as a partnership between the United Way of Central

Indiana and Indianapolis Public Schools, the program is now being implemented in Decatur Township Schools and Lebanon Community Schools. The goals are to improve students' academic performance and to promote self-sufficiency among families and communities.

www.bridgestc.ips.k12.in.us

UNIVERSITY-ASSISTED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania was the pioneer of this model; other university-assisted models include Boston College, the University of Central Florida, the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa and the University of New Mexico. University-assisted community schools serve all members of the community, while at the same time providing universities the opportunity to advance teaching, research and the civic development of their students. University-assisted community schools engage K–16+ students in community problem-solving that is integrated into the school curriculum and extended-day programs.

www.upenn.edu/ccp

6. International Adaptations

Community schools are not confined to the United States. In fact, there are now an estimated 27,000 institutions adapting this approach in six continents: North and South America, Asia, Africa, Australia-Oceania and Europe. Many of these adaptations have been inspired by the American movement. For example, professionals from 52 countries have visited CAS' schools since the first one opened in 1992.

The global forces behind this movement include increased immigration, poverty, post-conflict or war challenges and the push for democratization in former Communist countries. For example, in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, interest in the strategy stems directly from the desire to promote social inclusion in their increasingly ethnically diverse urban neighborhoods. Visitors from South Africa and Northern Ireland have come to New York City to learn about community schools in their efforts to promote community harmony and understanding among previously divided populations. Meanwhile, Russian regions such as Siberia, and East European and Asian countries including the Czech Republic, Moldova and Ukraine have adopted the community schools strategy as part of their efforts to promote the development of democratic institutions. In Colombia, an influential organization successfully promoted the initiative to help neutralize rebel influence in war zones.

After a few failed attempts to create a global network of community schools, the International Centre of Excellence for Community Schools (ICECS) was founded in England in 2009, with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The effort is being incubated by ContinYou, the United Kingdom's national technical assistance provider for their Extended Schools. ICECS has established a set of International Quality Standards that offer

International Community School Adaptations (at All Stages of Development)

1. Argentina	15. Colombia	30. Italy	45. People's Republic of China	59. Tanzania
2. Armenia	16. Cuba	31. Ireland (Republic of)	46. Philippines	60. Uganda
3. Azerbaijan	17. Czech Republic	32. Japan	47. Poland	61. Ukraine
4. Australia	18. Denmark	33. Kazakhstan	48. Puerto Rico	62. United States of America
5. Austria	19. Dominican Republic	34. Kirgizstan	49. Russia	
6. Belarus	20. Ecuador	35. Malawi	50. Scotland	63. Uruguay
7. Belgium	21. Egypt	36. Mali	51. Serbia	64. Uzbekistan
8. Bermuda	22. England	37. Mexico	52. South Africa	65. Venezuela
9. Bonaire, Special Dutch Municipality	23. Ethiopia	38. Moldova (Republic of)	53. South Korea	66. Vietnam
	24. France	39. Mongolia	54. Spain	67. Virgin Islands
10. Bosnia	25. Ghana	40. Netherlands	55. Sweden	68. Wales
11. Brazil	26. Haiti	41. New Zealand	56. Switzerland	69. Zambia
12. Bulgaria	27. Hong Kong	42. Northern Ireland	57. Taiwan	
13. Canada	28. India	43. Norway	58. Thailand	
14. Chile	29. Indonesia	44. Pakistan		

As of August 2011, based on information from the International Centre of Excellence for Community Schools and CAS-NCCS

a framework for dialogue and comparisons. Chris Jones, the Centre's director, identifies several models of community schools in Armenia, Australia, Bosnia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Moldova, Mongolia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Sweden, United States, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. Through CAS' experience hosting study visits and providing technical assistance, we also know of community schools in Bonaire, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY'S MODEL

CAS, through its local implementation and its NCCS, has played a leading role in spreading the word about the effectiveness of community schools worldwide and in building the capacity of many international systems of community schools. Delegations of practitioners and government representatives from numerous countries have participated in study

visits to the Center and have seen the CAS community schools in action. Education consultants from the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Australia and Ireland have visited with groups two or three times a year since the early 1990s.

Such observation and consultation sessions have helped inspire the transformation of entire educational systems. For example, all of England's 23,000 schools now offer extended services, extended days and extended relationships. British schools have become more welcoming to parents and the community, offering social services, childcare, health services and adult and family learning as well as expanded learning and enrichment opportunities for students during and beyond the school day.

In the Netherlands, the government provides guidance and financial support to hundreds of institutions that have embraced the community school strategy. These *vensterscholen*, or window schools, link education to such services as parenting support, childcare, extended education time, health centers and others. *Bouwenanneen Community School,* the Dutch translation of the second edition of the CAS *Building a Community School* manual, was published in 1998.

Another major systemic initiative is taking place in Scotland, where all schools have adopted elements of the CAS model. The NCCS has also provided assistance to smaller efforts in South Africa, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the Netherlands Antilles, Australia, Colombia and Japan.

7. Defining Success

While the primary focus of community schools is promoting children's educational success, families, communities and schools all benefit from the strategy in tangible ways. Community schools take a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving services and to defining success:

CHILDREN

Children are healthy and ready to learn. They have access to regular medical, dental, mental health and vision care, as well as their immunizations on schedule and assistance in managing chronic illnesses, through either school-based or school-linked health centers. In addition, families receive help in securing health insurance and facilitated access to care.

With their medical, dental and mental health needs taken care of, students improve their attendance and face fewer impediments to learning. This results in better academic performance, grade promotion and high school graduation. Through multiple opportunities to learn and practice important life skills, they develop good work habits such as problem-solving, persistence and time and stress management. Active engagement in challenging activities, both during regular class time and during non-school hours, helps build their motivation and connection.

Students also benefit from the improved social capital that is produced through the community schools strategy. In his recent (2011) book, *Kids First: Five Big Ideas for Transforming Children's Lives and America's Future*, researcher David Kirp cites findings that show social capital to be a far better predictor of educational success than race, affluence, inequality and

Cincinnati: Community Engagement Leads to School Transformation

In the mid-1990s, the Ohio Supreme Court found that the condition of Cincinnati's Public Schools (CPS) was so poor as to deny children an adequate public education and those students and their families were therefore being deprived of their constitutional rights. The ruling allocated funds to bring the schools up to standards and, in 1999, the community's attempt to start a new school initiative included a visit from The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') Jane Quinn and Coalition for Community Schools' Marty Blank. In 2001, the Cincinnati Public Schools adopted the Guiding Principles for Community Learning Centers, and a positive impact began to be felt the next year, with the passage of legislation providing for a funding mechanism, the school facilities levy.

By 2011 all 51 Cincinnati Public Schools are—or are on the way to becoming—full-fledged community learning centers, as the initiative had intended from the start. The rollout began in 2006 as new school facilities were being constructed. Resource Coordinators were hired for nine schools. Now there are 28 schools with Resource Coordinators; this represents more than half the schools in the district. Forty-seven schools have instituted a full-time mental health partnership, 10 have school-based or school-linked health centers, and almost 40 have coordinated after-school programs. There is one community art center and one full-day, year-round early childhood education center, with another one on the way.

Public school attendance rates far surpass state enrollment projections for the Cincinnati Public Schools, according to Darlene Kamine, Executive Director of the Community Learning Center Institute. Every school is led by a site-sponsored committee of parents, community members, teachers and staff. Graduation rates have soared from 51% in 2000 to 83% in 2010, and many more students are passing the state graduation exams.

How do you measure community impact? Kamine observes, "The sense of parent and community empowerment, created through their engagement in the development of community learning centers, has brought families back to the public school system and reversed the dramatic decline in enrollment that preceded the Community Learning Centers initiative. Middle class families eager to return to, or remain in, urban neighborhoods are choosing to become part of a socio-economically blended school family. Customer satisfaction is also evident among the taxpayers, whose property values are supported by higher achieving schools and who are, in turn, passing school levies."

Because of their extensive leadership role in the field and deep expertise in community engagement in school reform, the staff of the CAS' National Center for Community Schools is assisting the Community Learning Center Institute to become a satellite technical assistance provider.

other economic indicators. He suggests that the strong and wide web of supports cast by community schools makes them the best option for boosting literacy, numeracy and critical thinking—the intellectual skills that schools are supposed to build—as well as the social skills youth need if they are to succeed in a networked world.

Another hallmark of successful children? They have aspirations for the future—thoughts and dreams of their achievements and of their lives as adults, possibly inspired by their families, their studies and their schools' enrichment activities.

PARENTS

Parents are engaged in their children's education, at home and school. They are welcomed into the schools; their self-efficacy is enhanced, they become better advocates for their children, participate and volunteer in school activities. They may become aware of the advantages of life-long learning and enroll in adult education at the school or even pursue higher education. Many schools offer their on-site medical, social and emotional support services to students' families as well, so families become healthier too. Families also become more stable; since parents and children generally are happy with their schools, they may be less likely to pull up roots and move from the neighborhood.

COMMUNITIES

Communities benefit from the improved school climate. There is less vandalism, such as graffiti, and less disruptive activity in the neighborhoods because students have more opportunities for constructive activities. The school welcomes and engages community as active participants, all of which helps promote student achievement. Business owners and residents feel that they have a stake in children's success. By design, some initiatives hire from the community, becoming major employers and thus helping improve the quality of life of many families.

SCHOOLS

Schools experience multiple positive changes. Teachers no longer need to spend class time on children's health or social needs. They are freer to teach and often improve their own attendance and productivity as a result of their heightened job satisfaction. The schools have a safer, more supportive and more positive climate, which also contributes to deeper student and family engagement. School-based or school-linked health centers reduce health-related absences and promote preventive care. Finally, as research shows, healthy students are better learners.

Community Schools Framework for Student Success

CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING	RESULTS	INDICATORS	

		SHORT TERM	
1. Early childhood development is fostered through high-quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development.	CHILDREN ARE READY TO ENTER SCHOOL	▸ Immunization rates ▸ Blood lead levels ▸ Parents read to children ▸ Children attend early childhood programs	▸ Receptive vocabulary level ▸ Families connected to support networks/services ▸ Vision, hearing and dental status
	STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL CONSISTENTLY	▸ Daily attendance ▸ Early chronic absenteeism ▸ Tardiness ▸ Truancy	
2. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.	STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN LEARNING AND THE 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 before- and after-school programs ▸ Partnerships for service learning in the school/community ▸ Post-secondary plans
3. Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.	SCHOOLS ARE ENGAGED WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	▸ Trust between faculty and families ▸ Teacher attendance and turnover ▸ Faculty believe they are an effective and competent team ▸ Community-school partnerships	
4. The basic physical, social, emotional and economic needs of young people and their families are met.	FAMILIES ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN 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

		LONG TERM	
5. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff.	STUDENTS SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY	▸ Standardized test scores ▸ Teachers support students ▸ Grades ▸ Teachers take positive approach to teaching and learning	▸ Graduation rates ▸ Dropout rates ▸ Reading by 3rd grade
	STUDENTS ARE HEALTHY PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY	▸ Asthma control ▸ Vision, hearing and dental status ▸ Physical fitness ▸ Nutritional habits	▸ Positive adult relationships ▸ Positive peer relationships
6. The community is engaged in the school and promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.	STUDENTS LIVE AND LEARN IN STABLE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS	▸ Students, staff and families feel safe ▸ Schools are clean ▸ Families provide for basic needs	▸ Incidents of bullying ▸ Reports of violence or weapons
	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

Developed by the Coalition for Community Schools

9. Community Schools: A Results-Oriented Strategy

These results and benefits are defined in greater detail by the Results Framework produced by the national Coalition for Community Schools. Citing the interaction of its six "Conditions for Learning," the Coalition suggests five short-term results:

- ► Children are ready to enter school
- ► Students attend school consistently
- ► Students are actively involved in learning and in their community
- ► Schools are engaged with families and communities
- ► Families are increasingly involved in their children's education

The framework also indicates four long-term results:

- ► Students succeed academically
- ► Students are healthy—physically, socially and emotionally
- ► Students live and learn in safe, supportive and stable environments
- ► Communities are desirable places to live

Two studies—sponsored by the Coalition for Community Schools—examined multiple evaluations and documented a host of positive outcomes, consistent with this results framework. The first, an early (2000) look at community school results conducted by researcher Joy Dryfoos, examined 49 evaluations of community schools that showed a variety of results, including improvements in student achievement, attendance and graduation rates; increases in parent involvement; reductions in suspensions, high-risk and disruptive behaviors, and neighborhood violence. The second study, summarized in a Coalition publication entitled *Research Brief 09*, concluded that community school evaluations "demonstrate positive outcomes in a variety of areas," including improved academic performance in reading and math, reductions in school dropout rates, improvements in graduation rates and in student attendance, improvements in student behavior, increases in acquisition of pro-social skills, greater parent involvement and benefits to communities (such as increased safety). Even more recently, third-party evaluations of Communities in Schools, the City Connects initiative in Boston and the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative have added positive findings to the growing body of evidence about community schools as a results-oriented strategy.

The CAS Community Schools: 20 Years of Growth and Learning

10. Solid Planning Pays Off

From the outset, The Children's Aid Society (CAS) leaders envisioned a community school as a coherent, learner-centered institution, rather than as a regular school with add-on programs. Shared leadership and shared accountability for results are the keys to this transformation. After two decades, the community school strategy still plays a major role at CAS. The agency will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its community schools work in 2012 by opening its first charter community school in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. CAS' new leader, President and CEO Richard Buery, sees this initiative as a natural progression from the comprehensive nature of the community schools strategy. A firm believer that education is the best way to escape poverty, he wants to ensure that every child served by CAS is put on the path to college.

In the late 1980s, CAS' leadership became increasingly concerned about the decline of public education in New York City, especially in its lowest-income neighborhoods. In addition, the agency—a provider of child welfare and social services to the city's poorest children since 1853—had in 1987 identified a rapidly changing community, Washington Heights in northern Manhattan, as being severely in need of family and youth services. The concept of the community school was born as a way to respond to the dual challenges: the need for additional public schools in a neighborhood with an increasing number of young families; and the need of these families for an array of support services. CAS' CEO at the time, Philip Coltoff, envisioned "clustering services and education in one place, right where the students and

parents are." He began raising funds and communicating CAS' vision to the city's central Board (now Department) of Education. With the Board's blessing, CAS then approached the local school district and parent groups. The Board of Education was (and is) CAS' primary partner in the community schools effort. The first partnership with CAS as lead agency was formed at the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Middle Academies (Intermediate School 218) in February 1992, followed by the Ellen Lurie School (P.S. 5) in March 1993.

During the five-year planning process that led to the opening of the first CAS community school, much of the effort was devoted to planning and cultivating community support for this new idea. CAS conducted years of outreach to community residents, students, teachers, administrators, the teachers' union, other community agencies and the local police precinct to ensure that they understood the multi-service concept. CAS, in essence, marketed the community schools concept to make sure it was not only understood by the Washington Heights community but also welcomed.

CAS' community schools require daily consultation, coordination and collaboration among the many teams and partners, as well as ongoing fundraising and outreach in order to ensure that we achieve the goal of helping children, families and communities to thrive. The agency's unwavering commitment to the strategy is key to the success of community schools.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

The foundation for the CAS community schools is the Developmental Triangle, illustrated on page two, which places students at the center; their educational success, health and well-being are the focus of any CAS community school. Families and communities surround them, as CAS has always seen supporting families and strengthening communities as primary ways of boosting student achievement. Enclosing the Triangle are the three main components of the CAS community school model: a strong, core instructional program; expanded learning opportunities designed to enrich the educational environment for students and their families; and medical, dental, mental health and social services, provided on-site or nearby, designed to remove barriers to students' learning and healthy development.

These core components have always formed the basis of the CAS full-service approach. Most schools stay open until late in the evening, six days a week, year-round to serve students, their families and members of the community. The essential school-day curriculum is strong, and additional learning offerings and enrichment opportunities are integrated with it. Furthermore, the model's medical, dental, mental health and social services are made available to all students, regardless of immigration or insurance status. Medical professionals ensure that students keep up-to-date on exams and immunizations. They provide acute care and manage chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes, ensuring that children miss as little school as possible due to health emergencies. Locating these services on site, or making them easily available, prevents parents missing work or children having to leave school to keep medical appointments.

Regular dental care is rare in low-income communities and orthodontic services are a luxury, but CAS offers both. We also bring additional health partners into the schools to make sure all students have vision exams and receive glasses and treatment if needed. Students routinely meet with social workers and other mental health professionals on site. The availability of this type of counseling relieves teachers of much of the social and behavioral problem-solving that can disrupt a class.

THE FOUR CAPACITIES

The CAS National Center for Community Schools (NCCS) consults and trains on the philosophical backbone of the Developmental Triangle, the Four Capacities (Four C's) Framework: **Comprehensiveness**, **Collaboration**, **Coherence** and **Commitment**.

The Four Capacities in Community Schools

COMPREHENSIVENESS	CAS' full-service approach responds to the multiple needs of children and families by marshaling a full complement of partnership resources. Our staff members employ a whole child developmental approach that includes conducting needs assessments and resource inventories, and implementing responsive, high-quality programs.
COLLABORATION	We promote the structured involvement of all stakeholders (educators, parents, students, funders, community members, service providers, policymakers) through outreach, relationship-building and shared leadership.
COHERENCE	A shared vision focused on a common set of results helps the school and community partners align their activities and skills. After-school programs are designed to build on and complement what students are learning during the regular school day; summer camp programs enhance and supplement what young people have learned during the previous school year and help them avoid summer learning loss. Health professionals routinely check in with students on their school progress. Parents have opportunities to learn how to support, monitor and advocate for their children's education. Joint planning and shared decision-making support this kind of intentional integration. As the lead agency, CAS participates in the school's governing bodies, such as the School Leadership Team, Student Support Team, School Safety Committee and Principal's Cabinet.
COMMITMENT	All partners conduct sustainability planning from the start. A shared vision results in a high level of motivation and perseverance in pursuit of common goals.

These Four Capacities are based on what we learned from best practices at our own schools in New York City and from our colleagues across the country and abroad. To have effective and results-oriented community schools, the partners need not only to implement additional supports, services and opportunities but also to develop both a mindset and a skill set around these Four Capacities, which affect their daily interactions and their long-range planning.

11. Core Program Components of CAS Community Schools

The CAS community schools are built on deep, long-term partnerships with the New York City Department of Education, parents and many community organizations and service providers. As the lead partner, CAS maintains a full-time presence in the school and engages in regular joint planning with school staff, particularly between the principal and the Community School Director (a CAS employee). The Director and other CAS staff are fully integrated into the school's governance and decision-making bodies, such as the School Leadership Team, Principal's Cabinet and School Safety Committee. This full-service model places a primary focus on education, student health and well-being as well as family and community engagement. Though the program elements vary depending on student and local needs, a welcoming environment for students, their families and community members and a positive, healthy school climate are hallmarks of every CAS school.

While it is true that "community schools are a strategy, not a program"—meaning that the effort is a long-term and transformational approach comprising many programs, services and opportunities—there are key programmatic components that form the basis of our contribution to the schools:

INNOVATIVE AFTER-SCHOOL, HOLIDAY AND SUMMER ENRICHMENT

CAS coordinates out-of-school-time curricula to enhance school-day learning and enrich students' academic experience. This alignment results in improved student learning and teachers' satisfaction. CAS further contributes to school-day learning by convening student Town Halls and Freshmen Seminars as well as offering health education instruction and, at some sites, teen pregnancy prevention programs. Summer camps help prevent summer learning loss.

MEDICAL, DENTAL, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Our five school-based health centers in Manhattan and our centrally located health services hub in the South Bronx are licensed by New York State to provide comprehensive primary care for students. The goal is to prevent or treat health problems that may act as obstacles to learning.

The services are provided by caring professionals in our school-based or school-linked student wellness centers. This facilitates timely care; students do not have to miss a day of school—or parents a day of work—to keep a medical or dental appointment. Parents, however, are welcome to accompany their children during in-school medical or dental visits and are urged to become involved in their children's care.

Our mental health clinics provide age-appropriate counseling to youth. Siblings and parents are often involved. Bilingual service providers ensure that children and their families have the support they need to address acculturation and separation issues common among recently immigrated youth.

Our Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus in Washington Heights (a middle and high school) has what might be the first orthodontia clinic in a public school in the U.S. Confidential reproductive health education is provided in CAS' middle and high schools during the school day.

All services are offered through partnerships with local city hospitals or professionals hired by CAS. The agency is committed to a comprehensive team approach to service delivery, which translates into holistic care for each student.

A key benefit of the health program is the ability to monitor and treat chronic illnesses, such as asthma and diabetes. Students learn techniques to manage their illnesses; when attacks do occur, treatment can start immediately, thereby averting traumatic and costly trips to emergency rooms. Other benefits include helping parents enroll in public health insurance, educating students and parents on various health issues, and reducing or eliminating barriers posed by a complex, costly health care system to families with little money and low health literacy.

Obesity prevention is a newer health initiative that begins with "Go Kids" in the early education programs and goes up to middle and high school. Small children start with "Go Foods and Slow Foods" curriculum units, bringing copies of their lessons home as well as recipes and other literature about the relationship between eating, exercising and health. Families can then make healthy adjustments to their cultural menus and adopt healthier lifestyles. Older students participate in healthy gourmet cooking contests and manage farmers' markets in their schools, often making up for the lack of healthy food choices in their neighborhoods.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

CAS' early childhood education initiatives demonstrate the value of programs for children from zero through age five as well as the many benefits of locating such programs within schools. The model consists of Early Head Start and Head Start programs. The transition to Head Start at age three is eased by the child's familiarity with the school and its classroom routine, as is the transition at age five from preschool to kindergarten. The program also facilitates early detection of physical and cognitive challenges, allowing for interventions that can obviate the need for special education later on.

Since parental participation is mandatory in early education, parents become not only better equipped to understand the developmental process of their children but also life-long leaders in their schools. Their involvement enables them to take advantage of the school's comprehensive services and helps their socialization—as often these parents are recent immigrants with no, or poor, social networks. Bilingual doulas, for instance, are available to help pregnant women navigate the medical system, manage labor, access health care and, after giving birth, benefit from learning parenting skills.

A prominent feature of early childhood programming is its age-appropriate introduction to concepts of nutrition and healthy eating. This curriculum is crucial in the campaign to prevent childhood obesity.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

CAS community schools work to involve parents and families at all levels, starting as early as possible through vigorous outreach efforts. Parents are treated as true partners in their children's education. They are encouraged to visit the school often, to learn and socialize, to serve as volunteers or as paid staff, as members of a parent's association and, potentially, as leaders who will advocate for their children and the school. A parent coordinator, a friendly liaison who speaks the parents' language, is found in every CAS full-service community school, as is a cheerful family resource room; together, they communicate a positive, welcoming attitude.

Based on the premise that students whose parents support, monitor and advocate for their education are more likely to achieve academic success, "Parent and family engagement is everybody's job" is a mantra put into practice at all CAS community schools.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community schools help transform the relationship between a school and its neighborhood, according to Richard Negrón, CAS' Director of Community Schools. CAS school leaders frequently reach out to community members—including local community organizations, businesses, elected officials and faith-based organizations—to involve them in events or issue discussions and to bring them in as partners and as advocates. These partnerships expand the resources available for the school, improve the students' social capital and engender local support. Area businesses, homeowners and landlords benefit from the improved school climate and improved connectedness of students that result from the community school strategy.

In Washington Heights, for example, where CAS operates ten of 21 community schools, the agency is the community's third largest employer. Many staff members are local residents and some are school parents.

There are signature events eagerly awaited by the community, such as a unique school-wide Heritage Celebration at the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus. Every February for the last 19 years, the area's elected officials have flocked to the school to address the 1,000 plus residents who fill the school's plaza-like lobby and auditorium. This is a joyous multi-cultural and intergenerational event, produced by parents, grandparents, students and community members. Cultural exhibits, regional food stands, dancers and musicians pack the entire first floor, and students from all CAS schools perform original pieces in creative costumes designed by themselves and their parents.

ADULT EDUCATION

Lifelong learning facilitates community development and student success. Many CAS schools have robust Adult Education programs open to parents and the general community. Typically the programs include sequential classes in English, high school equivalency, basic computer, literacy, leadership development and an array of vocational offerings. Partnerships with local and international higher education institutions facilitate professional certification of non-U.S. trained teachers and other professionals, and offer college courses at the schools.

CAS: Building Parent and Family Leadership Skills at CAS Community Schools

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) wanted to promote parents in our community schools to the next level: to enhance their development as leaders, as advocates for their own children and for all the schools' children. With funds secured by then-State Assemblyman, now State Senator, Adriano Espaillat, CAS created the Ercilia Pepín Parent Leadership Institute and drew more than a hundred parents to the kick-off on a hot early summer day in 2006.

Run by the CAS school parent coordinators and open to parents and community members, the year-long Institute trains parents to be proactive in advocating for their children. It also focuses on furthering their own education and on developing marketable skills. We wanted to ensure that the programs were both substantive and enticing. Alma Whitford, CAS' Associate Director of Community Schools, and a committee that included parents and other seasoned CAS staff devised a structure that features four tracks: Educational, Vocational, Advocacy/Entitlements and Recreational. Each track offers a menu of workshops and activities; participants must take part in a minimum number of workshops, classes and activities per track. For instance, they may choose to enroll in entitlement workshops, participate in advocacy events, take literacy and English classes, and learn television production, crafts, interior design or cake-making.

To motivate parents further, CAS urged the parent coordinators to become role models; in response, several of them enrolled in college. In 2007, Lidia Aguasanta, the longtime parent coordinator of CAS' Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus, returned to college at the age of 53 and received her bachelor of Human Services degree from the City University of New York at age 56, completing all requirements in just three years. Other parent coordinators and parents are due to graduate soon.

An incredible example of parent engagement herself, Aguasanta was a newly arrived immigrant who brought her children to the school in 1992 and never left. She took advantage of all the programs she found there. Over the years, she has proved to be an untiring advocate for the community.

The Institute has become very popular; CAS, along with several elected officials and participating parents, are already planning the next stage. According to Whitford, the program's goal is to create a co-op so that participants can begin marketing the products they've been making—tote bags, jewelry, dresses, upholstery and cakes, among others. In the meantime, participants have gone on to become licensed child care providers, obtained their GEDs, are on their way to becoming fluent in English, and attending college.

At the May 2011 graduation, 568 male and female participants of the Ercilia Pepín Parent Leadership Institute proudly received certificates of completion from CAS and certificates of recognition from the New York State Assembly. Those documents stand as symbols of a roaring success for the parents, their children and the community.

13. CAS Community Schools: Results to Date

Since the opening of our first community school in 1992, CAS has made a strong commitment to evaluating results through a series of third-party evaluations conducted by Fordham University, the Education Development Center, ActKnowledge, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and others. Our intent has been to document multiple results for youth, families and schools—results that emanate directly from our efforts to align our resources with the schools' core instructional programs, to enrich the learning environment of the school and to reduce barriers to student learning and family well-being. The following outcomes are the results of studies over a 19-year period.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The earliest evaluation of our community schools, conducted from 1993 to 1996 by a collaborative team from Fordham University, documented steady progress in reading and math at I.S. 218 and P.S. 5, compared to similar neighborhood schools. At I.S. 218, math performance rose from 37 percent of students at grade level in 1994, to 44 percent in 1995, to 51 percent in 1996—a total change of nearly 40 percent over two years. In the third grade class that entered P.S. 5 in 1993, its first year in operation, only 10.4 percent of students were reading at grade level. In that same class, 16.2 percent of students were reading at grade level by the fourth grade, and 35.4 percent by the fifth grade. Math achievement at P.S. 5 increased from 23.4 percent at grade level in the third grade class in 1993, to 32.1 percent in fourth grade and 56 percent in fifth grade. Later evaluations showed that students at I.S. 218 and P.S. 5 continued to improve in math and reading scores.

A later evaluation (2004–07) conducted by ActKnowledge found that middle school students who participated in CAS after-school programs experienced greater academic gains than their non-participating peers. This evaluation also found that more participation led to higher achievement gains. Students who had higher levels of participation in CAS after-school programs demonstrated higher levels of achievement in math and reading test scores and school attendance, and their teachers reported an increase in their motivation to learn.

A third evaluation, conducted by ActKnowledge in 2009, just after the New York City Department of Education began assessing the progress of individual schools in comparison to all City schools and to peer schools, found that CAS community schools averaged greater student achievement gains than other schools. (ActKnowledge is facilitating a Theory of Change process at all CAS community schools. Please see appendices D and E for further information.)

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

All three of the studies cited above found that students in CAS community schools have higher attendance than students in comparison schools, no matter how the comparisons are made (carefully matched by third-party evaluators, or designated as peer schools by the

New York City Department of Education). The 2009 ActKnowledge study found that CAS community schools had "far higher" attendance than peer schools, and that schools with on-site health centers tended to have higher attendance than those without.

TEACHER ATTENDANCE

Another important finding on attendance came from the early Fordham University studies, in which the evaluators found teacher attendance to be higher at community schools than at comparison schools. This finding directly correlates with cost savings since schools with higher teacher attendance have less need to spend their scarce resources on substitutes. In addition, higher teacher attendance means less disruption for students. Overall, this finding indicates that working in a community school allows teachers to do what they were hired to do: to teach their students. Teachers reported being able to spend more time on instruction than their counterparts in comparison schools. This included spending more time on class preparation and more time working directly with children.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Several studies found the atmosphere of CAS community schools to be markedly different from other schools. They appeared more busy and cheerful, and exhibited few signs of violence or graffiti. Parents, students and teachers reported feeling welcome and safe.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

According to the Fordham University researchers, the dramatic levels of parent involvement in the CAS community schools were among the most significant findings of their six-year study. Parents were more involved, took more responsibility for their children's school work, felt more welcome within the school and were observed to be a greater presence in the community schools than in comparison schools. Parents also took advantage of the many services offered to them, such as social services and adult education workshops.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

In a study of two middle schools, mental health services demonstrated impressive progress in helping students cope with mental health challenges. The evaluation documented improvements on a wide range of mental health problems, and a significant portion were resolved within the school year. In addition, students in the study maintained their grade point average—a significant achievement for students facing multiple mental health challenges. Other studies of health services in CAS community schools found dramatic increases in children's access to quality health care; better student and family management of chronic illnesses, particularly asthma; and improvements in students' vision (which, according to their teachers, often produces immediate improvements in their behavior).

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Several studies documented that students in CAS community schools—and particularly those who participate regularly in our high quality after-school programs—report higher

self-esteem, school engagement, career aspirations and sense of responsibility to the community than other young people. After-school participants report reading more books and watching less television than non-participants. Behavioral conduct of elementary school students at a CAS community school improved significantly more than did that of students at a comparable elementary school.

SCHOOL READINESS

Three CAS community schools have early childhood programs integrated into elementary schools. Several studies of these programs have documented important indicators of school readiness, including development of early literacy and of social-emotional skills. Parents benefit from their participation in these programs as well: for example, mothers in Early Head Start showed decreases in depression and stress over the course of participation in the program, and increases in the quality and size of their social support networks. In another study parents reported feelings of improved confidence in their parenting knowledge and abilities as a result of program participation.

Research and Evaluations
of CAS Community Schools 1993–2011

Extensive passages in this chapter were excerpted from the report, "*Summary of Research Findings, 1992–1999*," by Hélene Clark, Ph.D. and Robert Engle of ActKnowledge at the Center for Human Environments of the City University of New York Graduate Center.

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Caspe, M., Quezada, E., Gillman, M. (2007). *Talk and Play: A Research-based Enrichment Program Serving Low-income Latino Children and Families*.

Caspe, M., Quezada, E., Gillman, M. R. Seltzer, A. (2007). *Talk and Play/Jugando y Hablando*, Unpublished Final Report.

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Notes:

Building Community Schools

The Vision Becomes Reality

1. Understanding the Stages of Development

Community schools are child-centered strategies to promote students' educational success through coordinated, integrated efforts by schools, families and communities, working together.

These proven strategies are based on a solid foundation of research that demonstrates how student learning is improved when schools are organized to promote student success, when parents are engaged in their children's education and when students' comprehensive needs are met. The Children's Aid Society's (CAS) mature community schools have been independently evaluated and show tangible improvements in students' academic progress, health and social capital, parent engagement and school climate, among other measures.

The desire to start one or more community schools may spring from any number of perceived issues in a school, district or surrounding community. CAS has identified four Stages in the Development of Community Schools: **Exploring**, **Emerging**, **Maturing** and **Excelling**:

- **Exploring** begins with discontent about the current way a school operates and a desire to improve or change it. This stage is marked by creative large-scale thinking, high energy, optimism and a perhaps a certain amount of "if only" dreaming. This should all be encouraged, because these thoughts, dreams and emotions will contribute to the shaping of a shared vision.

- The **Emerging** stage is characterized by a commitment to jump in and do something. An assessment helps determine initial program design. As a shared vision and clearly defined goals emerge, some of the groundwork is laid. A decision is made to start the transformation of a school or schools by introducing some services, securing initial funding and establishing partnerships.

The success of this stage is based on a shared commitment to the vision and goals, clear communication around roles and responsibilities, dynamic responsiveness to documented needs—and taking time for recognition and celebration. This phase commonly lasts for about two years.

▸ The hallmark of the **Maturing** stage is steady, intentional progress toward your goals. The vision becomes clearer and, consequently, you are likely to garner greater internal and external support for it. The community school begins functioning better: service utilization increases and improves, relationships between the school and its community partners deepen, and the working relationship becomes more natural as all partners come to realize that this work requires continuous and significant effort.

▸ At the **Excelling** stage, you are implementing quality programs that are fully integrated into the fabric of the school. Your hard work has resulted in a school culture that focuses on addressing the needs of the whole child, has increased parent involvement and has established strong relationships within the school, community and school district. The entire school staff values the partnerships that have helped transform the school.

(See Appendix C for detailed chart of the Stages of Development.)

The Non-linear Nature of Community School Development

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
EXPLORING	**EMERGING**	**MATURING**	**EXCELLING**
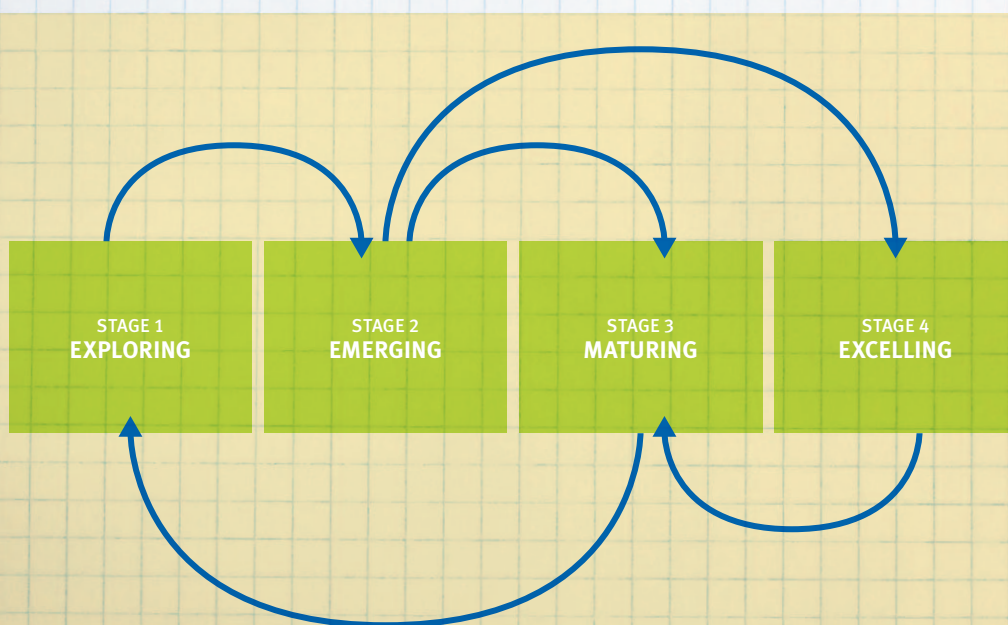
The trajectory of these phases may not always be linear or forward moving. Teams can advance and then slip back, or can be further ahead in one area of the work than in another. Try not to worry about the pace. While experience has demonstrated that these are the typical stages

of development in community schools, we also know that no two communities or schools are alike. Each school's strategy should be tailored carefully to the needs of its own students and community. Therefore, your partnership may experience a somewhat different set of milestones than those described here.

2. Getting Started

A community school functions effectively when partners have a clear understanding of the needs and assets of the community. The assessment process should be used not only to gather valuable information but also to build a palpable sense of momentum. You will want the community not only to be aware of the new school but also to have input into its development and to welcome it.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment is part of the **Emerging** stage in community school development. In the absence of a systemic and comprehensive assessment, a community school is less likely to provide coherent programs or to foster partnerships that effectively address risks and promote opportunities for all of its students and families. The purpose of the assessment is not to rigorously or scientifically evaluate the impact of current individual programs, strategies and curricula, but instead to gather a wide range of information that will drive decisions about the new initiative's programming and operations. Some important steps include:

▸ Identifying the team that will collect the data. This group should include partners and other key stakeholders in a school and its neighborhood.

▸ Conducting a resource inventory of existing programs and services.

▸ Reviewing archival data (such as school suspension and attendance rates, after-school attendance and community health statistics); this process is intended to identify patterns, reveal gaps in information and generate questions for further exploration.

▸ Implementing surveys with key constituent groups, including teachers, parents, and students, to obtain their views on the school's strengths and on the unmet needs of students and families.

▸ Interviewing key stakeholders (school administrators, faculty and staff, parents, students and community leaders) to elicit their interpretation of the data and their suggestions for addressing the results.

▸ Facilitating focus groups composed of stakeholders (at a minimum, students, parents and teachers). This allows deeper exploration of the questions raised in the archival data review, surveys and interviews, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the school's and community's strengths, challenges and needs.

▸ Analyzing the data gathered to generate priorities and an action plan.

▸ Sharing findings and recommendations with stakeholders.

DEFINE GOALS

The analysis of the assessment will set the stage for the development of targets you and your partners will agree upon. Some goals will focus on short-term results (quick wins help build momentum and credibility) while others will aim for longer-term outcomes. New and existing partners may have to change the way they work in order to build collaborative relationships; schools will have to share decision-making power with other members of the team. Appraisal of the partnership's goals and outcomes must be ongoing.

LAY THE GROUNDWORK

The tasks are many: securing initial funding, assembling the right team, designing programs and services responsive to the assessment, constant maintenance of communication and collaboration among partners and lots of outreach. Laying the groundwork for a community school—a new kind of educational institution in most locales—will require tactful negotiation with local, municipal and state education leaders; local and state elected officials; business owners; law enforcement officers; and residents.

3. Continuing to Build Your Team

"The job of transforming schools takes a strong, sustained commitment from all partners to the shared responsibilities as well as a perspective that accommodates both immediate and long-term results," says Richard Negrón, CAS' Director of Community Schools.

This section of *Building Community Schools* is about just that—it's a look at some of the important steps that must be taken to move a community school initiative from the Exploring into the Emerging stage of development. Once initial goals are defined, it's time to build the team needed to advance the effort.

GATHER CRITICAL PARTNERS

To begin to create your community school, you will need to identify the people and institutions that will form your collaborative team. The earlier you involve all of the critical partners, the better your chances of developing a workable and effective plan. The configuration of team members may vary from community to community, but they should probably include the following to start:

▸ **Lead Partner Agency**
In this approach—employed by CAS and several other national models (Beacons, Communities in Schools, University-Assisted Community Schools)—there is one organization that is willing to make the long-term commitment to join with a school or school district to manage and sustain the community school strategy and to serve as the intermediary linking numerous partner organizations, the school's population and the community. This agency leads the community involvement for the principal and facilitates the overall process, by helping with the assessment, creating

momentum, identifying and assembling partners, organizing meetings, spearheading fundraising, hiring staff and conducting program oversight. This organization serves as the go-to partner when opportunities, needs and challenges arise.

An alternative to the lead agency approach is to hire a district employee to serve as Site Coordinator. This model is used effectively in Denver, Port Chester (NY), Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Union (OK) and several other initiatives. Although there are merits to both approaches, the most important consideration is ensuring that you have accounted for the planning and coordination functions, since these are essential elements of the community school strategy.

► **School Leaders and Other Key Staff**
These include the principal, teachers, union representatives and district officials. There is consensus among practitioners and researchers that the principal drives change in the school and works with partners to build capacity within the school to transform its culture and climate, and to implement a holistic approach through the community schools strategy. Don't forget to include clerical, custodial and safety staff early in the process; in community schools every partner truly counts.

► **Additional Social Service and Youth-Serving Agencies**
Partners drawn from this group should have experience in providing educational services, recreational programs, health and mental health services, foster care prevention and, as needed, immigration assistance and advocacy, health insurance, entitlement benefits and housing assistance.

► **Parents and Other Community Members**
Parents have significant, multifaceted roles to play as partners in community schools. They can provide critical perspectives on the specific services needed in their community and help spread awareness about the community school's services and goals. Parents' participation will instill a sense of ownership. Other partners should include business owners, business improvement district representatives, local officials, homeowners—anyone with a stake in the community and the school's success.

► **Students**
Because they will be the individuals most impacted by changes in their school, students must have input into the effort. Including children and youth in the planning and implementation of the strategy will build a sense of ownership. Older students can be given real opportunities to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of their community.

► **Funders**
It is important to include public and private funders in the process from the beginning. They can provide a sense of purpose and enthusiasm, offer expertise in program planning and implementation. Funders are often the main drivers of education reform efforts.

► **Champions**
Cultivate champions among funders, civic leaders and elected officials—and others. Congressman Steny Hoyer is a strong example of a national champion of community schools. Among civic leaders, Judith K. Dimon vigorously advanced the community schools agenda in New York City and Chicago; and Alice Dodge Berkeley helped put community schools on the map in England. In Lincoln, Nebraska, the publisher of the local newspaper has been a long-term champion for the Lincoln Community Learning Centers.

CONSIDER OTHER POSSIBLE PARTNERS

Since community schools are complex institutions that interweave academic, enrichment, health and social services and programs, there is always room for new partners. Even if they are not involved from the early planning stages, new collaborators can play meaningful roles. Such potential partners might include:

- Child welfare authorities
- Local hospitals and other health providers
- Local businesses and corporations
- Vocational schools
- Community foundations
- Employers
- Police and other law enforcement agencies
- Libraries
- Arts and cultural institutions
- Local universities/colleges
- Legal assistance organizations
- Local elected officials
- Staff of government agencies

4. Creating the Infrastructure

Two tools that will help you build a basis for ongoing collaboration are effective infrastructure and good internal communications. A significant challenge, according to Richard Negrón, CAS' Director of Community Schools, is to create and maintain an infrastructure that allows the work to thrive and provides nurturing and support to all the partners. He believes that the commitment required for putting the infrastructure in place is often underestimated. Partners must develop the underlying system of staffing—including reporting hierarchies, shared responsibilities and communication patterns.

ASSESS YOUR CORE COMPETENCIES

In moving from vision to initial implementation, it is important to assess and articulate the skills and expertise that each partner should bring to the work. This will enable the team to identify gaps, manage expectations and gauge everyone's capacity for the different aspects of the work at hand.

START SMALL AND BUILD GRADUALLY

You needn't open a full-scale community school or launch a multi-school system from the outset. Partners should consider starting with a small after-school program and a Family Resource Center, then adding counseling and parenting workshops and, eventually, medical

CAS: Building Our Systemic Infrastructure

Like many community school initiatives, The Children's Aid Society (CAS) system developed organically—starting with a few schools and then designing an infrastructure that would, in the words of Richard Negrón, "Provide whatever support the sites need, when they need it." Following are some of the steps that CAS took to build its own systemic infrastructure:

▸ CAS begins planning in 1987, by conducting a community assessment, outreach to partners [NYC Department of Education (DoE) and others] and building a presence in the Washington Heights community.

▸ The first CAS community school opened in 1992 and by 1995 it had four full-service, lead-agency-model schools—all in Washington Heights. The National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools (NTACCS) was established in 1994.

▸ In June 1998, George Soros' After-School Corporation (TASC) invited CAS to open four after-school programs by September 1998. This was a great opportunity with formidable challenges, which CAS accepted with a condition that funding for a full-time director, not part-time coordinator, was provided. A full-time presence was essential to transitioning these after-school programs toward a community schools approach—CAS' ultimate goal.

▸ Until 1998, CAS had one administrator in charge of supporting all community school directors. She was also head of the NTACCS, aided by an assistant director. When the TASC schools opened in September 1998, CAS hired a central Business Manager to oversee the schools' finances and two Community School Assistant Directors to provide each site with regular supervision and extensive on-site coaching.

▸ To meet the demands of a growing system, in 2000 CAS added an executive position at the senior level, CAS Assistant Executive Director for Community Schools. This person would provide guidance to the schools, help get funding and direct the NTACCS. The Director of Community Schools could now focus on the local work; the Associate Director position was added in 2006. The central team was also reinforced this same year by adding a Director of Education to ensure after-school and summer program quality. Our Business Manager's role grew to Director of Fiscal Operations, with two assistants to help manage the myriad funding streams that sustain our local sites. A Contracts Manager was added in 2007 to oversee the New York City Out-of-School Time funding.

CAS learned that in order to develop and sustain community schools, the infrastructure needs to keep pace with the initiative's growth. This means adequate staffing and additional supports, a clear supervisory and communications infrastructure. The organizational chart on p. 41 outlines the current CAS community schools support structure.

services. Other additions might include a grandparents group, a fathers group and a teen group for high school graduates who live in the community. By building gradually toward a comprehensive program, the team's leadership will be able to observe how well the partners work together and consider ways of resolving any issues that arise before growing the strategy. Also, this kind of gradual expansion allows trust to grow among partners at the site.

The infrastructure needed to run a community school successfully depends on the model and the scope of the initiative. A principal-driven or a district-driven model will require a different structure than, say, a lead partner model. For instance, CAS usually starts with a full-time director and an office manager as well as a group of specialists, hired perhaps on a part-time basis, who will deliver the programs. It can take years to develop the right infrastructure since it requires constant fine-tuning.

PLAN PROGRAMMING AND NEGOTIATE SPACE

Your needs and resource assessment should be the blueprint of the program and should drive decisions about operations. Space is usually a luxury in any school and is likely to become one of the biggest points of tension. Principals and their partners ought to keep in mind that space allocation should respond to programmatic needs. For instance, the Family Resource Center should be accessible and clearly visible to send a welcoming message to parents and families. It won't have the desired effect if it's hidden in the basement.

KEEP BUILDING YOUR TEAM'S CAPACITY

It is a challenge for busy practitioners to keep up with daily advances in knowledge about education and youth development, but this is a necessity. Building in time for staff development is essential. Also, working in partnership requires ongoing attention to the refinement of relationship-building and group problem-solving.

CREATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE YOU NEED AS YOUR WORK DEVELOPS

As you develop one, and then several, community schools, you will find that you need to develop supportive infrastructure. Our advice is to let form follow function—that is, to let the needs of your community schools and the specific strengths of your local circumstances inform your decisions. CAS built its portfolio of community schools gradually and created its supportive infrastructure over time, as our brief case study indicates.

ASSESS YOUR RESULTS

Even at the early stages of developing community schools, many initiatives start this work by thinking through their logic model or theory of change—that is, their planning team comes to an agreement about why and how particular inputs (new supports, services and opportunities) will result in specific outcomes for students and families. Coming to a consensus about these causal links will help you decide what data you will need to collect and whether or not you want to hire a third-party evaluator to assist in the processes of assessing your results. (Please see appendices D and E.)

CAS Community Schools Support Structure Chart

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                    CAS Chief Executive Officer
                            President


    VP for Community Schools              Executive Vice President
       Director of NCCS    <········      and Chief Operating Officer

    Executive
    Assistant


  Dir. External   Dir. Regional   Deputy     Sr. Dir. National        Director of Community Schools
  Communications  Initiatives     Director   Capacity Building

                                  Office
                                  Manager


  Associate
  Director           Assistant         Assistant        Dir. Academic   Dir. Quality   Dir. Fiscal
                     Director          Director         Initiatives     Control        Operations

  Mirabal Sisters
  Campus                                                                                Business
  CS Director        I.S. 98            P.S. 152                                        Manager
                     CS Director        CS Director
  Salomé Ureña de
  Henríquez Campus                                                                      Asst. Business
  CS Director        C.S. 61            P.S. 5                                          Manager
                     CS Director        CS Director
  P.S. 50
  CS Director
                     Fannie Lou         P.S. 8
  H.S. for Excellence M.S. and H.S.     CS Director
  and Innovation     CS Director
  CS Director
                                        Manhattan
  Parent                                Center H.S.
  Leadership                            CS Director
  Institute
```

━━━ = Direct supervision

•••• = Guidance

6. Communicating the Vision and Marketing the Results

Two elements often left out in the planning and implementation of a community school strategy are marketing and communications. Sustainability will depend in large part on marketing the concept and vision to all stakeholders within the school, the community and beyond: to funders, legislators, the press and business groups—in short, anyone who might benefit from the initiative.

Frequent communication among partners keeps everyone informed, motivated and involved. Meetings, memos, e-mails and newsletters all work to keep team members up-to-date and unified. Intranet (computer network within an organization), extranet (giving authorized outsiders controlled access to the intranet) and social media will also facilitate communication and information sharing.

Your public website for the community school should feature points of pride—student shows, special achievements and innovative activities in school and outside. This will result in positive feedback for the work of the partners, funders and other stakeholders. Share your good news: better attendance, improved school climate, less graffiti in the neighborhood and fewer drop-outs. Success is a powerful motivator.

On the other hand, negative incidents can have a devastating effect on a community school initiative. So partners should develop plans to handle bad news if the need arises. Protect the good image and integrity of your initiative.

Parents, families and community members must be kept well informed of all developments so that they will buy into the changes made in the school and engage with school staff. How? Communicate with parents directly and through the local press. Invite them into the school for open houses and special events, and offer programming just for them. Elected officials, business owners and community organizations will all be interested in what's happening in their local area. Students and teachers may be the most interested; teachers need to be your partners, so timely and easily accessible communication with them will be key. Students will appreciate new programs and services; include them in the process.

Don't be shy about publicizing your initiative. Right after CAS opened its first two community schools, we started hosting visits to demonstrate our model in action to area leaders, funders, media personnel and policymakers in particular. Everything about the schools "said" something: the cleanliness of the building, the signage affixed to the schools' entrances, the well-maintained offices, the cheerful and welcoming family resource centers, the orderly and colorful student areas, the positive attitude of the staff.

Our public relations department featured community schools in a great deal of its media work as well. Word quickly spread nationally and internationally; soon, a new infrastructure had to be created to handle all the visits and interest generated by such energetic marketing.

Study visits also helped our staff, students and parents internalize the value of the initiative since they had to reflect on the process in order to describe it to streams of visitors. Press articles were written; television and radio spots were broadcast.

The lesson here: maximize exposure. Positive publicity will help your community school grow and prosper.

Building Systemic Community School Initiatives

7. Taking a Systemic Approach to Community Schools

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) began creating its own systemic infrastructure in 1998, and made several additional advances in 2000. Around that same time, in our national capacity-building work, we recognized that other initiatives were struggling with the same issues—how to build centralized management and governance structures that could support their growing number of local sites.
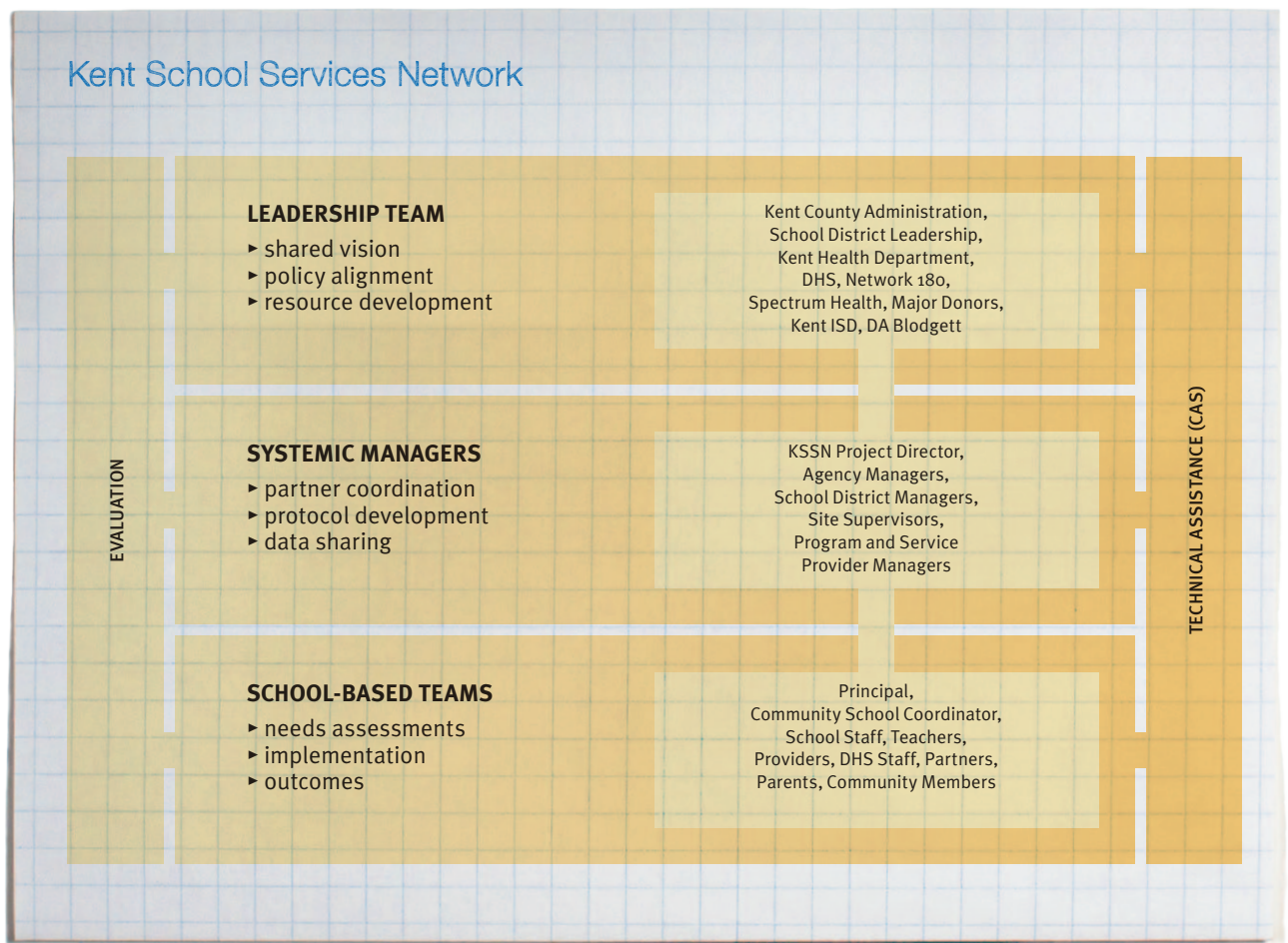
During the last five years, an increasing number of forward-thinking leaders across the country want change at a much larger scale; entire neighborhoods, school districts, cities and counties are looking to the community school strategy to coordinate and align local and systemic resources around shared results. As their pioneering work has taken hold, new challenges and opportunities have emerged: what management and governance structures are needed to support growing numbers of local sites, how might public policy and funding practices need to change to sustain these initiatives, and how can school districts flexibly leverage both local and systemic partnerships to meet the needs of their children and families? Community leaders, district officials, philanthropies and government agencies are learning to work more closely to address these questions as they develop systems of community schools—often now at the outset of their work.

Kent County, Michigan is a strong example of this approach. After conducting extensive research on school reform and integrated service delivery efforts around the country in 2005—including visiting a CAS community school in New York City—The Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative announced the launch of the Kent School Services Network

(KSSN) a year later. The plan was to pull together a large number of partners, county, city and neighborhood agencies and coordinate their work in support of children and families in schools where the needs were greatest.

The KSSN Leadership Team includes executives from three school districts, Kent County, the Department of Human Services, Network 180 (mental health services), Spectrum Health Healthier Communities, the Kent County Health Department, the Kent Intermediate School District, DA Blodgett for Children, Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Frey Foundation, Steelcase Foundation, Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation, the Heart of West Michigan United Way and others. A total of nine schools—seven in the urban Grand Rapids district, one in the suburban Godfrey Lee district and the entire suburban district of Comstock Park—were selected as sites for the first phase of the initiative. This kind of large-scale, multi-district planning at the outset of a community school was unusual in 2006, when NCCS became involved as a technical assistance provider to KSSN. But increasingly, this systemic thinking is more prevalent as the evidence mounts about the effectiveness of the community schools strategy.

Planning an entire system of schools requires strong support and leadership at three distinct levels: school, middle management and city-wide leadership. The school-based

Kent School Services Network

EVALUATION | **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CAS)**

LEADERSHIP TEAM
- shared vision
- policy alignment
- resource development

Kent County Administration, School District Leadership, Kent Health Department, DHS, Network 180, Spectrum Health, Major Donors, Kent ISD, DA Blodgett

SYSTEMIC MANAGERS
- partner coordination
- protocol development
- data sharing

KSSN Project Director, Agency Managers, School District Managers, Site Supervisors, Program and Service Provider Managers

SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS
- needs assessments
- implementation
- outcomes

Principal, Community School Coordinator, School Staff, Teachers, Providers, DHS Staff, Partners, Parents, Community Members

teams should include the principal and assistant principals, the community school director, teachers, service providers, parents and community members. They must interact with members of the mid-level management team, which may include city/county agency managers, assistant district superintendents, site supervisors and program and service provider managers. That team also interacts with the city-wide leadership team, which can include the mayor/county executive, district superintendent, city/county agency directors, major donors, lead agency executives and business partners. The Kent School Services Network is one of several community schools initiatives that follow this approach.

Beyond the challenges of infrastructure development at the individual school level there are those of creating systemic infrastructures and governance mechanisms that meet the need for **Coordination, Collaboration, Coherence** and **Commitment** (the Four C's). Sustaining these infrastructures as well as each school's partnerships takes additional professional development, collaborative skills and a persistent focus on goals and results. These are critical efforts that will help a system survive, for example, the departure of a superintendent or principal. Furthermore, a community school system needs champions at each of the three levels noted above, as well as strong leadership by the initiative's staff to keep driving the many components of change.

From our local practice in New York City as well as from our national capacity-building work, CAS has come to understand that—as with the development of individual schools—there are four distinct stages of development of a systemic initiative (from **Exploring** to **Emerging** to **Maturing** and, finally, to **Excelling**). The chart on the opposite page outlines the characteristics of each stage.

In a systemic initiative, communications and marketing play important roles. Change can be unsettling, and the development of a systemic initiative creates change on multiple levels. Partners will want to keep all participants well informed from the outset. The partnership should not just inform but should actively market the changes to all stakeholders. Make sure local officials are on board and prepared to explain the new initiative to their constituencies. This should be an ongoing effort.

Every detail must be considered in light of the larger strategic issues engendered by a multi-school system. Each school operates on its own as well as within the context of the larger structure. Starting small and expanding to more schools over time may be the right strategic move but can also be fraught with difficulties. "You have to get your first school right," observes CAS Community Schools Director Richard Negrón. "That school will be the springboard and model for the rest of the system."

Through our national capacity-building work, the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS) team has been able to chart the path and outline the benchmarks of systemic initiatives, and we offer the following stages of development chart as a guide for action to colleagues who want to learn from the experience of the increasing number of community school systems around the country.

Like others in the community schools field, we have been pleased to contribute to, and learn from, the work of the Coalition for Community Schools as they created an important new online guide, *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy* (Melaville, A., Jacobson, R., Blank, M.J., Washington, DC: 2011).

Stages of Development of a Systemic Community Schools Initiative

	EXPLORING	EMERGING	MATURING	EXCELLING
SHARED VISION & RESULTS FRAMEWORK	Multiple stakeholders realize need for change, but remain unclear on how to change or what to change to Examples of effective broad-scale change in education, social service and youth development sectors are studied	Recognition that children's needs are complex and multi-faceted and require a broad range of interventions and opportunities Growing numbers and types of stakeholders are drawn together to bring about change	Consensus on a vision that includes broad set of outcomes, system structures and underlying beliefs Multiple means of measuring student learning and development with special attention to data collection and sharing protocols	Commitment to continuous vision refinement with existing and new stakeholders Widespread use of qualitative and quantitative data to respond to immediate needs and inform future decisions
SUPPORTIVE POLICY & INNOVATIVE FINANCING	Reports on need for changes in how children are educated and supported are discussed among policy makers and in news media Dissatisfaction with the categorical nature of funding and limited scope of related outcomes for children	Debates on how to use policy to help lead reform rather than force change Alternatives to old financing paradigm, including cost-sharing and redeployment of existing resources, emerge in piecemeal fashion	Policies across education, health, social services, etc. aligned and interconnected, using community schools as an organizing framework More resources allocated for innovation and funding opportunities encourage partnerships and integration	Policies at the district, municipal, state and federal levels recognize, promote and sustain school-community partnerships Public/private financing reflects a focus on the whole child and invests in service implementation and coordination
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	Leaders from multiple sectors recognize and discuss internally the need to change their organizations' operations in order to better address the comprehensive needs of children Innovative "cross-boundary" leaders gain media attention	School and community leaders initiate discussions on core education and human service issues, including emerging roles and responsibilities Political and community leaders speak out on selected issues	Leaders use power and influence to generate broad-based support and build consensus for the initiative Leaders support paradigm shift in their own sectors through professional development	Key champions are continually and strategically cultivated from across sectors to advance the community schools agenda Leaders plan for succession and institutionalize structures to manage change and ensure continuity
BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT	Forums on need for change with input from the public are seen as essential Strategic plans, studies and recommendations from influential groups call for fundamental changes to "business as usual"	School-level advisory councils are formed, forging connections between school and community stakeholders Authentic public involvement in identifying needs and defining broad outcomes for children	Ongoing commissions and task forces established to drive changes and maintain momentum as leaders come and go Underrepresented groups (families and youth) engage in the process through advocacy and organizing	Public, political and business engagement and ownership seen as essential features of the initiative During times of transition, community stakeholders act as a stabilizing and guiding force
STABLE & FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS	Commitment to reform existing structures in a transparent and inclusive manner Realization that partnerships need to be formalized, made longer-term and better coordinated in order to address crisis-oriented and fragmented nature of services	Networks (including electronic) used to facilitate sharing of information and new ideas Service providers recognize need for, but have little or no access to, training on cultivating interagency partnerships	Governance structures are responsive to changing contexts and represent the diversity of the communities they serve Technical assistance builds capacity, ensures fidelity to the vision and facilitates continuous improvement	Roles of partners are mutually agreed upon and partners are held accountable for results Fiscal management, information technology, communications and human resource processes are informed by current best practices

Adapted from The Finance Project's *Sustainability Planning Workbook* and Beverly Parsons' *Finding Transformative Themes Across Multiple System Change Evaluations* by the CAS-NCCS (2008)

8. Elements of a Community School System

In preparing for our 2007 Community School Practicum conference—a national invitational conference for community school leaders—on the topic of driving systemic change through the community schools strategy, the NCCS team adapted The Finance Project's sustainability planning framework to create a summary of five elements that are central to building a successful, sustainable systemic community schools initiative. We organized the entire conference around this framework, which was well received and is widely used by community school leaders around the country:

SHARED VISION AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

‣ Stakeholders collaborate in the development of the vision, mission and goals.
‣ Plan clearly identifies the necessary strategies, activities and partners.
‣ Model is well-defined and adapted to local needs.
‣ Results are clear, measurable, achievable and need-based.

SUPPORTIVE POLICY AND INNOVATIVE FINANCING

‣ Policies at the district, municipal, state and federal levels recognize, promote and sustain school-community partnerships.

‣ Public and private financing reflects a focus on the whole child and invests in both the implementation of services and in their coordination.

‣ A community school framework serves as a conduit for new funding streams; existing resources (e.g., funding, personnel and space) are redeployed.

‣ Incentives exist to encourage partnerships at all levels and partners are held accountable for results.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

‣ Leaders boldly challenge conventional thinking and practice to support change within and across systems.

‣ Key champions are strategically cultivated across sectors to advance the community schools agenda.

‣ Leaders use power and influence to generate broad-based support and build consensus.

‣ Leaders from across sectors plan for succession; they institutionalize structures to manage change and ensure continuity.

BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

‣ Community stakeholders serve as active participants in needs assessment and resource inventory processes.

- Community resources—both financial and human—are organized to address prioritized needs and build on strengths.

- A variety of opportunities exist to engage stakeholders and ensure shared ownership of the initiative.

- During times of transition, the community acts as a stabilizing and guiding force.

STABLE AND FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS

- Governance structures are responsive to changing contexts and represent the diversity of the communities they serve.

- Technical assistance builds capacity, ensures fidelity to the vision and facilitates continuous improvement.

- Fiscal management, communications and human resource processes are informed by best practices.

- Roles of partners are mutually agreed upon, and partners are held accountable for results.

Adapted from The Finance Project's *Sustainability Planning Workbook* by the CAS-NCCS.

Sustaining Community Schools

9. Sustaining the Partnerships

As discussed earlier, sustainability means more than fundraising—it means making permanent changes in daily practice and in institutional arrangements, both human and financial resources. Sustained funding and solid partnerships are equally important; they in fact depend on and reinforce one another.

Partnerships require constant nurturing and a strong commitment to overcome any issues that arise—staying on goal, reconciling work styles, maintaining a spirit of collaboration. For example, a principal might retire or be reassigned and replaced by someone who does not share the partnership's commitment to the endeavor or who is not familiar with it. Given the importance of a principal as a driving force for change, this could be a disaster or a mere bump, depending on the strength of the partnership and the support it has built up among students, parents, the community and school staff. Making sure this new leader understands the initiative and knows that partners are not tenants, that they have rights and responsibilities, is fundamental to moving ahead. This type of situation points to the urgency of communicating the initiative's value and results to all stakeholders as the initiative grows and matures.

The addition of new partners and their active integration are critical. Each new arrival must be educated about the shared vision and the operational dynamics. If, for instance, you partner with a hospital or government agency to establish a school-based health center, their staff may lack experience working in a school setting. Another issue that could threaten both the partnership and the strategy itself is loss of funding. Consider taking a proven approach to fundraising—one based on diversification of funding sources, both public and private. Principals and community partners should also look at possibilities of maximizing

funding by combining resources. Community leaders and elected officials can become your champions, help raise funds and identify new sources of money in your local, city and state budgets. Remember that by developing communications and marketing plans, you will be promoting the sustainability of your work.

10. The Finance Project Sustainability Planning Framework

The Finance Project is a non-profit research, consulting, technical assistance and training firm designed to inform and assist public and private sector leaders nationwide. The organization "helps leaders make smart investment decisions, develop sound financing strategies and build solid partnerships that benefit children, families and communities" according to the organization's website (www.financeproject.org).

The Finance Project has developed a comprehensive conceptual framework for sustainability—a system of strategic thinking and effective action designed to institutionalize supportive practices and to help organizations secure the range of resources needed to achieve specific results. The framework promotes energetic fundraising as part of a strategic financing orientation and sustainability planning.

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) has applied The Finance Project's sustainability framework to its own community schools. A case study of how CAS has applied this framework follows this outline of the approach:

1. **Vision**
   Having a clear set of objectives that articulate how an initiative's programs or activities will improve the lives of children, families and communities is one of the most important and basic elements involved in achieving sustainability.

2. **Results Orientation**
   Demonstrating program success through measurable results is a crucial step in building support from key stakeholders in the community.

3. **Strategic Financing Orientation**
   Developing a strategic financing outlook is an essential task for program leaders; it enables them to identify the resources they need to sustain their activities and to develop strategies for bringing these resources together to achieve the initiative's goals.

4. **Adaptability to Changing Conditions**
   Being flexible enough to adjust to dynamic trends in the community enables leaders to take advantage of new opportunities. Adjusting to new social, economic and political realities enables initiatives to withstand any external threats to sustainability.

5. **Broad Base of Community Support**
   In addition to nurturing a community presence, an initiative achieves a broad base of community

Portland: Capacity Building Sustains and Grows a Countywide System

The SUN (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) Community Schools Initiative in Multnomah County, Oregon, expanded from eight schools in 1999 to a system of 60 as of the spring of 2011. Consistent capacity-building strategies at multiple levels—corresponding to the three structural levels identified by the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS)—have sustained and deepened the partnership.

SUN's capacity-building is based on NCCS' Four C's: Comprehensiveness, Collaboration, Coherence and Commitment. Governance at the school level includes an Operating Team and a Site Advisory Structure. The county is the managing partner and involves partners and staff from key sponsoring organizations. The SUN Service System Coordinating Council provides oversight and support to ensure shared responsibility and coordination.

The Coordinating Council is responsible for: ensuring systems-level alignment among all participating organizations; developing vision and operating policies for the system; ensuring accountability and quality; providing recommendations to the sponsors; promoting sustainability; ensuring equitable access and making operating decisions together. Challenges have occurred as elected officials leave office and key school district leaders depart. SUN finds that attention to commitment, especially from key leaders and funders, helps the initiative survive changes in leadership and financial support.

The SUN initiative is grounded in four imperatives:

▸ **Engage and Maintain Champions**—include key leaders in the planning and implementation from the very beginning; cultivate their support and provide visibility.

▸ **Communicate!**—keep the leaders informed; maintain good relationships with key staff that have access to officials.

▸ **Drive Work with Results**—define a results framework linked to the shared vision and expected outcomes; then use data gathered at all levels.

▸ **Put it in Writing**—written commitments, memoranda of understanding, contracts and policies create stability over time and help ensure understanding and alignment.

SUN has regular opportunities for staff to expand and deepen their practice. Employing a lead-agency model, it pairs community agencies with schools using a competitive bidding process. A uniform data management system allows all 60 schools to report on the same results, that include academic achievement, attendance, health and family stability.

Diana Hall, Program Supervisor, affirms that it takes capacity to build capacity. "Though not as tangible as the thousands of youth served, our capacity-building is equally important to achieving our vision. These efforts require attention and resources, both human and financial, and will not happen if they are not intentionally included in job roles and budgets." SUN is working closely with NCCS as a satellite technical assistance provider.

support by identifying who is in favor of the effort and nurturing the willingness and ability of those individuals to stand up in support of the work.

6. **Key Champions**

   Identifying and cultivating key leaders from multiple sectors—business, faith-based institutions, government agencies and philanthropies, for example—who are committed to an initiative's vision will help ensure its long-term stability.

7. **Strong Internal Systems**

   An initiative works effectively and efficiently when it has developed strong internal systems, including fiscal management, accounting, information retrieval, personnel systems and governance structures. Building these systems also allows initiatives to document results and demonstrate their soundness to potential funders.

8. **Sustainability Plan**

   Developing a comprehensive plan that accounts for short- and long-term needs and goals is crucial. A sustainability plan will help leaders decide on future directions; it will offer benchmarks indicating whether an initiative is achieving its goals. Such a plan serves as a valuable asset to help policymakers, opinion leaders and investors decide whether and how to support particular initiatives.

12. Tapping into Federal Support

In recent years a new wave of school-based service programs along the lines of the community school model has emerged in cities and towns nationwide. This development has drawn attention to the need for integrated funding streams at all levels of government. As government leaders grapple to prioritize access to existing resources, the idea of local partnerships and collaborations becomes increasingly appealing. At the federal level, a number of initiatives—some new, some long established—present support opportunities for a creative brand of comprehensive collaboration between schools and human service agencies working to provide school-based services to families and children.

FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Full-Service Community Schools Grants Program awards funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support the creation or expansion of community schools. This grant competition, held in 2008 and again in 2010, generated substantial interest nationwide, with more than 400 applicants vying for $5 million the first year. Successful applicants covered a wide range of urban and rural sites that are now working to expand student and family support services that are integrated with core instructional programs at these schools. CAS, through our National Center for Community Schools (NCCS), is providing technical assistance to these grantees, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

CAS: Sustaining the Partnership at C.S. 61

The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') relationship with Community School 61, a public K-5 school in the South Bronx serving 390 students in school year 2010–11, began in 2000, after Principal Patricia Quigley embraced the agency's offer to join the CAS community school initiative. She has not only advanced the relationship but, with total support of CAS as lead partner, has transformed the school to benefit the students, their families and the neighborhood.

Principal Quigley has anchored a partnership that embodies the CAS Developmental Triangle and the Four Capacities (Four C's): Comprehensiveness, Collaboration, Coherence and Commitment. In addition, her school improvement efforts illustrate the value of the essential ingredients outlined by Anthony Bryk and his colleagues in their 2010 study, *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago:*

▸ Principal Quigley has been the driver of change at all levels at C.S. 61. She has designed an innovative data system that allows DoE and CAS staff to work collaboratively, and in real-time, to analyze and promote student success.

▸ The school has a coherent instructional program that aligns the day and after-school curriculums. CAS staff teaches final school-day periods, thus freeing teachers to prepare classroom lessons, review student data and provide one-on-one support for students.

▸ C.S. 61 has created a student-centered school climate, including an after-school program that serves every student, holiday and summer programming, and access to services and supports for children and families.

▸ The school's short and long-term family and community engagement strategy includes increasing parent-family engagement in education, leadership development, adult classes, family literacy and engaging the community in improving student attendance.

▸ The principal has worked consistently to build professional capacity of all staff, including both DoE and CAS. In addition to joint yearly retreats, she brought a professional development course led by Harvard University to all staff and engages the School Leadership Team to build a shared understanding of the community school strategy.

School climate and students' social capital have improved greatly since CAS joined forces with Principal Quigley at C.S. 61. Gang activity was noticeably reduced in the park across the street; CAS improved the appearance of key areas of the building and provided critical support after the events of September 11, 2001 and the November 2001 plane crash that directly impacted school families.

Principal Quigley is proud of her students' access to vital supports, such as comprehensive health services, and the highest quality instruction. "The kids now have lots of extra support and all the tools at their fingertips to enhance their learning and our teaching." She happily boasts that her students call themselves "Children's Aid kids."

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (SIG)

SIG awards funding to persistently low-achieving schools engaging in a school intervention model in order to raise student achievement. In San Francisco, the community school strategy is central to their district-wide SIG proposal, and two schools in Hartford's community schools initiative are using SIG funds to support components of their community school strategy.

PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS

These competitive grants provide funding for non-profit organizations to design comprehensive approaches for addressing the education and developmental needs of children in distressed, high-poverty communities. Comprehensive services range from early learning to college and career, including programs to improve the health, safety and stability of neighborhoods, and boost family engagement in student learning. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has referred to Promise Neighborhoods as "the intersection of community schools and community development."

INVESTING IN INNOVATION FUND (i3)

This relatively new program, from the U.S. Department of Education, provides funding to local organizations partnering with schools, by awarding competitive grants to applicants with a record of improving student achievement through innovative approaches. Grantees are expected to close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides grants for rural and urban public elementary or secondary schools to plan, implement or expand projects that meet the educational, health, social service, cultural and recreational needs of communities. The program enables school districts to fund public schools as community centers designed to provide children with safe, supervised and enriching after-school and summer activities. Participants have access to homework centers, tutors, counseling and cultural, recreational and nutritional opportunities. The funding level for this program is currently about $1.16 billion annually, making it one of the major sources of support for community schools.

TITLE I

Title I is the major source of federal support for low-income schools. Local educational agencies and schools are required to combine these funds with federal, state and local streams to update the schools' overall instructional programs, for example, by providing academic support activities to students in reading, language arts and math. Funds can be used for tutoring and academic enrichment; and, through the advocacy efforts of the Coalition for Community Schools and others, can now be used to hire Community School Directors.

CAS: Applying The Finance Project's Framework

From the start, The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') staff and board addressed the issue of sustainability—that is, how to plan for the long-term development, implementation, assessment and institutionalization of our community schools work. Here is a summary of our approach to each element of The Finance Project's sustainability framework.

1. **Vision:** The CAS vision for our community schools starts with the long-term result—children who are prepared for productive adulthood. In order to achieve that vision, we intentionally increase the access of low-income children to all of the supports and services that we know make a difference in their healthy development and school success. The Developmental Triangle is an illustration of that vision—keeping children at the center of our collective attention at all times, we integrate enrichment opportunities as well as health and social supports with the schools' core instructional program in order to ensure that all children succeed and thrive.

2. **Results Orientation:** At the earliest stages of this work, we commissioned a collaborative team from Fordham University's Schools of Education and Social Services to assess the processes and outcomes of our community schools, focusing on the two initial sites (I.S. 218 and P.S. 5). Subsequent evaluations have demonstrated such positive outcomes as decreases in inappropriate special education referral rates and improved functioning of students receiving mental health treatment. Current (2011) evaluation efforts include examination of academic and behavioral outcomes of middle school students in six of our community schools. Working with Heléne Clark and her colleagues from ActKnowledge, we have developed and refined a Theory of Change that articulates the causal pathways from our collective efforts to the outcomes we expect to see. (Please see Appendix E.)

3. **Strategic Financing Orientation:** CAS initiated our community schools work with private funding but has consistently pursued an overarching strategy of balancing public and private funding. We generate support for our community schools through a wide variety of sources. During the initial years, core support came primarily from private sources, including foundations, corporations and individuals. Our current sources of support still include private donations but two-thirds of our revenue now come from public funding streams, including Medicaid, Early Head Start, Head Start, federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, New York City Out-of-School Time funding and New York State Extended Day and Advantage grants. The National Center for Community Schools receives fees for service as well as foundation grants to support its work.

4. **Adaptability to Changing Conditions:** Over the 20 years of CAS' community schools operation, many significant changes in public education have occurred nationally and locally. For example, the inception of the academic standards movement led CAS to strengthen the academic component of its after-school and summer programs. The federal government's No Child Left

Behind (NCLB) legislation fostered new interest in parent involvement. On two different occasions, CAS schools were highlighted in videos produced by the New York State Department of Education. When NCLB increased the emphasis on high-stakes testing, CAS responded to our partners' requests that we add some test preparation to our after-school programming so that teachers could continue to teach the core academic curriculum during the school day.

5. **Broad Base of Community Support:** CAS builds community support through public relations and constituency-building. This includes outreach to the city's political leaders (mayor, city council, schools chancellor, youth services commissioner) and to neighborhood leaders, business owners and residents, parents, principals, teachers and young people themselves. This is ongoing work, not a one-time event, and includes a wide range of activities and responses to requests by parents and school personnel. CAS' constituency-building efforts target our own board of directors and non-school CAS staff as well. We use all of our communications channels to generate visibility for our community schools work and to reach additional stakeholders.

6. **Key Champions:** We have also used our long-standing relationships with local, state and national political leaders to advocate for increased public support for community schools. In particular, we have collaborated with influential colleagues on city and state advocacy campaigns. Some of our most effective champions are members of the CAS board of trustees, who regularly tap into their networks of friends and colleagues to support our school efforts. Another effective strategy has been to host study visits to our schools. To date, more than 10,000 visitors have seen the CAS community schools in action; some in turn have provided financial support and have helped spread the word about community schools.

7. **Strong Internal Systems:** As the CAS community schools division has grown, we have built strong internal systems, including the creation of staff positions to direct, guide and support the division and each school. The community schools division, in turn, is able to rely on the strong internal systems of CAS, including the development, fiscal, human resources and public relations departments, which are all guided by the CAS executive office and board of trustees.

8. **Sustainability Plan:** The community schools division is one of CAS' five core service divisions and accounts for about one-fifth of the agency's annual budget. As such, community schools are a priority in the agency's overall fundraising, public relations, advocacy and constituency-building work. Individual community schools do not carry fundraising responsibility, but each school leader knows which funding sources support its specific work and is attentive to the funding parameters and reporting requirements of each source. Sustainability is a major and shared responsibility on the part of all members of the community schools team, who receive direct and substantial assistance from other CAS colleagues and divisions.

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

The Head Start Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, funds educational and social enrichment programs for low-income children (ages 3–5) that include access to comprehensive services. The program also provides funds to involve parents in their children's learning and to help parents make progress toward their own educational, literacy and employment goals. Early Head Start, also administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, supports home-based and center-based early childhood programming as well as parent education and support.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Schools that provide on-site health and mental health services are eligible for various federal grants through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and entitlement programs like Medicaid and Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment. These funding sources cover services as varied as the development and implementation of effective health promotion policies and programs that address such high-priority health concerns as asthma control and mental health treatment for adults and youth.

OTHER FEDERAL GRANTS

Other federal grants that support community schools initiatives are available under the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program. The Community Services Block Grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides funding to support services and program activities that meet the needs of low-income families and individuals. Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program, schools can receive reimbursements for nutritious after-school snacks and meals.

Building Capacity to Implement Community Schools

15. The National Center for Community Schools Approach

As a result of two decades of community schools experience, our staff has learned valuable lessons that we are eager to transmit to other practitioners, whether in Connecticut, California and Texas, or in Europe and Asia. We are a practice- and research-based organization that, since 1994, has assisted nearly all major national and international community schools initiatives (including Chicago (IL), Evansville (IN), Hartford (CT), Portland (OR), England, Scotland and the Netherlands).

The work of the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS) has been informed and influenced by key research in the area of capacity-building. We promote thorough ongoing assessment, the development of relational trust and accountability, joint planning and effective partnerships. NCCS' activities focus on:

▸ **Customized Study Visits**
We provide practitioners with opportunities to see a community school in action and to gain access to top experts in partnership-building; sustainability; out-of-school time programming; comprehensive school-based medical, mental health and dental services; parent and community engagement; early childhood education and Head Start.

▸ **Consultation**
Initial assessment and development of a technical assistance plan are co-constructed by our consultant and the client, followed by on- and off-site guidance as the plan is implemented.

Hartford: Organizing the Community Around Student Success

The Children's Aid Society's (CAS') National Center for Community Schools (NCCS) began its affiliation with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG), the sixth largest community foundation in the country, in December 2001. Initially, HFPG wanted NCCS to provide a series of trainings on parent and family engagement for grantees in its After School Initiative. When that work was successfully completed, HFPG asked our staff to provide assistance around the development, implementation and expansion of a citywide Community Schools Initiative.

In 2008, the Hartford Community Schools Initiative (consisting initially of five community schools) was launched by the school superintendent, Hartford's mayor, the President of HFPG and the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut during a meeting facilitated by NCCS. Hartford then took its initiative to the systemic level by creating the policies and the infrastructure necessary to support a network of community schools. This work included hiring a Director of Community Schools.

NCCS provides technical assistance at the leadership and operational levels of the Hartford system. This assistance includes capacity-building for front-line staff and school site teams (training, on-site consultations and program observations). At the leadership level, our assistance has included meeting facilitation, policy analysis and advising, sustainability assistance and connecting the initiative to other community school systems around the country.

The Hartford community schools have followed the CAS model in several respects. They use a lead agency approach, have diverse funding streams and engage a wide variety of partners to operationalize the Developmental Triangle approach to enrichment and service provision. An external evaluation (2009–10), conducted by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, showed significant results for students in the after-school programs of the five community schools, including gains across the three Connecticut Mastery test subject areas. The initiative moved onto a new stage of development with the addition of two new community schools (to seven total) in the beginning of the 2011–12 school year.

"Students in Hartford Community Schools—the newest initiative of the Hartford Foundation—made their mark during 2010, posting significant gains in the Connecticut Mastery Test, adding momentum to the city's school reform movement. The community schools increased their state test scores by 5.6 points from 2009 to 2010, which represents twice the Hartford Public Schools average increase over the prior year, and 15 percent growth since 2008" (from the Hartford Foundation website, http://www.hfpg.org).

The achievement gap between urban and suburban students in Hartford is the largest in the nation. Sara Sneed, the Senior Program Officer who leads the Foundation's Community Schools Initiative, believes that this new system of high-quality, high-performing schools is needed to help close the gap, and, according to their website, maintains that, "Community schools increase opportunities for children to succeed in school."

England: CAS Helps Launch a National Initiative

According to Julian Piper, former Director of England's extended service support team, The Children's Aid Society (CAS) maintained a relationship with England throughout the development of the Extended Schools National Policy. Key capacity-building activities included a 1999 speech by CAS' then-CEO Philip Coltoff to the British Parliament, which generated national policy interest in community/extended service schools. In 2002, CAS' then-COO C. Warren (Pete) Moses, spoke at the London conference that launched their report on Extended Schools. Subsequently CAS organized several study visits for British officials and education journalists to its community schools in New York City.

Piper says that England based its Extended Schools model in part on what it had learned from CAS and its National Center for Community Schools (NCCS). That model outlined a "core offer" of services that would be provided by all of England's schools, with funding from the national government and technical support from Piper's organization, ContinYou.

A team from ContinYou visited New York in 2004 to find out more about CAS' full-service schools, the NCCS technical assistance strategy and how this model might be further adapted by England. In a mutually beneficial relationship, ContinYou's staff have participated in, and presented at, several of the CAS' community school Practicum conferences over the years.

By 2004–05, third-party evaluations documented that the Extended Schools were showing significant signs of success—particularly in bringing diverse areas of government policy together but also in raising academic achievement levels. The British government decided to expand the program to all schools, setting a target date of 2010 to achieve this goal. Moses spoke to Parliament that same year, as part of this expansion effort. Three years later, 25 members of the Education Committee of Parliament visited the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus in Washington Heights to see the school that had inspired the reform.

Since the new Coalition Government in the UK came to power in 2010, there has been little talk of Extended Schools or the Extended Services policy. But, observes Piper, not all has been lost. Policymakers continue to discuss the feasibility of supporting early intervention and integrated services, which is encouraging at times of significant budget cuts to public services, and there are many schools where staff understand and support the rationale behind the Extended Services policy.

"These schools will continue to deliver a wide range of services to children and families, believing—and increasingly seeing the evidence—that children can achieve their potential when their needs are met. The hope is that a future government will realize that education is not just about teaching and learning and that it will return to the true notion of community schools once again."

▸ **Training at Various Levels**
Our team provides training at all levels of a community school initiative, from direct service staff to city and district leadership; we also provide facilitation of meetings and strategic planning processes.

▸ **Development and Application of Planning Tools**
Our consultation work often involves the application of a wide array of planning tools that we have developed over the past 17 years, specifically for community schools. These tools assist with assessment of needs, strengths and progress; community mapping; partnership development; sustainability; and evaluation.

▸ **Conferences and Presentations**
Our team of experts is available to present at, or help plan and execute, conferences and seminars, elucidating particular components of community schools or the strategy in general. They also deliver presentations to an organization's target audiences, such as boards of directors, school districts and public officials.

▸ **Network-Building and Relationship-Brokering**
A two-decade tenure of close interaction with all the major players in the community schools field has enabled CAS to build strong relationships with key individuals and organizations throughout the community schools field. Our biennial Practicum is an example of a successful convening of the field's most seasoned practitioners.

WHO RECEIVES HELP?

Our clients include schools and school districts, United Ways, community foundations, local human service agencies, national organizations (such as the Public Education Network and Boys & Girls Clubs of America), and national and international philanthropies. Over the years, our work has increasingly moved from one school at a time ("retail") to whole districts, cities and national organizations ("wholesale")—a development that reflects the maturity of the work across the field.

Our engagements vary not just in duration but also in intensity. Some groups reach out to us after conducting one or two years of careful research and coalition-building at the local level, while others request assistance at the earliest stage of their work. A typical engagement lasts one to three years, although some clients become self-sufficient after only one or two study visits, while others engage our services for as long as seven or eight years.

Our capacity-building practice follows researcher Barbara Blumenthal's advice: that effective capacity building should be developmental in nature, client-centered and rooted in a relationship of trust. Our client list of national and international colleagues testifies to the effectiveness of our work and the trust upon which our work is based.

Blumenthal, B., (May/June 2004). "Rethinking Capacity Building," *Foundation News & Commentary*, pp. 43–6.

Conclusion

18. Every School a Community School!

Community schools are well-positioned to respond to the realities of 21[st] century families. These comprehensive schools provide the services, supports and opportunities critical to the healthy development of all children, in addition to providing the rich and engaging academic curricula needed by students who are prepared to enter the labor force of the future.

Community schools bring together the multifaceted resources necessary for children, families and communities struggling to meet new educational requirements, deteriorating socio-economic conditions and ever higher labor force expectations. Helping children in all circumstances to become healthy, productive adults is the ultimate goal of the community schools strategy.

For all these reasons, The Children's Aid Society believes that *every school must be a community school*. Only then, when our schools are transformed and joined in collaborative systems, will our children benefit from consistent, cradle-to-college educational excellence as well as from health and family support services that remove obstacles to their learning and development. If we are to produce generations of happy, productive adults, this is the path to take.

Notes:

Notes:

Tools and Resources
for Community Schools

Role of a Lead Partner in a Community School

A Lead Partner (LP), also known as a Lead Agency, is an organization that works closely with a school and other partners to lead the development and sustainability of the community school strategy. The LP brings a core set of competencies that enhance and complement those of the school. To be successful, an LP needs to be regarded not as a "tenant" in the building, but instead as a key collaborator that—through joint planning and timely access to resources and information—can add significant value to many aspects of school and community life.

While LPs tend to be community-based organizations in the social service or youth development fields, there are many examples of intermediaries, universities, health institutions and public agencies (such as parks/recreation or youth services departments) effectively performing the following functions at one or more community school sites:

BROKER AND COORDINATOR

By design, community schools develop, coordinate and integrate a wide range of programs and services that are responsive to the identified needs of students and families and are provided by the school and one or more partners. Brokering new relationships, coordinating partnerships and fostering collaboration are key responsibilities of the LP, and should be carried out in a manner that preserves the autonomy and identity of providers while ensuring all programs are high-quality, integrated, comprehensive and aligned around a set of shared outcomes. In cases where an LP works in multiple community schools, opportunities to leverage larger-scale partnerships (such as a health services provider) across some or all of their sites should be actively sought. This approach led The Village for Families & Children in Hartford, CT, for example, to provide school-based mental health services in every site of the community schools initiative.

PROVIDER

Although an LP typically provides one or more of the programs, it is not a requirement. The Children's Aid Society (CAS) in New York City, for example, has the capacity and interest as an organization to implement almost all of the enrichment and support services in many of its partner schools, while DA Blodgett for Children, a child welfare organization in Grand Rapids, MI, provides no direct programming at all, focusing their efforts almost entirely on the coordination/integration functions. In both cases, the LP is held accountable for planning with the principal and ensuring the quality and alignment of programs—whether primarily by collaborating within the agency, as with CAS, and/or between agencies, as with DA Blodgett.

EMPLOYER AND SUPERVISOR OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

The LP maintains a full-time presence at each of its partner schools by hiring, training, supervising and supporting a Community School Coordinator (also called a CS Director, Resource Coordinator or Site Manager). The Coordinator works closely with the school

principal, and also collaborates with all stakeholders—students, families, residents, staff and providers—to plan and implement strategies that are comprehensive and aligned around a set of clearly identified and shared outcomes.

Serving as the principal's liaison to other partner organizations, the Coordinator adds capacity to the school by facilitating collaborative planning processes, ensuring alignment around identified goals, developing shared enrollment and coordinated referral systems, creating procedures around the use of shared space, managing shared calendars and communicating about the community school internally and externally, among other ways. This level of coordination is challenging, but when done well, results in an environment that promotes synergy, creativity and transformation.

Given the complexity of the Coordinator position, the LP must provide meaningful, regular and on-site supervision to their employee. This includes providing intensive professional development opportunities from the start and—particularly in the case of multi-site LPs—creating formal structures for peer learning and inter-visitation among Coordinators. While the Coordinator's connection to the principal is essential to the success of the community school, the Coordinator's supervisor should similarly develop a trusting relationship with the principal and be prepared to mediate conflict as needed and appropriate.

RESOURCE DEVELOPER AND FISCAL AGENT

LPs can also bring their organizational capacity to bear in community school partnerships. LPs often have knowledgeable and experienced grant-writers or development offices that can facilitate the acquisition of additional public and private funding streams, including non-education dollars and/or resources for which schools or other partners may not have the capacity or the eligibility to apply. An LP may also elect to serve as a fiscal agent for the partnership on particular grants, an arrangement that can create flexibility and facilitate coordination of large-scale or complex projects.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ADVOCATE

An effective LP should seek and create opportunities—in concert with its partners—for families, staff, community residents, district officials and other key stakeholders to better understand the work of the community school through open houses, celebrations, orientations, special events and publications. It should create and widely distribute materials such as fact sheets and videos that describe the philosophy, the strategies and the results of its community schools to foster broad support for the strategy among community members, elected officials and policy makers. Community schools are a safe place where students and parents can advocate for the programs, services and issues about which they care most deeply.

Where appropriate, LPs have the added responsibility for representing and contributing to the larger system of community schools. This may include participation on initiative-wide governance or planning committees, for example, or collecting and sharing data that can be used to measure and communicate the initiative's impact. LPs possess valuable assets: funding, personnel, cultural competence, experience working with families, programmatic and managerial expertise, political connections, etc. All of these resources should be leveraged to promote the growth and development of the community schools.

Community School Coordinator Sample Job Description

Reports to: Designated Supervisor of Lead Partner (LP)

POSITION SUMMARY

The Community School Coordinator (CSC) is responsible for the implementation, integration, alignment and coordination of the community school strategy at the site level.

The CSC, while employed by the LP, is also accountable to the school principal and is therefore expected to plan and align all programs, services and opportunities collaboratively.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

▸ Implement a menu of needs-driven, high-quality programs and services in adherence with the community school model, including but not limited to early childhood programs, expanded learning and enrichment opportunities, health services, parent/family engagement, adult education, direct material assistance and interventions targeted to chronically absent students.

▸ Ensure the alignment and integration of all programming with the principal's vision and school-day curriculum to the fullest extent possible.

▸ Advise the principal on how to integrate partners and community members into school governance structures (i.e., School Leadership, School Safety, Child Study and Attendance teams).

▸ Coordinate needs and resource assessment activities on an ongoing basis, employing a variety of strategies and including a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

▸ Hire, train and supervise staff as required by the LP.

▸ Convene and staff the site-based Community School Leadership Team, a coordinating body that is co-led by the principal and Community School Coordinator and may comprise administrators, teachers, support services staff, partners, parents and others to identify needs, set priorities and coordinate the strategy.

▸ Support the research/evaluation of the community school by supervising and coordinating the collection of data, timely submission of reports and responses to other requests for information made by the initiative's leadership.

▸ Participate in capacity-building activities, including initiative-wide and site-based trainings, network meetings and study visits, and—with the principal—ensure the participation of other site-based staff as needed or required.

▸ Represent the initiative in various public forums as needed and participate in advocacy activities to promote the initiative.

▸ Execute other tasks as indicated by the LP.

Stages of Development: Capacity > Comprehensiveness

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES	STAGE 1: EXPLORING	STAGE 2: EMERGING	STAGE 3: MATURING	STAGE 4: EXCELLING
Community Schools (CS) build their vision from a comprehensive understanding of the developmental needs of children and youth, and seek to address the major developmental domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral) in ways that promote student success.	Characterized by recognition that children and families have multiple needs that impact school climate and inhibit learning, and that schools cannot address them alone. Focus on how to secure services and programs for children and families, both non-academic and academic enrichment.	Characterized by initial steps towards building relationship with a Lead Partner and other willing providers. School open extended hours for partners to provide services, as well as inviting programming and support services during the school day.	Characterized by opening school to multiple partner services and programs that respond to identified needs of students, school, families and community and that improve the overall conditions for learning.	Characterized by the school serving as an identified hub of opportunity and civic engagement for students, families and neighborhoods residents. System in place for ongoing comprehensiveness in response to need and demand.
Whole Child Perspective Recognition that school success results from positive development in all the major domains: cognitive, physical, social, emotional and moral. Social-emotional learning understood to contribute to and support academic achievement. CS approach recognizes the importance of the family, school and community as context for student development.	Focus on shared learning of high-quality principles and approaches: ‣ academic enhancement ‣ child and youth development ‣ parent involvement and family strengthening ‣ community development	Complementary programs target identified needs: ‣ initial programs/services may be added as opportunities arise ‣ program resource development prioritized by need ‣ referrals to programs identified by need ‣ family and community needs considered	Major areas of developmental concern are being addressed by programming and/or linkages: ‣ academic support and enhancement ‣ cultural enrichment/skill development ‣ physical and mental health ‣ family social services and adult education ‣ early childhood ‣ community safety and development	Academic, social, health and developmental needs are systematically being addressed: ‣ opportunities to progress along continuum of programming ‣ developmental opportunities fuel academic success ‣ developmental opportunities fuel improvements in related outcomes
Responsiveness to Need Systematic assessment of needs—of each target population, school climate and community context—grounds decisions about resource allocation and partnership recruitment. Existing resources are well understood and evaluated for alignment with results framework of the CS.	Initial needs assessment and mapping of existing resources in school and in community: ‣ leadership "brainstorming" ‣ discussions with stakeholder groups ‣ study of existing community and school archival data	In-depth, ongoing needs assessment and resource mapping: ‣ surveys/focus groups with all stakeholder groups: ‣ parents ‣ school staff ‣ students ‣ community residents ‣ partners Systems put in place to monitor school and community data	Program utilization is linked to identified needs and monitored for outcomes: ‣ needs assessment is institutionalized as ongoing process; regular channels exist for input and feedback ‣ students/families linked to needed services and programs by site coordinator and school staff ‣ enrichment activities complement school-day program ‣ school facilities offers numerous opportunities in out-of-school time	Partner-provided and school-provided programs jointly meet district and community goals: ‣ needs assessment addresses individual needs, population needs and community needs ‣ assets/resources of community are fully integrated to target challenges ‣ new challenges regularly brought to CS for coordinated responses
High-Quality Programs and Services The array of activities and services offered is designed to augment, enrich and increase the capacity of each target group. Scarce resources are directed at identified needs and targeted to appropriate populations in order to achieve agreed priority results.	Some partner programs and services may already exist in school. Partners and school begin to explore how to improve: ‣ access to services ‣ coordination ‣ integration ‣ targeting to identified needs and results ‣ quality assurance	Developmentally appropriate programs added as funded: ‣ resource development for needed programs and services ‣ attention paid to quality programming: ‣ youth development ‣ family strengthening ‣ community empowerment ‣ use needs assessment data and best practices	Principles of youth development, family strengthening and community development underpin program content: ‣ core competencies of partner agencies are fully utilized ‣ school and partner programs use common philosophical approaches ‣ programs and services are perceived as desirable, fun, responsive by students, families and neighbors	School is seen as a vibrant, trusted center for activities desired by its community, and as locus of effective service delivery and civic engagement in education: ‣ schools are partners of choice for new programs and opportunities ‣ community has confidence in school as access point for responsiveness ‣ school seen as purveyor of excitement, opportunity and hope

Stages of Development: Capacity > Collaboration

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES	STAGE 1: EXPLORING	STAGE 2: EMERGING	STAGE 3: MATURING	STAGE 4: EXCELLING
In CS, multiple partners develop the trusting relationships and the capacity to work smoothly together with authentically shared leadership and mutual accountability for shared results.	Characterized by interest in CS strategy as way to engage others in removing barriers and improving conditions for learning. Open to sharing leadership. Interested in increasing parental and community engagement.	Characterized by increased efforts to engage parents and community in planning, implementation and oversight of academic and non-academic programs. Beginning to involve partners and parents in decision making.	Characterized by the regular involvement and leadership of wide range of stakeholders. Transparent agreements and mutual accountability underpin the ongoing development of partnerships.	Characterized by permanent engagement across community, collaborative mode of community and program development, and policy making.
Community Engagement Civic engagement in schools will increase their success. Community acts as advocate, supporter, partner, service user and guardian that holds schools accountable for student success.	Recognition of the connection between success of school and thriving community: ▸ engagement of community leadership in efforts to improve conditions for students ▸ interest in school as center of community ▸ importance of community conditions recognized, e.g., safety, environment and housing ▸ public interest in increasing civic engagement in education	Clear communication and engagement of community in planning and implementation: ▸ public education about CS strategy ▸ may establish agreements with community residents, businesses, organizations to provide services to students and families ▸ community representation on all governing and coordinating bodies	CS is responsive to needs of the community and generates regular community events and programs: ▸ increased visibility, public celebrations ▸ services directed at community needs, accessible in school/non-school hours ▸ community represented in leadership ▸ community-based learning opportunities ▸ parents and youth encouraged to become community leaders	Community regularly utilizes schools as venues for problem-solving, cultural celebration, development and engagement: ▸ "swinging door" access for community members and organizations as providers of and participants in school-based opportunities ▸ joint planning and accountability with community ▸ community members rally as advocates for CS strategy
Partnerships Schools and one or more organizations with a shared vision and resources come together to serve students, their families and the community. Agreements are structured to ensure clarity of roles and shared accountability.	Openness to agencies and organizations with services and programs essential to student success: ▸ study of models of partnership ▸ willingness to share leadership, accountability	Formal agreement with Lead Partner shifts some responsibilities to partner staff: ▸ principal begins sharing management of building, activities, and scheduling ▸ joint decision making in agreed areas of work	Lead Partners serve as lead point-of-contact for all school partnerships: ▸ agreements in place for all providers ▸ monitoring and accountability ▸ shared responsibility of partners and school staff for success of students ▸ shared philosophies of youth development and family strengthening	Seamless coordination among permanent and mobile partners: ▸ systems allow for occasional and long-term partnerships to evolve, with monitoring and accountability assured and responsiveness to changing needs emphasized
Governance Structures and processes are created through which shared leadership is institutionalized and decisions are made for CS. A coordinating body and leadership team at the school level must bring all partners into regular and active communication, giving voice to all perspectives. At the initiative level, a resource coordination/policy development body is important. Mid-level management collaboration may also require institutionalization.	Interest in sharing leadership and responsibility for success of students: ▸ principal and district leaders retain sole responsibility for school facilities and programs ▸ existing school leadership teams and structures are in place ▸ informal networks may also be at work to support school and students	Formal governance structures, agreements built around shared vision and objectives: ▸ selection of Lead Partner and agreement on roles ▸ decision making and communication processes developed among school, lead partner and providers ▸ development of coordinating body with representative stakeholders ▸ memoranda of understanding (MOU) or letters of agreement (LOA) concluded District and municipal policy leadership develop governance structures as well.	Governance bodies effectively institutionalized within schools: ▸ leadership committees include needed representation of relevant stakeholder groups ▸ mission and strategies integrated with school improvement plan ▸ CS coordinating bodies enhance existing school committees Vertical communication among levels of governance (school site, district, regional, etc.) is responsive, transparent and effective.	School-site and community-wide governance in place and functioning as part of public and private networks: ▸ management issues efficiently responded to ▸ flow of ideas and concerns move agilely, up and down the governance chain ▸ linkages to political systems ensure effectiveness and relevance

Stages of Development: Capacity > Coherence

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES	STAGE 1: EXPLORING	STAGE 2: EMERGING	STAGE 3: MATURING	STAGE 4: EXCELLING
In CS, a shared vision drives the alignment of community resources toward student success. Effective management structures, communications and policies are institutionalized in support of the whole child, family and community.	Characterized by recognition that effective management of needed programs and services exceeds capacity of existing staffing and structures. Recognized need for program integration. Planning process engages all stakeholders.	Characterized by efforts to develop effective coordination and system of monitoring and accountability for programs and services. Development of new resources for staffing, communication patterns and management.	Characterized by the integration of CS structure/processes/programs into "normal" operations of schools. Site coordinator role is clearly understood and leadership is reliably shared. Effective, consistent management is a hallmark of this stage.	Characterized by policy shifts that make CS a permanent approach to school reform, service delivery, community-based education and civic engagement.
Integration The process of aligning diverse and separate programs and activities into a coherent, congruent whole around an agreed-upon set of results. Participation of CS leadership in school's regular teams and regular communication between partners and educators are key features of well-integrated initiatives.	Interest in moving toward more comprehensive, integrated system: ▶ programs and services are not integrated with the school's academic program ▶ programs and services not highly integrated with one another ▶ limited integration may exist through district-mandated structures	Extended-day programming complements content of school-day curriculum: ▶ initial efforts to align enrichment program with state and district standards ▶ initial efforts to open communication between staff of school and program partners ▶ develop coordinating body for regular communication among various providers	Extended-day programming developed in concert with school staff and addresses school learning priorities, as well as school climate: ▶ program referrals from established Pupil (Student) Support Teams ▶ content developed in collaboration with school staff	Joint development of academic and extended-day programs, with curriculum enhancement provided by partners and teachers together:. ▶ partners' cost-sharing contributes to optimal programming ▶ shared delivery of content ▶ connection to community-based learning ▶ shared responsibility for success
Management and Staffing Paid and volunteer personnel are used to accomplish the tasks and activities of the CS. Key staff positions include CS Coordinator and Parent Coordinator/Liaison. Regular consultation between leadership and key school administrators is critical. Effective logistical and communication strategies in place.	Desire for principal's primary role to be instructional leader: ▶ principal remains sole manager of all activities in building ▶ no formal budget exists for program and coordination staffing ▶ volunteers may play roles in management but with little coordination or planning ▶ data collection practices vary from program to program	CS Coordinator assuming responsibility for agreed-upon set of responsibilities: ▶ budget established for coordination functions ▶ additional roles may be played by staff or volunteers (parent coordinator, etc.) ▶ program staff provided per grant sources ▶ individual programs collect and track student-level data for their own reporting purposes	Well-trained program staff provide high-quality, well-utilized programming: ▶ consistent practices across providers ▶ enrollment, disciplinary and termination policies aligned ▶ leadership opportunities for program graduates, parents ▶ new staff acculturated to collaboration ▶ aggregated data shared with partners; school staff authorized to see student-level data across systems	Programs are consistently of high quality, even during staff changes: ▶ staff promoted to become leaders in new CS sites and coach new staff ▶ CS programs enhance and improve quality of academic instruction ▶ common standards of quality enhance wide range of school- and community-based programs ▶ formal data-sharing agreements in place
Family Engagement The underlying philosophy and daily practice reflecting the belief that parents/caregivers are key to student success, and must be included in school life at all levels.	Awareness of impact of parental involvement on academic success: ▶ PTA/PTO, existing school policies or no functioning formal structures; some natural leadership ▶ study of successful family engagement strategies ▶ informal parent groupings around natural commonalities	Energized focus on family engagement as advocates, volunteers and partners in education: ▶ parents involved in all levels of planning, needs/assets assessment, governance bodies ▶ scheduled parent activities ▶ active parent leadership bodies ▶ reliable communication between CS and parents ▶ parent space being developed in school	Parents present in wide range of supportive roles for entire CS: ▶ effective as decision-makers in governance structures of school ▶ utilizing dedicated parent space with access to information, technology, etc. ▶ leadership development and opportunities for parents, including as volunteers and staff ▶ connected at home to learning process	Parents both take advantage of and generate/provide elements of programming and are fully empowered as leaders: ▶ provide leadership development for other parents ▶ trusted partners for school and provider organizations, as well as at levels of governance ▶ serve as advocates and spokespeople for CS in policy-making arenas

Stages of Development: Capacity > Commitment

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES	STAGE 1: EXPLORING	STAGE 2: EMERGING	STAGE 3: MATURING	STAGE 4: EXCELLING
Actions and communications reflect intention to remain partners for the long-term, independent of any particular grants or initial funding stream or political scenario.	Characterized by an interest in building the CS for the long term, with policy changes, systems, resources and engagement geared towards permanency.	Characterized by systematic, multi-year efforts to collect data, generate focus on results, seek resources and build support.	Characterized by growing realization that CS can provide coordination and targeting for numerous child/family/community goals. Policy and funding decisions begin to reflect site successes.	Characterized by permanent political commitment, dedicated funding, private and community support, alignment of related initiatives, using CS as coordinating strategy.
Sustainability Planning Key partners act in such a way as to sustain the initiative through time and across changing political realities. Includes: ▸ shared vision ▸ broad support of community/leaders ▸ agreed-upon set of results ▸ strategic financing: public/private funds	Conversations begin with wide range of stakeholders: ▸ results framework developed in collaborative process ▸ policy leaders involved in planning, collaborative structures ▸ financing options are investigated, including grants, public funds and in-kind	Sustainability activities are regular work of staff and governance bodies: ▸ resource development is multi-year ▸ policy changes to align existing public funding ▸ integrate with broader public goals ▸ networking within initiatives at perhaps systemic level ▸ garner commitments from policy-makers	Results in CS sites are connected with broader goals and agendas, providing rationale for increased support: ▸ key policy-makers taking ownership, backed by community demand ▸ collaborative, strategic proposal-writing ▸ advocacy for alignment of existing funds ▸ connections to related initiatives ▸ CS strategy enters political discourse	CS strategy seen as integral to regional service delivery and to the new definitions of "school" and "community": ▸ schools seen as locus of family strengthening, access to resources ▸ schools seen as centers of community development ▸ public and private funding aligned
Evaluation Assessment of the process and impact of programs and partnership on the target population. Includes the systematic collection, analysis and use of data in programs.	Understanding of need to document positive impact of CS activities: ▸ informal observations ▸ some may have concern for costs of evaluation ▸ identification of program objectives ▸ resource development for formal evaluation	Systematic collection of relevant data tied to results: ▸ closely analyze process data (utilization, satisfaction, etc.) for use in quality improvement ▸ using preliminary data, demonstrate correlation between need and utilization ▸ generate outputs and baselines for outcome research	Comprehensive evaluation underway and beginning to show effectiveness and initial outcomes: ▸ meaningful data demonstrate improvements in key indicators (e.g., attendance) ▸ commitment to full funding for multi-year evaluation ▸ Early results broadly communicated to generate future commitments	Ongoing evaluation demonstrates effectiveness and areas for improvement: ▸ continuous looping of information informs policy-making and capacity-building ▸ well-informed planning ▸ commitment to evaluation sustained ▸ findings disseminated
Marketing and Communications A developed capacity to communicate the impact and the value of the community school on academic achievement, child and youth development, family and community well-being; and to convey confidence in the management systems that undergird these efforts.	Plan development is shared with stakeholders: ▸ can experience concern over new approach and/or cynicism about past efforts ▸ ways in which different stakeholders can participate and benefit are communicated ▸ leaders strive for maximum transparency	Regular communication vehicles selected and implemented: ▸ newsletters, websites, blogs, chat rooms, hotlines, calendars, etc. enable free flow of communication among multiple stakeholders ▸ regular reporting from leadership/governance bodies to all stakeholders of policy development	Communication practices effectively link all stakeholders and engage them in planning, implementation and utilization: ▸ keep pace with times ▸ utilize appropriate technologies, maintaining sensitivity to various communication pathways of stakeholders ▸ media utilized to publicize CS activities	Information flows in multiple directions through multiple pathways: ▸ partners integrate CS into internal and external communications ▸ public media regularly transmit information about CS ▸ successes are regularly publicized; communications and media mobilize public will to sustain CS
Capacity-building Creating infrastructure to build capacity of all stakeholders and among sites within initiative.	Begin to understand that there is a body of knowledge from both research and practice that can guide CS implementation: ▸ leadership development ▸ understanding Four Capacities, associated practices and activities ▸ connection to national movement	Establish training and networking opportunities at all levels: ▸ develop intermediary with capacity-building responsibility ▸ consistent message about centrality of capacity-building in CS systems ▸ create developmental awareness at all levels	Ongoing training/networking at all levels of initiative—program, site coordination, management and governance: ▸ scheduled, budgeted training/coaching functions ▸ accountable for skill/knowledge development ▸ development of peer learning networks and inter-visitations	Initiative perpetuates excellence as it grows and provides opportunities for leaders to train and coach others: ▸ develops own procedures and best practices as teaching tools ▸ serves as regional site for expanded learning ▸ hosts outside entities on study visits

Theory of Change Basics for Community Schools

By Heléne Clark, Ph.D., Director, ActKnowledge

Theory of Change (TOC) is a method social initiatives use to plan their work around the impact they want to achieve—on their consumers, on their communities, and on social change advocacy and policy. A Theory of Change is an initiative's "theory," or story, of how it will make change in the world. The theory provides a clear and testable hypothesis about how change will occur and what it will look like. It describes the types of interventions (actions, strategies, etc.) needed to bring about the outcomes depicted in the causal pathway map. Outcomes in the causal pathway are tied to interventions, revealing the often complex web of activity needed to bring about change. As a roadmap, a Theory of Change identifies measurable indicators of success and keeps the process of implementation and evaluation transparent, so everyone knows what is happening and why.

As more community school efforts realize and plan for a focus on results, there has been a huge increase in the number of community school Theories of Change. To name a few:

- The Children's Aid Society, New York City
- Quebec Community Learning Centres, Quebec, Canada
- Luton Full Service School, Luton, UK
- Paterson Public Schools, Paterson, New Jersey
- Children and Families First, Wilmington, Delaware
- United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

ActKnowledge, an evaluation research organization, is the premier name in TOC methodology and a leader in the field of community school and after-school evaluations. ActKnowledge begins evaluations by helping organizations articulate the goals and impact they expect their work to have. The resulting Theory of Change is both a guide to program planning and a roadmap for evaluation. A TOC approach is participatory, which means stakeholders work as partners, not outsiders, with the initiative.

More recently, community schools initiatives such as Paterson Public Schools (PPS), Wilmington, Delaware and Quebec Community Learning Centres have been developing and using their "Theory" as a planning tool. In Paterson, their Theory of Change was created prior to implementation, and served as a first-year guide on how to use AmeriCorps volunteers, planning parent strategies and how to support teacher development in order to achieve set outcomes. At the end of Year One, everyone at PPS had their TOC in hand as they prepared to discuss how well they met CAS' Four Capacities of Community Schools (Four C's) for each of their short and intermediate outcomes.

Community school programs will have many outcomes: wanted and unwanted, attributable and not attributable, foreseen and unforeseen. A Theory of Change helps groups sort out which events, among the many things that happen in the course of a program, were intended to happen, and why they happened as they did. Theory of Change is a powerful evaluation tool because in modeling desired outcomes and how action will produce them, the TOC guides the evaluator on what outcomes to look for and how to recognize them.

It is important that social change organizations are able to demonstrate what impact they expect to have over the short term, and how these earlier outcomes set the stage for longer-term impact. It also helps organizations to understand and be able to explain why they expect to see these changes. The process of creating a Theory of Change helps to think critically about the desired outcomes of your work, the activities and strategies you use to do the work, the assumptions you make in setting your goals, and the types of evidence that are necessary to demonstrate the impact of your work.

The fundamental component of a Theory of Change is the pathway of change diagram showing:

► Your intended impact on the world, and how communities will be different because of your work—called **outcomes**.

► A "causal" pathway of change that depicts most outcomes as **preconditions** to other outcomes farther up the chain.

► Measurable indicators of success: **results.**

As we build the connections between short- and long-term outcomes (often called pathways), we ask ourselves the following questions to check the validity of our thinking at each stage of the process: Why do we think a given precondition, or short-term outcome, will lead to (or is necessary) to reach the one above it? Are there any major barriers to the outcome that need to be considered in our planning? These are the explanations for why our initiative is expected to work.
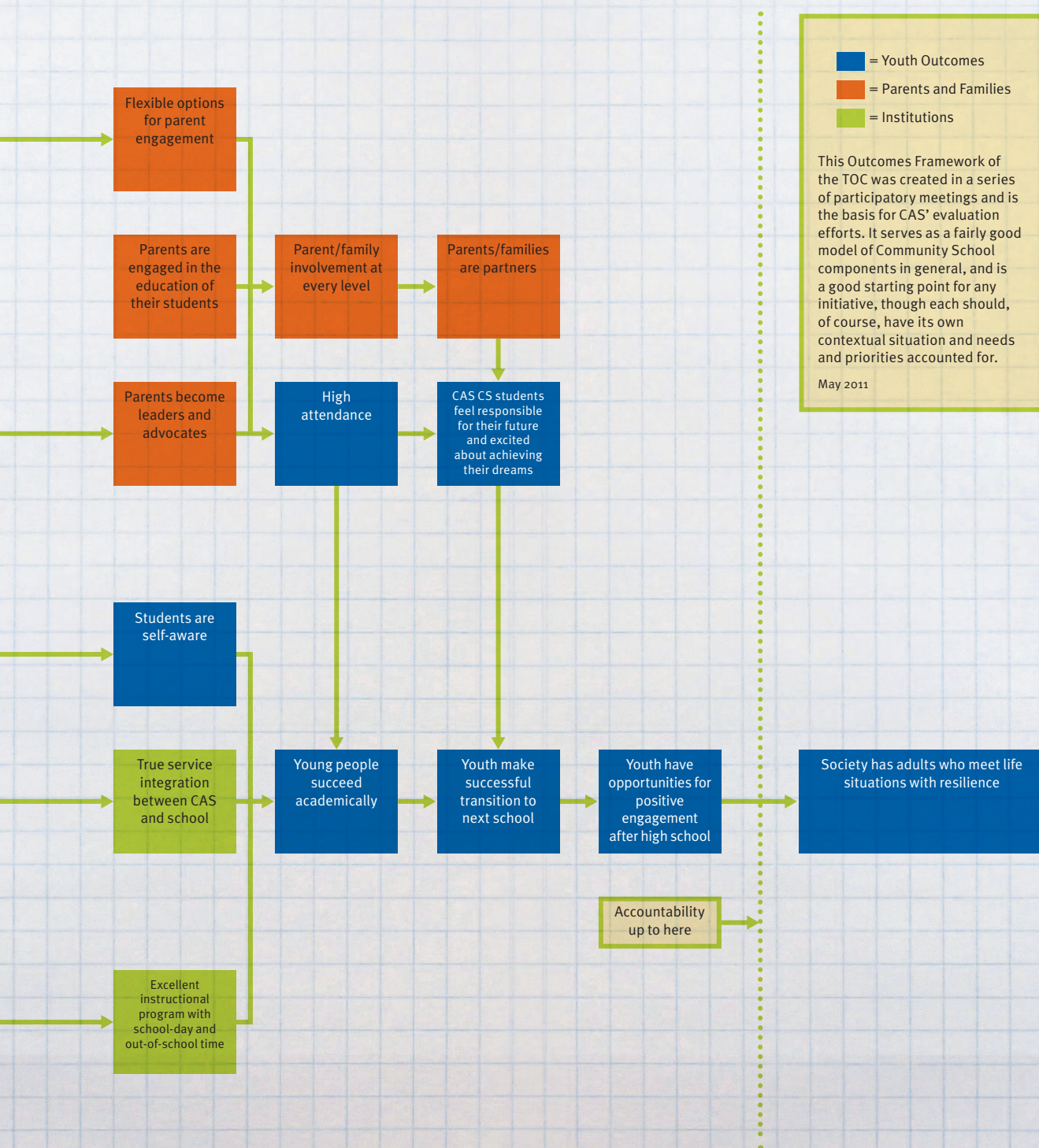
The advantages of Theory of Change methodology include the following:

► **Collaborative and transparent process:** Initiatives and many programs are typically complex and involve the participation of many different groups with their own strengths and interests. Because TOC encourages collaboration among stakeholders, the framework for change is jointly developed, ensuring that stakeholders understand one another's assumptions and expectations.

► **Logical, practical, and specific road map:** TOC helps stakeholders create a logical pathway that is realistic and specific to their ultimate outcomes—know where you are, where you want to go and how to get there.

► **Alignment of goals and activities:** By mapping current programs and activities to the outcomes framework stakeholders can distinguish the work that produces value from the busywork.

► **Evaluation Framework:** If you can't measure success, you won't know what does and doesn't work. With funders being more results-oriented than ever, proof of your success is more than ever about survival.

Many tools and examples are available for how to build a Theory of Change for a Community School. Go to www.theoryofchange.org; contact the National Center for Community Schools; or contact ActKnowledge at info@actknowledge.org

CAS Community Schools Theory of Change

```
CAS and staff value and support families
    → Safe, welcoming, nurturing learning environment
    → Schools provide a dedicated space for parents

Pre-operational

Safe, welcoming, nurturing learning environment
Schools provide a dedicated space for parents
    → Common language and understanding bridges CAS and school missions
    → All partners see and engage parents as valuable assets/resources and as links to community and schools

Common language and understanding bridges CAS and school missions
    → Parent buy-in to both CAS and school mission

Parent buy-in to both CAS and school mission
    → In-home learning
    → Deeper partnerships with teachers

In-home learning
Deeper partnerships with teachers
    → Establish home links

Parents are heard

Establish home links
Parents are active participants in school

Internal and external partner buy-in to CS model
    → Partners share data, results and evidence

Partners share data, results and evidence
    → Securing sustainable funding

Partners share a common language and understanding of community schools and promote it
    → Securing sustainable funding

Securing sustainable funding
    → The community school is sustainable

The community school is sustainable

Parents are empowered to support children's education

Resourceful parents support their children's well-being and education

Access community resources

Healthy partnerships between school and CBO
    → Capacity building at the site level
    → Strong and effective leadership

Capacity building at the site level

Strong and effective leadership

Students become engaged and motivated

Wellness Center (school-based health center) or Wellness Hub (school-linked)
    → Youth receive quality healthcare

Youth receive quality healthcare
    → Mentally, morally, physically and emotionally healthy youth who feel empowered

Mentally, morally, physically and emotionally healthy youth who feel empowered

All partners have high expectations for student success

All partners are committed to health and physical fitness
    → Wellness needs of whole child are met

Wellness needs of whole child are met

Continuum of services that are coordinated, ongoing and comprehensive

Access to healthcare

All partners value and understand youth development

Qualified, certified and effective professionals

All partners have cultural competence
    → All partners will connect, value and understand students' assets, strengths, barriers and experiences

All partners will connect, value and understand students' assets, strengths, barriers and experiences
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Flexible options for parent engagement

Parents are engaged in the education of their students

Parent/family involvement at every level

Parents/families are partners

Parents become leaders and advocates

High attendance

CAS CS students feel responsible for their future and excited about achieving their dreams

Students are self-aware

True service integration between CAS and school

Young people succeed academically

Youth make successful transition to next school

Youth have opportunities for positive engagement after high school

Society has adults who meet life situations with resilience

Accountability up to here

Excellent instructional program with school-day and out-of-school time

Legend:

- = Youth Outcomes
- = Parents and Families
- = Institutions

This Outcomes Framework of the TOC was created in a series of participatory meetings and is the basis for CAS' evaluation efforts. It serves as a fairly good model of Community School components in general, and is a good starting point for any initiative, though each should, of course, have its own contextual situation and needs and priorities accounted for.

May 2011

Selected Resources

ORGANIZATIONS

American School Counselor Association
http://www.schoolcounselor.org

"School-Community-Family Partnerships," (2011). ASCA, *School Counselor Magazine*, Volume 48, Number 3.

Downloadable at: http://www.schoolcounselor.org/files/2011_2012RateCard.pdf

American Federation of Teachers
http://www.aft.org

"Surrounded by Support: Partnerships Between Communities and Schools Connect Students With the Services They Need," (2009). *American Educator Journal*, Volume 33, Number 2.

Downloadable at: http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american _educator/issues/index.htm.

Coalition for Community Schools
http://www.communityschools.org
An alliance of national, state and local organizations whose mission is to mobilize the resources and capacity of multiple sectors and institutions to create a united movement for community schools.

Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy (2011).

Downloadable at: http://www.communityschools.org/scalingup

Financing Community Schools (2010).

Downloadable at: http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/finance-paper.pdf

Community Schools: Research Brief 09.

Downloadable at: http://www.community schools.org

Growing Community Schools: The Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership (2006).

Downloadable at: http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CBLFinal.pdf

Making the Difference: Research & Practice in Community Schools (2003).

Downloadable at: http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/Page/CCSFullReport.pdf

Harvard Family Research Project
http://www.hfrp.org

This Harvard-based research team focuses on three components of complementary learning: early care and education, out-of-school time, and family and community involvement in education.

Weiss, H.M., Lopez, M. E., Rosenberg, H. (2010). *Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform*. Harvard Family Research Project. Cambridge, MA.

Downloadable at: http://hfrp.org/BeyondRandomActs

Beyond Random Acts: Provides a research-based framework for family engagement; examines the policy levers that can drive change in promoting systemic family, school, and community engagement; focuses on data systems as a powerful tool to engage families for 21st century student learning; and examines the integral role of families in transforming low-performing schools.

School Administrators Association of New York State
http://www.saanys.org

Mendez, H. (2008). "After the Bell: Extending Programs to Support Student Success." New York: *SAANYS Journal*, Volume 37, Number 3.

Downloadable at: http://www.saanys.org/membersonly/saanysjournal/.asp/CITE

SELECTED WRITINGS

Epstein, J. et al. (2009). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This practical handbook provides a detailed framework for how schools, districts and state leaders can develop more effective programs for family and community involvement.

Maeroff, G. (1998). *Altered Destinies: Making Life Better for School Children in Need*. New York: Saint Martin's Press.

In this book Gene Maeroff argues that schools can and should have a role in strengthening support systems that build social capital—which he maintains can help improve opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged schoolchildren. CAS' and other school-community partnerships are cited among the promising initiatives trying to address inequalities by bringing support systems and making the school a larger part of the community.

Mapp, K. L., Johnson, V. R., Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

Written for parents, teachers, administrators and policymakers, this practical guide provides useful tools, checklists, sample surveys and school policies for promoting community and family involvement in the educational process.

Dryfoos, J. (1994). *Full-Service Community schools: A revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth and Families*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

A classic in the field, by community schools' champion Joy Dryfoos.

Dryfoos, J., Quinn, J., Barkin, C., eds. (2005). *Community Schools in Action: Lessons from a Decade of Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Compiling lessons from the first 10 years of operations at CAS Community Schools.

Dryfoos, J., Quinn, J., eds. (Fall 2005). *Community Schools: A Strategy for Integrating Youth Development and School Reform*. Belmont, MA: New Directions for Youth Development.

This volume summarizes the experiences of The Children's Aid Society community schools, and additional community school models including: Beacons, University-Assisted, Chicago school-system community schools and more.

Bryk, A.S., et al. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anthony Bryk and colleagues at the Consortium on Chicago School Research discuss five "essential elements" necessary for schools to improve.

Kirp, D. (2011). *Kids First: Five Big Ideas for Transforming Children's Lives and America's Future*. New York: PublicAffairs Books.

Researcher David Kirp devotes one chapter to community schools as an important strategy for policy makers to pay attention to in improving outcomes for youth.

Acknowledgments