Pulling the Pieces Together: Profiles in Community Schooling
UIC Community Schools Evaluation Project

Striving to Synthesize Academic Rigor and Social/Emotional Excellence:
Burnham/Anthony Mathematics and Science Academy and Youth Guidance Inc.

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Introduction

Recent research into impacts of standards-driven urban school reform has surfaced both good and bad news about the effort to narrow the persistent gap between the school success of advantaged and disadvantaged children, most particularly those of African American background (The Education Trust, 2003). On the one hand, several states are reporting clear gains for urban minority students, and the National Science Foundation’s Math and Science Partnership program (MSP) has recently reported significant gains linked to improved science curricula for African American elementary and middle school students (Holzman, 2006; Science Daily, May 5, 2008).¹ Yet the overall pattern of evidence points to a remarkably intransigent lag in academic outcomes for African American children nationally, despite an urgent and institutionally wrenching battery of reforms mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. And emerging evidence from the federal Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort suggests that the gap widens fastest for African American children whose early school success puts them on par with non-minority children (Viadero, 2008).²

As frustration with the minority Achievement Gap has grown, a new wave of research has explored how the early experience of low income children creates disadvantage and differentiate success from the earliest grades. This research has replaced genetic and broad cultural “deficit” explanations of achievement gaps with more fine-grained analyses of child-rearing and family patterns that disadvantage low-income students as they enter school. These patterns combine cognitive as well as social, emotional, and cultural features. Work by Hart and Risley (1995) demonstrated significant class differences in the exposure of children both to enriched vocabulary and to the quality of conversation between parents and adults. Low-income preschool children in their study engaged in less adult conversation, and heard a lower proportion of approving and encouraging utterances from parents in the exchanges they had. These patterns correlated highly with measured IQ differences as children approached school.

More recently, intensive ethnographic studies of low-income and middle class families across ethnic lines have revealed telling differences in the ways that families both raise children and engage their local schools. The work of Annette Lareau and colleagues (2003) distinguishes between the middle class pattern of concerted cultivation and the lower income approach to natural growth (also, Horvat,

¹ See: http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080502094232.htm
² For information on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort, see the website of the National Center for Education Statistics: http://nces.ed.gov/ECLS/kindergarten.asp.
Middle class parents are more likely to converse with their children, modeling skills of engagement and attitudes of entitlement that pay off when children engage their middle class teachers. They also keep their children scheduled in a series of non-academic enrichment activities, while engaging teachers personally and advocating assertively when necessary. Working class and poor parents are more likely to leave children to their own devices in out-of-school time, granting them wide latitude to control their activity choices, but requiring more deference to adult authority and less influence over adult interactions.

Children raised within the natural growth pattern often gain valuable skills of self-reliance and social negotiation with peers. But they lack knowledge of the complex web of social cues and communication skills that aid school success, while their parents, equally uncomfortable with these cues, are more likely to avoid engagement or conflict with teachers. When combined with the on-going realities of classism and racism in the allocation of resources to predominately minority schools, these mismatches between school culture and family culture make minority children a challenging task for educators (Harris & Robinson, forthcoming). The long-term consequences for African Americans, and in particular males, range from under-representation among college graduates to over-representation within a growing American penal population (the Pew Center on the States, 2008).

The degree of difference between the social and cultural capital of poor and middle class families has caused some scholars to doubt the capacity of school systems to contribute to narrowing achievement gaps substantially (Sampson, 2007). Nonetheless, evidence from enriched early childhood programs show substantial learning gains for children whose parents receive coaching in academic support and school advocacy (Reynolds, 2004). And many schools across the country are beating the odds with African American children, even in communities of concentrated disadvantage (The Education Trust, 2006). These “high-flying” schools begin with intentionality around rigorous curriculum and instruction, raising the capacity of teachers to work as teams that attend closely to the progress of individual students (Marzano, R. J., 2003).

In tandem with instructional rigor, the wed intentional and urgent steps to increase layers of support both for academic success as well as for social and emotional skill-building, family intervention and support, and parent partnership (Epstein, Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). Many exhibit the strategies typical of today’s best “community schools,” developing rich extended learning opportunities in after school time, inviting collaboration with high-asset community based organizations, and reaching out to parents at home and in school to complete the circle of home-school-neighborhood support for children and their success (Dryfoos, 1994; Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006). Yet no blueprint guides these efforts. Instead, principles of student and family support are translated to action and intervention through thoughtful experimentation and sometimes collegial struggle.

In this community school profile, we explore the journey of one school partnership to build a synthesis between academic rigor and social and emotional excellence that supports student success and establishes collaborative common ground. For over a decade, Burnham/Anthony Mathematics and Science Academy (also “Burnham/Anthony” or BA in what follows) and Youth Guidance Inc. (or YG) have partnered to support the educational success of African American students in the South Deering section of Chicago. Building from a Comer School
Development base, the partnership has responded to the challenge of building standards-driven instruction while sustaining a culture of social and emotional development for children. Burnham-Anthony’s journey illustrates both what can be accomplished and the challenges implicit in valuing both academic and social-emotional excellence.

The Burnham/Anthony + Youth Guidance Inc. Partnership

Burnham/Anthony Mathematics and Science Academy is located at 1903 E 96th St. in the South Deering community of Chicago. Its annex building, the former Anthony Elementary, is located about one mile to the east, at 9800 S Torrence Ave. The Burnham building houses the primary level program, grades K through 3, while upper grades students (4 – 8) attend the Anthony location. In 2007 the combined campuses served a total of 302 students, all of African American background, most (94%) qualifying for federal free or reduced lunch subsidies. The number of students with identified disabilities, requiring Individual Education Plans (IEPs) stood at 12% in 2007, about average for CPS neighborhood schools. The Burnham building sits within a quiet enclave of modest but well maintained single-family bungalows just south of busy 96th Street.

Stretched across two buildings at a distance, Burnham/Anthony certainly poses administrative headaches for the school’s principal, Dr. Linda Moore, and her administrative and community school team. But this arrangement is simple compared to the cluster of four buildings that comprised the far-flung “scatterplex” campus as recently as 2003, when the school officially joined the CPS Community Schools Initiative. The Goldsmith building, located further south on 102nd street, housed a Pre-Kindergarten early childhood program plus a stand-alone program for special education students, and additional 7th and 8th grade classrooms. Students were also incorporated within the St. Kevin’s building, a venerable parochial school at 105th St. Afterschool programs were accommodated at all sites, but with great difficulty. It was not until Fall 2006 that the school consolidated to two buildings, and resources could be focused on a more concerted agenda for school improvement.

The South Deering community surrounding Burnham/Anthony is geographically the largest of the 77 “official” community areas defined by University of Chicago sociologists in the 1920’s to track neighborhood development. In reality, South Deering’s residential population is concentrated in the northern corner of this six square mile area, while the remaining land comprises a patchwork of protected wetland and industrial sites, centering on Lake Calumet. Long one of Chicago’s most intensive and productive industrial corridors, South Deering has been home to most of Chicago’s ethnic tapestry. After the Civil War and through the 1950’s, the working population shifted from Irish and German to Eastern European, while a strong Jewish community centered in Jeffrey Manor beginning in the late 1930’s. With the swift

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3 Sources include the Interactive Illinois Report Card at Northern Illinois University, and the CPS Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability.

4 Burnham-Anthony’s scatterplex arrangement emerged partly in response to declining school enrollments in parts of South Deering, and partly as an experiment within Chicago’s small schools movement in the late 1990’s. As described in an ERIC review: “Leadership of small schools can be complicated. Many are teacher-led, but state law requires that certified principals be attached to each school, giving rise to such unique arrangements as the "scatterplex" (several small schools that operate in different buildings but share a principal). In the scatterplex, principals must contend with the ambiguities of dealing with several different school cultures simultaneously.” See Anderson, V. “Small is better.” Catalyst Chicago, May 1998.
decline of South Deering’s industrial fortunes beginning in the 1960’s, the areas became an anchor of the emerging northern rust belt. Population patterns also shifted, from 99% white in 1960, to a combination of 55% African American and 24% Hispanic in 1980. The transition was tense and sometimes violent, beginning with the closely studied Trumbull Park Homes Race Riot in 1953 (Rosen, 1998). Tension continued into the mid-1970’s as areas like Jeffrey Manor became predominately African American, and unemployment became a ubiquitous challenge to area residents.

Today’s South Deering is a predominately minority community, roughly 62% African American and 30.5% Hispanic. Based upon an extensive analysis of community indicators, the Metro Chicago Information Center recently characterized South Deering as “Emerging Low Income,” indicating a pattern of increasing numbers of low-income households, but also the sustained presence of significant numbers of working- and middle-class families (Taylor, 2007). While census projections point to continued overall decline in population in South Deering through 2010, the Hispanic population is forecast to increase moderately. And while African American population is projected to decline, the churn in this population is more complex, with arrivals of displaced families from near-Loop neighborhoods contributing to high levels of mobility into and from South Deering public schools. Indeed, the press of displacement on far Southeast communities has led Chapin Hall Center for Children to forecast a 19% increase in the population of children ages 0-17 between 2005 and 2010 (Goerge et al., 2007).

Table 1 (p. 22) provides a selected overview of 2000 US Census indicators for South Deering as well as for the specific census tract that includes both the Burnham and Anthony school buildings. Two patterns come through clearly. First, while South Deering is “diverse” statistically, its Hispanic and African American populations tend to live apart in concentrated populations. The neighborhood served by Burnham-Anthony is overwhelmingly African American, a reality reflected in the demographic composition of the tract’s schools. Second, a cluster of indicators signals that social and economic circumstances have become more challenging in the Burnham and Anthony neighborhoods. While the numbers of males has declined more rapidly than the overall population, this may be due to the notable aging of the community’s population. That said, the number of family households headed by married adults declined by almost one-quarter between 1990 and 2000, and the proportion of families below the federal poverty line increased significantly. According to the Metro Chicago Information Center’s Community Vitality Index (CVI), the Burnham/Anthony census tract has higher than average residential stability and civic participation (70 on a 100 point scale) and better than average community amenities, including access to parks, libraries, and other resources (59 on a 100 point scale). But its rating of 20 on “Economic Potential” reflects continued economic pressure and a dearth of high paying jobs in the South Deering community.

The effort of Burnham/Anthony Academy to engage the evolving needs of its surrounding community has moved through three distinct phases. Phase One began in 1999, when BA began to implement the Comer School Development Process (or Comer SDP), a whole school change model that mobilizes school stakeholders around a comprehensive strategy to support families and address the development needs of children. Since then the school has sustained its commitment to the vision of the Comer model while seeking higher accountability for improved learning
outcomes among students. As the literature of the Yale School Development Program emphasizes, the Comer Process “…is not a project or add-on.” Much like community schooling, it involves “an operating system – a way of managing, organizing, coordinating, and integrating activities” (Joyner & Comer, 2004). This “operating system” involves at least four integral components:

✓ A set of guiding principles and daily practices for school culture, particularly, a commitment to collaborative (vs. hierarchical) decision-making, involving all stakeholders in substantive roles; an emphasis on consensus-building across the conflicting views of stakeholders and their interests; and a focus on no-fault problem solving

✓ A common framework for child development emphasizing six domains of growth (cognitive, psychological, linguistic, social, ethical, and physical) that include guidance on assessment and goal-setting for the school community

✓ Three focal operations (developing a comprehensive school plan, a staff development plan, and on-going assessment and evaluation) that guide collaborative planning, action, and accountability

✓ Three focal teams (a school planning and management team (SPMT), student and staff support team (SSST), and parent team) that drive effort and distill the voices of three adult stakeholder groups:

In 2003, Burnham-Anthony entered a second phase of community engagement when it officially joined the Chicago Public School’s Community Schools Initiative (or CSI). While models of community schooling vary around the United States, most have in common a basic diagnosis of the obstacles facing urban schools in addressing the educational needs of children in poverty. Some of these obstacles reside in communities and families in poverty. But other serious obstacles reside in schools as systems and long-standing educational practices that hold families at arm’s length, and limit community access to school buildings and their resources. In response, Chicago’s model of community schooling supports schools to expand their hours of operation, deepen developmental supports in out-of-school time (OST), and engage community partners to re-think parent involvement and deepen “wrap-around” resources for children and families. For Burnham-Anthony and lead partner Youth Guidance Inc., CSI posed the opportunity to extend the Comer process to include more parents in decision-making roles, and expand the school’s capacity to genuinely address the six developmental pathways at the heart of the Comer vision.

In 2005, this Comer-based community school entered a third phase of development with the retirement of Joanne Gray, principal since 1997, and the arrival of a new principal, Dr. Linda Moore, with a challenge to raise the school’s academic performance to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks set by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Despite intentional efforts to build a standards-based curriculum, the school fell short of full AYP beginning in 2003, bringing more pressure

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5 The Comer SDP was developed in 1968 as part of a collaborative effort between New Haven Public Schools and the Yale Child Study Center. See also: http://www.northwestern.edu/ipt/publications/comer.pdf.
on school staff as well as the Local School Council to address instructional improvement. For a time, the crisis around AYP appeared to threaten the continuation of the Comer approach. For Dr. Moore, however, the challenge instead was to marry the best of the Comer process and its social and emotional priorities with a clearer agenda for building shared accountability for student success across Burnham-Anthony’s extended professional community.

If standard measures of academic progress are any indication, then three years has won substantial progress toward this marriage of approaches. Figure 1 summarizes the percentage of Burnham-Anthony students meeting or exceeding state-wide grade level standards as measured by the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test (ISAT) from 2002 through 2007 (composite of reading, math, and science performance). While Burnham students made significant progress prior to 2006, and certainly in the period between 1997 and 2002, the gains were vulnerable and occasionally reversed. In 2006, however, Burnham students exceeded CPS gains for the first time in recent memory, and sustained this progress in 2007. Student gains were particularly strong in math when compared with other schools in Burnham’s Instructional Area (Area 18). In 2007, this surge of performance won for Burnham-Anthony an Academic Improvement Award from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Even more critically, it removed the school from the state’s academic watch list and established the school’s capacity to meet AYP requirements.

More substantively, the evidence shows that Burnham graduates have become increasingly successful in high school as the community school effort has matured. Figure 2 presents the trends in the percentage of Burnham-Anthony graduates considered “on-track” for high school graduation at the conclusion of 9th grade.6 With the exception of 2006 (BA’s 2005 graduates), each year since 2003 has seen a steady climb in the success of Burnham-Anthony 8th graders, to levels consistently above those of Area 18 and CPS as a whole.

In seeking an approach to community schooling that aligns instructional coherence

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6 A CPS high school freshman is “on-track” if s/he has at least 5 full course credits and no more than one semester F in a core course at the completion of 9th grade. See: Allensworth, E. M. & Easton, J. Q. (2007, July).
with the “whole child” developmental goals envisioned by Dr. Comer, Burnham/Anthony has benefited from the professional resources and adaptive organizational culture of its lead community school partner (or LPA), Youth Guidance Inc. From its roots in the early 1920’s as a faith-based social welfare agency with a focal commitment to unmarried mothers and their children, Youth Guidance (or YG) has evolved to become one of Chicago’s premier social service providers. Today YG serves over 17,000 children with an operating budget exceeding $5.14 million dollars in fiscal year 2008.

A critical juncture for YG came in 1969, when the agency initiated a steady shift of all programs and service delivery into school-based settings in Chicago public schools. As of 2008, Youth Guidance maintained social service and program management staff in over 40 Chicago public elementary and high schools serving predominately Latino and African American student bodies. The agency manages services that include arts-based counseling and therapy, workforce development, whole school transformation, parent training and empowerment, and comprehensive supports for wards of the state. In support of these efforts, YG has developed a deep network of collaborative and funding relationships with one of three respected Chicago social service providers funded by the Polk Bros. Foundation to implement a model of community schooling that featured key fiscal and leadership roles for community based organizations. The Foundation’s Full Service Schools Initiative (FSSI) came at a critical point in Chicago public school transformation, when Mayor Richard M. Daley moved to vest key features of school management within a streamlined school board and executive team. It was a period when Chicago’s first wave of grassroots “democratic localism,” with its emphasis on parent and community voice as a driver of school improvement, appeared to be in disarray (Hess, 1995; Bryk et al., 1998).

Youth Guidance has played an important role in the evolution of a distinctive Chicago approach to community school design and implementation. In 1996, the agency was one of three respected Chicago social service providers funded by the Polk Bros. Foundation to implement a model of community schooling that featured key fiscal and leadership roles for community based organizations. The Foundation’s Full Service Schools Initiative (FSSI) came at a critical point in Chicago public school transformation, when Mayor Richard M. Daley moved to vest key features of school management within a streamlined school board and executive team. It was a period when Chicago’s first wave of grassroots “democratic localism,” with its emphasis on parent and community voice as a driver of school improvement, appeared to be in disarray (Hess, 1995; Bryk et al., 1998).

7 For information, see: http://www.youth-guidance.org/YG/YGMAINS.nsf/WhoWeAre?OpenForm.
As the Chicago and national facilitator of the Comer School Development Process, it was hoped that the participation of Youth Guidance would teach valuable lessons about how to bring a wider range of community stakeholders into school planning activities, while elevating the capacity of schools to address the needs of the whole child and whole families. In fact, the dedicated attention of Youth Guidance participants to learning “portable” lessons about parent involvement and convening oversight and planning committees yielded important insights for community school design in Chicago (Whalen, 2002). From that early experience, Youth Guidance has broadened its commitment to Chicago’s community school movement, working as lead partner agency with 13 CPS elementary and high schools as of June 2008. In many respects, it is no exaggeration to call Youth Guidance the Dean of Chicago’s community school lead partner agencies.

As a Lead Partner Agency, Youth Guidance staff stake their professionalism on their capacity to respond flexibly and adaptively to the emerging needs of each of its partner community schools. While several of its community schools started (and continue) as Comer Network affiliates, other schools have not been officially “Comerized,” and do not share a foundational vocabulary for whole school improvement and community engagement. These schools have posed an opportunity for YG to explore whether discrete modules of the full Comer “package” can be implemented effectively in a stand-alone fashion, such as consensus-driven committee management or the Comer approaches to parent training. In other respects, however, Youth Guidance approaches all of its community school partners with a consistent set of goals and concerns founded in core organizational commitments to social justice. Three are particularly prominent:

- First, in the face of pressure toward narrowly conceived educational products, Youth Guidance holds out for attention to processes of stakeholder inclusion and voice that may be inefficient from one perspective, but yield long-term community buy-in for school improvement.

- Second, in the place of deficit- and problem-driven views of underserved communities, Youth Guidance emphasizes the assets and strengths of community youth and adults, and challenges school partners to identify and engage these assets as aides to school improvement.

- Third, rather than value only academic success, Youth Guidance champions the promotion of whole child development across several domains. These are captured by Comer’s six developmental pathways, but Youth Guidance has also integrated recent insights from youth development and asset promotion into its practice repertoire. To its school partners, Youth Guidance staff consistently asks: how does this approach address the social and emotional as well as academic needs of our students?

YG’s partnership with Burnham/Anthony Academy began in 1999 through the agency’s role as the Chicago (and national) facilitator for schools implementing the Comer School Development Process. At that time, Principal Joanne Gray reached out to Youth Guidance and the Comer process to help her cope with the challenge of addressing the academic as well as social and emotional needs of her African American students.

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American students and parents distributed across three schools (and eventually four). As Mrs. Gray told us in 2004, “When I came here, the people in each school were competitive toward each other and against the other school...I knew I needed help. I could not run these three schools by myself and be effective. I told my staff, ‘I’m not a social worker. I can help you educate the children. But we’ve got to address these social and emotional issues’.”

Youth Guidance established a bureau in the Burnham building that included two full time staff, a process facilitator and an on-site social worker. Other YG staff connected with the school in specific counseling and program roles. Intensive retreats and professional development activities over a two year period established the basic Comer committee structure – the School Management and Planning Team, tasked particular with oversight and school improvement planning; the Student and Staff Support Team, focused particularly on school-wide mental health promotion; and the Parent Team, tasked with parent engagement and training. For Mrs. Gray, the results amounted to a sea change in school climate and inter-personal tone. And it created conditions for shifting teacher attention away from classroom management and toward more innovative and differentiated instruction. Slowly but surely, ITBS test scores moved forward from the late 1990’s into the new decade.8

When CPS approached Youth Guidance in 2002 to nominate schools from within its Comer network to participate in the inaugural class of the new Chicago Campaign to Expand Community Schools, Burnham/Anthony was a natural choice. The principal had established a strong working relationship with the Comer facilitator, Ms. Vicky Woodley, who in turn was considered among the most seasoned and highly qualified facilitators across the national Comer Network. Doubling the roles of Comer facilitator and community school resource coordinator (or RC) seemed a strategically sound way to ground Burnham/Anthony’s community school agenda within both the principles and practices of the Comer school development design. This approach has been adapted in subsequent years as the school has been pressed to raise its academic performance. But it has also proven highly effective in fielding a slate of developmental opportunities for students that compares with the best OST enrichment programs of any school in CPS.

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8 A review of Burnham/Anthony Inclusive Academy’s progress on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) indicates a 16% increase in reading and a 15% increase in math from 1997 to 2005, in terms of the percent of students meeting national grade-level norms. These rates exceeded CPS District-wide gains for the same period (10% in reading; 10.1% in math). The review also reveals inconsistency in the trajectory of change over that period. Source: CPS Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability, ITBS School-Level File (archived).
Distinctive Features of the Burnham/Anthony + Youth Guidance Inc. Partnership

As Burnham/Anthony Inclusive Academy and Youth Guidance Inc. approach the 10 year mark in their collaboration, several features of the school’s community school effort stand out for their vitality and intentionality. Here we highlight several of the most distinctive programs and practices currently in place.

A dynamic agenda for out-of-school time enrichment (OST).

In order to expand access to services and opportunities for child and family development, community schools extend their hours of operation and open their facilities to community uses. This has been particularly challenging to realize fully in the case of the Burnham/Anthony “scatterplex,” due to the logistical complexities of programming across school buildings separated by several blocks. In addition, budget constraints have limited the available hours of engineers and janitorial staff. Nonetheless, both buildings are typically open and offering after school programs until 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Early morning tutoring and arts programs begin at 7:30 AM, coinciding for many children with breakfast at school.

A review of program offerings at BA since 2005 reveals an impressive range of OST opportunities for students, with evidence of strength in most of the developmental pathways central to the Comer School Development concept. Overall BA has staffed and supported over 100 OST programs with community school funding since 2004, and consistently engaged more than half of students enrolled each year after the final bell. These have included:

✓ A consistent range of academic support and tutoring options, ranging from a home-grown homework club, to implementation of After School Counts (ASC) and the district’s AIM HIGH tutoring option, using school teachers funded through NCLB-mandated Supplementation Educational Services funding.

✓ Several innovative academic enrichment options, with a sustained commitment to Spanish language instruction through partnerships with quality providers like Language Stars and Spanish Horizons for younger students and a Spanish Club for older students; literacy enrichment through the Creative Writing and Speech Club; a Science Club and Chess Club for analytic thinking skills

✓ Several choices in sports, recreation, and physical wellness, including basketball teams and a specialized training camp in 2008, cheerleading for girls, high quality triathlon training for girls through partner Tri-Masters Sports, and a “Falcon Fitness” program through a partnership with the Proper Headstart in Training Program (P.H.I.T.)

✓ A commitment to arts enrichment, with a sustained line of programming in African and Praise Dance, several arts and crafts programs for the youngest students, and a development Band program starting with grades 4-6. Several strong OST arts organizations have contracted to provide services, including Urban Gateways, Columbia College, and Barrel of Monkeys, a Chicago arts education theatre company.
✓ **Social and emotional learning and support**, including Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts for younger students, a girls mentoring program for grades 4-8, and a male mentoring called GoalBuilders that engages boys in grades 4-8 in a business development project sponsored by the Concept2Venture program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. There is also considerable attention to SEL goals in the sports and fitness programs reviewed above. Partner organization Concerned Christian Men also sponsors a monthly Man-Boy Breakfast to connect older male students with African American role models in a Saturday breakfast event.

✓ **Summer programming**, often in a camp format, providing a mix of academic support, enrichment, and recreational activities.

An important milestone for the direction of OST programming at BA came in 2005, after the arrival of current principal Linda Moore. Faced with the challenge of moving the school off of academic probation, Dr. Moore convened her community school oversight committee for a thorough review of the OST program slate and its organization. The review concluded that more attention was needed to quality program instruction across all development areas, and a more intentional structure was needed to assure that all students received academic support as well as enrichment experiences. The school shifted to an “extended day” model of OST activity with a fixed program schedule at all three (two, after 2006) school buildings.

The new model is credited directly with supporting improved test scores and helping to keep more students at school for a full afternoon of OST activity. For the first hour, from 2:45 to 3:45 PM, Dr. Moore recruited the teaching staff for “Academic Enrichment” using SES and After School Counts funding. Participation from teachers exceeded 90%, and all classrooms from K-8 were covered with a well prepared instructor. At 3:45 PM students enjoy a 15 minute snack period. At 4:00 PM non-academic support activities begin through 5:30 PM. Buses are used to transport some students between schools for selected activities. But most students remain at their daytime school for programming targeted to their age group. The approach has reduced the logistical challenge of transportation considerably but not entirely. Based on this success, the oversight committee has continued to employ student participation and academic outcome data as well as program evaluations to assess which programs are contributing value to student success.

**School leadership for rigorous and enriched learning.**

The two principals who have guided Burnham/Anthony through its implementation of the Comer process and subsequent development as a community school have brought unusual strength as instructional leaders to their leadership roles. Mrs. Joanne Gray came to her position in 1998 with national credentials in science education, particularly at the high school level. She knew the graduates of schools like Burnham/Anthony well from her vantage point as a teacher and administrator at local Corliss High School. She also occupied several district positions facilitating professional development in science education, and was deeply versed in the latest instructional techniques for differentiating teaching to students at varied ability levels. Her contribution to advancing instruction to encourage professional development for curriculum design, and
intervention with teachers to shift them away from one-size-fits-all direct instruction.

At the same time, Mrs. Gray brought a sensibility about enriched learning to her work that was generational as well as professional. Her experience as a child raised in small town Alabama combined the lessons of Jim Crow with an appreciation for the power of drama, music, writing, and sports to expand children’s horizons and aspirations. From the weekly class assembly to school plays and readings, the attention of her teachers to enriched learning activities was formative in her development. “I didn’t know what all that meant then,” she told us in 2004, “but when I think about it now, this is powerful stuff. It taught me character, it taught me to have no fear, it taught me to be proud, it taught me that if I keep my head then I’m a good citizen. That’s what the kids need today.” The same conviction led her to take an active role in advocating for a fixed (rather than portable) public library site for the Jeffrey Manor neighborhood.

Dr. Linda Moore brought somewhat different credentials to her principalship in academic year 2005, suited to a school facing an altered district context. In addition to Masters and Doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership, Dr. Moore was a veteran elementary teacher and administrator, in communities similar to Jeffrey Manor. While student achievement had advanced under Principal Gray, the more precipitous challenge posed by NCLB called for elevating the school’s faculty to the level of collaborative teamwork characteristic of a full-fledged professional learning community (or PLC). In the process of development a PLC, a Standards-driven focus challenges teacher teams to put aside rote, textbook sequences of instruction in favor of more diversified materials that enrich student learning. Teachers share best practices on a regular basis, collect and examine data to assess progress, and open their classroom practice to the friendly critique of their colleagues and lead teachers.

In effect, to realize a strong PLC, the conception of teacher autonomy must shift from “private” classroom practice with little accountability, to a norm of shared, transparent practice among respected and accountable colleagues. In the process, a core of instructional practices becomes normative and teachers feel both accountable to and ownership of these practices. At the same time, teachers feel supported to propose and explore new practices in a culture that treats “failure” as data for further learning. Teachers can trust that school leaders will treat their collective efforts with respect and collegial interest (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). As Dr. Moore told us in 2008, “I believe in shared leadership, but I also believe that staff members have to take ownership and make sure that students are learning.” The result of developing higher professional accountability at Burnham/Anthony has been consistent improvement in classroom practice over 4 years, and as we’ve seen, improved standardized test performance.

In thinking about place of out-of-school time in whole school improvement, the touchstone concepts for Dr. Moore have been alignment, accountability, and above all, learning. During the school day, she and her staff have

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concentrated on raising the motivation of students for literacy, math, and science through engaging cutting-edge curricula from the district and high quality partners. In math and science, the school participates in the Math and Science Magnet Cluster Program and makes strong use of released lead teacher positions provided by this program to support individualized teacher coaching and in-house professional development. The school also takes part in the Chicago Math and Science Initiative (CMSI), and utilizes the highly regarded, Standards-based Everyday Math and Foss Science curricula, with a strong emphasis on technology integration.

On the literacy and reading side, the school participates in the Chicago Reading Initiative (CRI) and utilizes formative assessment materials through the federal Reading First program. Balanced literacy is the common instructional philosophy, with appropriate attention both to phonics and sentence elements in tandem with a two hour daily reading block with time for elective and interest reading. Grade level teams are accountable for monitoring alignment of lesson plans and curricula to Illinois State Learning Standards, while the school’s leadership team is tasked with teacher observation and evaluation. Overall, the program of instructional development outlined in Burnham-Anthony’s 2006-2008 School Improvement Plan reflects all the basic parameters for transformational school development advocated by Robert Marzano (2003).

In turn, rich and focused instructional development during the school day means that OST programs actually have a curriculum worth aligning to and supporting, but in ways that combine genuine learning with fun and relaxation. What matters, from Dr. Moore’s perspective, is that every program has thought intentionally about the quality of learning for which it will hold itself accountable. “I think enrichment programming as a lot to do with the development of students,” Dr. Moore reflected in our first interview in spring 2005. “There should be some sort of instruction or teaching that’s continuing the learning process.” As a principal and her school’s instructional leader, Dr. Moore feels as responsible for accomplishing the same quality of learning in OST as she aspires to reach in the school day. The frequent mentions of OST learning in the school’s 2006-2008 SIPAAA indicates that she expects her school teachers and OST partners to do that same.

**A seasoned Lead Partner Agency (LPA)**

At the front of this profile we introduced Youth Guidance Inc. in terms of its broad expertise in school-based youth development and social service collaboration. This institutional capability has yielded several specific assets to the Burnham/Anthony community school effort. Four aspects of this contribution have consistently emerged in our interviews over five years.

**Highly qualified resource coordinators.** A hallmark of agency school-based staffing at Youth Guidance partner schools is the exceptional level of experience and preparation invested in key staff positions. This is particularly true in the stressful resource coordinator position, where it has not been uncommon to find newly minted college graduates struggling to locate themselves with minimum orientation to education or resource coordination. Burnham/Anthony’s first resource coordinator acceded to that role after serving as Comer facilitator and parent coordinator. She brought degree background in Social Work to her role as well as extensive Comer training in school-based service provision. Her successor, Debra Pickett, came to
Burnham/Anthony first as the agency’s assigned, full-time social worker, tasked with individual and family counseling as well as developing SEL support and mentoring programs. In a way consistent with the general Youth Guidance approach to staff development, she under-studied the role of RC for several months before moving into the position in 2005. Her professional credentials were invaluable to Dr. Moore’s vision of raising overall program quality based on program data and an understanding of whole child development. She served in this position through spring 2008.

Deep capacity in group process. One of the consistent carry-overs from the Comer process to community schooling in YG schools is the evident application of strong process tools to meetings and other group interactions. Youth Guidance oversight committees aspire to include a wide range of community and stakeholder voices, and thus require a disciplined structure to assure that all voices are heard. A key role for resource coordinators as well as their supervisor-liaisons is to provide technical assistance to group process, based in turn on the triad principles of Comer school development – collaboration, consensus, and a “no-fault” perspective. This includes attention to rotating roles like time-keeper, note taker, and meeting moderator, and the use of techniques of consensus building like “fist-to-five.” This does not free Youth Guidance community schools from conflict. But it does help to elevate the overall effectiveness and intentionality of oversight processes. This is not lost on partner principals, who often draw Youth Guidance staff into process capacity building roles within their faculties.

A reflective professional learning community. With its own commitment to the value of process and a systems perspective on child development, Youth Guidance also promotes collaboration and group reflection within its corps of over 10 resource coordinators. Each month YG resource coordinators gather as a group to trouble-shoot specific issues, share news and best practice ideas, and undertake other forms of professional development which, as we have seen, is the hallmark of any professional learning community.

Beyond the personal and professional support that such meetings provide to sometimes stressed resource coordinators, these meetings and other professional activities prepare YG’s resource coordinators to connect well with similar faculty processes within their schools, and facilitate collaborative learning with parents and students. As Senior Comer Facilitator and Community School Liaison Michelle Adler Morrison told us in 2004, “Its important that our RC’s see their role as collaborating with the school administration, being brought in on all the planning – that we really have a team there between the agency, the resource coordinator, the school administration, and the oversight members. That we really see ourselves as facilitating the process. We don’t want any “Lone Rangers” in those positions....”

By extension, Youth Guidance convenes its partner principals a few times each year to build common understanding of the agency’s model of community schooling, and share ideas about the school-agency

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10 For another useful overview of the Comer SDP, see: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/comer.html.
11 For a quick overview of this technique, see: http://www.cbs.state.or.us/dfcs/ml/workgroup/testing_for_consensus.pdf.
collaboration. Dr. Moore found the networking and sharing among principals at these meetings to be “very beneficial and helpful.”

Access to wider networks of information and support. CPS requires its Lead Partner Agencies to supply a funding match of $50,000 annually per school to support community school operations. At a level that rivals any other non-profit organization involved in CSI, Youth Guidance Inc. assertively pursues public and private grant funding in the social service and youth development arenas, and has cultivated an impressive array of program and funding partners to meet and effectively exceed this matching commitment. These relationships are prominently profiled on its website and in its fund-raising publications. This does not relieve the pressure on either the agency or its partner schools to anticipate budgetary needs and prospect for funding sources. Behind the ambition of the Youth Guidance vision, after all, lies a lean but significant administrative infrastructure that undergirds program and staff quality. But this infrastructure sometimes appears opaque to school partners who underestimate the agency’s administrative costs.

What this network does provide school partners, however, is enhanced credibility as a Youth Guidance partner and client, and the benefit of alternative lines of funding to sustain staff positions over several years. At Burnham/Anthony, supplemental program and staff funding was secured through a Teen Reach grant to Youth Guidance from the State of Illinois. Other schools have benefited from matching funds brought by YG to the CSI table from Community Development Block Grants administered by the City of Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services.

Engagement with community partners

Connections developed by both the principal and Youth Guidance staff have contributed significantly to program success since the transition to community schooling in 2003. Sponsorships from local businesses like the McDonalds franchise on nearby 96th street have provided helpful funds for everything from school parties to team uniforms. Relationships with local block clubs and churches provide valuable information to Dr. Moore about conditions among families in the neighborhood, and help spread the word about the value of school OST programs. A few organizations have emerged as key partners in raising program quality in areas like recreation and social and emotional learning. Since 2006 Burnham/Anthony has participated in the fitness programs of not-for-profit Tri-Masters Youth Sports Initiative. Tri-Master’s after school program uses the training structures of preparation for triathlon competition (swim-bike-run) to introduce children in grades 4 through 8 to a range of wellness and health practices. The program also assesses children’s fitness and monitors changes in body fat as part of program evaluation. Burnham/Anthony’s GoalBuilders mentorship program is associated with University of Illinois at Chicago, and in particular its annual Concept2Venture business plan development competition. Local members of Concerned Christian Men are responsible for organizing and implementing the monthly Man-Boy Breakfast.

13 http://www.tri-masters.org/.
15 http://www.concernedchristianmen.org/. The organization considered the Man-Boy Breakfast
Moving Forward – Challenges and Opportunities

The Burnham/Anthony + Youth Guidance community school effort began with the goal of extending the vision, processes, and impacts of the Comer SDP through the enhanced resources of a full service community school design. In particular, the employment of a full time resource coordinator plus the development of an ambitious slate of OST activities were design features not central to the Comer process, but highly compatible with the Comer vision. After five years of sustained effort, progress toward this vision is marked by both continuity and discontinuity.

On the one hand, most of the Youth Guidance staff who implemented the Comer SDP remained on at BA to guide the community school process through spring 2008. While the current principal did not come to BA with a background in the Comer SDP, those Youth Guidance professionals won the respect and trust of Dr. Moore, and were integrated into both her School Management and School Improvement Teams.

At the level of OST programming, the success is clear, particularly in terms of student enrichment. Looking across the most recent two years of OST programs and partnerships, attention to experiences in all six of the developmental areas specified by the Comer SDP is tangible - cognitive, psychological, linguistic, social, ethical, and physical – and a process of continuous quality review and improvement is developing. Further, a culture of respect for student voice has emerged from the partnership between Youth Guidance and Dr. Moore, reflected both in a revived student council and a survey process that regularly takes the student pulse. A recent change of mascot to the more inspiring “falcons” is just one outcome of honoring student voice and enabling student leaders.

Yet influential discontinuities are also in play, reflecting distance between the respective professional practice traditions of the principal and Youth Guidance Inc. On the plain of child development, both Dr. Moore and Youth Guidance staff would agree that the interests of children should be paramount in community school decisions. For Youth Guidance staff, with its systemic and contextual understanding of child development, this entails diversifying the ways in which schools contribute to children’s growth, and if necessary taking on roles traditionally ascribed to family or community. But for contemporary school leaders, there is a strong imperative to concentrate attention on the perceived academic interests of children, to organize enrichment around those interests, and be vigilant for influences that undermine instructional focus. The same differences in perspective can lead to very different constructions of the “appropriate” role of parents in school improvement.

On the plain of leadership, both Dr. Moore and Youth Guidance staff would agree that effective distribution of leadership roles and development of leadership capacity are essential to community school success (Spillane, 2006). For Youth Guidance staff in the Comer tradition, effective distribution entails widening the circle of influence to incorporate parent and community voices previously ignored or disenfranchised in school reform processes. The role of training is to prepare non-educators to engage school professionals respectfully but also skillfully and when necessary assertively.
For today’s instructional leaders, though, the measure of distributed leadership is its success in building buy-in and accountability for instructional improvement at the classroom level. Especially in the first years of a new principalship, the strong tendency is to concentrate leadership development on the faculty and the teacher-student interface. Thus while much of the spirit of Comer collaboration remains alive within BA’s community school partnership and oversight process, most of the Comer committee structures – for example, the SMPT, the SSST, or the Parent Advisory Team - have given way to leadership arrangements more typical of a professionally-driven school improvement process. This trajectory has been reinforced further by the on-going pressure to avoid NCLB-driven probation and drive up standardized test scores. In turn, increasing numbers of teachers at Burnham/Anthony have no formal orientation to the Comer SDP, while the school no longer affiliates officially with the Comer School Network.

While these discontinuities have injected undeniable tension into the BA partnership, both pragmatic mutual interest and professional good faith have held the partnership together and yielded substantive successes. For her part, Dr. Moore resisted pressure from BA’s Local School Council to terminate the Comer SDP and relationships when she first arrived in 2004. Instead, she persuaded the LSC to allow her to observe the Comer and community school processes in action, and to address how best to align these with her priorities for instructional improvement. Her interactions with Youth Guidance staff and research into Comer SDP convinced her that her goals and those of Youth Guidance were largely compatible, and that YG’s skill sets and resources remained indispensable to the community school effort.

For their part, Youth Guidance understood that their situation at Burnham/Anthony was just one variant in a broader shift of conditions for collaboration occurring across the public schools. Under these circumstances, the Community School Initiative represented the best chance for sustaining attention to child development and substantive parent engagement in neighborhood public schools otherwise constrained by NCLB. Thus Burnham/Anthony posed an opportunity to explore alternative processes for collaboration with a principal with strong instructional vision and resolve. Determined to approach Dr. Moore responsively, YG staff drew upon its deep experience with schools to engage the principal’s concerns and establish a dialogue around reconfiguring key roles such as the resource coordinator position. This dialogue has continued, productively if not always smoothly, to the present writing.

In our recent interviews, two challenges emerged that will test the on-going capacity of YG and BA school leaders to forge common strategies and sustain the school’s real gains. The first challenge has been chronic for nearly a decade, and involves stress and peer conflict within the school and the surrounding community. Across five years, our interviews with parents, teachers, students, agency staff, and school leaders have consistently surfaced concern about stress in the lives of students and its expression as conflict among peers. Behavior issues continue to dog classroom teachers at BA and pre-occupy the school counselor and other lead staff.
The results of the 2007 Student Connections Survey, summarized in Figure 3, bring home the extent of the issue for students. As the results suggest, BA students actually feel safer on school grounds and feel better supported by teachers and other school adults than most students in their community or in CPS. They also feel that their school work is challenge and interesting, and that teachers see them as capable of high achievement (“Acad Rigor”). Yet they are considerably less likely to see their classmates as respectful of their teacher or of one another, and indicate that issues like bullying worry them. Where BA students exceed neighbor schools and the district in other areas of school experience, they noticeably trail in their quality of social and emotional experience. But this is actually a pervasive issue among CPS students (Karp, 2008).

This issue persists at BA despite quality OST activities and specific programs targeted to social and emotional learning, including a recent intensive partnership with Inner Vision International. In prior years, these data would have become front-burner concerns of the Comer cross-disciplinary Student and Staff Support Team (SSST) as well as the full-time Youth Guidance social worker. But funding limits foreclosed the renewal of this position when Ms. Pickett transitioned to the resource coordinator role in 2005. During the 2007-2008 school year, BA full time counselor Lisa Krotiak and Principal Moore took advantage of CPS pilot funds to involve Burnham/Anthony in a classroom-based curriculum on social and emotional learning, based on the SEL curricula developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Youth Guidance staff participated in the effort as facilitators in staff development. Subsequently Youth Guidance helped secure expanded funding for continued implementation of the CASEL approach, along with enhanced counseling support and professional development. The approach melds YG’s focus on SEL with the Dr. Moore’s concern to link SEL to school learning and involve classroom teachers in meeting the State of Illinois’ new SEL standards. As Dr. Moore put it, “Social/emotional learning hopefully will take us to the next level of academic achievement.”

A second challenge facing the Burnham/Anthony partnership involves the invigoration of a sustainable agenda for parent involvement. During the early years of Comer implementation at BA, there is evidence of high levels of parent

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17 See: http://www.casel.org/about/staff.php.
involvement and experimentation with a range of programs for adult education and family development. Monthly family enrichment field trips have also been a staple of the OST program year. An active Parent Team (PT) was trained in organizing techniques and planned adult education and parent-oriented celebrations in the school, creating a climate of welcome. Youth Guidance continues to maintain Parent Resource Rooms in the Burnham and Anthony buildings, with video and training materials as well as information about neighborhood services. The agency continues to link BA parents to the resources of the Comer Network via participation in the annual Parent Leadership Conference, taking several parents each year.

Over the years, the school and agency have developed programs in OST to attract parent participants, at times with considerable success. But consistently gauging the interests of parents has been difficult. A recent survey suggested, for example, that parents would welcome a GED course. But the effort to offer that course did not draw enough participants to sustain it. The school enjoys high rates of attendance at “mandatory” events like report card pick up days, and parents also attend school performances in strong numbers. But attracting parents into leadership or training activities has proven difficult, whether the focus is parenting skills, money management, or how to support your child’s academic success. As the 2006 BA SIPAAA characterized the situation, “There’s a small group of parents who consistently support and volunteer in the school.” This of course is a pervasive quandary for Chicago Public Schools, including the schools and community-based partners involved in CSI (Whalen, 2007).

Issues in the surrounding community and in the lives of young South Deering parents certainly contribute to this quandary. Della Ezell, a Youth Guidance liaison working with BA, manages the Parent Resource Rooms and speaks frequently with young parents. She finds that young African American parents are self-conscious of the contrasts between themselves and CPS teachers and administrators, whether the issue is quality of speech, dress, or other aspects of appearance. For BA and Youth Guidance staff, the challenge would appear to get “back to basics” with these parents, establishing a climate of welcome and conversation in both schools. Some progress has been made with last year’s E.P.I.C. (Empowering Parents in the Community) program, which drew 30 parents into a range of adult education workshops. There is every reason to believe that the same attention to quality that has distinguished Burnham/Anthony’s student programs can also be achieved in a new generation of parent engagement and family support activities.
References


Acknowledgements

The author thanks the administrators, staffs, parents, and students of Burnham/Anthony Inclusive Academy and Youth Guidance Inc. for welcoming this research and providing helpful suggestions for the development of this profile. The author particularly thanks Dr. Linda Moore (Principal), Debra Pickett (Resource Coordinator from 2005 through 2008), Della Ezell (Youth Guidance Liaison), Michelle Adler Morrison (Youth Guidance Community School Facilitator), Vivian Loseth (Youth Guidance Executive Director), and the community school and evaluation staffs of Youth Guidance Inc. for interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008. Amparo Castillo contributed invaluable transcription and editing. The final study remains the sole responsibility of the author.

A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this profile. During spring 2007 and winter 2008 UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators. These were combined with interviews with teachers, students, and parents from three prior years of study. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and its partners were collected and analyzed, most notably the 2006-2008 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA), out-of-school time program schedules, and web-based documents from the school, Youth Guidance Inc., and several other community partners. Community census data were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC). School achievement trend data were derived from the University of Northern Illinois’ Interactive Illinois Report Card website. Community safety information was derived from the Chicago Police Department’s CLEARMAP system.
Table 1: Chicago’s South Deering Neighborhood and Burnham Elementary’s South Deering Census Tract on Selected Census 2000 Indicators

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>South Deering</th>
<th>Burnham Census Tract</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2000 Number</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
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<td><strong>% Ages 15 to 19 years</strong></td>
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<td><strong>% Ages 65 &amp; above</strong></td>
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* Against population sub-total (not total population)
The “Common Sense” of Community Engagement: Burroughs Elementary and Brighton Park Neighborhood Council

Introduction

Community schools embrace the view that schools and their surrounding neighborhoods share a common stake in supporting the learning of neighborhood children and the well-being of families. Removing barriers to open communication and common action serves the interests of both schools and their neighborhoods. Schools perform better if they enjoy the active support of parents and neighbors, and resources are available to meet the basic developmental, nutritional, social, and emotional needs of students. Neighborhoods do better when schools do their part to increase the connectedness of families and the pride of residents in local accomplishments, and channel the energies of youth away from risky behaviors and toward educational and vocational development.

Beyond the broad common sense of school-community partnership, however, many questions arise when schools genuinely engage pressing community issues, and community members look to schools to help solve neighborhood problems. What contributions are schools best equipped to make to community well-being, given their primary expertise in classroom education? In an era of heightened “standards-based accountability”, should schools be asked to engage complex community issues if this risks drawing attention and resources away from instructional practice? Should organizations devoted to community development and advocacy use their own limited resources to engage schools, and to what ends? What happens when a community-minded public school and a capable neighborhood organization collaborate to engage the educational and residential concerns of their neighborhood constituencies?

In this community school profile we examine one school-CBO partnership in Chicago’s Brighton Park neighborhood that successfully marries academic success with a broader agenda of parent empowerment and community action. Like most marriages, this partnership is a work in progress in which neither the school nor the community partner share an identical set of interests. Instead, respect for the specific missions of each institution, anchored in flexibility, intentionality, communication, and evaluation, have yielded a “common sense” agenda for engaging parents and community members that has changed the priorities of both school and partner agency in subtle but powerful ways.

The Burroughs + BPNC Community School

Brighton Park is a working class community on the near southwest side of Chicago, roughly 2.7 square miles in size and 6 miles from the downtown Loop. Two major rail corridors and an interstate highway form three of its boundaries, contributing to the community’s sense of distinct identity and cohesion. Between 1990 and 2000 Brighton Park’s population expanded by more than 39% to its current size of 45,000 residents,
making it among the fastest growing and most densely populated sections of the city.\(^1\) With a median family income of $38,815 and high levels of employment, Brighton Park’s neighborhoods are anchored in families of low to moderate means but optimistic expectations. A recent analysis by the Metro Chicago Information Center characterizes Brighton Park as an “emerging low income” community, marked by a strong increase in low income households from 1990 to 2000, but a significant balance of moderate and higher income families.\(^2\) Yet with 15% of the area’s families falling below federal poverty levels, many Brighton Park children continue to face acute barriers to educational attainment and aspiration.

Two significant forces shape the social and economic fabric of today’s Brighton Park - immigration and gentrification. Brighton Park was predominately white and working class through the 1970’s, with strong representation among Eastern European immigrants. Today Hispanics, largely from Mexico, comprise the majority of the population, almost 77% at the 2000 Census, more than double the 1990 levels. For many Hispanic newcomers, Brighton Park is their port of entry to Chicago and the United States. Others have come to Brighton Park from nearby neighborhoods like Pilsen and Little Village, as affordable housing in these growing communities dwindles. Roughly half of current residents are foreign born, and one-third are non-citizens.

As Hispanics have increased their numbers, so too has the presence of children. Residents ages 0 through 19 account for more than 37% of the current population, an increase of more than 75% over 1990 levels. About half of all households include dependents under 18 years of age. The median age in 2000 was 26.6 years, signaling that the needs of young people are a pressing issue in Brighton Park. At the same time, adult educational levels have declined in Brighton Park since 1990. Nearly one-third of residents have no education beyond the elementary level, while the percents of high school and college graduates declined by 10% between 1990 and 2000. Add to this that Spanish is the daily language of more than two-thirds of Brighton Park households, and the challenge to schools is clear – accommodate rising class sizes while trying to engage wary parents across barriers of language and educational attainment.

Like other near-Loop communities, Brighton Park also attracts increasing numbers of affluent professionals seeking the conveniences and amenities of city living. While still relatively small in numbers, residents with high levels of education and income are the fastest growing segment of the population.\(^3\) By 2010 median family income is projected to exceed $61,000, compared with $38,800 in 2000. In turn, the character and price of the housing stock is shifting rapidly. The 1990’s saw a surge in construction of single-unit, attached housing typical of townhouse condominiums, and a loss of structures built prior to 1980.\(^4\) For both renters and buyers the cost of housing as a percent of income rose precipitously between 1990 and 2000, a trend projected to continue. As a result, issues of affordable housing and anxiety about the future affordability of Brighton Park for working class Hispanic residents have become a political and social flashpoint.

\(^1\) All statistics in this section are drawn from US Census 2000 sources, as reported by the Metro Chicago
\(^3\) According to the 2000 US Census, 34.4% of Brighton Park families posted combined incomes exceeding $50,000, increasing at rates of 75% or above as segments of the population. Mean retirement income increased by 124% from 1990 to 2000, while earnings derived from public assistance declined by 44%.
\(^4\) 2005 US Census estimates cite an increase of over 200% in housing units built since 1999 when compared with 2000 US Census numbers.
Burroughs Elementary is a neighborhood public school in the northwest corner of Brighton Park, serving about 550 students and over 360 families in grades Pre-kindergarten through 8. In many ways Burroughs is typical of neighborhood schools in the community. The stately red brick building is old, dating to 1893, although capital improvements and community lobbying have kept the facility attractive and in good repair. Consistent with the immediate neighborhood, the student population is predominately Hispanic and largely Mexican (88%), with smaller numbers of white, African-American, and Asian students. Almost all families qualify for federal free and reduced lunch subsidies (96%), with growing numbers of students qualifying for special education services (10.7% in 2005) or bi-lingual support (32.7%).

In other respects, though, Burroughs is anything but typical. While officially a “community school” since 2004, the school has built its success on a strong foundation of community school practices since the arrival of Principal Richard Morris in 1990. Students remain in class one hour longer each day than most CPS students. Continual professional development prepares teachers to address Illinois Learning Standards with enriched curricula that keep students interested and engaged. After school programs further support the “whole child” through high quality sports, arts, and service learning opportunities, staffed with help from community residents. A distinct middle school curriculum counters the attraction of gangs and drugs with intensified student and family counseling. Recent Burroughs graduates volunteer as mentors to 8th graders as they prepare to enter the local public high school. Adult education programs keep the school open until 8 PM on most evenings. Workshops address how parents can help students succeed, but also cover topics such as personal finance, home buying, and paths to citizenship. ESL and GED classes help parents advance their own academic development. Parents and other community members participate in advisory committees that make important decisions about community school policy, and evaluate program quality and success.

While the Burroughs community school model continues to mature, there is no arguing with its academic success. Despite a rise in the percentage of low income families, daily attendance exceeds 95%, with low levels of family leave-taking (or mobility) across the year. Disciplinary incidents are rare, as are suspensions and expulsions. In such an environment, combined with exceptional instructional development, Burroughs students thrive. Figure 1 summarizes the percentage of Burroughs students meeting or exceeding state-wide grade level standards as measured by the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test (ISAT) from 2002 through 2007 (composite of reading, math, and science performance). While a third of Burroughs students qualify for bi-lingual support, more than 70% meet or exceed state reading
standards, and over 80% meet or exceed state math standards. For three years running, the school has met Annual Yearly Progress requirements set by the No Child Left Behind education reform, leading to its designation as an Autonomous Management and Performance School (or AMPS). The school also has been recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as an Illinois Spotlight School and Rising Star. Perhaps the highest praise comes from former students and their parents, many of whom return to the school to teach, volunteer, coach, and otherwise support the school during the school day and in out-of-school hours.

Burroughs’ close partner in community schooling is the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council. For over 10 years BPNC has applied grassroots community organizing techniques to advocate for improvements in a wide range of conditions affecting low and moderate income residents in Brighton Park. Through this time, BPNC has been recognized locally and nationally as a model for community organizing that combines resident education, community mobilization, political advocacy and institutional coalition-building to secure tangible improvements while empowering resident leadership. Current BPNC priorities include affordable housing, school improvement, youth leadership and gang prevention, and immigrant rights. The organization recently played an important role in advocating for the passage of the Big Box Living Wage Ordinance by Chicago’s City Council. With a lean annual operating budget ($623,500 in revenues in FY 2007) and a small full time staff, BPNC depends on its network of volunteers and issue-focused committees to advance its campaigns.

One key to the success of BPNC is the attention it pays to community education and leadership development. Through its own facility on Archer Avenue and at locations like Burroughs School, BPNC draws on its existing resident members to identify issues that matter most to fellow residents. Through workshops, informational clinics, and ongoing classes, BPNC provides information and services that recruit many residents into leadership groups and issue committees. BPNC groups such as Light and Hope support local women in personal growth, but also encourage members to identify an agenda for advocacy and action. Similarly, the organization’s Youth Council builds the capacity of local youth for social and political action with the support of a full time youth organizer. When BPNC inaugurates full scale campaigns addressing immigration or housing issues, both youth and adults are trained in the basic skills of door to door and constituent organizing necessary to mobilize residents and influence key decision makers.

Schools have always been important to the BPNC network. The organization employs a full time education organizer to mobilize residents around issues such as school crowding, safety, and bi-lingual services. Community school partnerships with Burroughs and Kelly High School, however, immerse BPNC staff in organizing of a new sort, involving the on-going management of school-based programs and relationships. This has required BPNC staff to incorporate new roles such as the school resource coordinator, with new skill sets involving program management. Yet the core skills of community organizing remain highly relevant to Burroughs and Kelly, especially as applied to the essential challenge of engaging parents as school partners. An open question for BPNC remains how community schooling fits within the organization’s broader imperative to advocate for a mixed income, ethnically diverse future for Brighton Park.
Distinguishing Features of the Burroughs + BPNC Partnership

As a member of Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative, Burroughs Elementary incorporates all the core features and strategies central to the Chicago model of community schooling. These include a strong alliance with a not-for-profit community partner, a vigorous agenda for out-of-school time, involvement of parents and teachers in planning processes, and efforts to deepen support services for children and families. What distinguishes the Burroughs + BPNC partnership, though, is how strategies cohere around a shared vision of community service and whole child/whole family support. This vision encourages Burroughs leaders to think flexibly about how the school can prepare students to succeed in high school and in life. So what would you see and experience if you spent a season observing this partnership in action? In this section we give an overview of some of the key distinguishing features of this partnership.

A friendly and welcoming school climate.

One of the first impressions of most visitors to Burroughs is of a friendly and welcoming place where the boundaries separating neighborhood from classroom are more functional than institutional. Upon entering the building, visitors are greeted not by a security guard but by the resource coordinator from Brighton Park Neighborhood Council who handles inquiries in English and Spanish, orients newcomers to a menu of services and programs, and works closely with the school’s administrators and front office staff. Parents are a constant presence throughout the day, whether contributing as classroom aids, meeting with teachers and staff, participating in adult enrichment courses, or just socializing while they wait for a workshop to begin. The principal and his staff maintain an open-door policy throughout the day, contributing to an overall climate of trust among school staff and parents. Murals throughout the building depict everyday scenes in the surrounding community. As an alderman once told the principal, “This is the friendliest school I’ve ever visited – noisy, but friendly!” While the school’s high ceilings do echo, it is a noisiness steeped in real engagement in student and adult learning.

A facility committed to community purposes.

One of the fundamental challenges of community schooling is to expand the availability of the school building and grounds to a wider range of community uses. Typically this involves extending the times when the school is open as well as broadening the “ownership” of school as a space beyond the claims of faculty and staff. Burroughs opens its grounds and facilities to an exceptional range of academic and community objectives. A 13 hour day is typical of the school year, from 7:30 AM algebra classes for 8th graders, to 8:00 PM, when ESL, GED, and other adult enrichment classes finally let out. Saturday mornings are busy with the Saturday Reading Academy for ESL readers in grades 3 through 8, as well as numerous sports and arts programs. Summer hosts a 6-week arts and academic enrichment camp for students across the grade levels, as well as a popular Friday movie night open to all community members and staged on the recreational field behind the school. The school also has opened its gym and other facilities to more “risky” initiatives such as a basketball night designed to attract gang members in a neutral local setting. School families maintain a school garden as a small sanctuary for all community members in the midst of the neighborhood. The openness of Burroughs to a wide range of community uses

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5 For an overview of the Chicago Community Schools Initiative, see Whalen, S. P. (June 2007). Three Years into Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative (CSI). Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago. Link: http://cpsafterschool.org/CSI_Three_Year_Study_Dec_06_07.pdf
is critical to its local identity as a genuine community center.

**A school culture of community service.**
Burroughs administrators and staff embrace the conviction that the school exists to serve the community, and that school staff are “civil servants” as well as professional educators. For Mr. Morris, the school principal, this view is the cornerstone of everything that happens at Burroughs, morning through evening, and the signal concept for anyone who works at Burroughs to understand. It is the deeper foundation for the school’s claim to a “whole child/whole family” philosophy of education.

At least three operating principles flow from this core conviction. Taken together, these principles converge in a school culture that places a high priority on the development of human potential. First, ownership of the school resides fundamentally with the community and its residents. Residents therefore own a voice and role in guiding how the school pursues its primary institutional mission. This applies particularly to parents, who are closest in interest to their children. But it includes other community residents as well. One sees this principle embraced in the empowered role of the school’s community school oversight committee which is dominated by parents and community residents. In 2007 the oversight committee initiated a participatory evaluation process designed to review the quality of all community school programs and make recommendations for improvements and future priorities.

A second operating principle is that the community shapes the readiness of children to learn and the capacity of families to support learning. Thus any condition in the community that impacts the well-being of children and families is the business of the school, and warrants the school’s attention. How and to what extent the school can engage a particular condition is a pragmatic matter, and should involve a process of community deliberation and consultation with partners like BPNC. This principle is enacted daily at Burroughs, from the focus of adult learning on issues of housing, immigration and citizenship, to the extensive investment of discretionary funds in full time student and family counseling positions.

A third operating principle is that youth are community members too, and remain the concern of the school beyond their graduation from Burroughs. Thus the school owns a role in the long-term success of students and youth in the community, and must think outside of the “K-8 box” in supporting this success. This principle is enacted in such initiatives as a gang intervention program that utilizes the school’s gym to engage gang members in positive recreation, as well as sponsorship of a teen leadership group that connects with the BPNC Youth Council to help advocate for community improvements. It is further exemplified in the school’s innovation of a middle school curriculum keyed to the issues facing Brighton Park teenagers.

**Enriched, engaging learning, all day long.**
In an era of pressure for standardized test gains, many schools divide their days between tedious school work and the “fun” of after school activities. The staff at Burroughs intentionally pursues a different view, that powerful learning must be both challenging and engaging for students at whatever time of day it occurs. The faculty enacts a “standards-driven” instructional program in the richest sense, using the Illinois Learning Standards rather than textbook sequences to plan and carry out lessons throughout the year. A team approach to grade-level instruction allows teachers to share and critique lessons and materials that interest students and keep them challenged. The school’s affiliation and close alignment with district curricular resources such as the Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster, the Chicago Math and Science...
Initiative, and the Chicago Reading Initiative have yielded additional specialized faculty positions supporting enriched curricula. Team work and communication across the grades and among the school day and after school staff is the norm at Burroughs. Grade level teaching teams maintain “curriculum maps” that keep teachers and students on pace and avoid the boredom of repeated lessons. Use of a range of instructional best practices along with a positive approach to discipline and behavior management have allowed Burroughs staff to extend the classroom day by one hour with little resistance from students or parents. This extended day program creates extra time to pursue independent learning such as science fair projects, Young Author workshops, frequent use of the school library, book clubs and literature circles, and peer support through the school’s Reading Buddies program.

Enriched, diversified learning in out-of-school time. Burrough’s commitment to the education of the whole child is amply reflected in the diversity of its out-of-school time programming. For most students at some point in the year, the engaging and diversified learning of the class day merges seamlessly into an afternoon of sports and recreational programs (including soccer, football, volleyball, and basketball), arts enrichment experiences (examples include drama, mural painting, ceramics), and participation in youth leadership and service learning activities, from 3:30 PM to 5 or 6 in the evening. Younger students also participate with their parents in family activities that include cooking classes, computer and technology activities, and first aid instruction. A homework help center offering student-to-student tutoring is available for students needing additional academic support. For many students in two income households, daily attendance at OST programs is the only alternative to unsupervised afternoons at home or on the street.

Several factors contribute to consistently high quality in these programs. Instructors include school teachers, parents, and community residents, and professional artists and youth development workers who volunteer time and materials, and collaborate to maintain a safe environment. The school’s engineer, custodians, and food service staffs provide services and further oversight into the afternoon hours. The community school oversight committee uses periodic student surveys to gather information for program development and review program quality. Its members including parents and local neighbors are present regularly during after school hours to help supervise. The after school resource coordinator, Ms. Santiago, is integrated into key school committees and the middle school’s behavior intervention team, as well as meeting weekly with the Principal and BPNC staff. She is seen by the principal as a critical staff person with special responsibility for aligning OST offerings with the Illinois Learning Standards, particularly those targeting social and emotional learning. The same factors support high quality in parent programs in the afternoon and evening hours.

Pervasive commitment to parent engagement. From the earliest days of his 17 year principalship, Richard Morris noticed that his Hispanic parents tended to be both distrustful and deferential toward their school and its faculty. In practice, this meant that parents often avoided interpersonal contact

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I’m very much into creating systems, organizing things so they run more smoothly. So I definitely want to analyze this past year, think about what we can do next year so that things run a little smoother.

-- Burroughs + BPNC Resource Coordinator --
with school staff, and stayed away from official school functions. Mr. Morris set out to change that relationship between home and school decisively, positioning parents as a school resource, and encouraging parents to barge into his office if necessary to express their ideas and concerns. The result today is a pervasive culture of parent engagement focusing on academic partnership, adult education and empowerment, and increasingly, whole family support.

Several practices support consistent communication and academic partnership between parents and teachers. Parents contribute to daily classroom life as aides and assistants, and are a valued resource for teachers to implement small group and individual tutoring for students needing extra support. The school hosts three report card pick up events annually — one more than required by CPS — plus an early Open House event to connect parents with their children’s teachers and classrooms. Parent attendance at these events typically exceeds 90% of families, allowing staff to survey parent opinions in support of school improvement efforts. Faculty committees collaborate with the school’s NCLB Parent Advisory and Bilingual Advisory Committees to sponsor parent workshops geared to the Illinois Learning Standards and home strategies fostering student success. Other events include Family Literacy Nights sponsored by staff of the Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster Program, and a “Success in School” workshop sponsored by BPNC. Partnerships with organizations such as Chicago Gear-Up aim to ally parents with their middle school students in achieving college graduation.

Burroughs also invests extensively in adult education and aspirations, to build trust with parents, to elevate the value of education within families, and to support parents as home educators. During the 2006-2007 academic year Burroughs offered parents and neighborhood residents a exciting menu of afternoon and evening options, remaining open until 8 PM Monday through Thursday. Programs included English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED classes, computer instruction, cooking and nutrition classes, aerobics and yoga as well as a basketball program for fathers, and instruction in cold porcelain figure making. So far the Burroughs + BPNC Partnership has been able to provide these resources to interested parents at no charge, with free on-site child care available. The partnership with BPNC also connects parents with informative seminars on topics such as first time home ownership and refinancing, credit repair, financial literacy, and citizenship and immigration issues. Held both at Burroughs, BPNC, and other community locations, these seminars provide a bridge for some parents to become involved in BPNC’s committees and advocacy work.

Finally, the Burroughs + BPNC partnership continues to deepen resources for family support at both the community and individual family levels. BPNC’s status as a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, for example, allows the agency to provide individual family counseling on housing issues, in addition to informational workshops. Flyers and advertisements publicizing these counseling opportunities are made available at the school’s front desk and at events such as open houses and report card pick up. A long-standing partnership with SGA Youth and Family Services provides a full time social worker position with more

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6 The culture of parent engagement at Burroughs is evident in its official 2006-2008 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA). Roughly 380 parents were surveyed in support of this SIPAAA, in addition to consultation with NCLB parent committees. Unlike the majority of CPS SIPAAA plans, Burroughs approaches parent engagement as a strategic resource for reaching instructional goals rather than as a separate (and usually weakly supported) goal. To examine the Burroughs 2006-2008 SIPAAA, link to: http://research.cps.k12.il.us/resweb/SchoolProfile?unit=2540, and open the link to “SIPAAA Plan.”
flexibility to engage higher need families in collaboration with teachers and other CPS specialized service staff. The school currently is exploring an expanded role for SGA at Burroughs involving the development and staffing of a mental health and family support clinic on-site.

Burroughs also implements the School Based Problem Solving Approach (SBPS) to student behavioral and academic engagement through a partnership with the Illinois ASPIRE project. With professional development from Illinois ASPIRE, SBPS emphasizes collaboration between parents, teachers, administrators, and counseling specialists to address student motivation and engagement issues as they emerge, before they become chronic obstacles to learning. The integration of the BPNC resource coordinator into the SBPS framework helps factor after school programs into the mix of resources to support behavioral change.

An integrated style of partnership. As Harvard Researcher Gil Noam has observed, partnerships between schools and not-for-profit organizations range from minimal collaboration (self-contained and associated relationships) to more coordinated, integrated, even “unified” levels of collaboration.7 At an advanced level of integration, “…both the program and the school have identified the other as a key partner in achieving their goals around learning and other aspects of development” (p. 24). The Burroughs + BPNC Community School is a strong example of the integrated level of school-OST bridging. Several dimensions of partnership illustrate the extent of integration between school and partner at Burroughs and its impact on school climate and capacity, including the following:


Alignment of vision. As organizations and as leadership teams, Burroughs and BPNC align closely around the core principles of school-community relationship espoused by Mr. Morris and reviewed earlier in this profile. For BPNC, these principles conform closely to a vision of education serving broader purposes of social justice. Burroughs and BPNC agree that the school exists to serve

Burroughs, working in partnership with students, parents, and community, provides each student with a quality education in a safe and supportive environment. We promote self-discipline and high educational expectations through rigorous adherence to the Illinois Learning Standards and integration of Literature, Writing, and Technology across the curriculum.

- Burroughs Mission Statement, 2007 -

Our mission is to create a safer community with a strong infrastructure, improve neighborhood schools, provide a voice for our youth and stabilize the local business and housing structure. BPNC is dedicated to developing strong grassroots leadership by utilizing the capacity of residents to organize and mobilize their own resources.

- From BPNC Mission Statement, 2007 -

the community, particularly through engaging the community in its educational mission. They agree that parents and families contribute critical assets to school and student success, and own a central place at the school and community planning tables. And they agree that schools cannot meet the needs of communities alone, while community partners have a unique role to play in the success of schools and families.
Alignment of leadership styles. Senior staff at Burroughs and BPNC share a core vision of leadership. This vision combines the direct, active, and consistent engagement of senior staff in partnership activities, with the empowerment of stakeholders to exercise leadership and effect critical planning and decisions. Senior administrators of Burroughs school engage daily in classroom observations and instructional oversight, but distribute significant responsibility to teachers who collaborate on curricular design at the grade level and cross-grade level (see further in next section). The lean, horizontal staffing structure of BPNC requires the flexible deployment of skill sets and expertise, informed by the utility of downplaying formal hierarchy and credentialism in order to invite parents and community members into leadership roles. In practice, the leadership cultures of both organizations promote an inclusive and collegial climate keyed to the assembly of knowledge and expertise within problem-solving teams.

Integration of staffs and affiliates. Both the BPNC resource coordinator and the associate director are included in school leadership meetings as well as the School Based Problem Solving teams. Teachers staff a number of after school enrichment activities in addition to their own extended day assignments, and help staff the community school oversight committee. The default assumption at Burroughs is that BPNC staff are an asset to organizing any community event, from summer movie nights to Family Literacy Nights. Parents expect to see school staff and BPNC staff working together to advance community school projects.

Consistent communication. Consistent, frequent communication, both in formal settings and in everyday interactions, is a critical asset to the partnership. A community school executive committee comprised of the principal and assistant principal on the school side, and the BPNC associate director and resource coordinator on the BPNC side, meets weekly with parents and other staff to share information and trouble-shoot challenges. A standing weekly meeting has built deep rapport and trust between the principal and senior BPNC staff over time. The BPNC associate director visits the school several times each week, and contributes to everyday program management in visible and tangible ways. The resource coordinator begins her work day at about noon, and connects through the day with teachers and school staff to identify student issues and respond to teacher suggestions. The accessibility of her desk at the top of the first floor landing makes it a natural hub of staff and parent communication throughout the day.

Transparency and accountability. Chicago’s community school partners – schools and not-for-profits – commonly complain that their collaborators do not disclose fully their fiscal practices or show all their financial cards at the planning table. Schools suspect that not-for-profits over-allocate funds to cover general overhead and staffing costs not connected with community school programs. Community partners suspect that principals can deploy Title 1 and other discretionary funds with greater freedom than they disclose to their partners.

Over time, Burroughs and BPNC have built considerable fiscal transparency into their planning processes, especially at the weekly executive committee level. BPNC provides the principal with a breakdown of staff and material expenditures, and contributes clear in-kind value in the form of volunteer staff hours, parent training, and educational materials. The principal’s acquaintance with BPNC’s store-front location on Archer Avenue further reinforces his confidence that his partner keeps the belt tight on its internal expenses. Mr. Morris raises additional funds through local business contributors that are made available to OST program development.
and evening programs. In interviews, both the principal and BPNC staff agreed that the partnership has been operating increasingly from one, unified fiscal resource, and that sustaining the partnership was genuinely a joint responsibility of both partners.

A strong illustration of partnership in action at Burroughs involves the school’s emerging program of supports for early adolescents, centered in the development of a middle school curriculum. The conviction that Burroughs needed to re-think its supports for students in grades 6 through 8 emerged in spring 2006 in faculty discussions of the pressure on students to join gangs, and the difficulties students experienced in transitioning successfully to the local high school. These discussions were integrated early into the weekly community school management meetings between school administrators and BPNC staff. As the school formed a faculty leadership team to plan the middle school curriculum, and reallocated space to dedicate the school’s second floor exclusively to these grades, BPNC staff considered how it could leverage its community expertise and youth leadership resources in support of the initiative. Through its own close association with SGA Youth and Family Services, for example, BPNC helped facilitate the hiring of a full-time counselor/social worker to work with families on student behavior issues. BPNC also took a lead role in facilitating a mentorship program between 9th graders at Kelly High School and Burroughs 8th graders, providing the key staff necessary through its partnership with the University of Chicago’s resource coordinator internship program.8

After school arts, health, sports, and tutoring programs extended the developmental supports for middle schoolers into the later afternoon. The cumulative impact of these interventions is impressive. Over four years, the percentage of Burroughs graduates on-track for high school graduation at the end of 9th grade has risen substantially, from 39.3% in 2004, to 67.4% in 2007.

Taken together, the daily cultivation of these features and practices has created a deep reserve of relational trust within the Burroughs + BPNC partnership, a resource for further experimentation and collaborative learning. School reform scholars Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schnieder (2002) define relational trust as confidence among school role players (administrators, teachers, parents, and students) that school team members are committed to the common vision, respect the intentions of others, and will carry forward the specifics of their roles with integrity. Relational trust is expressed by Burroughs administrators as a willingness to grant BPNC wide latitude over the management of before- and after-school hours, with full access to the school and principal’s offices and resources. It is reflected further in the encouragement that BPNC receives from the principal to organize parents as “participatory evaluators” of community school programs, a development that many other principals would view with alarm. Equal trust is expressed by BPNC in its recent commitment to co-write a proposal for a replication of the Burroughs community school model as a Renaissance 2010 performance school. While there is no guarantee that this new school will locate in Brighton Park, BPNC trusts that further collaboration with Burroughs staff will further deepen its general school partnership capabilities.

What Organizational Capacities Lie Behind the Success of this Partnership?

The emerging success of the Burroughs + BPNC community school partnership is no accident. Both partners bring considerable organizational talent and community credibility to the planning table, and can draw

8 For program description, see: http://www.ssa.uchicago.edu/programs/special.shtml #Community.
on capabilities within their individual organizations in order to deliver on their commitments to the partnership. On the part of Burroughs school, five organizational assets are particularly important to highlight.

**A capable and visionary principal.** Most observers of community school transformation recognize the key role played by the principal in authorizing and leading change. The current principal of Burroughs, Richard Morris, has been without a doubt both the “father” and unflagging champion of what his faculty now calls “the Burroughs Way.” Three key qualities of Mr. Morris’ approach to the principalship help explain how his personal commitment to community school values has rooted itself deeply in the culture and practices of Burroughs as a working school.

*Walking the walk.* In a range of ways, large and small, Mr. Morris consistently models his understanding of school-based community service for his faculty, parents, and partners. While he does not live in the community, residents appreciate that he attends Burroughs community events such as the summer movie night regularly, even bringing his family for the evening. He is consistently present, often in the hallways and classrooms, and noted for his open door to parents. His partners appreciate his “why not” attitude toward their proposals to conduct outreach to parents and students through community school programs. And his faculty admire his willingness to visit students’ homes to connect with parents on a one-to-one basis. As one teacher related: “Last year, I had a set of triplets and they were kind of rambunctious on the one-block walk home. So Mr. Morris heard about what was going on and he said: Well, come on, we will walk over. We walked over to their house and I was just amazed. This would have never happened at my old school. I don’t know if she ever left the office.”

Another incident captures in a nutshell how Mr. Morris personally links his school’s assets to the issues confronting the neighborhood. In summer 2005 a series of gang-related incidents had left residents around Burroughs school rattled and frustrated. A key issue for more active parents in the neighborhood was defusing the fear of other families about reporting incidents to police. A parent volunteer living close to the school called Mr. Morris for help. We interviewed a community member who participated that day. As she described it:

*He came in. I remember it was a summer day. And he brought in the cook to cook for everybody. He was knocking on doors and we were all going with him, a couple of parents, we were knocking on doors and people came out. We all talked about how we were going to get together and call each other whenever there’s a problem because sometimes some people weren’t calling the police. There were a lot of people that came in because we said: ‘The principal is here. He doesn’t have to be here, the school is closed. And he is here and its 100 degrees and he’s got somebody cooking in there for us, so come on in and eat something and we will talk about what’s happening. So people were coming out and they thought it was a really great thing for him to do that.*

Does principal commitment at this level have a measurable impact on neighborhood safety? This is difficult to determine. Census figures for the tract containing Burroughs Elementary suggest that the surrounding neighborhood has a somewhat more favorable income and social capital profile than other sections of Brighton Park. Thus it is possible that families around Burroughs are more prone to vigilance when it comes to neighborhood crime. Yet recent crime statistics also indicate
that Burrough’s immediate neighborhood is consistently safer than those of any other school in Brighton Park. (see Figure 2). Our inquiry makes the case that the school’s commitment to local families has contributed substantively to neighborhood stability and safety.

Instructional leadership. A leading theme in contemporary school reform is to emphasize the role of principals as the instructional leaders of schools (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). While many community school principals possess an inspiring vision of school-community partnership, few marry that vision with equal insight into the requirements of excellent classroom instruction. Our interviews with Burroughs teachers and senior administrators make clear that Mr. Morris, who began his career teaching in one of Chicago’s most stressful neighborhoods, grasps the challenges of classroom teaching first-hand.

As many of his teachers told us, Mr. Morris combines a broad vision of curricular improvement with extensive knowledge of curricular specifics, especially in the core subject areas of reading, mathematics, and science. His office bookshelves are packed with the literature of standards-based curricular reform. Over time he has been able to shape a core set of classroom practices by engaging faculty in rich discussions of classroom teaching, while engaging university partners as a co-equal collaborative partner. Finally, he has used CPS and university partnerships to build an instructional leadership team that supports frequent observation and coaching of teacher practices, especially among new teachers. Thus he brings deep understanding of Burroughs as an instructional setting to his discussions of the link between the school day and OST.

Figure 2. Sample of Reported Incidents of Crime within a 1/8 Mile Radius of Brighton Park Schools (2-week periods in May-July 2007)

Source: Chicago Police Dept. CLEARMAP.

10 The Chicago Police Department’s CLEARMAP website allows for flexible queries about incidents of crime around schools. Our figure selected three two-week periods in spring/summer 2007 for comparison. http://gis.chicagopolice.org/CLEARMap/startPage.htm
activities with his BPNC collaborators.

Political acumen. Principals with the capability to transform school practices typically manage “up and out” of their school buildings. They manage “out” toward relationships with local political and community leaders in ways that win allies for school improvement. And they manage “up” the hierarchy of power within the school system, identifying useful resources, garnering trustworthy partners, and protecting the school when possible from onerous impositions.

With 17 years of experience, Mr. Morris is an experienced hand with both directions of advocacy. He recognizes, for example, that the politics of Chicago’s near southwest side involve power relations within groups of aldermen who influence appropriations beyond the bounds of their immediate wards. He has cultivated relationships in surrounding wards as well as his own, sometimes leveraging connections with families and parents associated with the school. Aldermen in turn are happy to affiliate with a school with such a successful track record and a partnership with Brighton Park Neighborhood Council. On several recent occasions he has made Burroughs Elementary available as a neutral setting for issue dialogue between aldermen and concerned community members.

In a similar way, Mr. Morris’ long-term success in securing resources for school improvement from within the system suggests skill in navigating the contentious waters of recent Chicago school reform. On the one hand the base of trust and affiliation that he has built among faculty, parents, and neighbors has minimized internecine conflicts that sometimes involve CPS central office in the affairs of local schools. Colleagues who know him indicate that he also approaches the system sparingly, engaging specific offices that have resources relevant to his school’s improvement agenda. Among his peers he is known for expressing himself directly but not antagonistically. While approached at different times to take on central administrative positions, he has stayed focused on the role of principal as his career track. Like many of his peers, he was eager to attain AMPS status for his school, which released him from certain demands of Area Instructional Office (AIO) oversight.

A dynamic leadership structure. While one persuasive dimension of Mr. Morris’ leadership style is personal and hands-on, he also understands that a committed and capable team is required to carry off the Burroughs vision. If Burroughs is a culture of community service, it is equally a culture of collaborative accountability. Teacher-leaders at many levels, from grade-level work groups to the assistant principal, are entrusted to convene and run their own meetings, formulate agendas, and communicate group consensus to senior administrators. In this culture of “distributed leadership,” new roles such as after school resource coordinator find a more friendly welcome as colleagues with value to add to student learning and family support.

In turn, Mr. Morris has assembled a senior administrative team that shares his commitment to bridging instructional discipline, enriched learning experiences, and

11 I am indebted to Peter Martinez of the UIC College of Education’s Doctoral Program in Urban Education Leadership for clarifying this important dimension of principal leadership.

12 In this Mr. Morris reflects understanding of the relationship politics that continue to govern everyday business between CPS central departments and neighborhood schools. As recent CPS Chief Administrative Officer David Vitale recently put it: “I found the district to be organized by personality, not by strategy… resources were too often allocated by negotiation, not by policy and not by need. In Catalyst Chicago, “Turning school systems upside down,” Chicago Schools Policy Series, May, 2007.
community partnership. These administrators understand their role as eliciting broad faculty and community involvement and input into the on-going school improvement effort. In 2007 this talented team included a full-time assistant principal with a dual designation as curriculum coordinator. Assignment as curriculum coordinator exempts the assistant principal from a classroom assignment, and frees the AP to participate in activities such as the weekly community school management meeting described earlier. The current AP, Ms. Sanborn, was the first teacher hired by Mr. Morris in 1989, and has become a close collaborator across all issues of school improvement. Her focus on curriculum is supported by an effective implementation of positive behavioral management practices by faculty, and significant investment in counseling and social work positions. The team also includes a principal intern from the University of Illinois at Chicago focused particularly on middle school instruction, with additional responsibilities for grant and proposal writing. For these administrators, collaborative planning with BPNC staff is a natural extension of a leadership structure that underplays formalized roles and “inside/outside” distinctions, and emphasizes the assembly of talent to address student success and family engagement.

A highly developed professional learning community. At many schools, professional development (PD) is still approached as an individual matter, in which each teacher pursues classes, workshops, and conference presentations to meet district PD requirements and advance in the profession. Faculty development often involves whole group instruction by external consultants or school system specialists, typically in “one-off” presentations that do not build a coherent program of teacher learning. Research strongly indicates that this combination of isolated individual PD and fragmented group learning does not support student learning or whole school improvement.13

By contrast, Burroughs’ faculty functions as a community of adult learners that is devoted to understanding as a team how to advance and support the learning of its Brighton Park students. Adult learning and development are viewed as crucial to the achievement of school improvement goals. Daily and weekly learning is embedded in focused consideration of classroom practices and lesson plans among grade-level team members, particularly as they align with Illinois State Standards at the grade level. Professional development occurs primarily “in-house,” involving shared work among classroom teachers and specialist colleagues acquired through affiliation with assets such as the CPS Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster or university partners. External providers of professional development are chosen carefully to complement grade-level learning activities and support directly the accomplishment of school improvement goals.

A Standards-driven focus challenges teacher teams to put aside rote, textbook sequences of instruction in favor of more diversified materials that enrich student learning. Teachers share best practices on a regular basis, collect and examine data to assess progress, and open their classroom practice to the friendly critique of their colleagues and lead teachers. In effect, the conception of teacher autonomy at Burroughs has shifted from “private” classroom practice with little accountability, to a norm of shared, transparent practice among respected and accountable colleagues. In the process, a core

of instructional practices has become normative, and teachers feel both accountable to and ownership of these practices. At the same time, teachers feel supported to propose and explore new practices in a culture that treats “failure” as data for further learning. In these and other respects, the Burroughs faculty exemplifies many of the defining features of a professional learning community (or PLC).14 The result has been consistent improvement in classroom practice over 5 years, and a low turnover rate among the school’s highly qualified staff.

To be sure, the development of a PLC at Burroughs is a work in progress, and teachers vary in their enthusiasm for collaborative action. On the whole, though, the establishment of a culture of adult learning at Burroughs has three implications for the success of community schooling. First, respect for adult learning in the broader context of community service supports greater openness and respect for the educational aspirations of parents and community adults. In our interviews, teachers expressed admiration and support for ESL and GED programs as contributors to the overall climate of academic commitment and seriousness at Burroughs. Teachers also welcomed the inclusion of parent classroom assistants in grade-level meetings, remarking on the value contributed by parents to these discussions.

Second, the habit of team work and team building supports a broader willingness to welcome external collaborators such as BPNC staff to the planning table. While conflict over turf and space surface occasionally at Burroughs, teachers by and large have come to see school space and resources as shared assets through the extended school day. Third, the high standards of practice pursued by faculty affect a broader climate of accountability for the quality of student experiences throughout the extended Burroughs day. While BPNC program managers feel welcome at Burroughs, they also feel challenged to attain a high level of program quality, and to assemble data that illustrate their “value added” to a faculty committed to student success.

Enhanced fiscal and administrative autonomy. Since Fall 2005, Burroughs has been among a group of 110 schools whose strong academic and administrative performance have earned them greater autonomy over their instructional development and budgetary priorities. These Autonomous Management and Performance Schools (or AMPS) are released from a number of CPS central office initiatives that target low performing schools, and instead are encouraged to elaborate the in-house strategies that have yielded academic success and “allows them to reflect the needs of their communities.”15 AMPS status currently bestows four administrative advantages. First, AMPS principals can elect to minimize their involvement in the oversight activities of their assigned Area Instructional Office (AIO), including meetings for principals and school visits by AIO staff. For Mr. Morris, this means more time in his building, in


Second, AMPS schools are granted broader discretion around their school calendars and daily schedules. This has permitted Burroughs to institute an additional hour of instruction without a long central office vetting process, as well as to experiment with various scheduling schemes to increase the engagement of middle school students. Third, AMPS schools may garner extra funds to institute their own professional development and new teacher support programs rather than involve teachers in the system-wide programs such as the CPS GOLDEN Teachers Program. This has provided additional funds to build the Burroughs PLC described earlier.

Finally, and crucially, AMPS administrators enjoy greater latitude to transfer funds between budgetary lines without the approval of an Area Instructional Officer or extensive red tape. For Mr. Morris and his leadership team, this means wider latitude to combine funds from federal funds such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program with internal CPS and Title 1 resources to support parent education programs, academic enrichment in out-of-school time, and more inclusive school improvement planning that includes community partners.

Advocates in the CPS Central Office. Burroughs and its leadership also enjoy an exceptional degree of support from the CPS Central Office, most notably from the Office of Extended Learning Opportunities (OELO). Established in September 2001, the mission of OELO is “...is to ensure that there is a diverse offering of high quality programs available to Chicago Public School students that serve to enrich the development of the whole child outside of the regular school day.”

OELO’s small but committed staff administers the full range of CPS after school programs, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and the Supplementary Educational Supports (SES) tutoring program mandated by No Child Left Behind. Thus the office can be helpful to individual schools and their partners in clarifying how various funding streams can be coordinated to maximize OST opportunities for students. In addition, the CPS officer who directs OELO can advocate for community schools and identify collaborative assets for community schools as a member of the Chief Education Officer’s administrative cabinet. This is made easier by the passion of the current CEO, Mr. Arne Duncan, for the value of after school enrichment and community engagement.

What Brighton Park Neighborhood Council Brings to the Table

Particularly in Chicago, the birthplace of Saul Alinsky, the popular image of community organizing as a struggle for power between disenfranchised neighborhoods and powerful urban elites remains resonant. For today’s community organizers, though, the critical challenge often involves balancing strategic confrontation with the daily practice of connecting local residents across racial and class divides in ways that propel equitable community development. Writer Kristina Smock has identified several features of contemporary community organizing that distinguish its methods from other approaches to urban development. Since 2000 BPNC has been recognized for excellent

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16 See the OELO website: <http://cpsafterschool.org/home.html>

practice in all these dimensions of community organizing. Here we draw upon three features of Smock’s analytic frame to explore what an organization like BPNC can bring to the shared table of community schooling.

**Building local leadership.** Community organizing builds the capacity of local residents to become involved in community change, and provides opportunities to exercise agency and leadership in collaborative action. But as Kristina Smock notes, “…little attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms through which the organizations fulfill this role. (p. 38). Organizations like BPNC do employ a methodology – one associated particularly with Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and the concept of “popular education” - that engages youth and adults in action-oriented reflection and problem-solving.18

Popular education methods take many forms, but they commonly involve cycles of “action/reflection/action” that progress from identifying priority community issues, to gathering and analyzing information, to planning and implementing strategies to effect change. While organizers and educators can help guide this process, their primary role is to broaden the perspective of participants from their most immediate interest – say, making their mortgage payment – to the more “global” context for their problems – say, loss of affordable local housing. Thus the agenda for change establishes and maintains a potent link between the issues facing individual residents and families, and the emerging strategies to address these issues at a community level. Success is measured not only against whether specific objectives are achieved, but also against the extent of resident involvement in leading and implementing the change process.

BPNC’s investment in both the vision and methodology of popular education is evident at three levels of the organization. Several **leadership development groups** focus on building the leadership capability of youth and adults by clarifying individual goals, building specific skills, and introducing opportunities for involvement and responsibility in BPNC issue-focused initiatives. The group “Light and Hope” for women, for example, encourages its members to identify issues that impact them, and develop classes and workshops that address these issues. The group began in 2005 with self-directed discussions on topics from domestic violence to family nutrition, facilitated by a BPNC staffer. This “support group” stage was followed by a more formal leadership course with a facilitator from Mujeres Latinas en Accion, an affiliate of BPNC specializing in domestic violence and related issues for women. Consistent with Popular Education approaches, the group now meets weekly, starting first with a skill-building curriculum, and progressing toward the development of community projects. From a pedagogical standpoint, the goal is to move learning as quickly as possible out of workshops, and embed it in hands-on work that matters to participants.19

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18 “Popular education is a form of adult education that encourages learners to examine their lives critically and take action to change social conditions... Key characteristics of popular education are as follows: everyone teaches and learns, so leadership is shared; starting with learners' experiences and concerns; high participation; creation of new knowledge; critical reflection; connecting the local to the global; and collective action for change…” From: Kerka, S. (1997). “Popular Education: Adult education for social change.” ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education Columbus OH. (ERIC Digest # 185).

19 The Brighton Park Youth Council follows a similar annual process. As an example, it has participated in a two week leadership institute called the “Chicago Freedom School” at a local high school that provides youth with in-depth exposure to community organizing as a discipline, and provides enrichment experiences to its members through the year. But it involves members directly and substantively in Campaigns as well,
Committees take the developing capabilities of BPNC members and focus them on specific issues. At BPNC, committees range from those addressing fairly specific issues like drug and alcohol abuse, to larger groups that oversee the organization’s broadest programs for action in areas like housing and immigration reform. Educational outreach is a key strategy for building committee affiliation. In 2006, for example, a BPNC survey of youth bore out high levels of drug, alcohol and tobacco use among Brighton Park youth. In response the organization convened a committee - Families Against Drugs in Area 58 (or FAD58) - beginning with a core leadership group of parents, youth from the Youth Council, and professional staff. The committee’s inaugural activity was “Kids and Drugs 101,” a workshop to inform and engage parents about the signs of youth substance abuse and their options to respond. Using a “train the trainer” model, the group also prepares affiliate groups to extend “Kids and Drugs 101” to broader audiences within its community network.

Finally, Campaigns mobilize the entire membership of BPNC to accomplish a slate of goals in a priority area of concern, deploying the full arsenal of organizing tools and leadership strategies within the organization. Campaigns advance the longer-term agenda of a BPNC committee, but emphasize accomplishing shorter-term goals within a specified time-table. BPNC’s ongoing Affordable Housing Campaign nicely illustrates the range of educational strategies deployed by the organization to support core goals.20 Inaugurated in 2006, this campaign has addressed three related housing issues associated with gentrification in Brighton Park: controlling property taxes, alternatives to foreclosure, and stemming the loss of affordable housing. This involves a mixed strategy of pressure on local and state politicians, confrontation with predatory lending institutions and absentee landlords, and alliances with state and local government to expedite the review of property assessments, police abandoned buildings, and keep HUD properties well maintained. Educational strategies build community commitment to the campaign through:

- Counseling of individual families on housing issues provided by the full time BPNC Housing Counselor, a professional staff member integral to the Affordability Campaign
- Broad dissemination of an informational booklet offering links to local organizations that support families facing housing foreclosure
- A bi-lingual Homeownership Education Program to educate area residents about home ownership, predatory lending, property tax relief, and other housing issues.

From the perspective of a school like Burroughs with a genuine interest in extending parent and resident engagement, BPNC’s expertise in popular education methods contributes to community schooling in at least two ways. First, by engaging parents around issues of urgent interest, a community school partnership can deepen trust and credibility with engaged parents, and get new parents through the door whose prior school involvement has been minimal. In the Burroughs’ case, the evidence suggests that sponsorship of BPNC workshops in

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20 For a detailed breakout of the goals of the Affordability Campaign, go to http://www.bpnc-chicago.org/ and click on the icon for “housing” at the bottom of the web page.
homeownership, immigration, and “Success in School” has broadened the appeal of the school for its Hispanic parents who increasingly see it as a family support ally and a genuine community center. For Burroughs, this strategy has deepened significantly the pool of invested adult volunteers who can assist in classrooms, conduct after school programs, coach sports teams, monitor neighborhood safety, staff fund raisers, and advocate for the school to CPS officials and community power brokers.

Second, BPNC’s approach to local leadership development invites parents and community residents to identify needs and issues in a school, and build their skills by addressing problems that matter to them. This transition in popular education, from skill development to formulation and implementation of a change program, heightens the motivation of adults to stick with leadership development experiences. Just as important, this process instills in parents and residents the expectation that their training will lead to impact, and a sense of accountability for the quality of their own contributions to a collaborative effort.

Building community governance. If any aspect of the modern community schools movement bears the stamp of community organizing, it is the prominence given to stakeholder participation in planning, governance, and decision-making. This theme of stakeholder governance is particularly strong in the Chicago model of community schooling. As Kristina Smock notes, successful community organizing groups convene and foster shared decision-making for several reasons (Smock, 2003, pp. 97ff). These include the rebuilding of norms around trust and accountability within communities, the gathering of critical information from citizens to inform decision-making, and the forging of public will to move an agenda for community change. The same aims inform the expectation in Chicago that community schools will form oversight or advisory committees, and infuse stakeholder input and feedback into policy development and program priorities. In this regard Chicago’s community schools movement is part of a longer term agenda to spur school improvement “from the outside in,” by increasing community accountability and broadening school improvement efforts to include awareness of whole child development and family support.

Perhaps not surprisingly, and given the complexity of any democratic process, the development of stakeholder participation in Chicago’s community schools varies widely across its 110 schools, both in levels of involvement and the representation of stakeholders. Our own recent analysis of representation in community school advisory committees in Chicago indicates significant variation among schools, particularly in the inclusion of students, parents, and community members (Whalen, 2007). That the Burroughs + BPNC Advisory Committee is a leader in engaging of these stakeholders reflects the commitment of BPNC to adapt its participatory practices to a school setting, as well as the deep knowledge about families and community conditions that the organization can contribute to planning activities.

For example, several features of BPNC expertise help sustain broad-based enthusiasm for collaborative decision-making, where such enthusiasm often lags at other schools. The same educational assets reviewed above that build individual leadership capabilities also generate a pool of parents, youth, and community residents eager to participate in decision-making processes. Popular education processes then empower residents to plan and undertake collaborative action. This helps prevent the Burroughs advisory process from bogging down in tedious operational details. Instead, the advisory committee focused its energies in 2007 on evaluating the quality and success of out-of-school program for adults,
with the aim of producing a public report to inform next steps. A feasible data collection schedule was developed, adapting survey and door-to-door canvassing techniques to poll the views of parents at events like open houses and report card pick up days. The BPNC resource coordinator helped facilitate the process. But parents and residents bear primary responsibility for interpreting results and formulating recommendations. While still in an early stage of development, participatory evaluation plants the seeds of a learning community among parents and residents, one that complements the participatory culture of the faculty.

BPNC staffers also contribute extensive experience in the negotiation and management of collaborative processes. Beyond simply developing leadership capacity, BPNC leaders must be able to identify and negotiate a common agenda for action among empowered residents and its own professional staff. Inevitably this involves moments of conflict. For school leaders with their heart in parent engagement, this remains a potent fear – that in enabling parent leaders, they will inject unmanageable conflict into an already complex matrix of adult goals and interests. By sustaining frequent contact between senior school staff, the school-based resource coordinator, and key BPNC staff with expertise in parent and resident collaboration, BPNC helps build school confidence that empowered parents can find common cause with school staff. For example, in addition to the joint executive planning meetings discussed earlier, the BPNC Education Organizer often briefs the principal on campaign progress, and connects with the oversight committee for the same purpose. By committing senior BPNC staff such as the Education Organizer to meet with the principal and attend community school meetings, BPNC builds parent confidence that their views and opinions will find substantive voice in the community school agenda.

**Building constituent networks.** Community organizations spend considerable energy on deepening the bonds of trust and mutual interest among residents in communities, through youth and adult activities such as those offered by Burroughs Elementary. And they bridge from their interests to those of other organizations in ways that deepen resources and collective resolve for action. Over its 10 year history BPNC has built a wide network of contacts and associations with human service, political, and governmental organizations, along with a solid reputation as a capable and reliable partner.

At least three distinct types of organizational alliance support BPNC initiatives and campaigns. The first type involves local and regional human service organizations that partner with BPNC to develop educational and counseling programs. Some recent examples of fruitful collaborations include:

- **SGA Youth and Family Services**, one of the city’s best regarded counseling and social service agencies, which provided support and expertise to the development of its Families against Drugs in Area 58 Committee and its drug education program, “Kids and Drugs 101.”

- **Mujeres Latinas en Accion**, a Chicago comprehensive service organization devoted to Latina empowerment, which facilitated leadership training with BPNC’s new support group, Light and Hope.

- **Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health** (ICAH), focusing on health and sexuality issues, which collaborated with the BPNC Youth Council to administer and report a survey of attitudes toward sex education and sexual health among students at

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Brighton Park’s Kelly High School.

A second type of connection allies BPNC and its members to organizations and coalitions outside of Brighton Park, in order to reach broader audiences and impact city, county, state, and federal policies. The alliance with ICAH just mentioned, for example, is part of a broader campaign joining the two organizations that has campaigned successfully to change CPS district policies regarding sex education at the high school level. BPNC and ICAH also are among 6 Chicago organizations supporting FUFA, or Females United for Action. FUFA is devoted particularly to addressing how girls and women are portrayed in the Chicago media. In 2006, BPNC Youth Council members took a leading role in a FUFA campaign to confront misogynist imagery in the ad campaign of an influential Hispanic radio station in Chicago. Finally, BPNC regularly identifies common interests with city, county, and state agencies and officials to address legislation in core areas of concern such as housing and immigration. As part of its Affordable Housing Campaign, for example, BPNC collaborated with government advocates for property tax caps at the county and state levels, developing informational workshops with the Cook County Assessors Office, and lobbying with the State Assessors Office for a renewal of tax cap legislation.

A third and critical type of connection involves relationships with Chicago foundations and funders. BPNC has cultivated close relationships with several Chicago foundations, receiving recognition and financial support in the areas of community organizing and community education.

Funding has included support for general operating expenses as well as specific funded projects. In 2004, BPNC was among a select group of Chicago’s community based organizations to receive funds for community school activities, and specifically for its partnership with Burroughs Elementary, from a consortium of funders comprising the Chicago Campaign to Expand Community Schools. In 2006, BPNC was among two community organizing groups to receive the prestigious Chicago Community Organizing Award, funded by the Chicago Community Trust and an alliance of leading Chicago foundations.

BPNC’s partnership with Burroughs Elementary illustrates two advantages for a community school that derive from association with a network this diverse. First, of course, is access to supplemental funding. While financing a broad community agenda always poses fiscal challenges for BPNC, the organization’s success in developing support for general operations as well as specific initiatives means that it can draw less heavily from funds earmarked for community school purposes in order to fulfill its partnership obligations. In the case of Burroughs, this has freed 21st Century Community Learning Center funds for use in supporting the school’s ambitious extended hour of enriched academic learning, as well as enabling activities with youth and adults that fall outside the 21st Century grant guidelines. BPNC’s credibility among Chicago funders should provide Burroughs with enviable options for sustaining its mission to neighborhood youth and residents.

Second, and equally important, is access to the social and political capital as well as expertise in community-based services stored within the learning Center program); Fry Foundation; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Girls Best Friend Foundation; Kaplan Family Foundation; Polk Bros. Foundation; Prince Charitable Trust; Wieboldt Foundation; Woods Funds of Chicago.
network, with the commitment of the lead partner agency to help leverage those relationships to the school’s advantage. In the case of Burroughs Elementary, association with BPNC has helped reinforce previously established relationships with neighborhood leaders and local politicians in ways that are helpful in advocating the school’s interests. Another example is the triangulation of interests between the school, BPNC, and SGA Youth and Family Services. As a successful grant writer and quality service provider, SGA has been a valued Burroughs partner in its own right, underwriting most recently a full time social worker position in the middle school grades. But the working relationship between SGA and BPNC is a key asset in the school’s vision of a family mental health clinic at the heart of its work as a community center. If a working clinic is realized, it will combine SGA’s social service expertise with BPNC’s credibility with neighborhood parents as a trustworthy partner in family support, and combine the fund-raising capability of these school partners in tandem.

Moving Forward, On-Going Challenges

Our aim in this study has been to profile what is possible when a community-oriented neighborhood school aligns its interests with a community-based organization with high local credibility and a collaborative staff structure. Even without a community-based partner, the assets discussed above would position Burroughs Elementary to be an effective instructional setting and a welcoming place for parents and residents. Partnership with the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council has amplified the ambition and scope of the Burroughs Community School, especially in the areas of parent involvement and family support. As a result, the Burroughs + BPNC partnership now sees itself as a distinct, cohesive, and comprehensive community school model, ready for replication in other areas of the city. At this writing, the leaders of this partnership await word on whether their proposal to start a new school based on their emerging model will be authorized as part of the Chicago Public Schools’ Renaissance 2010 Initiative.

While alignment of interest is a striking feature of this partnership, school and CBO remain distinct institutions, each with unique interests and challenges. For BPNC, one area of challenge involves sustaining the necessary internal capacity to collaborate with schools with the intensity evident in its work with Burroughs. In general, contemporary CBO’s like BPNC struggle to assemble sufficient staff expertise and capacity to carry forward complex organizing campaigns. For BPNC staff, effective school collaboration involves frequent and consistent consultation with school leaders and the school resource coordinator, spliced into weekly schedules that also must accommodate door-to-door canvassing, community meetings, adult education classes, and lobbying activities. For this reason, BPNC currently has no immediate ambition to expand its community school commitments in Brighton Park beyond Burroughs and the local high school, with the exception of involvement with the proposed school to extend the Burroughs model.

BPNC also contends with unexpected tension between its community organizing agenda and its role as a school-based program manager. For BPNC, developing broad community volunteerism is both intrinsically valuable, and a critical dimension of organizational capacity. In pursuing school partnerships, the organization certainly hoped to develop schools as venues for recruiting youth and parents into organizing activities. But so far this goal has been slow to materialize. While parents at Burroughs appreciate workshops in academic support, housing, or citizenship, they tend to remain focused on involvement in school-level activities and advocacy for school issues, and are not drawn easily into broader community organizing. While school
partnership yields many other benefits to BPNC, particularly in terms of community credibility, a tenuous link between school work and campaign organizing could tend to marginalize school organizing as a priority, especially when staff is stretched thin.

Youth organizing also can be complicated by school-based program commitments. In an organization dependent on committed youth volunteers, attractive program options can inadvertently compete with youth leadership activities. At Kelly High School, for example, conflicts emerged for some Youth Council members in 2006 when BPNC collaborated with the school to stage its first musical theatre production in several years, *Little Shop of Horrors*. The success of the production was an early “win” for the new Kelly partnership, a tangible preview of a more community-friendly Kelly campus. But the challenge remains to coordinate these opportunities with Youth Council activities to avoid undercutting BPNC’s youth organizing capabilities. High schools also are even more sensitive than Elementary settings when it comes to parent organizing, or broaching sensitive issues such as sex education or Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual rights. While these issues are an important focus of BPNC youth organizing, BPNC staff are aware that significant trust must be built with their high school partners before popular education around these issues can become a significant dimension of high school-based organizing.

Looking forward, Burroughs Elementary also is likely to face challenges, even as it seeks to apply its model to a new school. In terms of resources, the school has made savvy use of a mix of federal grant dollars and local philanthropic support, combined with the selection of core not-for-profit partners with strong grant development capabilities. But funds from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center program will last only one more year, creating an urgent need to develop alternative sources of support for Burroughs’ extended day and after school programs. This is not a new challenge for a principal and staff who have mined funding opportunities resourcefully. But it will engage valuable staff and partner time in the consuming work of grant identification and development.

Continuity of leadership has also been a significant asset to the Burroughs + BPNC partnership. While long term principalships sometimes breed stagnation, the sustained tenure of key administrative team members at Burroughs has built deep credibility among parents and community residents, and authorized unusual levels of trust and initiative within the faculty. Our review certainly suggests that Burroughs’ faculty and staff genuinely buy into the principal’s vision of the “common sense” of community partnership, and would try to carry it forward in his absence. It is also clear that if principal succession became an issue, the standards set by the current principal around community engagement would weigh heavily in the selection of a successor. This said, the degree and focus of community engagement in Chicago public schools remains largely a matter of principal discretion, while the tendency of teachers to view community concerns as “outside” the core concerns of educators remains deceptively strong. The continuity of community engagement at Burroughs inevitably will depend upon the capability of school partners like BPNC to organize parents and community residents in ways that remain aligned with the faculty’s commitment to instructional excellence.

Finally, a stiff test of the resilience of the emerging Burroughs + BPNC model of community schooling could come if the proposal to commission “Burroughs II” is accepted and implemented. There is no guarantee, for example, that the new school will be assigned a location within the Brighton Park area. This raises the question of whether BPNC, working outside Brighton Park, will
have the credibility or local knowledge necessary to attract parents and residents to community school activities, while avoiding potentially destructive competitive dynamics with established local organizations. Neither is there any guarantee that Burroughs’ deep experience with a predominately Hispanic population will be relevant to the population in the assigned community. The establishment of relational trust within an African-American milieu, for example, is likely to involve new learning and subtle adjustments to a parent engagement model with roots in a Mexican immigrant experience. There is cause for optimism that in confronting these and other challenges, the staff of “Burroughs II” can draw upon a model of community schooling that powerfully reframes how educators, parents, and community members understand the school as a center of community.

References


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A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this case study. During spring 2007 a team of UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators including the principal, assistant and intern principals, the school resource coordinator, and the associate directors of BPNC. Six group interviews were conducted with teachers, parents, and students in separate groups. These were combined with interviews from two prior years of study, transcribed, and analyzed for the themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and BPNC were collected and analyzed, most notably the 2006 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA), out-of-school time program schedules, and web-based documents from the school, BPNC, and other school partners. Community census data were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC). School achievement trend data were derived from the University of Northern Illinois’ Interactive Illinois Report Card website. Community safety information was derived from the Chicago Police Department’s CLEARMAP system.
“Good schools depend on strong communities, and strong communities require good schools.”1 This straightforward equation is supported by educational research and practice that show that the connection between a focus on student achievement and building partnerships that link the school, family and community is strong. Yet the path to creating community schools can be formidable. Most educators have little background in the dynamics of school neighborhoods. Community agency and organization leaders are often not familiar with the culture and characteristics of schools and school systems. Years of categorical funding and earmarked private grants make the sharing of financial and human resources difficult. And school district leaders too frequently seek narrow solutions to complex problems, avoiding more comprehensive strategies as unwieldy or costly.2

Such has not been the case in Chicago. The Community Schools Initiative (CSI) of the Chicago Public Schools is grounded in a vision articulated by CPS Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan. “We see our schools as the anchor of the community. The Community Schools Initiative is one way to improve student achievement, increase parental involvement and create opportunities for the community to support our schools.”3

High hopes were held that the initiative would result in the reduction of typical concerns such as high student mobility rates, poor student attendance, and frequent truancy – issues that impact student progress. “Schools as Centers of Community and Partnership with Families” is one of the eight major goals the CPS Education Plan positioning that strategy as central to achieving the system’s overall goals. Deepening the concept further, the city sought to transform public schools into hubs of learning, services and enrichment for students, parents, and the entire community. The school system is taking on the challenge of full embodiment of the community schools model – a culture of full partnership with families and communities to address the needs of the whole child – and a goal to expand this approach to every school in the district by 2012.

3 See website for Chicago Public Schools; www.cps.k12.il.us; Press Release, September 19, 2002.
Community schools may be particularly suited to addressing the educational challenges facing Chicago’s growing and diversifying Latino community. As a recent report of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs points out, Chicago’s expanding Latino and predominately Mexican immigrant population – 1.6 million people across the region - is not simply a demographic reality, but rather an emerging asset to a city with global ambitions (Ponce de Leon, 2006). But to realize that potential, Chicago schools and communities must come to terms with several daunting obstacles. Schools in Chicago’s Latino communities face dual challenges of overcrowding and limited English proficiency as funding for capital improvements as well as curricular development remains tight. Economic pressures as well as cultural and language barriers complicate the imperative to partner with parents and bolster family resources. While Latino parents respect teachers and value education, parents often face barriers to helping their children succeed in school. And in the neighborhoods surrounding schools, gang influence, economic pressures, and limited access to basic services such as health care all contribute to acute high school dropout levels and incarceration rates (Skogan et al., 2002; Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

While this matrix of obstacles is formidable, community schools in Chicago’s Latino communities are working strategically with community-based partners to change the equation for school success. In this profile we highlight what can be accomplished when a school collaborates with a capable arts enrichment organization and other community stakeholders to engage the talents and address the needs of Latino students and parents. Like many schools in underserved Latino neighborhoods, Chicago’s Chavez Elementary has been a center of community in Chicago’s Back of the Yards section since 1993, providing a focus of pride, resistance, and ownership. Embracing a community school design in 2004, Chavez has expanded developmental supports for students and parents, and created conditions for academic progress. Sustaining progress has required a commitment to bridging three distinct organizational cultures, and investment in key positions that facilitate communication and collaboration.

**The Chavez Neighborhood Setting**

Chicago’s Back of the Yards neighborhood is located in the community area of New City, which stretches north from 39th Street to 55th Street, and is bounded on the east by Halsted Street, and on the west by the railroad tracks along Leavitt Street. Back of the Yards is slightly south and west of the former Union Stock Yard (from which the neighborhood derives its name), which was, in the mid-20th century, the nation’s largest livestock yard and meatpacking center. Established in 1865, the Union Stock Yard grew considerably as a result of both the concentration of railroad infrastructure and the development of the refrigerated box car. The increased need for labor in the industry attracted newly arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe - largely Poles, Lithuanians, Slovaks, and Czechs. It was the conditions under which these immigrants lived and worked that prompted Upton Sinclair to immortalize Back of the Yards in his novel, *The Jungle* (1906). As early as World War I, the community began to be home to Mexican immigrants, but the neighborhood remained predominantly Slavic until the 1970s. Thereafter, the
numbers of Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants began to grow.\(^4\)

The surrounding New City community is a major port of entry for many immigrants to Chicago, most of them coming from Mexico. While New City's overall population declined somewhat between 1990 and 2000 (2.8%), there's been a significant demographic shift in that timeframe, suggestive of tension between gentrification and immigrant influx across this section of the city: numbers of white non-Latino and African American citizens have declined (55% and 16%, respectively), as the Latino population has increased by 24%. As a result, Latinos now form roughly half of the community (50.2%), the majority of that segment being from Mexico or of Mexican descent (90.4%). One of the results of the influx of Latino residents can be seen in the percentage of households which speak a language other than English (48.6%). 94% of these households speak Spanish, that number increasing by 19% in the years 1990-2000.

The immediate neighborhood surrounding Chavez is an intensified reflection of the challenges facing Mexican families living in the Back of the Yards area, and a study in contrasts with the larger New City section as a whole. Attachment Table A (p. 22), found at the end of this profile, provides a selective statistical comparison of the New City area and the census tract immediately surrounding Chavez MAC. In comparison with the larger New City community area, the neighborhood immediately surrounding Chavez has seen precipitous change across the 1990's and into the present decade. To be sure, the larger New City area continues to be a major port of entry for many immigrants, with a 39% increase among the foreign-born, but this trend is even more pronounced in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, which has seen a 59% increase in its immigrant population. An important aspect of this can be found in the fact that Back of the Yards has witnessed a significant increase in the number of children in the neighborhood, relative to the numbers of adults (22%). As a result, residents between the ages of 0-19 now comprise over 42% of the area's population.

This rise in the number of children in Back of the Yards takes on added significance when taking into account the complicating factor of poverty. The number of families living below poverty level is a significant concern in both New City (over 30%) and Back of the Yards (nearly 41%), but there's a crucial difference when one examines the respective directions in which these two communities are trending: in the years between 1990 and 2000, the number of families living in poverty in New City has declined (-8%), while the corresponding number in Back of the Yards has increased dramatically (49%). Families with young children are hit especially hard, as nearly 60% of Back of the Yards families with children under the age of five are living in poverty - an increase of over 1200% during the decade of the '90s. Median household income among New City residents has grown notably (28%), while the numbers among residents in Back of the Yards has dropped (-12.6%). Between 1990 and 2000, the number of unemployed in New City has declined (-29%), while that number has increased by 11.7% in Back of the Yards. While the number of those without high school

diplomas has decreased overall during the '90s in the New City area (-6%), that number has seen a stark rise (25%) in Back of the Yards.

Other conditions challenge the cohesion and well-being of residents in both Back of the Yards and New City. At a time when the number of homicides, particularly those involving children and teenagers, is on the rise, overall patterns of crime plague New City. Violent crime proves especially vexing as New City sees among the highest number of incidents in the city (244 incidents within a 90 day timeframe, ranking New City 12th among 77 community areas in Chicago). Further examination by types of violent crime indicates that New City ranked 13th in public violence (57 incidents), 12th in simple assault (123 incidents), 11th in simple battery (377 incidents), 8th in aggravated assault (56 incidents), 7th in aggravated battery (98 incidents), 2nd in criminal sexual assault (17 incidents), and 11th in homicide [first or second degree] (3 incidents).

New City also lacks any hospital, hospital affiliated health centers, or publicly operated health centers, relying instead on one community-based health center and two free clinics. This is, however, a community with significant needs for better access to medical care and hospital facilities, as can be seen in the increased rates at which specific health issues affect New City residents, relative to those in the rest of the city. Take, for example, infant mortality rates in New City. In the years 1993-2003, this figure has decreased dramatically (-52.2%), a welcome figure. However, in spite of this positive trend, the infant mortality rate in 2003 in New City (11.1%) remained 15% higher than that of the rest of Chicago - and 63% higher than the national average (6.8%). While there's been a significant reduction in teen births among New City women during the years 1993-2003 (27.1%), the rate at which they occur (18%) remains 33% higher than that rate in the rest of Chicago. These, and other obstetric and pediatric related medical issues, bear even greater significance when one considers that over 27.3% of women who gave birth in New City in 2003 received no prenatal care, a rate 29% higher than that of the rest of the city (1.7%).

Public health concerns for New City residents can also be seen in the disparate rates as the leading causes of death in the community, relative to those in the surrounding city. The rate at which New City residents die from cerebro-vascular diseases (stroke) is 17% higher than that of the rest of the city; the rate at which they die from diabetes is 36% higher; the rate at which they die from trauma related to accidents is 51% higher; and the rate at which they die from septicemia is 60.7% higher than that of the rest of the city. All of these issues come into sharper focus when one considers that, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health, residents of New City run a high risk of not having a health coverage plan.

Cesar Chavez Multicultural Academic Center (MAC)

Chavez Multicultural Academic Center (MAC), named for Cesar Chavez, civil rights activist and cofounder of the national Farm Workers Association, is a public elementary school located at 4747 S. Marshfield in the heart of the Back of the Yards neighborhood on Chicago’s

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5 http://chicago.everyblock.com/crime/locations/neighborhoods/back-of-the-yards/

6 See: http://www.cchsd.org/pdfs/Ca61.pdf
south side. The school serves nearly 1,000 students and their families in prekindergarten through eighth grades. The student body, like much of the surrounding community, is largely Latino (89%) and, reflective of that community, most of those students are Mexican-American. The balance of the school's student body includes smaller numbers of African-American and white students, as well as students of mixed race. Almost half (44.6%) of the students receive bilingual support and 10% receive special education services. Virtually all students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program (99%).

The design of the main Chavez facility attracted considerable attention at its opening in the mid-1990's. The thin building plan, required to maximize the small building site, resulted in a higher percentage of exterior wall and consequent higher potential cost than conventionally shaped buildings. This dilemma prompted innovative use of materials and ingenious redesign on the part of the builders. The resulting pyramids, earth tones, and bright colors provided a festive design for the new school, a beacon of light in the somewhat lackluster surroundings of the Back-of-the-Yards landscape.7 Despite the restrictive space, the savvy designers created a user friendly building that includes classrooms, gym, display room, cafeteria, computer lab, science lab, and a parking lot. The building was conceived with an eye toward flexible use and community engagement. Despite the edgy design, rapid influx of new families with school-age children caused the Chavez facility to shortly become obsolete in terms of student capacity.

Chavez MAC is actually a campus comprised of two facilities. Grades Pre-kindergarten through fourth are housed in the state-of-the-art school opened in 1993. The Upper Grade Center, which includes the fifth through eighth grades, is housed in the leased school building of the St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, the parish that serves the Chavez neighborhood. St. Joseph’s school building was constructed in 1903. Together the new and old buildings form an extended campus covering more than four square blocks, and provide safe passage for many Chavez students as they move through the neighborhood.

History of Community Schooling at Chavez Elementary

Community schooling at Chavez did not begin with the CSI partnership. From its inception, the school's administration aimed at a shared decision-making process relative to educational program planning and stronger communication between school and community, seeking funds and garnering countless external resources along the way. An early example of the founding principal Sandra Traback’s creative responsiveness to student needs revolves around a district-wide flurry in 1996 regarding bilingual education and the success of the three-year transition process. “You can live in this community and never have to learn English to survive,” Ms. Traback observed in a 2005 Catalyst interview.8

To advance their LEP students, the bilingual program was revamped with a $1.3 million grant. Curriculum was redesigned in collaboration with DePaul

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University, teachers were retrained, computers, projectors, and books were purchased, seventeen teachers were partially supported to obtain a master’s degree in bilingual education, and a dual language program for primary grades was begun. Subsequently, the principal made a practice of taking several parents annually to the National Association of Bilingual Education Conference as a means of educating and empowering them. Now, after three years in a bilingual program, English Language Learners (ELLs) are held to the same standards as native English speakers.

What may be termed “full throttle” community involvement was born out of rising violence in the community primarily perpetrated by youth gangs. This was an issue that aroused the common concern of the schools, businesses, community-based organizations, churches and the community at large. Discussions about ways to improve the lives of approximately 5,000 children residing in a 10 x 10 block neighborhood were spearheaded by the principals of Chavez and Seward Schools and the pastor of St. Joseph Parish. Soon others with an investment in the community joined the discussions. As Chavez Principal Traback told Catalyst in 2005, “If we don’t change what’s happening outside the schools, we’ll never be able to change what’s happening in the schools.”

What evolved from these 1997 talks was the Peace and Education Coalition of the Back of the Yards/New City. The mission of the coalition is, “to foster relationships between local community stakeholders. The Coalition members work to create a united vision to help neighborhood children, especially those trapped in a cycle of poverty and violence. The Coalition serves at-risk and high-risk youth by providing peace and education in the Back of the Yards, New City community. We strive to guide our children with hope, a future and opportunities to reach their potential.”

Among the initial strategies for positive change were:

- Creating two alternative high schools, housed at Chavez and Seward respectively, for school dropouts – the profile of most of the youth committing crimes.
- Promoting increased participation in the Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) by moving meetings to St. Joseph School where area residents felt more comfortable.
- Pressing the Housing Services to buy, rehabilitate, and sell vacant buildings often used for crime and drug activity.
- Referring students with chronic behavior problems to Youth Outreach where therapy focuses on the entire family.
- Assisting families to create a supportive and healthy home environment.
- Creating a Youth Summit and sponsoring cross-school basketball games to enable students to get to know one another.

While violence has not disappeared, coalition members cite demonstrable improvements. The Coalition is currently made up of public schools, churches, parks, businesses, law enforcement, elected officials, and not-for profit organizations. The Peace and Education Coalition maintains its deep passion for

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Back of the Yards families and continues to meet on a monthly basis at Chavez School.

**Clear Academic Progress**

Chavez MAC’s recent accomplishments are impressive in light of the challenges facing families in the immediate neighborhood. Trends over six years indicate increases in the number of Chavez students who meet or exceed the grade level benchmarks in reading and math. As figure 1 attests, the overall progress the school has made between the years 2002-2007 is both clear and notable, as the number of students meeting Illinois grade level standards has improved by 96%. The average score between 2003 and 2005 school year was 45.97% meets or exceeds. In 2006, the ISAT score was 62.5% meets or exceeds, a 16.53% increase in students

![Figure 1. Percent of Students Meeting Illinois Grade Level Standards (ISAT). Chavez MAC, CPS, and All Illinois Schools](source: Interactive Illinois Report Card, Northern Illinois University)

While progress at a specific, fixed grade level generally sees incremental, if sometimes uneven, gains from year to year, dramatic gains can be seen when one fixes on a specific cohort and charts its progress over the years. For example, while 15% of third-graders met or exceeded standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in 2002, 36% of these students met or exceeded standards as fifth-graders in 2004. Even more dramatically, 80% of these students met or exceeded state standards as eighth-graders in 2007.

Improvement in mathematics was no less impressive among these same students over those same years. As third-graders in 2002, 26 % met or exceeded standards, but the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards as fifth-graders in 2004 more than doubled (55%). As eighth-graders in 2007, 85% of those students met or exceeded state standards.

School on the Illinois Honor Roll for an increase of 8.5% on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) which brought the school to 46.2% of the students meeting or exceeding state standards.

One reason for these gains may be due to the fact that Chavez has established a positive school climate that clearly supports overall academic progress. Results of the 2007 Student Connections Survey indicate that almost 74% of surveyed students feel that their classes are challenging and engaging. Chavez students are more likely to see their school as a safe and civil setting for learning when compared with nearby schools. As can be seen, extracurricular participation stands out as the most positive of all topics surveyed. With the close exception of adult support, results are more positive than the CPS system as a whole.

Over the recent five-year period, the attendance rate at Chavez has ranged between 94.9% (2007) and 95.8% (2005, 2006), consistently higher than the corresponding rate for the district. In 2003-2007, the attendance rate at Chavez is 3.74% higher than that of the district. The low rate of truancy at Chavez is another indicator that the school has established itself as a place where children want to be. While the truancy rate for the district from 2003-2007 has averaged 3.64%, that rate at Chavez has never gone above 1.1% (2004), and there were no incidents of truancy during 2007. The mobility rate has, historically, been higher than that of the district, although comparable to neighboring schools. As recently as 2003, the mobility rate at Chavez (39.3%) was 60% higher than the district's. However, each year since then has seen a significant drop in that rate to the point that Chavez's rate was lower than the district's in both 2006 and 2007.

To be sure, Chavez continues to face significant obstacles in advancing the academic success of its student body. Among the population of students with disabilities - many, if not most, of which have one or more learning disability - 22.5% met or exceeded the state reading standard in 2007, while 35.7% of those students met the state math standard. As a result, Chavez did not meet its Adequate Yearly Progress as assessed by the criteria of No Child Left behind. And while students with Limited English Proficiency met the state standards for both Reading and Math and, therefore, making Adequate Yearly Progress, student scores indicate that there is room for improvement (55.2% met the standard in Reading, while 69.3% met the standard in Math).

A Premier Lead Partner Agency (LPA)

A signature feature of Chicago’s community school design is a close partnership with a lead not-for-profit
engages students in a rigorous study of art within a sequential, curricular framework, offering students the opportunity to examine social and historical contexts of artistic objects and performances, and then build on this knowledge by developing the skills of analysis and evaluation. Students not only gain the opportunity to create their own art, but to reflect on that process of creation.

Urban Gateways has a long history of association with Chicago Public Schools extending more than twenty-five years. Recognizing Urban Gateways’ potential to make the arts an integral part of the learning process, UG was listed as a program option under the Education and Consolidation Improvement Act (ECIA) Chapter I menu in the early 1980s. This was a great impetus for the Chicago-based Urban Gateways and boon to CPS as well, since schools classified as impoverished could now use federal discretionary dollars to bring the arts to their students at a new level. With the creative and professional expertise of more than 40 teaching artists and 140 performing artists, Urban Gateways is able to provide up to five artists per school, and provides individualized programming for over seventy-five of Chicago's public schools. Urban Gateways offers a combination of programs designed to involve stakeholders at every level in the community-school partnership.

Through its Artist in Residence program, Urban Gateways provides teaching artists who engage students in a rigorous academic framework which is aligned with


13 Urban Gateways Arts for Learning Program. Chapter 1 ECIA Select…, http://eric.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/reordDetails/det...
the Illinois Learning Standards for Fine Arts. The residence program also trains classroom teachers in ways of making meaningful connections between the arts, social science, and language arts in order to enhance curriculum. Through its After-School and Community Programs, Urban Gateways works with students to create arts-based projects which supplement students’ in-school learning, thereby reinforcing, and building upon, fundamental concepts taught during the traditional school day. It is the intent of Urban Gateways that their programs “create shared and lasting experiences that connect participants to their cultures, to each other, and to their own creative potential. Most importantly, their imaginations are ignited, instilling in them a love of learning and discovery that anything is possible.” Based on its innovative concept, Urban Gateways received the 1995 President’s National Medal of Art. Based on its capacity to work with multiple schools, UG has also emerged among a small group of community-based organizations capable of administering several schools at once in the role of Lead Partner Agency.

Chavez MAC has an especially strong partnership with Urban Gateways. Through the establishment of this partnership, Chavez has made academic achievement through a focus on the arts the forefront of its Community School program. Central to academic achievement is community involvement, and Urban Gateways, as a lead partner, works in collaboration with Chavez administrators, parent groups, community members, and the student body to develop programs and services that address quality education, youth development, family support, family and community engagement, and community development. This involves after-school and weekend programming, incorporating artists-in-residence, academic enrichment, adult continuing education, and health and wellness workshops.

Through professional development seminars, Urban Gateways provides on-site, hands-on professional development workshops which emphasize the art making process, as well as an integration of the visual and performing arts into daily classroom teaching strategies. During these seminars, participants receive practical, standards-based instruction that provides theoretical approaches, skill and technique building, and performance development. Through parent workshops, Urban Gateways provides strategies to incorporate the arts in home environments for parents and community members, thereby cultivating the involvement of this key group in the academic and aesthetic development of students. All of this is part of the goal of Community Schools to not only increase the academic achievement of Chavez students, but to transform the school into a place of lifelong learning.

Urban Gateways was a logical choice as the LPA for Chavez School. Building upon nearly 10 years of collaboration, Urban Gateways and Chavez MAC share the goals of establishing a healthy community and using the arts to bring that about. From an instructional standpoint, the arts represent one of the three major strands in the school’s curriculum design (Literacy – Arts – Technology). Research documents the influence that integration of the arts has in producing positive educational outcomes. In the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the arts share equal billing with reading, math, science, and other

14 At this writing UG’s website lists LPA partnerships with 11 Chicago Public Schools. See: http://www.urbangateways.org/special.html.
disciplines as “core academic subjects” which can contribute to improved student learning. Studies have indicated that participation in the arts is a particularly important strategy for engaging and motivating at-risk students and that the arts promote a positive school environment.15

Urban Gateways collaborated with Chavez in writing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for 21st Century funding.

Urban Gateways demonstrated flexibility in providing programs outside the traditional school timeframe and in designing modules that invited ongoing participation from students. While working with CPS schools was nothing new to UG, confidence operating in a mode of community outreach consonant with the LPA role was not as secure. Thus, the partnership was mutually beneficial enabling Chavez to expand what had been working and also actualize plans previously only on paper and propelling Urban Gateways into developing proficiency in less-charted territories such parent and community involvement. Both agree that the partnership has been a “good fit.”

**Chavez as a Vital Community Center**

Chavez M.A.C. has had a clear vision of extending learning beyond the school and into the community. A community school is viewed as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, services, supports, and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.16 Chavez actualizes its “Whole Family – Whole Child – Whole School” agenda through a broad menu of student programs, parental involvement strategies, and a coalition of business and medical services and local connections that make Chavez a hub in the community. Programs and services offered indicate need priorities based on community input. Beginning with simple availability, the school is generally open from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM17 and later for its many special events.

The range of initiatives, options, and connections is comprehensive and extensive. Academic and enrichment programs are evaluated annually. Some are offered on a rotating or temporary basis. The list includes but is not limited to:

**Regular Day Academic Supports.** Partnership READ (UIC), Erikson Institute, Museum of Science and Industry, Activity Fridays, Magnet Cluster, Buddy Reading, Reading Fair, Battle of the Books, Poetry Fair, Authors’ Visits, Academic Olympics, Science Fair, History Fair, Literature Circles, Chavez Pulitzer Prize Ceremony, Boeing & Loyola University Science Conference.

**Extended Day Academic Supports**, including the Homework Center, Tutoring, Info Tech Club, Computers, Extended Reading and Math Instruction, Accelerated Reading, and Field Trips.

**Arts Enrichment opportunities**, including those provided through Kamakazi Theatre, Joffrey Dance, Art Through

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17 Chavez is on an early schedule with the regular school day beginning at 7:30 and ending at 1:45. Extended day programs begin at 2:00 PM and generally extend to 6:00 or 6:30 PM.
Literacy, Visual Arts, Storytelling, Ballet Folklorico, Ballroom Dance, Hip-Hop Program, Chorus, Percussion, Act Out I & II.

*Clubs* for academic and social enrichment, including Girls Club, Boys Club, Media/Writing Club, Chess Club, Book Club, Garden Club, Web Page Design Club, Adventure Club, and Store Management.

*Numerous Sports and Recreation Options*, including Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Volleyball, Yoga, Open Gym, Kids College, Alivio y Saludo, 5K Run, Special Olympics;

*Leadership and Youth Development Options*, including the Youth Summit and Young Women’s Mentorship program.

*Health and Wellness Services*, including Access Community Health, UIC Health Clinic, Kids Care State Vision and Dental Program, Holy Cross Hospital, Pearl Vision, Asthma Van (UIC).

*Parent Involvement Opportunities*, including Parent Patrol, Parent Volunteers; Training such as English as a Second Language (ESL), Computer classes, workshops on education, health, insurance, public assistance.

*Family Support Services*, including Greater Chicago Food Depository, Food Stamps, Nourish for Knowledge, Neighborhood Housing Organization.

*Attractive and Informative Special Events*, including school assembly programs built on presentations from external organizations, Movie Night, Game Night, Reading Night, Math Night, Science Night, and the Community Arts Street Festival.

*Key Partnerships with Community Organizations and Local Government*, including the members of the Peace and Education Coalition, Illinois Latino Caucus, McDonald’s, Wal-Mart, San Miguel, Catholic Charities, City Aldermen, CAPS-Police, Park Federal Bank, St. Joseph Parish, Holy Cross Parish, and several local businesses, many along the busy 47th Street corridor.

A number of enrichment programs have enlarged the circumference of exposure for students. Examples include a performance opportunity for the Joffrey Dance Club at Millennium Park, citywide competitions for the Chess Club, and inter-school sports games. The astute approach of exhibiting and honoring student outcomes in various family-inclusive celebration events has the dual effect of demonstrating high expectations for students, enacted in a festival format that is reassuring and attractive for local parents and residents. Events like the annual Family Games Night and the Community Arts Street Festival have become local traditions and communicate the commitment of Chavez MAC to quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood.

Resource coordination and collaborative expertise are the core capacities necessary to any successful community school, especially one implementing the Chicago model (Whalen, 2007). None of Chavez MAC’s ambitious record of after school enrichment and community partnership would have been possible without the school’s investment in exceptionally capable resource coordinators. While most Chicago community schools employ one full-time resource coordinator who is employed by the LPA but works closely with school leaders, Chavez has consistently employed two full-time employees in this position. This has
allowed both buildings to be covered by a resource coordinator, and permitted the roles to be combined with other administrative duties such as parent coordination or assistant principal preparation.

Ms. Cathy Kelly, Chavez MAC’s longest serving RC, is a jack-of-all-trades during the school day. As a Spanish-speaker she has taught ESL and GED classes for adults during the day, and draws upon prior business administration experiences to keep a complex program schedule running smoothly. Other RC’s have included interns from principal development programs who become community school principals in training by overseeing after school enrichment programs. A key lesson of effective resource coordination from Chavez involves integrating RC’s fully into leadership teams and school improvement processes, with clear authorization from the principal to set policy for building uses during out-of-school time.

**Advancing Chavez to the Next Level**

The current principal, Ariel Correa, became assistant principal at Chavez in 2003. Dually, Mr. Correa was an administrative intern in the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Ed.D. program pursuing his doctorate in urban school leadership. The mentoring, transparency, and sharing of then Principal Traback allowed Mr. Correa to internalize the whys and hows that contributed to ten years of growth at Chavez. This prepared him to be an apt designee to carry the torch, and convene others to help conceptualize the next level of integration between classroom instruction and enrichment of learning in OST. Assuming the principalship in 2006, Mr. Correa moved on several initiatives for school development that have as their goal the realization of Chavez as a “90/90/90” school over five years, that is, a school with the following characteristics:

- 90% or more of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, a commonly used surrogate for low-income families.
- 90% or more of the students are from ethnic minorities.
- 90% or more of the students met or achieved high academic standards, according to independently conducted tests of academic achievement.\(^\text{18}\)

For Mr. Correa, the path toward realizing this goal leads through the detailed work of raising quality in all elements included in the Chavez School Improvement Plan - elements such as a focus on academic achievement, use of collaboration, extended time on task (whether student or staff), provision of feedback, mid-course corrections, alignment of teacher preparation with teacher assignment, constructive data analysis, common assessments, cross-disciplinary integration, accountability, curricular choices, and professional development.\(^\text{19}\) From a community-based perspective, elevating student achievement is expected to yield better career prospects for young adults, a safer and more prosperous environment, and a better educated population in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.

One essential thread of development toward this goal has been strengthening, empowering, and raising accountability within his school leadership team. This is particularly critical at Chavez for two reasons. First, the school must function


\(^{19}\) Ibid.
well between two buildings, a necessity beyond the capacity of a shuffling principal. Second, Mr. Correa is committed to developing his faculty fully as a professional learning community (or PLC). Within a fully realized PLC, the conception of teacher autonomy shifts from “private” classroom practice with little accountability, to a norm of shared, transparent practice among respected and accountable colleagues. In the process, a core of instructional practices becomes normative, and teachers feel both accountable to and ownership of these practices. At the same time, teachers feel supported to propose and explore new practices in a culture that treats “failure” as data for further learning. Moving a faculty toward becoming a PLC benefits from a distribution of leadership that builds relational trust and mutual accountability (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Currently, Chavez’ Leadership Team includes:

- Two Literacy Coordinators (LLTs) – one per building; Lower Grade Center and Upper Grade Center
- Two Magnet Cluster Lead Teachers – one per building
- Bilingual Lead Teacher – Lower Grade Center
- English as a Second Language Teacher (ESL) – Upper Grade Center
- Math and Science Lead Teacher – Upper Grade Center
- Counselor – serves both buildings
- Case Manager - serves both buildings
- Network/Technology Specialist – serves both buildings
- Positive Behavior Intervention Specialist – serves both buildings.

An intentional feature of Chavez MAC’s leadership design is “lifeline” support for every teacher in the school, but particularly for newer and younger faculty. Each lead teacher is designated four to five staff members for whom they are expected to provide comprehensive guidance as needed; academic support (information on the curricular program), management support (discipline and attendance), and organizational support (observation and cognitive coaching). This arrangement is not intended to be hierarchical, but rather a scaffolded approach to sustaining excellence. While still a work in progress, the development of a highly accountable leadership team at Chavez faced a strenuous test in autumn 2007 when Principal Correa suffered serious injuries in a motorcycle accident, forcing his absence for several weeks, and limiting his presence for several more. The complex school moved forward effectively, due both to the diligence of the “official” leadership team, and the initiative of “informal” school leaders such as the community school resource coordinators, who transact with the leadership team as highly empowered colleagues.

A second essential thread of development has involved initiation of a highly thoughtful, collaborative “sustainability” planning process that has few equals among Chicago elementary schools, even

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21 Ibid.
those associated with the Chicago Community Schools Initiative. The first draft of this intentionally evolving plan was produced by an Advisory Committee in spring 2006 that included two school administrators (principal, assistant principal), two resource coordinators, senior representatives of the LPA Urban Gateways, parents, and Local School Council leaders. Its development followed closely the writing of the schools 2006-2008 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA).

The purpose of this first draft was two-fold: first, to get school leaders and critical community school staff “on the same page” about the goals and direction of the Chavez community school enterprise, and second, to create a four year “action plan” for Chavez to guide future decision-making, benchmark progress, and shape funding strategies as older sources like the 21st Century Community Learning Center grants approached conclusion. The plan included a logic model for a “Healthy Child – Healthy Community School” that identified “inputs” into seven core program areas, program outputs, and intermediate and long-term outcomes for students and parents. The plan also pulled together a master schedule of programs – no easy feat – so that planners could fully grasp the range of effort currently underway. Few other Chicago CSI partnerships had attempted to map their trajectory or articulate their vision at this level of specificity and ambition.

Just recently, in spring 2008, Mr. Correa reconvened the planning group to update the plan and align it with the school’s continuing progress toward a rigorous, standards-based curriculum, advanced by an increasingly well integrated professional learning community. The mid-course update also reflected the need to integrate new Urban Gateways staff into the plan, and to discuss next steps in authorizing Urban Gateways as the supervising agency for all “extended learning opportunities” and their providers in out-of-school time. One idea offered by Mr. Correa to advance a more integrated vision of comprehensive learning supports is illustrated below – an “umbrella” concept of “The Chavez Learning Wrap.” In this concept, the pervasive principles of becoming a learning community with a deep commitment to standards-based change give over-arching continuity to the activities of key partners in out-of-school time. These include Urban Gateways and its Community Arts Program, Gads Hill and its OST programs, academic support programs like Supplementary Education Services (SES) and After School Counts (ASC), CPS (Chicago Public Schools) and PEC (Peace and Education Coalition), aptly placed at the tips of the umbrella, buttress pods of the above programs either through funding, advocacy, community organizing, oversight or a combination of these actions. The intent is to place the ELOs totally in sync with the Chavez curriculum, mission, and vision, eventually folding them into a single logic model and budget source.

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The Chavez Learning Wrap

Discussion has also advanced toward a more theoretically and developmentally integrated understanding of the priority impacts that Chavez asks of its ELO providers. In place of the seven program areas listed in the 2006 plan, the updated plan will articulate four primary program concentrations to comprise the “Healthy Child – Healthy Community” agenda, including the following:

✓ Academic support, integrating the curriculum triangle of Literacy, Arts, Technology (L.A.T.), shaped by the Standards Based Change process embedded in the high accountability of the Chavez Professional Learning Community

✓ Five Elements of Art, with particular attention to visual arts, drama, dance, creative writing, and music

✓ Adventure Learning, an intentionally broad concept designed to draw together sports clubs, extra curriculum arts (yoga, basketball, volleyball, etc.) and other kinesthetic activities that build students’ physical confidence and provide recreational outlets in the out-of-school hours

✓ Supporting the Healthy Child, Family, and Community, building the school’s role in total family health and wellness promotion, through activities like the asthma program, inoculations, physical examinations, dental and vision exams, nutrition workshops, emotional and behavioral learning.

Each program and/or service at or provided to the school addresses one of the four vital areas creating the “Chavez Learning Wrap.” Almost 600 students participated at some after school programming captured by the official CPS After School Attendance Record in academic year 2007-2008, well over half of the total enrollment. More participated in extracurricular teams not supported through district after school program funds. The school aims at engaging an additional 100 students per year until all Chavez students are regular participants. To do this, the principal consulting with his program partners has articulated program quality guides by which future programs will be reviewed and evaluated. The emerging list of “Characteristics of a High Quality After School Program” include:

✓ Establishing clear goals and outcomes
✓ Designing activities to achieve these goals
Aligning content with relevant Illinois Learning Standards
Establishing a link with the school day
Use research-based practices and materials
Creating a positive program environment
Using strategies that enhance participant motivation
Promoting student engagement and meaningful activities
Conducting effective program management/support/resources
Providing opportunities for students to practice
Conducting periodic evaluation to check program effectiveness
Conducting periodic assessment to review student progress
Resetting goals according to evaluation results

It is no accident that these guidelines parallel closely the practices that a classroom teacher at Chavez MAC would be expected to implement to assure high quality instruction. For Mr. Correa, the thrust toward a “seemless” community school day means informing classroom practice with research-based insights into child and family development, while asking OST program providers to step up to the level of transparent professional practice that Chavez aims to achieve across its grade levels. Indeed, seamlessness at Chavez aims at one professional learning community linking the classroom day to OST enrichment and family support.

Issues of discipline and behavioral management are often the Achilles heel of many school-based after school programs. Chavez MAC aims to implement a common, developmentally-informed framework for behavior management from morning through evening hours. Developed in-house, the system titled C.O.D.E. (Conducting Ourselves Differently to Enhance Education) embodies a positive approach to controlling conduct based on respect of self and others. While the immediate goals of the C.O.D.E are improving student achievement and establishing a safe internal environment in which teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn, the overall objective is the development of socially competent and responsible citizens. Positive reinforcement hinges on modeling of expected behavior by adults, and incentives and recognition of students acting in constructive ways. The C.O.D.E.’s mantra, “Be ready, be safe, be respectful” threads through the school’s activity.

Co-existing with the Chavez C.O.D.E. is the system-wide CPS Student Code of Conduct (revised CPS Uniform Discipline Code). Enforcement of the CPS Student Code of Conduct is strictly adhered to at Chavez, primarily as a means of documenting student behaviors so that causes may be explored and appropriate remedies applied. Behavior Folders have been created to track the conduct and interventions for individual students. The effort to uncover root causes of persistent negative behaviors produced an initial and notable rise in the school’s Reports of Serious Disciplinary Incidents to CPS compared to both past history and other schools in the area. Often interpreted by the system as a “bad mark” against a school, the situation merited the risk and has led to a steady decrease in real, not just reported, discipline problems.

23 Ibid.
Challenges to Achieving the Chavez MAC Vision

Despite community ties, a history of strong leadership, and dramatic student progress, any school serving a community with challenges such as those facing Back of the Yards will confront challenges to its own internal coherence and professional continuity. One set-back for Chavez MAC in spring 2007 was the loss of its status as an Autonomous Management Performance School, or AMPS. Nonetheless, awareness of specific problems has helped them to consider and/or implement adaptive strategies. Currently held by just over 100 CPS schools, AMPS status provides budgetary autonomy, calendar flexibility, and varied exemptions from system policies, and is viewed as important by many to the creation of innovative programs and the expedition of acquiring the means to do so. Chavez lost APMS status by failing by only .4 to inch forward sufficiently in ISAT scores to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to a new CPS metric. The school expects to regain the AMPS status in the next eligibility round, based on its strategic resolve to raise program quality both in the classroom and in OST settings.

Time and funding are the most frequently identified resource limitations impacting ambitious community schools. The thrust of the Chavez plan to integrate all programs into a single fluid structure cause the limitations of time and funding to be even more strongly sensed. One example of time management struggle is the endeavor to develop an individual plan for each student — one that matches programs/services from the wide list of offerings now available to the identified needs of the student and his/her family rather than essentially continuing to function on a choice basis. While the concept is logically promising, execution has been labor intensive prompting the school to search for a more efficient way to do it. Funds fluctuate in amount and various funding sources are often earmarked in prescriptive ways. Regaining AMPS status will aid Chavez in achieving a more coherent budget and allocating their monies creatively with minimal restrictions. The authorization of the LPA as fiscal manager (at least of 21st Century funds) has helped preserve some spending flexibility.

High annual student mobility levels remain a vexing challenge to sustaining student academic progress. Chavez MAC’s various approaches to year round schooling have each posed advantages and disadvantages. Due to a rapid rise in student enrollment and attendant overcrowding, Chavez School elected to become a year-round school on “multi track.” That is, at any one time, only three quarters of students were in school, with the other quarter of students on “intercession” or break in staggered fashion. This approach was logistically feasible, but poorly aligned with the vision of a school-wide community of learners. The leasing of the Upper Grade Center at nearly St. Joseph’s alleviated overcrowding to a degree and permitted Chavez to switch to “Track E” category, involving a single 10 ½ month school year. Thus advantages of year-round schooling were maintained, i.e., short breaks that prevent loss of learning often associated with longer breaks, but also holding all students in (and out of) school at the same time making student tracking easier for the school and school tracking easier for parents. Further, Track E has provided a better structure for infusion of a cohesive set of after-school and extended-day programs.
Finally, gang violence and recruitment continue to be a genuine threat to student safety and an impediment to student participation. The neighborhood surrounding Chavez MAC draws into quadrants, each with a specific gang affiliation. The gangs are described by the principal as “having a new face.” The old-guard gangs that fought for self-protection and human rights have converted into factions fighting for territorial hegemony. Drugs, alcohol, prostitution, violence, and other crimes are standard means of supporting that power-grab, creating dramatic turmoil in a community plagued by sub-scale pay and unemployment and a struggle to survive.

The Peace and Education Coalition (PEC) arose from this issue and has made inroads. Community members held marches and rallies and gained Mayor Daley’s support. Various Task Forces pushed out negative elements through initiatives like Clean and Green and the Youth Summit. The Chavez area has the lowest crime rate in the surrounding neighborhood and is considered a “neutral zone.” No single gang controls the area and, while there are gang members within their boundaries, cross-gang eruptions near Chavez are rare. The commitment of Mr. Correa to lead the PEC’s Youth Summit process adds further credibility to the school’s offer of alternative paths for local youth. But the lure of gang affiliation and intimidation to affiliate remain a stubborn impediment to realizing the vision of full participation in Chicago’s economic and cultural future that grounds the Chavez MAC community school effort.

To conclude, through vigorous effort, cultural sensitivity, and commitment to students, Chavez has generated a unique prototype of strategic planning and program quality improvement that has few rivals, even among Chicago’s best community schools. Yet Chavez MAC is poised to do even more. Residents’ early expectations signaled by the construction of the Chavez building appear not to have been disappointed. Chavez M.A.C. ranks among the highest in Chicago Public Schools in its extent of extra-curricular programs. By synthesizing its extended learning programs into an academically rigorous cycle carried forward by an adult Learning Community, Chavez is taking the next steps toward becoming a true neighborhood “school of choice” in Chicago’s dynamic Back of the Yards neighborhood.

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A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this profile. During spring 2007 and spring 2008 UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators. These were combined with interviews with teachers, students, and parents from three prior years of study. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and its partners were collected and analyzed, most notably the 2006 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA), out-of-school time program schedules, and web-based documents from the school, Urban Gateways, and several other community partners. Community census data were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC). School achievement trend data were derived from the University of Northern Illinois’ Interactive Illinois Report Card website, as well as the public access aggregate school datasets supported online by the CPS Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability.
## Attachment Table A. Comparing Chicago’s New City Section with Chavez Census Tract on Selected Census 2000 Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New City Community</th>
<th>Chavez Census Tract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000 Number</td>
<td>% Pop. 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>51721</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>26128</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latino</strong></td>
<td>25948</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White – Non-Latino</strong></td>
<td>6789</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Ages 14 or below</strong></td>
<td>16687</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>*<strong>Married/Family Households</strong></td>
<td>5736</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*<strong>Non-High School Graduates</strong></td>
<td>12975</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*<strong>Living in Same House as 1995</strong></td>
<td>25285</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Born</strong></td>
<td>15259</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Household English Only</strong></td>
<td>23581</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Indicators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>*<strong>Unemployed/In Labor Force</strong></td>
<td>2723</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>*<strong>Sales and Office Occupations</strong></td>
<td>3927</td>
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<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Families Below Poverty Level</strong></td>
<td>3301</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Indicators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average Household Size</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Renter-Occupied Housing Units</strong></td>
<td>9024</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing with No Vehicle</strong></td>
<td>4985</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Housing Value</strong></td>
<td>$85,259</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Against population sub-total (not total population)

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24 [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5524a6.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5524a6.htm)
Contemporary research points to a number of causes that contribute to the persistence of gaps in academic achievement among children in the United States depending on their race and family income. Poor and minority children are much more likely to enter kindergarten with smaller vocabularies and weaker academic and social preparation than their more advantaged peers. They are also much more likely to experience health and social problems that can hinder school readiness. Commonly, the structural organization of schools provides these most vulnerable children with the least experienced teachers. Thus, teachers still learning their craft and often unfamiliar with the worlds their students inhabit face children at the greatest disadvantage in reaching school success. This dominant method of organizing instructional practice has fostered crippling cycles of failure that undermine children and teachers alike. The external conditions that hamper children's readiness for school--poor nutrition, weak family structures and early emotional trauma, to name but a few--present obstacles that sap the energy of even the most reform-minded schools and teachers (Elmore, 2004; Lareau, 2003; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997).

The movement for community schooling attempts to bridge the gap between the internal world of schools and the external worlds of family and community in which children live. By pursuing research-based strategies, community schooling intentionally assembles the necessary assets for children to succeed in school. Rather than keeping parents at bay, community schools invite them in as full partners in their children's learning, their own learning and in the development of the school itself. Community schools also engage social workers, counselors, health and public safety professionals to build a network of "wrap around" resources for children and their families, and build bridges between classroom and out-of-school time that acknowledge the needs of the whole child. These schools extend their hours and spaces for community use, both to enlist active local support for school improvement and to address local needs such as safe, supervised activities for children beyond regular school hours. By participating in activities that bridge school and out-of-school time, children can engage in more high-interest activities and experience competence in more arenas, reinforcing their determination to stick with school (Mahoney, Lord & Carryl, 2005; Pittman, Yohalem & Tolman, 2003).

Frequently, community schools arise when an existing school and its surrounding community agree to build a partnership, often based on creating innovative out-of-school time programs. Less often, the community takes the lead in creating a school to meet its own needs. In Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools' Community Schools Initiative (CSI) has taken a more strategic approach by aligning key funding sources to help schools and community-based organizations to collaborate around whole child/whole family education (Whalen, 2007; Blank, Berg &
Melaville, 2006). In this profile, we explore how Erie Neighborhood House (ENH), a community-based organization in Chicago's West Town neighborhood, successfully created a charter elementary school to meet the needs of the graduates of its outstanding early childhood education program. In striking contrast to the challenges faced by some community-based organizations, that have created and housed schools only to see them press for greater autonomy from their creators, ENH quickly struck a balance of support and autonomy by designing Erie Elementary Charter School (EECS) as an independent nonprofit organization with close board ties to its parent. As a result, ENH and EECS have developed fundamentally harmonious relations between their high-quality programs for children and youth. Despite some tensions between EECS teachers and ENH after-school program staff over the priority after-school programming should place on academics versus social and emotional development, all parties share a fundamental commitment to Erie's mission: strengthening low-income, primarily Latino families. This basic sense of partnership will be essential in years to come, as gentrification pressures change the face of the surrounding community and affect the funding streams that sustain both the agency and the school.

Erie Elementary Charter School and Erie Neighborhood House in Their Community Context

In the 2007-08 school year, Erie Elementary Charter School served children in grades K-3 in the West Town neighborhood on Chicago's near northwest side. In fall 2008 EECS will serve children in grades K-4 and will grow to its final K-5 configuration in fall 2009. EECS occupies the building formerly used as a grammar school by St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church. St. Mark's also rents ENH additional space for its after-school program, which a number of EECS students attend. The neighborhood surrounding EECS and St. Mark's is rapidly gentrifying, with new-construction condos being added to the existing mix of brick and greystone two-flats. According to a July 2008 search of the real estate web site Zillow, three properties were for sale on the block where the school is located, ranging in price from $433,000 to $645,000.

The majority of EECS students are from working-class Latino families. In 2007, about 88 percent of its 127 students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, and 69 percent were Latino, according to Chicago Public Schools data. African Americans and a small number of white children filled out the student body. EECS distinguishes itself through its commitment to

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1 For an overview of the CPS Community Schools Initiative, see the website of the CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities (CPS OELO): http://cpsafterschool.org/home.html. Also see the website of the Federation for Community Schools: http://www.ilcommunityschools.org/

2 Demographic data for EECS is taken from the CPS Elementary School Scorecard: http://www.oism.cps.k12.il.us/pdf/ElementaryDirectoryNearNorthWestCentralZone.pdf
providing individual attention to each child and to educating students who are bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. At EECS, every classroom in grades K-3 has a maximum of 22 students and is led by both a classroom teacher and a teacher assistant. Although only two percent of its 2007 students were formally identified as English-language learners, many more have been exposed to both English and Spanish before starting school. EECS's curriculum includes instruction in Spanish language and a strong emphasis on Latin American cultural heritage to ensure its students maintain and develop a healthy sense of identity as well as Spanish literacy.

As a charter school, EECS does not have a geographic attendance boundary from which it draws students. Instead, the school accepts student applicants through a lottery system. EECS personnel recognize that the ENH early childhood education program is a key source of applicants; about 55 percent of new entrants in the 2007 school year came from the ENH preschool. Under Illinois charter law, up to 50 percent of EECS’s faculty may teach without an Illinois certificate. (In 2005, the law was amended to require more established charter schools to ensure that 75 percent of their faculties were certified, but newer schools that opened after 2003, like Erie, were allowed to remain at 50 percent certified.3 This flexibility in hiring has made it possible for EECS to bring assistant teachers into each primary-grade classroom. Many are from the community and have the language and cultural competence necessary to teach in the daily hour of instruction in Spanish and Latin American culture.

EECS is located near the border between the predominantly Humboldt Park neighborhood and the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Ukrainian Village. Both neighborhoods are part of Chicago’s West Town community area. From the start of the 20th century through the Second World War, West Town was made up of white ethnic enclaves such as Poles in the area near Division Street and Ashland Avenue and Ukrainians in Ukrainian Village. After the war, Puerto Ricans began to arrive in West Town, especially in the Wicker Park and Humboldt Park neighborhoods, becoming a strong presence by the 1960s. Mexicans came later, first occupying areas east of Ukrainian Village. Meanwhile, Ukrainian Village itself held on as an aging middle-class community with ethnic anchor institutions such as St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral and the Ukrainian National Museum.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, West Town remained a port of entry for Mexican immigrants and Puerto Ricans coming to the mainland. With the exception of Ukrainian Village, which remained middle-class, the economic challenges faced across the city in those years also affected West Town, where many heads of households were employed in low-wage manufacturing and service sector jobs. However, the Division Street commercial strip became a bastion of Puerto Rican business and ethnic pride, and has been the site of the annual Puerto Rican parade since 1966.4

After a period of disinvestment in the 1970s and initial efforts to revitalize in the 1980s, portions of West Town experienced explosive commercial and real estate development. By 1990, Ukrainian Village had already transitioned from an ethnic enclave to a home for young white professionals. By the mid-1990s, Wicker Park's new plethora of cafés, condos and expensive boutiques had become a symbol of gentrification for the entire city. By the year 2000, about 36 percent of West Town's renters were paying 30 percent or more of their income for a place to live, and the median value of a home in the neighborhood had risen to $288,621.5 Lower-income Latino and

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3 For more information, see the Illinois Network of Charter Schools web site: http://www.intheschools.org/charter_school_law.html
UIC Community Schools Evaluation Project
ENH + EECS Profile August 2008

5 All statistics in this section are drawn from U.S. Census sources, as reported by the Metro Chicago Information
African American residents headed west to Logan Square and Humboldt Park in search of affordable housing.

Today, whites and Latinos make up the majority of West Town residents. In the 2000 census, 58 percent of West Town residents identified themselves as white and 47 percent gave their ethnicity as Latino. (Note: in the 2000 census, "Latino" was considered an ethnicity, not a race, so respondents could identify themselves as both white and Latino. About one-quarter of the census respondents identified themselves as "some other race" than white, black, Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander.) However, by 2000 the number of residents identifying themselves as Latino had dropped by more than 13,000 people, or 25 percent, since 1990.

Mexicans made up 25 percent of West Town's Latino residents and Puerto Ricans made up 17 percent. In 2000, Spanish was the primary home language of 40 percent of West Town families.

Census projections assume gentrification will continue, and social service agencies are beginning to follow their clients out of the eastern end of West Town. By 2010, the census projects that West Town's median income will rise to $50,698, compared to a 2000 median income of $40,143. One long-established West Town social service agency, Association House of Chicago, has already moved its headquarters west, from Wicker Park to West Humboldt Park, to stay close to its target population.

Over its 138-year history, ENH has evolved from a church-based, missionary-driven organization to a secular institution led by members of the community it serves. Throughout this evolution, the organization has maintained a strong relationship with the Presbyterian Church while growing in cultural competence with the Latino community. In 1870, ENH was originally founded as Holland Presbyterian Church.

During the 1950s and 1960s, ENH helped lead the fight against urban decay sparked by construction of the Kennedy Expressway. In the process, ENH gained experience in creating and spinning off new nonprofit agencies to strengthen West Town. Responding to the loss of housing due to highway construction, ENH founded the Northwest Community Organization, which in turn created the Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation to build affordable housing. Both organizations exist today, and Bickerdike has become the lead agency for West Humboldt Park's work with the New Communities Program, a 10-year project supporting comprehensive community development in 14 Chicago neighborhoods, funded with more than $50 million from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

By the late 1970s, a leadership change signaled the beginning of a new era at Erie. In 1977, Merri Ex became Erie's first English-Spanish bilingual executive director. Prior to her tenure, no one was permitted to speak Spanish within the confines of ENH itself, though Ms. Ex had worked as a bilingual community organizer for ENH before taking charge of the organization. Ex then hired bilingual staff whenever possible. In 1985, ENH hired its first Latino executive director, Rafael Ravelo, who continues to advise the organization on community collaborations.

ENH's current executive director, Ricardo Estrada, has led the organization since 2003. As executive director, Mr. Estrada has deployed a two-pronged strategy to respond to gentrification, expanding ENH's services within West Town while also establishing an office in the Little Village neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side, where some West Town residents have relocated in search of affordable housing. Mr. Estrada himself has strong personal and

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6 All information about the history of Erie Neighborhood House comes from the organization's web site: [www.eriehouse.org](http://www.eriehouse.org).

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Center. See [www.mcic.org](http://www.mcic.org)
professional ties to Little Village. He grew up in the neighborhood and early in his career worked at Latino Youth, Inc., a social service agency that created and operated an alternative high school for returning dropouts.

For decades, ENH has run exemplary child care programs encompassing both early childhood education and after-school programming for elementary schoolers. As of September 2006, ENH served 60 two-year-olds, 120 three to five-year-olds and 181 children from kindergarten through age 12. ENH offers a complex mix of early childhood education programs: full-day child care for two-year-olds, Early Head Start, Head Start, a preschool program accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and state pre-kindergarten. In June 2008, the preschool program's NAEYC accreditation was renewed for another five years. Only 8 percent of the nation's preschool and other early childhood programs have met NAEYC's standards of quality.

However, once children outgrew the preschool program, parents discovered that finding an equally high-quality elementary school in West Town was difficult. Although Sabin Magnet and Pritzker Regional Gifted Center are both located in West Town, making the community area much better served than other parts of the city, the two schools combined enroll less than 1200 students, many of whom are accepted through the magnet lottery or the gifted application process.

To help satisfy parental demand at ENH for better choices beyond preschool, one of Mr. Estrada's first actions as executive director was to convene a design team to develop a proposal for a charter elementary school. The team included four ENH board members with experience in education, social services, finance, fundraising and communications. These board members worked with Estrada and founding principal Linda Ponce de Leon to develop a comprehensive charter proposal to the Chicago Public Schools Office of New Schools. This rigorous application process requires applicants to present their curriculum, budgets, facility plan, student recruitment strategies and operational procedures well in advance of opening a new school. From the beginning, the ENH design team expected the charter would recruit from Erie's early childhood programs.

Prior to the opening of the charter, ENH also operated an exemplary after-school program at two of its own sites, serving children from a number of local public schools. Both sites are accredited by the National After-School Association (NAA), which recognizes the top one percent of after-school programs in the United States. Interestingly, our interviews indicate that bringing ENH's after-school program to the charter school came relatively late in the start up process, when recruiting the inaugural group of students proved challenging. It seems likely that ENH's intense early focus on creating an excellent school-day academic program and developing the fiscal and operational necessary to support that program initially pushed other considerations to the side. By May 2005, ENH was advertising that its after-school program would be available at the charter. Currently, the ENH after-school site at EECS is pursuing certification by the NAA.

Given ENH's history of incubating new organizations and Mr. Estrada's knowledge of the challenges social service agencies often face when they directly operate a school, the design team chose to incorporate Erie Elementary Charter School as a separate nonprofit organization. However, ENH keeps close board and operational ties with EECS. Mr. Estrada serves as the charter board's president, and the four ENH board members who helped design the school also serve as officers on its board of directors. The charter has 18 board members; seven also serve on ENH's board. ENH's financial office administers the school's budget, and the principal meets weekly with ENH's financial personnel. While the principal makes the charter's hiring
decisions, ENH's human resource department handles formal hiring procedures. In essence, ENH provides the administrative and "back office" support that frees the principal to concentrate on instructional leadership.

The design team sought space near ENH and found it in the closed school building of St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church, at 2510 W. Cortez, about two miles west of Erie's headquarters. Erie Elementary Charter School opened its doors in September 2005. By May 2008 EECS was serving 161 children and had successfully transitioned from founding principal Linda Ponce de Leon to new principal Jane Montes, then in her first year of leading the school. In July 2008, Dr. Montes was replaced by Eleanor Nicholson. Such rapid administrative turnover is common in the early years of a charter school (Cookson & Berger, 2003).

Now entering its fourth year of operation, EECS has built relationships with multiple partners to provide its students with the combination of social support and academic press research has shown leads to gains in student achievement (Lee, Smyth, Perry & Smylie, 1999). EECS currently serves children in the primary grades and has yet to receive the results of its first-ever round of ISAT scores.

Erikson Institute has been a key partner helping EECS develop a supportive school culture and strong instructional practices. Erikson facilitator Rebeca Izkowich conducts monthly professional development workshops with EECS staff and ENH preschool teachers, helping them build relationships and understand a wider spectrum of childhood development than they might otherwise grasp. Izkowich has helped new teachers integrate as the school grows in size, gaining a new grade level each year, and has helped balance new thinking with the establishment of school-wide culture and practices.

To build school and classroom culture, Erikson trains EECS teachers in Responsive Classroom, an approach that emphasizes students' social, emotional and academic growth in a safe school community. Teachers learn classroom and schoolwide practices that help their students develop both social-emotional and academic skills. Teachers learn to use their words and tone of voice to promote active learning, a sense of community and student self-discipline. They also develop routines, such as morning meeting, organize their classrooms to promote both independence and cooperation among students, and structure options in academic work from which students can choose, fostering their independence and productivity.

At EECS, the school and classroom culture directly support academic rigor. With an extended, 7-hour school day, children have sufficient instructional time for all core subject areas: math, science, social studies and literacy in both English and Spanish. Each classroom is named for a local college or university, and the students in that room take a field trip to visit the campus each spring. By the end of third grade, EECS students will already have visited four local campuses, planting the idea of college among a population where many will be the first in their families to attend.

In reading instruction, EECS takes a balanced literacy approach. Erikson's professional development helps teachers practice read-alouds, shared reading with the whole class, guided reading in small groups and independent reading of text geared to their students' individual competencies. Teachers also learn to facilitate Writer's Workshop, and students practice writing in a variety of forms and genres. In the primary grades, social studies is integrated with literacy instruction through the use of thematic units that help students analyze their identity, their community, and larger themes like neighborhoods and government.
EECS has also partnered with Ravinia to integrate music and academics. In 2007-08, the four-year partnership kicked off by bringing two musicians to the school for 15 weeks. They worked with teachers to plan and execute lessons integrating music with core content areas, culminating in a schoolwide project through which students read the book and wrote their own songs, both music and lyrics, based on their reading. In May, the students performed at Ravinia.

As the school's initial cohort moves into fourth grade, Spanish and core content instruction will adapt to meet their needs and raise the level of academic press. Social studies will be taught in Spanish daily; other subjects will be taught in English. The fourth grade teachers will semi-departmentalize, with one teaching science in English to both classes and the other, who has Spanish-language proficiency, teaching social studies in Spanish.

**Distinctive Features of the Partnership**

Every afternoon at 3 p.m., ENH after-school staff go to EECS classrooms to pick up children coming to their after-school program. They walk students the short distance across the parking lot from the school to the building that houses the after-school program. The afternoon begins with a few minutes of introductory time on the rug, where students hear about the activity choices they have for the day and decide how they want to spend their time, which is divided into three 40-minute periods. A healthy snack is made available daily, and participants decide when they wish to take time out to eat it. Activity choices always include homework, large motor activities like dodgeball, arts, dramatic play and board games. Other activities may include cooking, science and various clubs. The only activity students may leave before the choice period ends is homework, if they finish all their assignments. Every Wednesday students may participate in a technology course. On Mondays and Thursdays, volunteer tutors are available to help with homework assignments. To maintain a ratio of one staffperson to every 15 children, no activity may have more than 15 children participating at a time. In May 2008, the program could serve up to 95 children. Though weekly attendance fluctuated, 84 were participating in mid-May, including children from schools other than EECS.

The after-school program’s emphasis on choice and high-interest activities is strongly supported by the NAA standards. The NAA recommends...

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8 For a complete list of the NAA standards for after-school programs, see [http://www.naaweb.org/pdf/StandGlan.pdf](http://www.naaweb.org/pdf/StandGlan.pdf)
time to meet other important goals for the young people in the program, from snack and nap time to time for play, socializing and exploring interests not necessarily addressed in the regular classroom setting. However, parents want their children to complete all their homework during after-school program time. This is an especially urgent issue for monolingual Spanish-speaking parents who cannot help their children with English-based homework. After-school staff have worked with these parents to explain the importance of time for activities other than homework and to work out strategies to ensure their children get the critical help they need with their most challenging assignments. They have also talked with Spanish-speaking parents about helping with math homework, since it is usually less dependent on language for understanding.

For the past three years, EECS has sponsored a Homework Club, staffed by teachers, which focused solely on homework. In September 2008 this program will merge with the ENH after-school program. In September, in response to requests from EECS parents and teachers for a stronger emphasis on homework completion, families will have the option of signing a contract guaranteeing their child will spend 40 minutes of daily after-school time completing homework assignments.

To encourage children to spend more time on their homework, the ENH after-school program developed a "homework dollars" incentive system in 2007-08. Children receive one "homework dollar" for every day they spend at least 20 minutes on homework and complete at least one assignment. If children don't have assigned homework on a given day, they can still earn a homework dollar by reading a book for 20 minutes and answering questions about the reading. At the end of each month, children can redeem their homework dollars for candy, toys or other prizes. Since implementing the incentive system, ENH after-school staff say they have seen children who were reluctant to do homework voluntarily choose the activity more often to earn the incentive. "We have seen a change in the kids doing homework. Kids that barely ever liked doing homework come to do it," said Francisca Contreras, who directs the EECS after-school program, because they've seen other youngsters earn prizes through the incentive program.

What Organizational Capacities Drive the Success of the Partnership

Starting a charter school is a difficult undertaking, even for a community-based organization like ENH, with deep roots in early childhood education. Yet more and more community-based organizations are taking on the challenge, enough to establish a trend, though little research has yet been conducted on such community-sponsored schools. Research on charter schools shows that the startup process is challenging and often includes early changes in principal leadership (Cookson & Berger, 2002; Warren 2004).

ENH successfully navigated Chicago's stringent charter application process and has built a fundraising structure to support its hallmark small class sizes and two teachers per classroom in the primary grades. ENH and EECS have also successfully weathered the transition from the founding principal to a successor without sparking conflict among stakeholders. Below, we survey the organizational assets and deliberate decisions that have made these successes possible.

Board expertise and networking. ENH is fortunate to have a high-powered board of directors representing major businesses like Northern Trust, civic entities like the McCormick Tribune Foundation and educational institutions like The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. ENH board members played critical roles in the design team that prepared the EECS application and went on to serve as board members for the school. ENH board members also donated startup funds for EECS and created a fundraising plan. A year later, the Renaissance

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Schools Fund matched the Sara Lee Foundation with EECS and the school received $500,000 in startup funds.

In addition to these supports, board member John Benitez of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology helped EECS find clinical psychologist Nancy Luna, who now works at the school. "To be able to address problems early on in a child's life is beneficial. The work Dr. Luna has done here is great," said former principal Dr. Montes. "She is very knowledgeable and offers resources throughout the city to parents who may need services beyond what she is able to provide here."

**Balancing school autonomy with CBO oversight.** The ENH design team chose to structure EECS as a separate 501(c)3 organization with its own board of directors, though possessing close ties to ENH through board members and fiscal oversight. This decision is in line with best practices in charter schooling, which emphasize the exchange of autonomy in operations for accountability in results. (Lin and Hassel, 2005). While EECS retains its autonomy in managing teaching and learning, ENH oversees budget, human resources procedures and facility issues. Commonly, school principals struggle to find the time to function as instructional leaders while juggling managerial and administrative responsibilities (Buchen 2002). In effect, ENH helps relieve some of the administrative burden on the principal, freeing her to stay focused on instructional leadership.

Other CBOs that have opened charter schools struggle to achieve the balance of support and autonomy ENH now provides. For example, Asian Human Services recently decided to bring in a new principal and an education management organization (EMO), American Quality Schools, to run its Passages Charter School. The decision sparked protests from parents, who feared Passages' track record of academic success would be jeopardized by new management.10 Although EECS experienced a principal transition in October 2007 and another in summer 2008, parents have not reacted similarly.

**Social capital.** Social capital refers to the inherent resources built by developing trusting relationships between and among people (Coleman 1988). As a local anchor institution with a 135-year history, ENH has built deep relationships with the families it serves. These relationships have achieved sufficient depth to persist even in the face of geographic displacement due to neighborhood gentrification. Though some families have moved to the South Side in search of more affordable housing, "they come to Erie because they've had a long history with Erie. ... There's this long tie that people have with Erie. They know the program. They know the people here. They grew up with the people here," said Ms. Contreras. ENH encourages youth to grow into new roles with its programs as they age, such as moving from attending an afterschool program in elementary school to helping out in a summer program as a teenager.

This deep social capital forms the foundation on which relations between ENH and EECS rest. "I have been very impressed at the level of collaboration," Dr. Montes said before her departure. "You go over there and you are always welcome. I will be going over there shortly, and you say hello to everyone. Everyday you feel that sense of community."

This social capital also produces resources for children and families in times of crisis. For example, when an EECS family lost their home in a fire, they contacted ENH for clothing and services, and a flurry of emails were sent to find them new furnishings as well. Both EECS and ENH staff help families connect to services. "[Because] the school [is] part of Erie, they're aware of what we offer. If someone is out of work and they want job training, they'll send them over," said Ms. Contreras.

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10 See the Chi-Town Daily News story at http://www.chitowndailynews.org/Chicago_news/Manage_ment_change_at_N_Side_charter_school_angers_parents,15280)
"We work as sisters," agreed Assistant Principal Velia Soto. "Anything we can’t immediately provide at the school, we refer to Erie Neighborhood House." This includes referrals for child care and adult education.

The kinds of overlapping relationships that produce social capital also create social closure, a situation where children receive uniform expectations about their behavior in a holistic, developmentally appropriate way. Both Ms. Contreras and Dr. Montes provided evidence that social closure is growing between the school and the after-school program by describing the progress of one child who has made significant strides in coping with a developmental disorder. Dr. Montes made a point of advocating on the child's behalf with CPS to obtain services called for in the child's IEP. EECS's emphasis on responsive classroom emphasizes social and emotional, as well as academic growth.

Meanwhile, Ms. Contreras and the after-school staff consistently worked with the child on communication and social skills in the after-school setting. Both Dr. Montes and Ms. Contreras noted that the child's social development this year has been impressive.

Committed parents. The strong partnership between ENH and the families it serves drove the creation of EECS, and ENH continues to have a stake in EECS at a fundamental level: agency staff send their own children to the school. Dr. Montes said she regularly encountered ENH staff as they dropped their children off at school before continuing on to work. "I know them here, and I know them on the job at Erie. So it is very family, community oriented," she said. Dr. Montes estimated that about a dozen ENH staff have children at EECS, which could be as much as one-third of the agency's staff.

Parents continue to express deep concern for their children's education in the school and after-school programs. A meta-analysis of 77 parental involvement studies showed that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes. Parental expectations, style and reading to one's children had greater impact on student achievement than parental attendance and participation in school functions. (Jeynes, 2005). Although EECS does not yet have test data related to student achievement, interviews with EECS and ENH staff indicate that EECS parents are concerned and involved in their children's education. Dr. Montes, who previously worked as an assistant principal at a CPS magnet school, observed that EECS parents "are really committed and have an ongoing communication between home and school," to an even greater degree than she saw in her previous position. "I think here you have more of a collective community where parents are trying to be in touch with each other."

One effect of having a group of parents strongly concerned and committed to their children's education is the intense pressure on the after-school program around homework completion. While other ENH after-school program sites serve children from multiple schools, the EECS site primarily serves children from the charter school itself. As a result, "people expect more," said Ms. Contreras. At the same time, the after-school program welcomes parental participation. "We always encourage the parents to come in. One of our moms is not working, so she'll come and sit and help with homework," said Ms. Contreras. The after-school program sponsors family nights and monthly meetings over dinner to discuss topics like how to help your child with homework.

Advocates in the CPS Central Office. Erie Neighborhood House and its charter school also enjoy an exceptional degree of support from the CPS Central Office, most notably from the Office of Extended Learning Opportunities (OELO). Established in September 2001, the mission of OELO is “…is to ensure that there is a diverse offering of high quality programs available to Chicago Public School students that serve to enrich the development of the whole child outside of the regular school day.”

11 See the OELO website: <http://cpsafterschool.org/home.html>
OELO’s small but committed staff administers the full range of CPS after school programs, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and the Supplementary Educational Supports (SES) tutoring program mandated by No Child Left Behind. Thus the office can be helpful to individual schools and their partners in clarifying how various funding streams can be coordinated to maximize OST opportunities for students. In addition, the CPS officer who directs OELO can advocate for community schools and identify collaborative assets for community schools as a member of the Chief Education Officer’s administrative cabinet. This is made easier by the passion of the current CEO, Mr. Arne Duncan, for the value of after school enrichment and community engagement.

Advancing the Partnership: Opportunities and Challenges

The deep social capital that exists within and between Erie Elementary Charter School and Erie Neighborhood House is a critical resource as these partners face the challenges of increasing their programmatic collaboration and continuing to serve an economically challenged population in the face of gentrification and changes to the funding streams that support current services. Although trust, social capital and a set of implicit common norms exist between EECS and ENH, interviews with staff at both entities indicate the need to increase communication and transparency among programs for the benefit of children and families. At the same time, continuing gentrification pressures and a change in the federal income limits subsidizing the ENH after-school program will require creativity and teamwork to ensure families can continue to take advantage of the charter school and after-school program.

The first and smallest hurdle is to balance parental pressure for homework completion with the after-school program's choice-based, NAA-accredited approach. The ENH after-school program's choice-based approach encourages young people's social, emotional and leadership development. However, pressure on the program to become more strictly oriented toward homework completion may increase next year, when EECS phases out its teacher-staffed homework club and all EECS children enter the ENH after-school program. ENH after-school staff are already pursuing a number of strategies to ensure children both complete homework and enjoy the wealth of other activities available. Communication with parents to ensure they know the after-school program's scope and goals, advice and training for parents on how to help with homework and the "homework dollars" incentive program all have a role to play in maintaining an appropriate balance between homework completion and other activities. It may be that EECS staff will need more exposure to the after-school program to appreciate this balance and consider ways to align after-school activities and academic objectives more seamlessly.

This leads to the second, more difficult challenge: deepening lines of communication between EECS and ENH after-school staff so that all staff working with ENH's children know what activities and skills they have been exposed to at the various stages of their time in ENH's care. Interviews with ENH and EECS personnel show the two entities have a set of shared values and assumptions about how to work with children in a holistic, developmentally appropriate way. However, the interviews also indicate that both entities would benefit from deliberate and explicit dialog about how each of them goes about their work. Ultimately, such dialog could produce a common language around expectations and practices that would strengthen social closure for children and align their educational experiences much more closely than they are aligned at present. This fall, EECS will take a step in this direction by designating a teacher as the formal liaison to the ENH after-school program.

In an interview, Ms. Contreras expressed a desire for more information from EECS teachers about their curriculum and assignments, so she could better align the after-school program's activities with in-school curriculum. "Without that, we're just doing what we think is interesting and the
kids might think is interesting." Currently, there are missed opportunities to connect learning across programs. By setting aside time to look across program boundaries and share practices, both ENH and EECS could "raise their game" and provide a more seamless, integrated experience for the children and families they serve.

Finally, ENH and EECS will need to collaborate closely to address the needs of families hit by the triple whammy of increasing gas and food prices, gentrification (which has not slowed sufficiently in the rental market to provide relief despite the burst of the real estate bubble) and an increase in the amount families are expected to pay for ENH after-school child care.

According to Valery Sheppard, director of child care programs for ENH, Chicago's recently acquired ability to use the Illinois Public Aid Communication System (IPACS) to determine income eligibility for child care subsidies and copays is making after-school programs too expensive for many clients of after-school programs sponsored by not-for-profit agencies like ENH.

ENH's after-school program is funded in large part through federal and state child care subsidies administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services. The state program requires that families make copayments on a sliding scale, based on income and family size. In April 2008, advocates for children succeeded in raising the maximum qualifying income level to 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

In 2007, after many years of waiting, Chicago joined the rest of the state in using the IPACS system. IPACS makes it much easier to see multiple income sources for the same household: wages, child support and Social Security. It has also clarified the importance of including all sources of income for all adults in the household when determining eligibility. For example, if a single working mother has an elderly parent living with her and receiving Social Security, that income is counted along with the mother's employment income. Ms. Sheppard said that although this method of calculating income was instituted statewide a few years ago, access to IPACS has made it much easier for agencies to find and include multiple sources of income.

Although advocates have made progress on raising the maximum income level eligible for child care subsidy, the copays required at the higher income levels are a financial stretch for many families. For example, a single mother with two children earning $34,644 must pay $364 per month, or 12 percent of her annual income, for child care. Meanwhile, the average family in the United States pays 9 percent of their annual income for child care. Advocates pushed to reduce the copayments through legislation in the 2008 spring legislative session, but were unsuccessful.

Because Chicago has become better able to track income from multiple sources, many families' copays have risen into the higher levels of the sliding scale. Since September 2007, "we lose at least two or three kids a week due to the income guidelines," said Ms. Sheppard. The reduced demand due to the expensive copays has also eliminated their waiting list. "The 14 years I've been here, we've never not had a waiting list," she noted.

ENH has already taken steps to look for alternative funding streams to support its after-school programming. It is an official Supplemental Educational Services provider and thus eligible to receive NCLB funds for SES services. And it is looking for ways to provide scholarships or other funding to parents as they make the transition from the less-costly EECS homework club to the after-school program.

12 Katherine Ritter, a policy advocate at Action for Children Illinois, provided the national statistic and legislative update during a telephone conversation. The copay example is taken from the Parent Copayment Calculation worksheet available from the City of Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services at http://cys.mycopa.com/
13 See the Education Week article at http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/14/37ses_ep.html
Given ENH's long history and expert, well-connected board of directors, the agency seems to have assets in place that will help it and EECS meet the challenges outlined above. Both ENH and EECS are already dedicating staff and resources to address all three of the challenges highlighted here. The funding challenge, most crucial and most difficult, will require leveraging the strong social capital already in place both to provide both resources--such as scholarship funds for individual families--and advocates for policy changes to make child care more affordable for families and maintain quality programs like the ENH/EECS after-school partnership.

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A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this profile. During spring 2007 and winter 2008 UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators. These were combined with interviews with teachers, students, and parents from three prior years of study. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and its partners were collected and analyzed, including out-of-school time program schedules and web-based documents from the school, Erie Neighborhood House, Erie Family Health Center, and several other community partners.

Community census data were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC).
A preponderance of research suggests two alarming trends among American children: first, increasing numbers are presenting physical and emotional conditions that significantly erode school readiness, and second, many of these conditions disproportionately impact the prospects of poor and minority children, beginning in the pre-school years (Currie, 2005; National Institutes of Health, 2007). From acute conditions like asthma, diabetes, lead poisoning and chronic malnutrition to chronic ailments such as tooth decay and allergies, disparities in the incidence and severity of health risk have grown over the last decade. Differences in maternal health conditions and behaviors such as depression and substance abuse also elevate health risks for disadvantaged children. Moreover, as UCLA’s Janet Currie has noted in a sobering review, “Disadvantaged children are not only more likely than better-off children to have particular health conditions, they are also less likely to be treated for them” (p. 129). A complex web of systemic factors can converge to prevent families in low income neighborhoods from securing and sustaining high quality health care (e.g., Bannor, 2004).1

Studies also suggest that strategic action to address disruptive conditions such as impaired vision, lack of immunizations, or improper medication can yield significant improvements in school attendance and behavior (Lear, 2007; Lapin & Smith, 2008). Thus an important emphasis within the national discussion about children and health disparities involves building the capacity of schools to coordinate access to comprehensive health resources for children and their families. Advocates for comprehensive school-affiliated health programs point out that schools are often the best resourced point of service reaching families in low income communities (St Leger & Nutbeam, 2000; Webb & Bannor, 2005).

In this vein, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has promoted a “Coordinated School Health Program” with eight components spanning health education and promotion, prevention counseling, and provision of direct medical, psychological, and social services to students and their families. The last decade has also seen a significant increase in the presence of school-based health clinics within high schools, and less frequently, at the elementary level (Swider & Valukas, 2004). The 2006 School Health Policy and Program Survey indicates considerable growth in health education and support programs related to the eight components (Journal of School Health, 2007).

1 According to Bannor (2004), “For example, the children to pediatrician ratio in poor neighborhoods in Chicago is 5887:1 in contrast to a national average of about 1000:1. Even when physicians are present in a community, they may refuse to see uninsured or Medicaid-enrolled children. In many instances, Medicaid rules and reimbursement rates deter providers from giving care…nearly half the state Medicaid programs do not pay for care by psychologists for clinical social workers, even when they are supervised by psychiatrists” (p. 3).
However, the agenda to involve schools in comprehensive health provision can easily flounder in the wake of acute pressure felt by urban schools to concentrate narrowly on standardized test performance.

One promising framework for aligning an ambitious program of health promotion with a broader understanding of “whole child/whole family” development is that of community schooling. Community schools build on the assumption that educators and communities have common cause in supporting the well-being of neighborhood children (Bannor, 2003). To that end, community schools act intentionally to extend their hours of operation well beyond the final bell, offering educational programs and needed services to students, parents, and neighborhood residents. Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative (CSI) particularly emphasizes close collaboration between schools and capable community based organizations to recruit parents and neighbors into leadership roles, and coordinate the assets necessary to sustain student success and well-being (Whalen, 2007). For organizations focused on community-based health promotion, community schools can provide a degree of access that puts the goals envisioned by the CDC CSHP within reach in underserved communities (Dryfoos, 1994, 1996).

In this profile we highlight a developing partnership between a community school and a capable community health provider. Like many schools in underserved African American neighborhoods, Chicago’s Henson Elementary has been a center of community for North Lawndale residents for decades. Through an earlier phase of community schooling, Henson concentrated on providing high quality after school enrichment programs for students and adults, with considerable success. More recently, in partnership with Erie Family Health Center, one of Illinois’ leading community health agencies, Henson is broadening its community school agenda in the directions of comprehensive mental, social, and medical services. The partnership illuminates both the possibilities and the challenges when schools choose to integrate health into their educational missions.

Community Schooling at Henson Elementary

Matthew A. Henson Elementary is a public elementary school located at 1326 S. Avers Ave. in the heart of the North Lawndale community on Chicago’s west side. The school serves a predominately African American student body (100% in 2007) in grades PK – 8, in addition to three Head Start pre-school classrooms. The majority of students qualify for federal free/reduced lunch support (an average of 90% annually between 2004 and 2007). From a peak of almost 450 students in 1999, the population of Henson had fallen by 39 % to 276 students in 2006, reflecting a protracted depopulation of the surrounding neighborhood. Enrollment returned to 450 in 2007, however, as the school absorbed a large contingent of students from a nearby elementary school closed as part of a school consolidation initiative. While accommodating these new students posed many challenges, both social and academic, it relieved Henson of pressures associated with falling enrollment and lost Title 1 funding. It also opened the unanticipated opportunity to transfer a school-based health clinic from the closing school into an available space within Henson.
Completed in October 1962, Henson is actually among the newest schools built on Chicago’s west side. It was constructed with space in mind, at a time when overcrowding was still an issue in North Lawndale’s growing African American neighborhoods. The building houses several exceptional amenities, including a 500 seat auditorium with full stage, acoustic tiles, and projection capability, a large, brightly lit lunch room situated at the front of the building, and a well maintained gymnasium on the first floor. Classrooms are spacious and well outfitted, and a library with several computer stations is located on the second floor. The school also enjoys a location in the middle of an extended residential block, away from the sort of high traffic corner that encourages unwelcome loitering. As Principal Robert Pales put it, “I’ve always called Henson my little red school house, a safe haven. Come into my building and be safe. We’ll go from there.”

While a climate of safety, order, and welcome certainly is evident to any visitor, what particularly distinguishes Henson Elementary is its culture of encouragement for African American students. As in many schools in Chicago, each day begins with the Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the national anthem. In addition, and for over twenty years, Henson students sing the well known African American hymn, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” often referred to as “The Black National Anthem.” It is a hymn that Martin Luther King, who lived within 2 blocks of Henson when he campaigned against slum conditions in Chicago in 1965, would have known well and approved. Numerous and colorful posters, sculptures, wall displays, and murals – many painted by students – remind students of African American accomplishments in the arts and sciences, celebrate African heritage and lineage, and exhort students to hold themselves to the high standards of their forbearers. Other displays remind Henson’s adult community to nurture and celebrate the talents of African American students. Encouragement amounts to an ethos at Henson, one that teachers embrace and the surrounding community genuinely appreciates as it grapples with raising children in today’s North Lawndale.

Chicago’s historic North Lawndale community is located 5 miles from the downtown Chicago Loop, stretching from the central west side to the border of Cicero township. In the wake of the Great Chicago

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2 For a succinct summary of the history of North Lawndale, see the website of the Encyclopedia of Chicago: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/901.html
Fire in the 1870’s, which North Lawndale escaped, the community grew both as a population center and an industrial corridor. The presence of large employers such as Sears and International Harvester helped to maintain a strong local employment base through the 1940’s, and fueled the development of small businesses and cultural institutions. This equation of local employment and community vitality shifted swiftly however after the Second World War, as African American families moved to North Lawndale from the South and Chicago’s south side, seeking work and a better life. Discrimination related to employment and housing set in motion a sustained pattern of community disinvestment that attracted the attention of Dr. King and remains persistent to this day. Today’s North Lawndale is among 11 Chicago communities fitting what the Metro Chicago Information Center calls a pattern of “desertification,” in which “…very few moderate- or high-income families remain in the neighborhood, leaving a high concentration of low-income families” (Taylor, 2007).

North Lawndale’s community advocates have not been passive in confronting discrimination and disinvestment. Several comprehensive housing and community development initiatives have targeted North Lawndale since the 1960’s. Each has attempted through varied strategies to shift the neighborhood toward a mixed income pattern that would attract new residents, anchor small business, and link residents to job training, affordable housing, and vital social services (Keating and Krumholtz, 1996). The theme of combining local community- and faith-based organizations with philanthropic and government actors to achieve mixed income development remains the core strategic vision of more recent initiatives. But building community involvement in such ventures must overcome considerable local distrust that redevelopment is not a prelude to gentrification of the sort that has cleared large African American communities from other near-Loop neighborhoods. And mounting such ventures means overcoming what a recent United Power report calls a “perfect storm” of factors favoring private, market-rate development over mixed-income policy considerations in the City of Chicago.

The daily social and economic conditions faced by the children who attend Henson Elementary are an intensified reflection of the challenges posed by life in North Lawndale at mid-decade. By most Census measures, Henson’s families were among the poorest and financially constrained in North Lawndale in 2000. At a median income level of $19,300 in 2000, 47.5% of families in Henson’s census area fell below the federal poverty line, while 35% of families earned below $10,000 annually. Unemployment (likely under-estimated) stood at 12.7% for adults in the active labor force, although total adult employment likely exceeds 40%. Only 6% of

3 United Power for Action and Justice, an alliance of over 300 churches, unions, and civic organizations, successfully placed affordable homes in North Lawndale through its Ezra Community Homes project.
5 Local organizations such as the Lawndale Alliance vehemently oppose the City’s plans to assign TIF status to the area surroundings the intersection of Pulaski and Ogden Avenues, complaining that under-appraisal of property values and property tax hikes will force long-time residents and property owners out of North Lawndale. See the Chicago Defender: http://www.chicagodefender.com/view.php?f=483.
adults over 25 years had completed a post-secondary degree. 44% of households owned no motor vehicle, while 22% had no telephone service. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of rental units available for under $500 decreased by roughly half, most categories of housing with 2 or more units decreased by about 1/3, and renter-occupied housing units declined by over 14%. In 2000, more than 37% of renters living around Henson paid 35% or more of their monthly income in rent. 

All evidence suggests that grinding poverty and its social correlates take a severe toll on the both the psychological and physical health of many North Lawndale residents. While disparities in health outcomes between white and minority Americans have generally declined in recent years, Chicago has resisted this trend (Margellos, Silva & Whitman, 2004). In turn, North Lawndale’s health outcomes are among the worst in Chicago across a range of health risks. In a series of studies by the Sinai Urban Health Institute, North Lawndale exceeded five other high risk Chicago communities in several measures of health risk, most notably in rates of heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, and suicide. Birth rates among older teens and childhood obesity also significantly exceed Chicago averages. Rates of substance abuse are among the highest in Chicago in several categories, including tobacco use, intravenous drug use, and alcohol dependency. In addition, children face elevated risk of physical and psychological abuse, and may experience acute levels of grief and depression associated with the health and stress-related conditions of the adults in their lives. And while health resources are often available, accessing them requires levels of intention and logistics management that many North Lawndale families find difficult to muster (see Whitman et al., 2004).

Eric Family Health Center (EFHC)

A signature feature of Chicago’s community school design is a close partnership with a lead not-for-profit organization (or LPA). Since Fall 2006, a new community school lead partnership with Erie Family Health Center has introduced unique resources and energy for addressing obstacles to student health, learning and family involvement at Henson Elementary. With over 50 years experience addressing the health needs of Chicago’s low income communities, EFHC has gained both regional and national recognition as an innovative advocate for high quality health care, regardless of the ability to pay. With total assets of over $10 million and revenues of over $20 million, EFHC reached over 31,000 patients in FY 2007 through 8 community health centers located on Chicago’s west and northwest sides. In addition to a full line of medical, dental, and case management services, EFHC supports several initiatives focused on health promotion, education, and prevention. The majority of Erie’s clients are Hispanic (87%), female (70%), school-aged (50%), uninsured (50%), and living below 100% of the federal poverty level (50%).

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8 Roles of the LPA include developing and implementing a community school plan, sourcing and brokering relationships with other service providers, contributing resources in its areas of expertise, and co-managing a full-time, school-based resource coordinator.

9 To view EFHC’s official website: http://www.eriefamilyhealth.org/.
EFHC opened its first school-based health clinic at Ryerson Elementary in Chicago’s West Humboldt Park neighborhood in 1995, the first elementary school location to open in Illinois. While Erie’s experience has been with largely Hispanic communities, its mission embraces low income residents across Chicago. Two other clinics were opened subsequently – Jose De Diego Community Academy in West Town and Frazier Elementary in North Lawndale – each serving predominately low income populations. While school-based health provision poses multiple challenges, these clinics have provided EFHS unique opportunities to learn health care practice with African American clients, and reach children in communities facing multiple barriers to health care access.

In FY 2007 EFHS reported over 5100 patient visits through its three school-based health clinics.

If fortune favors the prepared school, then key features of Henson’s early development as a community school laid the groundwork for a more ambitious partnership with EFHC. Henson entered Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative (or CSI) in Fall 2004 with the help of a 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant and a lead partnership with the North Lawndale Learning Community (or NLC). NLC was founded in 1995 as a vehicle for collaboration and resource sharing among North Lawndale’s public elementary schools, with funding and facilitation from the Steans Family Foundation. At its height in the early 2000’s, the principal’s of NLC’s 13 constituent schools served as the organization’s board of directors. A small professional staff administered a service center just south of the Eisenhower Expressway, North Lawndale’s northern boundary. The service center included several meeting and resource rooms, housed an after school program emphasizing literacy, sponsored in-service professional development for teachers, and provided teachers with access to copiers and other resources.

With NLC as his community school lead partner, Henson’s principal Robert Pales enjoyed unusual latitude to shape his own community school agenda, hire his own resource coordinator, and build a dedicated community school team. In some respects, Mr. Pales was his own lead partner, and was free of the challenges of partnership management that face principals in other Chicago community schools. The result by 2006 was a high degree of faculty buy-in to the value of extended school and weekend hours and after school programs, with high teacher participation and opportunities for supplemental income. On the other hand, NLC could not help Henson acquire the necessary expertise and resources to translate its awareness of student and family needs into a coordinated program of health and social services.

Beginning in 2006, several circumstances brought Henson Elementary and EFHC into

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10 For early history of the NLC, see: https://cbsl.depaul.edu/communityPartners/sitedetail.asp?id=125.
the same community school orbit. On Henson’s side, NLC experienced a severe funding shortfall which undercut its administrative capacity and forced the closure of its service center. NLC’s principals remained affiliated, and 21st Century Community Learning Center funds remained available to support programs and a resource coordinator. At the same time, the closure of nearby Frazier Elementary and the imminent arrival of Frazier students brought the existence of the EFHC clinic at Frazier to the attention of Henson’s principal. A brief courtship ensued in spring 2006, during which Mr. Pales expressed his genuine interest in housing the clinic, and EFHC realized the degree to which Henson Elementary was already committed to whole child development and family support. The deal maker involved space – Henson could provide two spacious rooms on the first floor for clinic and social service staff, while other schools in the running could not. Further, to a degree that surprised both the principal and Erie, CPS administrators committed to rehab and outfit both rooms at minimal cost to EFHC, to open by Fall 2006. While it took until December for the clinic to be fully functional, the result was a school-based clinic that delighted the Erie professional staff, and provided the staging area for a new phase of community schooling at Henson Elementary.

**Distinguishing Features of the Henson + EFHC Partnership**

As a member of Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative, Henson Elementary strives to incorporate all the core features and strategies central to the Chicago model of community schooling. These include a strong alliance with a not-for-profit community partner, a vigorous agenda for out-of-school time, involvement of parents and teachers in planning processes, and efforts to deepen support services for children and families. In several ways Henson’s partnership with Erie Family Health Center has challenged the school to raise its community school practice to a new level of intentionality. In this section we suggest some of the ways that Henson is combining established capacity with new capabilities for enrichment and support.

**An extended hours community center.** In order to expand access to services and opportunities for child and family development, community schools extend their hours of operation and open their facilities to community uses. Henson has exemplified both features for several years, and deepened that commitment since 2004. Students are admitted to the building as early as 7:30 AM to have breakfast and participate in computer programs, open gym activities, and tutoring through the Principal’s Scholars program. While classes are in session, beginning at 8:30 AM, parents participate in workshops and receive direct services through the on-site clinic. With regular classroom dismissal at 2:45 PM, over half the student body remains in the building for a variety of after school recreational, enrichment, and tutoring options, keeping the building open until 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Several special events, including Local School Council meetings, parent open houses, and community meetings often keep the building open into the early evening.

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11 For an overview of the Chicago Community Schools Initiative, see Whalen, S. P. (June 2007). *Three Years into Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative (CSI).* Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago. Link: [http://cpsafterschool.org/CSI_Three_Year_Sudy_Dec_06_07.pdf](http://cpsafterschool.org/CSI_Three_Year_Sudy_Dec_06_07.pdf)
Henson is particularly committed to weekend and summer programming. During the 2008 academic year Saturdays were devoted to computer, cosmetology, dance, and nutritional classes as well as family field trips. Quite unusually for a CPS school, Sundays were made available for an adult men’s basketball program as well as occasional field trips. In June and July the school remains busy from 9:00 AM through early mid-afternoon with enrichment and academic support activities. Finally, the clinic itself operates full time throughout the year, including through all school breaks over 12 months of the year. This has coincided with a significant diversification of programs for students and adults.

A day of enriched classroom instruction. Henson has developed its curriculum and academic program in several ways that enrich the experience and support the success of students. A walk through the school reveals a rich print environment that promotes literacy. Practices such as word walls are prominent in each classroom, and student work is displayed on every floor. The school employs two Lead Literacy Teachers to help utilize resources from the Chicago Reading Initiative and organize professional development. The school participates in the curricular and professional development opportunities of Chicago Math and Science Initiative, employs a full time Lead Mathematics Teacher, and has adopted a challenging math curriculum developed at the University of Chicago. A two hour block scheduling approach is in place to sustain instruction in reading, math, and science. A grant from the Beaumont Foundation helped procure a mobile laptop laboratory to supplement classroom computers and reinforce the integration of technology into daily instruction. The same grant funded the installation of wireless capability in the library/media center.

Henson also has advanced on several fronts to improve classroom instruction. The primary grades participate in the CPS “Step Up to Third Grade” initiative, using the DIBELS assessment to track specific learning issues among younger learners. The middle school grades have departmentalized, helping students prepare for high school. Learning First assessment tools are employed to diagnose individual student learning issues, and teachers receive training in differentiated and cooperative learning strategies, including the use of learning centers. Teacher prep periods are coordinated to assure regular grade level team meetings, focused on curriculum alignment to the Illinois Learning Standards. A separate cross-grade literacy team addresses issues in student reading and writing. Teachers with key roles in school leadership and out-of-school time were well represented on the 2006 School Improvement Planning Team.

Diverse enrichment opportunities in out-of-school (OST) time. While North Lawndale youth live in close proximity to Chicago’s cultural amenities, they often have little experience of the city beyond their community’s borders. Participation in the Community Schools Initiative has allowed Henson to significantly expand these supports and experiences in out-of-school time. Since 2004, Henson has offered a diverse range of OST programs combining tutoring and academic support with enriched learning, opportunities across the arts, and sports and recreational offerings. A flexible weekly scheduling matrix assures that students involved in NCLB-mandated tutoring can access the school’s full slate of enrichment opportunities. Program registration also precludes students from signing up for the
same program in succession across semesters, in an effort to diversify the after school experiences of as many students as possible. During the 2006-2007 academic year, over 80% of Henson students participated in at least one OST program during the year, averaging 63 days of programming per student.12

Several options for direct tutoring and academic support are provided either before or after school. Supplementary Educational Services (or SES) has been provided by several tutoring organizations with No Child Left Behind funding. In 2007 SES reached over 158 students at Henson. The Principal’s Scholars program was instituted to reach students in grades 1-3 with extra academic support. Participants in this program typically have breakfast at school and proceed to their tutoring session at 8:00 AM, an hour before day classes begin. The Homework Club meets two days each week after school for 90 minutes, targeted to students in grades K through 5. Options such as Phonics in Motion and Reading and Math Fun allow teachers to diversify the delivery of academic enrichment activities through games and diverse manipulatives, particularly for students not involved in SES or other mandated tutoring.

Henson’s slate of over 30 programs attends to the needs of children at varied age levels. A sampling of the OST offerings that primary level students have enjoyed during the 2007-2008 academic year includes:

- **Double Dutch**, reaching about 30 students in grades 1 through 5, two days each week. The program uses this challenging rope jumping activity, highly popular with girls (and their moms) in African American communities, to promote strength, agility, and coordination, and build awareness of the dangers of childhood obesity.
- **S.T.E.P.S.** (or School Technology Enhancing and Preparing our Society), reaching about 30 students with a particular focus on grade 3, four days each week before school. The program uses the school library/media room and its wireless connectivity to promote computer literacy, keyboarding, and internet exploring, with supervision from two classroom teachers. Another **Computer Club** offers similar opportunities to students in grades K through 5 after school.
- **Scrapbook Art**, reaching about 10 students in grades 3-5 on Mondays for 90 minutes. This weekly class combines a wide range of media, from textiles and paper to digital photography, to build a record of each student’s special interest through the year.
- **The Music Program**, allowing students to learn the piano keyboard as well as dance and vocal music. Two primary teachers offer the program twice a week for 90 minutes to students in grades K through 5. Several dance programs on Saturday and through the summer reinforce African-American cultural awareness.

Henson addresses the needs of its middle school children through a combination of academic support and programs that cultivate talents and interests. These programs draw upon the passions of Henson’s classroom teachers as well as engaged community

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12 Based on 2006-2007 student-level OST attendance data provided to UIC by the CPS Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA).
residents as facilitators and coaches, many of them Henson alumni. A sampling of Henson’s offerings for its older students in academic year 2007-2008 would include:

- **Sports and recreation options**, including several inter-scholastic sports teams, a cheerleading squad, an intramural volleyball program, and the After School All Stars program combining after school tutoring with daily access to the school gym for a range of recreation activities.\(^{13}\)

- Two high quality **dance programs**. Marlon’s Way, an arts education organization with a commitment to African American youth, offered its African Dance program to 30 Henson 5th-8th graders in fall 2007.\(^{14}\) Praise Dance created a Saturday option for 15 students interested in African American faith-based dance styles.

- **DellTechno**, a joint effort between Dell Computer and the Chicago Public Schools, which supports 15 Henson students to gain computer hardware and software skills while building a computer that they will take home at the end of the session.

- **Offerings in fashion design and cosmetology**, introducing students to sewing and clothes design, hair and nail care, and personal hygiene. The programs combine attention to specific competencies with discussion of career and lifestyle choices.

**Committed partner organizations.** In addition to its close working partnership with Erie Family Health Center, Henson has cultivated several collaborative relationships in recent years, including:

**Harris Bank**, which “adopted” Henson in 2003 as a focus for corporate volunteerism and engagement with North Lawndale families. Activities have included a tutoring arrangement in which Harris staff and 6th graders meet twice each week during the school year. In recent years the Bank also has arranged and financed many field trips over the years, including visits to expose students to the Bank’s corporate headquarters, and sponsored a branch of the Chicago Children’s Choir. Henson has been consistently a lead participating school in Harris’ Bank at School program, which allows students as well as parents to maintain small accounts to defray such costs as graduation and registration fees.

**Communities in Schools of Chicago (CISC)**, an organization devoted to brokering relationships between schools and community service providers at minimum cost to school affiliates.\(^{15}\) Beginning in Fall 2000, CISC engaged Carol Cook, Henson’s school counselor, to help connect the school more effectively with community health and service providers. A CISC veteran school coordinator remains available to Henson to consult on service needs, and provide or identify training opportunities for staff.

**Lawndale Community Health (LCH)**, a behavioral health center within the network of the Chicago Department of Public Health. Erie Family Health Center maintains a referral relationship with LCH, allowing local families to access behavioral and mental health services.

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\(^{13}\) For more on After School All Stars program: [http://www.afterschoolallstars.org/site/pp.asp?c=enJJKMNpFmG&b=1169117](http://www.afterschoolallstars.org/site/pp.asp?c=enJJKMNpFmG&b=1169117).

\(^{14}\) For information on Marlon’s Way: [http://igniteone.org/marlonsway.htm](http://igniteone.org/marlonsway.htm).

\(^{15}\) For an overview of Communities in Schools of Chicago, see: [http://www.chicagocis.org/](http://www.chicagocis.org/).
Social-emotional learning (SEL) and health promotion. Henson has long promoted healthy life choices and social/emotional well-being in its recreational and arts programs. The partnership with Erie Family Health Center has brought an invigorated agenda of experiences promoting social and emotional learning and healthy lifestyle choices among students. Students are engaged during the class day as well as through OST programming, led by CPS teachers and EFHC staff. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the Health and Wellness program reached primary level students with information and fun activities two days each week for 90 minutes. The Girl Talk program has involved EFHC staff with a group of 30 girls to provide information about teen health, with frank talk regarding sexual choices and sexually transmitted diseases. A similar number of boys participate in the Male Mentorship program through a partnership with Marlon’s Way, focusing on similar issues from a male perspective.

These OST offerings complement a more ambitious program to integrate social, emotional, and health learning into the heart of every Henson student’s classroom day, and to engage youth themselves as partners. The Path to Adulthood curriculum involves EFHC staff in delivering SEL and health information to students in grades 5 through 8. EFHC staff coordinate with classroom faculty to cover topics vital to North Lawndale teens, covering substance abuse, gang recruitment, and how to sustain a path to healthy development over a period of 5 weekly sessions. Even more innovative is Living in a World of Violence (LWV), a program that crosses the boundaries of classroom time and OST to train older students as mentors for primary level students. Facilitated by EFHC’s full time social worker at Henson, LWV trains a group of 6th through 8th graders to collaborate with EFHS staff in addressing SEL issues like bullying, school yard safety, and domestic violence. The training sessions allow EFHC staff to unpack similar issues with the youth mentors while building planning and leadership skills. The curriculum is based on a nationally evaluated model.

Building assets among parents and caregivers. For many parents, Henson is not just their child’s school, it is their alma mater, and often the school their own parents and grandparents attended. In turn, adult development has been a strong feature of the community school effort at Henson, although as with most Chicago public schools, fostering parent attendance has remained a challenge. Since 2004, Henson has regularly offered GED classes in the afternoon and evening hours, as well as healthy lifestyle options like Yoga and nutritional classes. On the side of academic engagement, the school has sponsored Family Literacy Nights on a monthly basis, and family field trips to destinations such as Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry. Movie days on Saturday morning offer families a chance to relax at the end of the school week.

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16 For more information, see: http://199.253.140.81/city/webportal/portalDeptCategoryAction.do?BV_SessionID=@@@@04022116.1211809169@@@&BV_EngineID=ccdaddeekmgfifecelldffhdfgk.0&deptCategoryOID=-536891842&contentType=COC_EDITORIAL&topChannelName=Dept&entityName=Health&deptMainCategoryOID=-536888026

17 The curriculum is adapted from that developed by Dr. James Garbarino. See: http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4381.
Henson’s partnership with EFHC has brought new energy and resources to an agenda for parent and family outreach, with several initiatives underway. The At-Home Tutoring Program, for example, supplies parents with children in grades K – 3 with flashcards and other instructional materials to help them support their children’s literacy development. Another innovative program combines a nutrition initiative with parenting education through varied workshops and discussions. Each Thursday EFHC provides a bus to transport 15 or more parents to the local Chicago Police district station, where the Department sponsors a ProduceMobile Program with high quality fruits and vegetables available year-round. After parents load their two bags, they return to Henson to sort their groceries, enjoy coffee and a treat, and participate in “wellness workshops” that cover a range of health topics, with particular attention to diabetes, high blood pressure, and nutrition. Henson also participates in the Nourish for Knowledge initiative of CPS and the Greater Chicagoland Food Depository. Each Friday Henson children receive a bag of food to take home to supplement family resources.

Stepping Up to Health Disparities: The School-Based Health Center

The staging area and resource base for Henson’s invigorated agenda for health promotion and social/emotional learning is the school’s new school-based clinic, administered by EFHC. The center occupies the west end of the school’s first floor, distributed across two large, newly renovated offices, with a street entrance controlled directly by center staff. One office houses the medical clinic and examination area, complete with several smaller exam rooms and fronted by a registration desk. The other office, called the Student Resource Center, includes several spaces for individual and small group therapy as well as EFHC-sponsored programs. The layout of the center promotes easy traffic between the two office areas, and allows quick transfers of families between the center’s medical and social services providers.

The two sides of the Erie Henson Center are home base for six of EFHC’s seven full time employees working at Henson. Four roles focus primarily on direct medical care with students and family members: an Advance Practice Family Nurse Practitioner with an RN and several certifications, a Medical Assistant, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and a Patient Care Manager. A Team Leader oversees student and family benefits enrollment support services, acts as liaison to the faculty, and supports the resource coordinator position. A Health Educator leads the development and implementation of health promotion and education programs for students and parents. The full time community school resource coordinator occupies an office near the Center, working closely with the Team Leader and Erie’s Director of School Health and Health Promotion, Amy Valukas. In her role, Ms. Valukas serves as EFHC’s primary liaison to Henson’s Principal and leadership team.

The clinic is equipped to meet all specifications for a school-based health clinic in the State of Illinois, and reflects the vision for school-based care advocated by the Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers, in which EFHC plays an active role. The main reception area includes a registration counter and waiting area. An alcove is outfitted with a small reading library with signs encouraging family literacy. Through the Reach Out and Read Program, the Health Center offers every child making a “well child” visit a free book to take home. The clinic also includes two fully appointed exam rooms with adult and infant
examination tables and all equipment typical of a doctor’s office. A state-of-the-art clinical lab allows the staff to process blood and other fluids and undertake a range of diagnostic activities on-site. An interdisciplinary room with utility kitchen and a small meeting table are locations for team meetings and staff breaks. Across the hall, the Student Resource Center includes a large meeting room with conference table and staff work areas, as well as open access computers for parents and students. A smaller room provides a more confidential space for consultation with the full time LCSW.

Around the country one key to staffing school-based clinics affordably and effectively has been the latitude to place both management and daily medical care in the hands of highly qualified nurse practitioners. Henson’s health center operates on such a “nurse managed” model. In Illinois, in order to manage and practice at a level of autonomy required of a school-based health center, three licenses are required – Registered Nurse, Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), and Controlled Substances. Family Nurse Practitioners also must maintain a written collaborative agreement with a practicing physician, covered in Henson’s case by a physician within Erie’s extended network of doctors. With these qualifications and in this context of support, Family Nurse Practitioners conduct and manage a wide range of clinical activities, including personal and medical histories, full physical examinations, diagnostic procedures and tests, and a wide range of prescriptions. Just as importantly, the Family Nurse Practitioner leads the clinic’s program for preventive and palliative care for students and adults. In this Henson has been particularly fortunate in its current FNP, Martha Glynn, who came to her position with 15 years of experience within community health settings.

In addition to these assets, the Erie Henson Center can draw upon the broader Erie health network in several ways to promote the health and well-being of Henson students and families. In her role as Director of School Health and Health Promotion, Ms. Valukas supervises 15 Health Promotors dispersed across the EFHC network. These staff are available to supplement full time Henson health center staff in the event of larger initiatives or events, such as a health fair or a training event for Henson parents. While the lead care provider at Henson is a nurse practitioner, the Center can refer school students and families to EFHC’s varied specialty practices throughout Chicago’s west and northwest sides for dental, pre-natal, and diagnostic services. In turn, EFHC maintains
Aligning the School and Clinic

Not only are schools and medical clinics complex organizations in their own right, but they each are embedded in professional cultures, systems, policies, and routines that must be aligned if effective collaboration is to occur. Over the first two years of their work together, lead professionals in the school and EFHS were able to anticipate some issues of coordination. Others emerged over the first several months of working partnership. Some areas of operation requiring joint planning, policy development and adaptive creativity include the following:

Determining scope of service. An important early decision in the life of a school-based health center involves who will be eligible for services. In this regard school-based centers can vary widely, even within the network of one provider like EFHC. School-based centers can serve as community health centers accessible to all residents of a neighborhood, taking appointments from within a defined geographic area or even city wide. Or they can decide to restrict their registration and service to currently enrolled students and families of the host school. Much depends on the goals of school leaders and clinic staff, as well as considerations like neighborhood safety, potential disruptions to school routine, and the fiscal and staffing capacity of the clinic.

EFHC approaches scope of service as striking a balance between their own preference to open services to the widest possible community clientele, and the school’s natural tendency to privilege students as the target for clinical intervention. What attracted Erie to Henson was some assurance that a neighborhood community school would prioritize the extension of services to families, allowing the clinic to reach a significant number of local residents. Together the school and clinic decided to focus services on the “extended Henson family,” including a fairly wide circle of family relationships associated with each enrolled student. In practice this means that the Henson Center schedules most of its appointments locally, while taking no general appointments from the central EFHC call center. Center staff also continue to provide services to formerly enrolled families, at least through the school year, as well as to families from its former host school who were enrolled in the prior year. Indeed, maintaining continuity with their Frazier School clients was an important condition for agreeing to transfer the assets of that clinic into Henson Elementary.

Decisions about scope of service can also entail difficult trade-offs for clinical professionals around the quality and conditions of pediatric care. On the one hand, children in communities like North Lawndale often lack effective access to health care and insurance, even in states like Illinois that have deepened public insurance subsidies for pediatric medical care. Adult support at home often is a missing link between children and medical care. Basing clinics in schools provides the surest access point to medical care for children in these communities. On the other hand, school-based care for children in severely underserved communities often places practitioners in the bind of treating children without a parent present – a situation viewed by many pediatric professionals as inherently sub-standard. As a matter of practice, treating children without the

18 For a list of hospital relationships, see: [http://www.eriefamilyhealth.org/hospital_affiliations.htm](http://www.eriefamilyhealth.org/hospital_affiliations.htm).
comforting presence of an adult family member predictably raises the stress levels for everyone involved. For this reason, as one EFHC clinician told us, some Erie clinical staff prefer to avoid working in school-based clinics with a strong focus on student services.

**Routines for clinical referral.** For several reasons it is critical for school and clinic personnel to agree on routines and procedures for delivering children to and retrieving from the clinic. First, while the clinic at Henson now registers a majority of its children for EFHC services, about one-third of families decide not to participate. Registration remains the prerogative of families, and non-registered children should not come under the care of the clinic, except under emergency circumstances. Second, direct traffic between classrooms and the clinic invites serial visits from “frequent flyers,” children who seem always in transit to the Center. Routines and follow through are essential to monitor children’s whereabouts, assure their safety, and suppress unnecessary visits. Third, a small number of children require daily or weekly scheduled visits to assure compliance with drug and treatment regimes. Routines assure that treatment occurs and children remain in school.

So far the administrative routines developed by school and Center staff have worked well to assure safety, prevent lost class time, and verify registration (see form below). Teachers understand to send children first to the school office, preferably with an adult escort. Front office staff review the child’s registration to verify eligibility. If eligible, an office staffer then escorts sick children to the Center. If ineligible, the child may be referred to the CPS school nurse (available only on Tuesdays) or the parent will be contacted. Children sent to the clinic are escorted back to the school office, logged out of care, and sent home or returned to the classroom. For school office staff, the procedures have reduced considerably the amount of time spent trying to contact parents to arrange pick ups of sick children or verify arrangements for care.

**Building Access and Security.** CPS school engineers and security officers generally take their respective roles in daily school life quite seriously. Lack of a cooperative relationship with a CPS building engineer can impede significantly the intention of the community school to extend building uses or hours of service. Productive relationships, in turn, invariably involve the principal as a mediator, facilitator, and problem solver. In the case of the EFHC clinic, a pressing issue for the school engineer involved establishing procedures for accessing the building that would place responsibility in the hands of clinic staff. Procedures also were needed to close the clinic promptly, and allow the clinic to function over Saturdays and holidays without the engineer’s physical presence, but consistent with basic protocols in school heating, lighting, and bathroom care. EFHC worked with the engineer and principal to establish mutually acceptable practices, yielding much more extensive building access than EFHC was able to negotiate at their former location.
Maintenance. Medical facilities of every sort must develop clear protocols around trash disposal and medical waste. The contractual agreement between CPS and school-based health providers generally commits CPS to provide cleaning and maintenance services. As it opened its new clinic, EFHC decided to hire an external service to handle daily cleaning in the two Center rooms, and to contract out the disposal of medical waste. In turn, Henson Elementary attends to routine issues like changing light bulbs, and the custodial staff can access the clinic spaces to address occasional contingencies like open windows after hours.

Meshing Clinical Management with the Lead Partner Role

In addition to the multiple tasks involved in establishing a school-based clinic, EFHS staff have had to learn the multi-faceted role of the community school lead partner agency (or LPA). For Ms. Valukas, the designated liaison from EFHC, this entailed responding to three specific challenges in the initial year of operations. First, she needed to map the full extent of the lead partner’s responsibility for after school programs and external partner relationships in a school that already managed a complex slate of OST offerings both for students and parents. This meant mastering several reporting obligations to CPS and developing communication channels with CPS to assure timely completion of grant-related responsibilities. Second, the liaison and other EFHC staff needed to develop a working relationship with Henson’s principal and other key staff that went considerably beyond the normal extent of collaboration in other schools with EFHC clinics. On top of monitoring the clinic’s status, the new lead partner liaison would find herself involved in all facets of after school and summer planning, as well as addressing inevitable emergencies from OST staff turnover to keeping the bathrooms stocked in after school time. And it meant exchanging phone numbers with the principal and being “on call” to address emergencies.

A third challenge has involved adapting EFHC school-based management practices to
fit the Chicago community school framework, with particular attention to integrating Henson’s experienced resource coordinator. From the EFHC perspective, two features of the CPS resource coordinator (RC) position have proven an awkward fit to EFHC’s school-based management framework. First, CPS resource coordinators often function as their agency’s primary representative at the school site, and thus are vested with wide latitude to make local managerial decisions. RC’s also often function as the first line of communication between the CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities, local community organizations, and the school. In the context of a working health clinic, however, Erie locates the RC position within a management hierarchy that is more centralized than the community school model. Especially in the transition to the lead partner role, senior Erie managers felt a need to be inside the communication loop with CPS managers around issues like budget and program management. For Henson’s highly respected veteran RC, Ms. Syretta Ashford, this has meant letting go of some aspects of autonomy that she enjoyed when NLC was lead partner - managing budgets, for example – in favor of consultation with the clinic’s Team Leader and Lead Partner Liaison. It has taken time to make this transition, with occasional lapses of communication along the way.

The Chicago community school model also intentionally locates the RC position between the authority of the school principal and the oversight of the lead partner agency. While the RC is an employee of the lead partner agency, each RC must establish a strong working relationship with the principal if OST programs are to thrive and other community school practices take root. In practice, this means that principals and lead partner liaisons must establish their own working relationship in order to manage the RC’s time and talents effectively. While Eric is a highly collaborative organization, such a joint management arrangement is still new to their experience, and made more challenging at Henson by an already strong working relationship between Ms. Ashford and Principal Pales. And for Ms. Ashford, it has required considerable resilience and commitment to read and adapt to changes in her role as Eric’s liaison and Henson’s principal have gradually established their own working relationship and lines of communication. She has made this adjustment while learning to manage a significantly expanded slate of OST programs.

Moving Forward – Real Successes, Emerging Challenges

Across Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative, several schools are addressing health disparities with innovative programs and resources that reflect contemporary standards of coordinated school health (Deschesnes, Martin, and Hill, 2003). But few schools approach the capacity being built within the EFHC/Henson partnership in the allied areas of treatment, prevention, and health education. There is strong conviction among both Henson and EFHC staff that establishing the clinic and expanding social, emotional, and health programming are yielding benefits for students, families, and teachers. While formal evaluation still awaits, anecdotal evidence suggests that many more students are receiving routine health care, and fewer students miss school days due to relatively minor treatment needs. There is less need to summon parents to retrieve sick children when the clinic can help a child recover and return to class.

In terms of capacity to address student health emergencies, there is clear evidence of the clinic’s “value added.” In spring 2008, a
serious outbreak of Meningitis in North Lawndale mobilized the resources of both CPS and the Chicago Department of Public Health to inoculate students. Schools were the logical venue for this effort, but inoculation rates were limited by student absentee rates on the few days that public health teams were available to visit schools. By contrast, the clinic staff was able to cover over 90% of Henson students (a passive consent procedure still yielded some parental refusals). In the process, clinic staff also were able to conduct brief health assessments of most children in the school.

Several factors, and two in particular, have contributed to overall success in establishing a promising partnership between EFHC and Henson Elementary. First, most agree on the importance of having the school principal and senior clinic staff “on the same page” when establishing a school-based clinic and an accompanying program of prevention and health promotion. This appears to be a strength of the Henson/EFHC collaboration.

On the clinic side, EFHC staff bring considerable operational insight to their work with educators, and apply equal parts of patience and intentionality to partnering with busy school staff. The fact that the EFHC liaison is a public health professional rather than a medical professional also has helped the partnership, in that Ms. Valukas is freed in her role to engage the principal and resource coordinator throughout the community school day. This has allowed her to build trust with Mr. Pales and other key staff, with the necessary flexibility to respond quickly to the inevitable emergencies of grant management and establishing a school-based health center.

On the school side, Mr. Pales began as early as 2004 to investigate the possibility of a school-based health clinic in response to the increasing array of stressors he observed in the families attending Henson. As a white principal in a predominately African American community, he is particularly aware of the importance of building trust with school families and allying the school with services that meet their needs. He has drawn upon his long association with Henson, first as a teacher and then master teacher, and later as principal, to build a community school program that welcomes family involvement and engages family issues. Programs like the weekend men’s basketball program succeed in attracting the engagement of community males in other activities like Family Literacy Night. When the opportunity to acquire the partnership with EFHC emerged, he was quick to signal his commitment to both EFHC, his own staff, and CPS administration, just as he has been entrepreneurial in securing other service partners. He is also a “hands on” community school principal who consistently seeks information about program enrollment and quality from his resource coordinator, and visits the clinic to stay abreast of issues facing the staff. His insistence on close communication can be demanding for a partner more accustomed to working fairly autonomously in school buildings. But it raises the potential to build a school health agenda that reaches for the scope laid out in the CDC’s Comprehensive School Health framework.

Second, several key staff positions are occupied by Henson professionals who combine deep acquaintance with the surrounding community with expertise in their roles and a strong commitment to collaboration. One pivotal role has been played by Henson’s full time school counselor, Carol Cook, who has attended to

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the social and emotional well-being of Henson’s families and staff for 18 years. Ms. Cook’s duties include management of all special education placements, group and individual counseling, implementation of standardized testing, high school placements for graduating 8th graders, and processing of all student transitions into and out of Henson. When Henson entered the Community Schools Initiative, Ms. Cook agreed to manage the after school programs with an eye to developing their social and emotional dimensions, and creating more diverse learning options for Henson students. In 2006, it fell to Ms. Cook to manage the transition of 140 Frazier Elementary students to Henson classrooms, a role that also involved collaborating with EFHC staff. In many respects the exceptional breadth of Ms. Cook’s duties reflect the importance that Mr. Pales places on social and emotional support within his building.

In turn, the partnership has benefited considerably from the competence and local credibility of contributors like veteran resource coordinator Syretta Ashford and EFHC Team Leader Marion Byrd, both community residents and Henson parents. Ms. Ashford provides an example of how talent in the resource coordinator position can be drawn effectively from the surrounding community. Ms. Ashford came to her position in May 2005 after working in several staff support roles with the North Lawndale Learning Center, Henson’s first lead community partner. As a long-time resident of the Douglas Boulevard neighborhood, she is well acquainted with the struggles of many Henson families. After a year of mentorship under Ms. Cook, she has emerged as an entrepreneurial self-starter who has brought several program funding opportunities to the attention of Mr. Pales. Her proximity to the school has been an asset for opening the school to weekend activities. In partnership with Ms. Byrd, who also came to her position as a community resident, she is beginning to learn how to integrate EFHC assets into the mix of resources that support a diverse OST program schedule at Henson. Other fortunate Henson staff assets for the establishment of the Erie clinic include an experienced and highly regarded school nurse, and a veteran assistant principal in Ms. Doris Spraggin, equally respected for her expertise in curriculum development and the management of school discipline issues. Inevitably, as Henson Elementary and EFHC consider how to elevate their partnership to a next level of impact, several challenges will require intentional consideration. Three emerged as particularly pressing in our conversations with staff of both organizations.

**Recovering momentum toward academic improvement.** Henson Elementary’s recent academic performance is marked by both progress and inconsistency, and illustrates many of the challenges facing North Lawndale schools. Figure 1 depicts the trends.
over six years in the number of Henson students who meet (or exceed) the grade level benchmarks in reading, math, and science, expressed as a composite across the three subject tests. After making inconsistent progress through the early decade, Henson made a clear jump in academic effectiveness in 2006, exceeding the overall CPS rate of improvement. After three years of community school practice, Henson met Annual Yearly Progress (or AYP) benchmarks set by the No Child Left Behind Act for the first time, exceeding expectations even among its many special education students. Figure 2 sums up trends in the ability of Henson’s 8th grade graduates to meet minimum criteria to be considered “on-track” for high school graduation at the end of ninth grade. After lagging behind other North Lawndale schools for most of the decade, half of the class of 2006 was meeting these criteria in June 2007 – a significant and sustained improvement.

Figure 2. Eighth Grade Graduates On-track for HS Graduation. Henson, Other Area 8, and All CPS Elementaries

Source: Chicago Public Schools, Office of Research, Evaluation and Accountability

Henson experienced a 6% setback in ISAT performance in 2007, however, as it struggled to absorb over students from neighboring Frazier Elementary. These students included a large number of children with special education needs, placing significant demands on Henson’s existing counseling and classroom staff. Our interviews with informants who were close observers of Frazier’s final year suggest that student learning suffered most from the difficult process of closing this school. This corroborates what we heard from Henson educators, that new students brought significant learning deficits to their new school that translated to poor test scores, and that a full year was required to socialize new students to “the Henson Way” across all grade levels. This also aligns with results of the 2007 Student Connections Survey, which indicated that about 38% of 6th-8th graders felt that school safety and the tone of relationships among students needed improvement. For Henson’s staff, two years of addressing new academic as well as classroom behavior challenges have yielded fatigue and a sense of “fragmentation,” as well as pressure to recover momentum toward academic improvement.

In response, Henson has put several critical building blocks in place that can contribute to more sustained progress. The 2007 Student Connections Survey revealed that over 80% of older Henson students see their teachers as both academically challenging and emotionally supportive, more than most North Lawndale schools. While mobility has climbed to over 30% annually over a five year period, reflecting steady depopulation in the neighborhood, the school has cut truancy rates significantly, from 29% in 2005 to under 5% in 2007. Leading from a community school perspective, the school will build on recent programs targeting social and emotional development to create more opportunities for
Henson students to voice their concerns and exercise leadership. This should be aided by efforts to coordinate Erie and Henson staff more effectively.

**Clarifying Issues of Inter-Professional Collaboration.** The location of a medical facility within a school represents the integration – and unless care is taken, the collision – of two of our society’s most complex professional cultures. Each takes its responsibility for the protection of children very seriously. Yet these systems vary considerably in the policy regimes that govern their actions as well as how they understand and manage critical issues such as confidentiality. Absent highly intentional, informed, and consistent communication and coordination among leaders and critical staff (e.g., school nurses and clinic nurses; clinic and school social workers), frustrations can arise and trust can erode when it appears that information is being withheld across institutional lines (Tourse & Mooney, 1999). Some of this frustration is evident at Henson, where available energy has focused on the complexities of establishing a start-up clinic.

Two different, complex, and punitive policy regimes around confidentiality and information exchange – FERPA and HIPPA – govern employees of schools and social service agencies. Schools and external agencies are conscientious as well as risk-averse when it comes to observing their respective obligations. Schools are governed by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that places significant boundaries around their latitude to share medical records with non-authorized personnel, including school contractors. EFHC staff are governed by the privacy provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) which strictly bounds who may receive information about any client from an Erie employee such as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker practicing at a partner school.

Thus while FERPA does allow teachers and counselors access to critical information regarding, for example, a student’s special education status, EFHC can not share information with teachers or even Henson’s counselor regarding students or families in EFHC’s therapeutic care. This can actually benefit the school if it creates a new avenue for treatment for a Henson family that is reluctant to share a problem with school staff. But it can also limit the ability of school staff to shape instruction to the full needs of individual students. At the same time, FERPA restrictions prevent the school nurse from sharing school medical records with Erie clinic staff, and limits their knowledge of a child’s immunization history. HIPPA restrictions have also complicated Erie’s effort to fully report student involvement in clinic services to CPS in accordance with 21st Century Community Learning Center grant requirements. Currently EFHC enters ID numbers for clinic service recipients to observe confidentiality restrictions, but cannot link these numbers to student names to fully account for the range of services provided to individual students.

While challenges like those posed by FERPA and HIPPA are real enough, lead staff from the school and Erie recognize the potential benefits of convening key professional staff from both organizations to clarify conflicts of practice and policy. Some collaborative efforts already point the way toward creative solutions to issues such as confidentiality. In spring 2008, for example, mental health staff from the school and EFHC as well as the YMCA collaborated within the framework of the Imagination Theatre program to provide education and counseling to students in
grades 1 through 5 around sensitive issues of sexual abuse. The LCSW from Erie, Ms. Sandra Rigsbee, participated in preliminary screening activities, while the school counselor, Ms. Cook, undertook counseling with the potentially most serious abuse cases in order to assure that the school remained fully apprised of issues facing these students. In a similar vein, collaborative steps between the school and clinic nurses enhanced the effectiveness of the spring’s inoculation effort against Meningitis. Intentionality will be required moving forward to coordinate schedules among school and EFHC staff so that meetings can occur and time be created to disentangle complexities associated with medical practice in school settings. The CPS Office of Specialized Services will soon publish guidelines around school-based health clinics that should prove helpful to such conversations.

**Sustaining an ambitious health agenda.**

In an era of escalating health care costs in the United States, the provision of quality community health services poses daunting challenges. The costs associated with staffing and provisioning a full service health facility are formidable, requiring deep administrative support to coordinate scheduling and billing functions. While federal resources such as Medicare and Medicaid can provide substantial funding for care, they also entail the management of a perplexing array of policies and procedures, driving further administrative costs. And in the case of an organization like Erie Family Health Center, many families whose care is central to their mission will not enjoy health care coverage from any sources, particularly in contemporary Latino communities such as those expanding in Chicago.

Within the vise of rising medical and administrative costs, interdisciplinary and comprehensive school-based health care is often the first to be cut or severely curtailed (Bannor, 2004). Faced with a general budget crisis in early 2007, for example, Cook County administrators elected to close four out of five school-based health clinics in the City of Chicago, adversely impacting residents in several of the city's poorest neighborhoods. Similar budgetary pressures inevitably pose questions about the viability of school-based health care for organizations like EFHS, which also operate community-based facilities in underserved communities. On the one hand, school-based care “captures” students and parents who are difficult to route into any other health facility, even those subsidized and relatively close to home. Further, EFHC’s school-based clinics meet all necessary criteria to be designated as Federally Qualified Health Centers (or FQHCs), reflecting in particular their affiliation with Erie’s broader array of affiliate services and partner hospitals. This permits EFHC’s Henson clinic to recoup an enhanced rate of Medicaid reimbursement in a population that overwhelmingly qualifies for federal medical benefits, and carries other benefits related to malpractice insurance, drug price discounts, and other advantages associated with federal grantee status (for a detailed review, see Swider & Valukas, 2004).

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20 For information: [http://www.imaginationtheater.org/programming.html](http://www.imaginationtheater.org/programming.html).


22 For a sense of the administrative complexity of operating as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), see: [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/fqhc.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/fqhc.asp). For an overview of the benefits attaching to designation as an FQHC, see:
Yet while FQHC designation can help school-based clinics like Henson’s cover basic administrative costs, other factors limit levels of reimbursement, and prevent school-based clinics from contributing strongly to the overall bottom line of not-for-profits like EFHC. Even in circumstances as favorable as Henson’s, school clinics see less foot traffic than non-school settings, and are hampered by competing building uses that can suppress hours of operation. The school’s desire to privilege the school population also limits the community outreach efforts of many school-based clinics. A significant number of families will remain wary of seeking health care within a school setting, even if they qualify for Medicaid coverage. And some populations, such as older men, may be reluctant to cross the threshold of a school for care. Thus while most pediatric offices handle upwards of 30 cases per day, Henson’s clinic averages 11 cases per day across the year—a number that varies widely across school seasons, holidays, and other “slow zones.” As EFHC’s Amy Valukas put it, “The in-school clinic is such a resource intensive model, you want it in communities where, because of extraordinary barriers, there is no other way to reach kids with the scope of care they need.”

These constraints mean that Henson’s partnership must generate a significant level of private grant support in order to staff and provision the level of health care and education now emerging within its community school design. In this regard, EFHC’s administrative model offers several advantages, freeing the agency liaison to focus on grant development as well as leadership in organizations like the Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers (ICSHC). 23 Affiliation with ICSHC links Eric Family Health Center to a network of providers that actively lobbies state officials on behalf of school-based health funding. ICSHC has begun to develop marketing and research tools to document the impacts of school-based health initiatives. EFHC also affiliates with Illinois’ new Federation for Community Schools, “…a collaborative that advocates for policies that develop and sustain community schools, which support children, youth, families, and communities.”24 Both organizations enjoy the support of area philanthropies that have consistently pushed for greater health-related funding from private and public sources.

But to strengthen its case for school-based approaches, EFHC must increase its capacity to evaluate both the quality and impact of its “value added” in schools like Henson. Several commentators have noted the need for strong evaluation studies of school-based health initiatives (St. Leger & Nutbeam, 2000; Bannor, 2004; NASBHC, 2005). But in common with other human service areas, high quality evaluation poses both methodological and fiscal challenges, particularly when dollars already are scarce to fund direct community services. Data quality issues abound, for example, involving the development of new outcome indicators that better represent the contributions of health-related interventions to student academic performance and well-being. Data access also poses challenges, involving cooperation across institutions to link student health and academic records consistent with FERPA and HIPAA requirements, but adequate to the demands of high quality research. These challenges are surmountable in a context that features

23 For ICSHC information, see: http://www.ilmaternal.org/ICSHC.index.htm.
24 http://www.ilcommunityschools.org/
increased collaboration between school and health professionals, at both the school and district levels. Moving forward, the emerging partnership between Henson Elementary and Erie Family Health Center represents an exceptional opportunity to research and document the full potential of community schools as platforms for comprehensive health promotion in underserved communities like Chicago’s North Lawndale.

References


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A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this profile. During spring 2007 and winter 2008 UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators. These were combined with interviews with teachers, students, and parents from three prior years of study. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and its partners were collected and analyzed, most notably the 2006 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA), out-of-school time program schedules, and web-based documents from the school, Erie Family Health Center, and several other community partners. Community census data were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC). School achievement trend data were derived from the University of Northern Illinois' Interactive Illinois Report Card website. Community safety information was derived from the Chicago Police Department's CLEARMAP system.
Corporate Partnership Goes to Community School: Herzl Elementary, the Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College Chicago, and J.P. Morgan Chase

Across the United States each day, private businesses large and small contribute their resources to the support and improvement of public schools. School-business relationships range across a broad spectrum of educational activities. They deploy corporate volunteers in numerous roles, fund improvement of curriculum, instruction, and professional development, sponsor after school programs, and even underwrite capital improvements. Some businesses align their engagement closely with brand identities – areas like technology, nutrition, or sports equipment – while others follow the lead of school partners. Some businesses prefer direct impact on individual schools, while others attend more to district, state, and national initiatives. Taken as a whole, business engagement has become an increasingly prominent and indispensable term in the equation of support for public schools.

As business engagement has grown, so too has urgency to increase the impact of philanthropic dollars. One reason that the federal No Child Left Behind Act has garnered business support is the law’s appeal to corporate values – themes such as competition, accountability, privatization, and attention to measurable outcomes. Another approach that is attracting the attention of corporate America is the idea of community schooling.¹ This framework challenges schools to remake themselves as centers of community, by extending their hours of operation, developing enrichment programming, addressing the needs of families, building the capacity of parents, and tapping the assets of neighborhoods and community organizations. For corporate champions of community schools, community schooling aligns well with the value placed on human development and community partnership within their own organizational cultures. It also provides a coherent entry point for organizing valued but often disparate efforts involving community development.

In this community school profile we highlight what can be accomplished when a school collaborates with an urban liberal arts college and a committed corporate patron to engage the talents and address the needs of students and parents. Like many schools in underserved African American neighborhoods, Chicago’s Herzl Elementary has been a center of community for North Lawndale for decades, providing a focus of pride, resistance, and ownership. Herzl’s dual partnership with Columbia College Chicago and JPMorgan Chase has expanded developmental supports for students and parents, encouraged individual and collective artistic expression, and deepened conditions for academic progress. Sustaining progress has required a commitment to bridge three distinct organizational cultures, and to invest in key positions that facilitate communication and collaboration.

¹ See the website of the Coalition for Community Schools: http://www.communityschools.org/.
Community Schooling at Herzl Elementary

Theodore Herzl Elementary is a public elementary school located at 3711 W. Douglas Blvd. in the heart of the North Lawndale community on Chicago's west side. The school serves a predominately African American student body (98.7% in 2007) of moderate size (about 770 students in 2007) in grades PK - 8. Herzl Child Parent Center (or CPC), located close by at 1401 S. Hamlin Ave., serves children ages 3 and above. Together the two buildings form a small but cohesive urban campus at the western end of Douglas Boulevard, a thoroughfare that still evokes a day when North Lawndale was a tree-lined suburb, and later a vibrant Jewish enclave of Chicago.

With its columned façade and graceful interior, one can see why Herzl students view their school with pride. Opened in 1915, the building itself has adjusted to a range of educational missions, including stints as a high school, junior college, and a naval officer training facility. Today the structure affords a number of unique amenities, including a spacious kitchen on the first floor, a 500-seat auditorium, a free standing health clinic, and two venerable gymnasiums. Recent, much needed renovations have replaced aging windows and brightened the school’s exterior, while classrooms benefit from computer and technology access. A large play lot is available in the rear of the campus, and the school annually cultivates community gardens around the property.

Yet for such a large and ranging building, the signature experience for visitors to Herzl is one of warmth, welcome, and order. Security staff provides a consistently friendly presence in the entrance to the building, whimsically accompanied by a large, colorfully decorated “Chicago Cow” that in the summer of 2001 claimed a conspicuous place in Chicago’s Loop. Proudly decorated by Herzl students, the cow signals the school’s commitment to connecting its students to Chicago’s cultural and business life. More poignant is the corner of the school entrance dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King and African American identity, a reminder that Dr. King lived less than 2 blocks from Herzl when he campaigned against slum conditions with the Chicago Freedom Movement in 1965. Colorful murals and student art communicate throughout the building that Herzl expects great things of its graduates, celebrating business and community partnerships that bridge students to a world of opportunity in Chicago.

Chicago’s historic North Lawndale community is located roughly 5 miles from the downtown Chicago Loop, stretching from the central west side to the border of Cicero township. In the wake of the Great Chicago Fire in the 1870’s, which North Lawndale escaped, the community grew both as a population center and an industrial corridor. The presence of large employers such as Sears and International Harvester helped to maintain a strong local employment base through the 1940’s, and fueled the development of small businesses and cultural institutions.

This equation of local employment and community vitality shifted swiftly after the Second World War, as African American

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2 For a brief description of the CPS CPC program, see: http://www.ecechicago.org/programs/ece/cpc.html. For recent coverage of the success of Chicago CPC program featuring the Herzl CPC, see: http://www.nbe5.com/education/14901809/detail.html.

3 For a view of Herzl’s cow and several of its colorful murals, see the school website: http://www.herzl.cps.k12.il.us/herzl_main.htm.

4 For a succinct summary of the history of North Lawndale, see the website of the Encyclopedia of Chicago: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/901.html.
families moved to North Lawndale from the South and Chicago’s south side, seeking work and a better life. As whites left and the Black population burgeoned, discrimination related to employment and housing set in motion a sustained pattern of community disinvestment that attracted the attention of Dr. King and persists to this day. The riots that followed the King assassination and the economic downturn of the early 1970’s only advanced disinvestment and job loss, leading to a severe erosion of population, deepened poverty among the remaining African American residents, and a landscape of deteriorated properties. Today’s North Lawndale is among 11 Chicago communities fitting what the Metro Chicago Information Center calls a pattern of “desertification,” in which “…very few moderate- or high-income families remain in the neighborhood, leaving a high concentration of low-income families” (Taylor, 2007).

North Lawndale’s community advocates have not been passive in confronting discrimination and disinvestment. Several comprehensive housing and community development initiatives have targeted North Lawndale since the 1960’s. Each has attempted through varied strategies to shift the neighborhood toward a mixed income pattern that would attract new residents, anchor small business, and link residents to job training, affordable housing, and vital social services (Keating and Krumholtz, 1996). The theme of combining local community- and faith-based organizations with philanthropic and government actors to achieve mixed income development remains the core strategic vision of more recent initiatives. One example, the redevelopment of Homan Square on the foundation of the old Sears corporate headquarters, assembled corporate, government, and community assets to build moderately priced houses and raise a beautiful community center. Other promising projects include the Ezra Community Homes Initiative organized through United Power for Action and Justice, and the leadership of organizations such as Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, Steans Family Foundation, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago to privilege the views of residents in crafting redevelopment plans. But building community involvement in such ventures must overcome considerable local distrust that redevelopment is not a prelude to gentrification of the sort that has cleared large African American communities from other near-Loop neighborhoods. And mounting such ventures means overcoming what a recent United Power report calls a “perfect storm” of factors favoring private, market-rate development over mixed-income policy considerations in the City of Chicago.

If anything, the daily social and economic conditions faced by the children who attend Herzl Elementary are an intensified reflection of the challenges posed by life in North Lawndale at mid-decade. A review of census indicators in the two tracts surrounding Herzl suggests the

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6 Local organizations such as the Lawndale Alliance vehemently oppose the City’s plans to assign TIF status to the area surroundings the intersection of Pulaski and Ogden Avenues, complaining that under-appraisal of property values and property tax hikes will force long-time residents and property owners out of North Lawndale. See the Chicago Defender: http://www.chicagodefender.com/view.php?i=483.
7 To see United Power’s 2006 Housing Report, see: http://www.united-power.org/system/files/UPhousing+report+final.pdf
following stressors that families confront and children bring to school each day:

- **Financial stress.** By all measures, Herzl’s families were among the poorest and financially constrained in North Lawndale in 2000. In 2007 over 97% of Herzl students qualified for federal free/reduced lunch subsidies. But this does not adequately reflect the degree of financial stress and constraint that Herzl families typically face. At a median income level of $19,300 in 2000, 47.5% of families in Herzl’s census area fell below the federal poverty line, while 35% of families earned below $10,000 annually. Unemployment (likely underestimated) stood at 12.7% for adults in the labor market, although total adult unemployment exceeds 40%. Only 6% of adults over 25 years had completed a post-secondary degree. 44% of households owned no motor vehicle, while 22% had no telephone service.

- **Housing-related stress.** New housing was evident everywhere to Herzl students walking to school in 2005. According to Chicago building permit data, the two census tracts surrounding Herzl included 46 new residential construction projects that year. But as annoyed Herzl parents told us in a 2004 focus group, attending “open houses” in their neighborhoods made it quickly clear that these properties were priced far above their income brackets. These families were instead preoccupied with finding affordable rental options in a quickly shrinking rental market. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of rental units available for under $500 decreased by roughly half, most categories of housing with 2 or more units decreased by about 1/3, and renter-occupied housing units declined by over 14%. In 2000, more than 37% of renters living around Herzl paid 35% or more of their monthly income in rent.

- **Social Stress.** Several statistics point to severe pressure on the social support available to children in the neighborhood of Herzl. With a median age of 24.2, this section of North Lawndale had one of the youngest populations in the city. While the numbers of children ages 5 through 14 did not change between 1990 and 2000, overall population declined by 11%, and numbers of young adults declined by over 30%, most strikingly among young males, the group with highest incarceration rates in Chicago and Illinois. With fewer adults to support the same number of children, the burden in 2000 fell disproportionately on single mothers and grandparents. Over 59% of families with children were headed by female breadwinners with no husband present in 2000. Of grandparents living in multi-generational households, 57% were the primary caretakers of children.

- **Security-related stress.** Crime remains a continual concern for residents in Herzl’s neighborhood. A review of Chicago police crime statistics for early February 2007 indicates that over 100 serious crimes were reported within a ½ mile radius of Herzl Elementary. These included five aggravated batteries, one of which occurred close to the Herzl school grounds. In 2003 the death rate from battery was double the average for the city.

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9 As reported by the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative: http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/uicni/partnerships/nearwestside.htm

10 However, such statistics undercount the presence of male partners and fathers in children’s lives in communities like North Lawndale. See: http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/CFSForum/c1.htm.
The fact that North Lawndale is among 7 Chicago communities receiving over half of male prisoners released to Chicago each year, with few employment prospects, suggests fertile conditions for both re-offense and recidivism (Visher and Farrell, 2005). But street crime is not the only source of insecurity in the lives of Herzl's families. Real or perceived, residents also fear encounters with the police, especially when youth find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. The near-riot that erupted in the wake of the shooting of 18 year old Aaron Harrison in August 2007 reflects acute and unresolved tension between police and residents in North Lawndale.

Health-related stress. While disparities in health outcomes between white and minority Americans have generally declined, research indicates that Chicago has resisted this trend (Margellos, Silva & Whitman, 2004). In turn, North Lawndale’s health outcomes are among the worst in Chicago across a range of health risks (Whitman et al., 2004). In a series of studies by the Sinai Urban Health Institute, North Lawndale exceeded five other high risk Chicago communities in measures of heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, and suicide. Birth rates among older teens and childhood obesity also significantly exceed Chicago averages.

Herzl Elementary’s recent accomplishments become that much more impressive in light of these neighborhood realities. Herzl received an Illinois School Improvement Award in 2007 for advancing from a third of students meeting state standards in 2005, to now moving more than half of its students to that level. Figure 1 depicts the trends over six years in the number of Herzl students who meet (or exceed) the grade level benchmarks in reading, math, and science, expressed as a composite across the three subject tests. A closer look at Herzl’s performance across subjects and grade levels indicates three patterns. First, the school has made particularly strong gains in mathematics in the upper grades. Between 2005 and 2007, 8th graders jumped from only 10% meeting/exceeding state math standards, to 62% in 2007. Seventh graders moved from 42% meeting/exceeding to 78% meeting/exceeding in the same period. Herzl met Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks set by the No Child Left Behind Act for the first time in 2007.

Second, Herzl has improved the learning climate and student behaviors in several ways that clearly support overall academic progress. Results of the 2007 Student Connections Survey indicate that almost 83% of 5th through 8th graders feel that their classes are challenging and engaging, more than 10% above the Chicago average. Yet the same students also gave their teachers high marks for personal support and expectations (79%), also exceeding CPS and North Lawndale averages. Herzl also has maintained exceptionally high levels of daily student attendance (roughly 94% with little variation since 2000), despite levels of student leave-taking (or “mobility”) averaging 30% over five years, reflecting the churn of population in the neighborhood. Even more strikingly, Herzl has mastered the challenge of student tardiness in recent years, never exceeding 3% since 1999 (always below the CPS average), and marking a

Finally, Herzl has created a safe and orderly internal setting for learning, in contrast to the safety challenges of the surrounding neighborhood. Figure 2 depicts trends in serious disciplinary incidents reported by the school as required by the CPS Uniform Disciplinary Code. In 2004, the first year of the Community Schools Initiative, incidents of disruptive and even violent classroom behavior had reached a peak at Herzl, reflecting family pressures, student need, and a high number of new and novice teachers. Over the next three years, Herzl has reduced these incidents by half, well below the average for Area 8, the administrative unit covering most North Lawndale schools.

To be sure, Herzl continues to face hurdles in preparing its students to succeed beyond elementary school. Gains in reading and language arts, while real, remain more variable and less consistent than math, a pattern common to schools serving low income students throughout the city. Starting from identical levels in 2003, reading proficiency has advanced by a modest 10% over 5 years, while math proficiency has more than doubled, up 30%. A closer look at content domains indicates that students are more likely to struggle with using various reading strategies to extract information from complex passages. The school’s 2006 SIPAAA recognized that while several assets were in place to enrich language arts, including participation in the District’s Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster Program, classroom practices differentiating language instruction to different reading levels remained a work in progress. These and related issues are the focus of the current 2008 cycle of school improvement planning.

A signature feature of Chicago’s community school design is a close partnership with a lead not-for-profit organization (or LPA). Roles of the LPA include developing and implementing a community school plan, sourcing and brokering relationships with other service providers, contributing resources in its areas of expertise, and co-managing a full-time, school-based resource coordinator. Herzl’s lead not-for-profit community school partner is the Center for Community Arts Partnerships (or CCAP) of Columbia College Chicago (or CCC).

For general reference information on Columbia College Chicago, see: http://www.colum.edu/About_Columbia/index.php. “Columbia is an urban institution whose students reflect the economic, racial, cultural, and educational diversity of contemporary America. Columbia conducts education in close relationship to a vital urban reality and serves an important civic purpose by active engagement in the life and culture of the city of Chicago.”

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13 Data provided by the CPS Office of Safety and Security at aggregate school level.
In the city’s downtown Loop, CCC has grown in recent years to become the nation’s largest private fine arts and media college, with an enrollment of over 12,000 students. The College maintains a clear urban focus, connecting an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body to the wealth of resources afforded by the Midwest’s artistic and architectural capital. While its program draws students nationally, Columbia remains committed to the education of youth from the city and its metropolitan region. Over 60% of 2007’s freshmen come from the Chicago area, and 30% are from minority backgrounds.

Since its inception in 1998, CCAP has become the organizing focus for many of Columbia’s civic and community outreach initiatives. Beginning with a mission to connect Columbia’s academic departments with collaborative teaching opportunities in underserved schools and communities, CCAP has evolved to encompass several collaborative outreach programs that connect general youth development goals and principles with the specific methodologies of arts enrichment. These programs include:

- **Project AIM** (Arts Integration Mentorship Project), connecting professional artists-in-residence with classroom teachers in Chicago public schools (and Evanston, IL, just north of the city).

- **Saturday Scholars**, a college readiness program that exposes minority youth in Chicago to college campuses, including Columbia’s, and prepares youth and their parents for the college transition.

- A specialized concentration within the College’s Masters in Arts Management program, **Arts in Youth and Community Development (AYCD)**, designed to train future leaders in community-based and school-based arts integration practice.

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16 For more information see CCAP’s informative website: [http://www.colum.edu/CCAP/index.php](http://www.colum.edu/CCAP/index.php).
✓ **Urban Missions**, a program to partner community-based arts organizations with Columbia College staff and departments to reach urban youth and schools with high quality, innovative arts enrichment experiences

✓ A *service learning and civic engagement program* for Columbia College undergraduates that allows growing numbers of Columbia College undergraduates to gain credit for assisting CCAP program implementation in schools and community-based organizations.

CCAP’s approach to “reciprocal partnership” with its six community schools is characterized in equal measure by respect for urban educators, commitment to the practice of arts education, and a spirit of flexibility and adaptive management. Building on a federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant in 2002, CCAP has been recognized by the National Partnership for Quality After School Learning for the design and implementation of its school-based arts enrichment program model. CCAP’s maturing community school approach links each school to the matrix of resources afforded by the College and CCAP’s growing network of community partners. Teacher-CCAP teamwork that begins with arts integration during the school day, for example, continues with innovative enrichment in after school time, and culminates in participation in Columbia College’s expanding MANIFEST arts festival in the spring of each year. At the same time, CCAP has engaged the daunting challenges of the LPA role, even as that role takes the agency and its staff well outside its “comfort zone” in arts education. Significant effort has gone into pooling the field experiences of CCAP resource coordinators as they learn about managing service relationships with churches, social service agencies, and health care providers.

It is doubtful that the partnership between Herzl and CCAP would have materialized without the active financial and logistical sponsorship of JPMorgan Chase. With $1.6 trillion in assets and operations in over 50 countries, JPMorgan Chase (or “Chase” below) is among the world’s leading financial service companies, as well as an acknowledged leader in corporate philanthropy. Both nationally and in Chicago, Chase has emerged as a critical advocate for community schooling as an organizing framework for corporate involvement in educational reform. This framework aligns well with all three of its focal themes for corporate philanthropy: youth education, with particular attention to reading, financial literacy, technology, and arts enrichment in the middle school year; community life, accenting investment in arts and cultural capacity and environmental sustainability; and community asset development, addressing affordable housing, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. In turn, philanthropy dovetails with the mission of its Community Development Group to support a full range of financial and consultative services in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. JPMorgan

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Chase currently is in the 4th year of a 10 year campaign to invest $10 billion in underserved communities in the United States. 18

Herzl’s relationship with JPMorgan Chase began in 1994, when Joan Klaus, then senior vice president for corporate partnerships with Bank One (subsequently acquired by Chase in 2004) toured the school and was impressed with what she saw. Between 1994 and 2000, Herzl joined three other Chicago schools in a fluid collaboration with Bank One in four areas: first, covering selected capital costs, ranging from building improvements to technology purchases; second, engaging Bank One volunteers in a range of school support roles, from tutoring and financial services consultation to “principal for a day;” third, funding external partners to provide supplementary enrichment programs, often in after school time; and fourth, connecting students to other Bank One education programs, such as Saturday Scholars. For Principal Betty Allen-Green, the partnership meant not only a reliable source of support for enrichment programming, but a corporate partner that understood how to combine frequent, active engagement with respect for the judgment and insights of CPS educators.

With the arrival of new CEO Jamie Dimon and his wife Judy in spring 2000, the community school model took center stage as an exciting and coherent framework for integrating Bank One’s school reform goals, based particularly on their passionate support for the pioneering community school work of the Children’s Aid Society of New York. 19 In Chicago, Judy Dimon quickly engaged local champions of community schools such as the Polk Bros. Foundation, and played a pivotal role in convening the public/private partnership that became the Chicago Campaign for Community Schools and the CPS Community Schools Initiative. Among its own schools, Bank One identified CCAP as a local program provider exceptionally well aligned with the Bank’s philanthropic vision and well grounded in school-based collaboration. For Joan Klaus, the shift to a community school paradigm offered a chance to “move the needle” on school improvement in Chicago, and leverage greater value from corporate investment in school-community partnerships. With this possibility in view, JPMorgan Chase committed $50,000 annually to each of its school partnerships to help underwrite the school-based resource coordinator position as well as support other community school activities.

Distinguishing Features of Collaborative Community Schooling at Herzl Elementary

As a member of Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative, Herzl Elementary incorporates all the core features and strategies central to the Chicago model of community schooling. 20 These include a strong alliance with a not-for-profit community partner, a vigorous agenda for out-of-school time, involvement of parents and teachers in planning processes, and efforts to deepen support services for children and families. Unlike most Chicago community school arrangements which focus on the school and a lead partner agency, the Herzl partnership aligns and balances the priorities and expertise of three partners, Herzl, CCAP, and JPMorgan.

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18 For general overviews of corporate philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase Bank, see: http://www.jpmorganchase.com/en/cs?pagename=Chase/Href&urlname=jpmc/community
19 For a general overview of the evolution of the Children’s Aid Society’s approach to community schools: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/communityschools.
20 For an overview of the Chicago Community Schools Initiative, see Whalen, S. P. (June 2007). Three Years into Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative (CSI). Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago. Link: http://cpsafterschool.org/CSI_Three_Year_Study_Dec_06_07.pdf
Chase. In this section we suggest some of the key distinguishing features of this partnership.

**A culture of invitation.** Earlier we commented on the warm climate of welcome that greets visitors to Herzl Elementary. But supporting this daily climate is something deeper and more pervasive – a *culture of invitation* that actively solicits the contributions of a wide range of people and organizations. This culture is enacted and communicated throughout the Herzl community, by faculty and students, at several levels. At the symbolic level, murals and banners throughout the building commemorate annual events co-sponsored by key partners such as JPMorgan Chase and the Steans Family Foundation. School assemblies routinely feature partner presenters and recognize their contributions.

At the interpersonal level, Herzl teachers and students “adopt” corporate and community volunteers in a particularly friendly way, recognizing them in the halls by name, and encouraging them to move in the building with a sense of ease. Care is taken to personally invite volunteers to participate in new programs and school events, and effort is made to understand and accommodate the preferences of volunteers when possible. Participants in the Real Men Read program, for example, each receive personal invitations to read to Herzl children, and are encouraged to sustain relationships with specific classrooms. Breakfast is provided before the reading sessions, and the men, who come from many walks of life, have a chance to socialize and network. As a result, over 40 men contribute time to the program monthly, and every classroom in the school can count on a reader.

**From morning through evening, a community center.** In order to expand access to services and opportunities for child and family development, community schools extend their hours of operation and open their facilities to community uses. Herzl exemplifies both features. Students arrive as early as 7:00 AM to be first in line to use a computer, get help with homework, or get a head start on open gym activities. With over 40% of families living beyond the school’s attendance boundaries, parents appreciate that they can drop their children for early recreation or academic help while commuting to work. At 7:30 AM, the resource coordinator officially welcomes children to the building. Over 200 students use the gyms, computer lab, and library each morning with supervision provided by teachers and staff. Morning is also assigned to teams like cheerleading and drill squad for practices. The first class bell rings at 9:00 AM, and classes continue until 2:30 PM.

While classes are in session in the main school building, much programming for parents and other adults shifts to Herzl’s Child Parent Center (or CPC). The CPC provides a flexible space to accommodate informal parent socializing as well as classes and workshops. After-school classes and special building uses typically keep Herzl open until 6:30 PM. An exception is Wednesday evening, when the Awani program, now in its second year, engages 200 students and a several adults in physical recreation and scripture-based activities until 8:30 or 9:00 PM. Thursday is game day for several sport teams throughout the year, and athletes and staff are present until 7:00 PM. Special school and community events also stretch the clock into the evening hours, ranging from Local School Council meetings and Family Literacy Nights, to occasional meetings of external community organizations.

In recent years Saturday mornings have been devoted to activities such as supplemental tutoring and field trips to cultural destinations. All eighth graders are recruited to participate in Columbia’s Saturday Scholars program for high
school students, and several students begin the program as 9th graders each year. Summer presents an acute need for neighborhood programming. In summer 2007 the school provided an afternoon camp to complement the morning “bridge” tutoring program. Activities included Legos Robotics, a basketball camp, arts enrichment and family field trips.

A day of enriched classroom instruction.
Herzl has built its curriculum and academic program in several ways that enrich the experience and support the success of students. The school participates in the Chicago Reading Initiative and devotes an uninterrupted block of two hours each morning to reading instruction. Affiliation with the district’s Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster program affords the school two specialist teachers who provide professional development and supplemental materials to all classrooms. The faculty also has revamped the math and science curricula through adoption of respected series such as the Math Trailblazers and Math Thematics programs and the Pearson Prentice Hall science series. A Fine Arts grant from the Chicago Community Trust now supports a school-wide effort to enrich fine arts experiences at every grade and align arts curricula with the Illinois State Standards.

Across all subjects areas, Herzl teachers frequently employ collaborative teaching strategies to support the development of individual teachers and facilitate the inclusion of special education students in the mainstream learning day. Collaborative teaching is used in mentoring arrangements to advance the proficiency of novice teachers, and special education teachers are paired with regular classroom teachers at every grade level to devise bridge activities that meet all student needs. The result is that Herzl students regularly see adults working as a team to learn and solve problems, and benefit from more individualized support in small learning groups.

Herzl extends collaborative learning for both teachers and students through participation in CCAP’s Arts Integration Mentorship Project (or Project AIM). Both in theory and practice, Project AIM represents CCAP’s most deeply conceived initiative linking three core commitments: first, to assert the place of discipline-based arts instruction – that is, the practice of art – as an indispensable facet of student learning, especially in underserved communities; second, to explore the value of arts instruction as a vehicle for developing higher order thinking and creative skills, with particular attention to literacy skills; and third, to diversify classroom instruction through collaboration with artist teacher-colleagues. Above all, Project AIM explores the possibilities of a full reciprocal partnership with school staff, in which the disciplinary knowledge of both artists and teachers is shared to help diversify student learning. In part, Project AIM has clarified its approach through dialogue and competition (for scarce grant dollars) with several other arts education organizations seeking to engage districts and individual schools as partners (Fiske, 1999). In part, Project AIM’s approach has evolved through experiment and reflection within a community of artists and teachers collaborating at several schools in Chicago and nearby Evanston. Over

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21 These include the arts integration perspectives of Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Urban Gateways: Center for Arts Education, and Canada’s ArtsSmarts. Each of these organizations shares with CCAP a commitment to respect teachers and their local knowledge, the value of art making as inquiry and practice, and the power of collaboration across the practices of art-making and school teaching. Each organization has pushed itself to articulate its working vision, theory, and models of practice as portable, replicable, and to some degree, scalable models of practice. See references for citations to their recent publications.
time, and guided by Project AIM director Cynthia Weiss, CCAP has evolved a distinct methodology and vocabulary for arts integration.

Project AIM refers to its research-based methodology as the Learning Spiral. The spiral, elegantly represented in a conch-like graphic, denotes a sequence of phased learning activities, broadening and deepening across the school year, and shared by CCAP teaching artists, school teachers, children, and school leaders, at several levels of inquiry and practice. The phases begin with a shared inquiry among adults and students to define a big idea to bind art making with other disciplines like math, science, reading, and writing. This is coupled with an introduction to arts-specific language and ideas, and the creation of a safe and respectful climate for questioning, feedback, and self-expression. With practice the classroom becomes a reflective artistic community, in which students and teachers encounter models of excellence, offer work for critique and appreciation, evaluate feedback and revise selectively, and shape emerging work for exhibition and performance, in whichever media the class takes as its focus. Two or three culminating performances, typically late autumn and late spring, provide heightened focus for excellent presentation. Through parallel processes of art making and school learning, children broaden their cognitive approaches to school subjects, while learning to see learning as a collaborative process of trial and error, inquiry, reflection, revision, and the pride of performance.

Each classroom learning community is supported by a network of adults who themselves enact the Learning Spiral and comprise an intentional learning community. CCAP, in the role of anchor organization, recruits each year’s artists from within Columbia College as well as from several affiliated community-based arts organizations. It then convenes each year’s teaching artists as an artist cadre who meet regularly to reflect, brainstorm, and problem-solve. In turn, each teacher-artist pair meets regularly to plan, assess progress, and adjust strategies. Project AIM sessions cover 14 weeks of collaborative instruction. Each classroom receives one period of instruction per week, ranging from 60 to 90 minutes. Six Herzl classrooms were engaged in Project AIM partnerships during the 2007-2008 academic year. This makes Herzl among the most extensively implemented AIM partnerships associated with CCAP and the College. Each school varies the schedule for Project AIM sessions to fit within the overall school schedule. Within each school, both a lead school teacher and a CCAP curriculum coach help teacher-artist pairs refine their approaches and mediate conflicts, as well convene teams for periodic sharing sessions. A school steering committee brings together the school principal, fine arts and literacy staff, teacher-artist pairs, and CCAP staff to manage each school’s Project AIM partnership. Throughout the year and over each summer, workshops, Summer Institutes, and peer-to-peer trainings ensure continual professional development for artists and school teachers. Herzl collaborators and students have played a prominent role in helping synthesize Project AIM’s distinct methodology, and are prominently featured in the recent publication, AIMprint: New Relationships in the Arts and Learning (2007).

Diverse opportunities in out-of-school (OST) time. While North Lawndale youth live in close proximity to Chicago’s cultural amenities and resources, they often have little experience of the city beyond their community’s borders. Herzl has been recognized for expanding the range of developmental supports and experiences for its students. Participation in

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22 For further detail on Project AIM, see: [http://www.colum.edu/CCAP/Programs/Arts_Integration.php](http://www.colum.edu/CCAP/Programs/Arts_Integration.php)
the Community Schools Initiative has allowed Herzl to significantly expand these supports and experiences in out-of-school time, both before and after the classroom day. Since 2004, Herzl has offered scores of OST programs ranging over homework help and tutoring, to social and emotional learning in mentoring and healthy lifestyle offerings, to academic and technological enrichment programs, to several recreation options and sports teams. During the 2006-2007 academic year, over 75% of Herzl students participated in at least one OST program during the year, and averaged 52 days of program attendance.

With CCAP as a lead partner, arts enrichment remains the signature of Herzl’s after school day, accenting music (e.g. guitar lessons, gospel choir), dance (e.g., tap, African dance, ballet, and praise dance), visual arts (e.g., mural projects, art history), and drama (drama club), and writing (book making, Act/Write). Columbia College faculty, alumni, student artists along with artist/teachers from CCAP’s community-based arts partners provide instructors for these offerings. And after school arts programs also showcase their students’ accomplishments in venues like Columbia Colleges annual Manifest Arts Festival. Further, the spirit of collaboration and cross-disciplinary experimentation that informs CCAP arts programs has influenced program goals and expectations across the school’s OST agenda, reflected in the following examples:

✔ Act/Write, a CCAP-staffed after school program for 8th graders, combining skill development in writing with acting and stage-craft. A professional writer from Columbia’s fiction department teams with a stage writer from Free Street, a partner organization, yielding a stage performance and a book of student writing.

✔ Caribbean Dance, extending the AIM framework into after school. A collaboration between a Herzl teacher and a Columbia College instructor, providing students in grades K to 5 with dance instruction and cultural background in Afro-Caribbean influences.

✔ The Tee Shirt Business, allowing roughly 15 regular participants in grades 6-8 to combine computer design with experience managing a working business. Student leaders decide on design themes and sales strategies, and manage classroom and community sales through the year. A technology specialist from the Neighborhood Technology Center in the Homan Square Community Center facilitates the program on a volunteer basis. Another adult volunteer with experience in “fashion deconstruction” has instructed students in doing cutting-edge T-shirt design.

✔ Girls in the Game. In 2005 this nationally recognized program approached Herzl based on the school’s reputation as a committed school collaborator. The program uses sports and fitness activities to develop esteem, leadership, and positive health practices among adolescent girls. The program has expanded its role recently, sponsoring Saturday field trips, summer camp scholarships, and planning a “healthy women” program for girls and their moms.

✔ Art Club, focusing on mural making as a focus of individual and collaborative expression. A CCAP professional artist-partner works with students in grades 6-8 to continue the beautification of Herzl, accenting Afro-Centric themes and images. In spring 2008 the medium will shift from paint to tiles, as the Club undertakes mosaics on the front doors of the building. The Club
has also contributed murals to nearby, renovated apartment buildings.

✓ *Awana*, a national faith-based youth development program operated locally by the Greater Galilee Baptist Church, a nearby Herzl neighbor. Every Wednesday evening over 200 local elementary aged youth, mostly Herzl students, convene for a healthy snack, brief scripture study, and recreational activities for about 2 hours, grouped according to age. Parents and families are engaged through several complementary programs, both at school and through the church. The inclusion of Awana at Herzl represents one of several ways that Mrs. Green recognizes the important of faith and church in the local community, and encourages churches and ministers to engage the school as a resource for family development.

Herzl has proven exceptionally resourceful in inspiring volunteer and part-time paid involvement in OST supervision. In addition to CCAP’s artist-partner network, volunteers reach Herzl through JPMorgan Chase, local church and community organization connections, and the informal networks across the school’s families and staff. The daughter of one office staff member, for example, recently contributed time to the T-Shirt Business to help students learn the art of “T-shirt de-construction,” a cutting edge fashion. Another mother-daughter team from the local community has staffed a series of dance programs. Several parents oversee team activities such as basketball and cheerleading. The informal contact and conversations between artists, teachers, parents, volunteer professionals, and community members result in an after school climate that is well grounded in the realities of family life in North Lawndale.

Building assets among parents and caregivers. For many parents, Herzl is not just their child’s school, it is their alma mater as well, and often the school their own parents and grandparents attended. In itself this is not unusual in North Lawndale schools, where teen pregnancy rates are high and grandparents often act as primary caregivers. What is less usual is the close relationship of families with Herzl’s teachers, encouraged by the school’s success in retaining experienced educators in a community known for high rates of teacher attrition (Chicago ACORN, 2003). This continuity between teachers and families is another dimension of the climate of welcome noted earlier, and has elevated attention to the links between adult development and family support on the one hand, and the success of students on the other. The school maintains a dedicated parent resource room on the building’s second floor, and parents supplement staff in several daily support roles, especially as office help and primary level room parents and teaching assistants.

While adult development programs are not new to Herzl, community school resources have led to expansion of adult and family programs, both in support of student learning, and directly addressing adult skill development. The emerging program of adult and family support includes the following broad themes:

✓ *Family enrichment.* Activities that gather families in shared learning are promoted by both the faculty and OST staff. Magnet Cluster and other grant resources help sponsor several family learning events through the year (*Family Literacy and Math Nights*, for example). *Field trips* during summer and the academic year include parents and encourage access of the city’s cultural assets. Beautification projects like the annual *community garden*, on the other hand, draw upon a long tradition of...
urban lot gardening in North Lawndale to highlight the contributions of parents to school success. In the case of family mural and mosaic projects, CCAP projects become a vehicle for highlighting the long, active struggle of North Lawndale families to nurture their neighborhoods and the schools that serve them.

✓ Adult literacy. **GED** was among the first adult programs initiated by Herzl with community school support, in partnership with nearby Malcolm X College, a part of Chicago’s City College system. In a way that reflects the culture of responsiveness at Herzl, several parents came to the principal and GED instructor to express that the formal GED content was too advanced, and requested the creation of a pre-GED basic literacy option. Today both levels are taught by the Malcolm X College instructor, and parents often attend both levels to reinforce basic skill development.

✓ Technical and job skills. Several offerings have focused on building job-related skills. The school’s computer lab is available to adult users at specified times of the week. **Computer workshops** for neighborhood adults have been offered consistently since 2004, along with coaching workshops covering employability skills.

✓ Parenting and family skills. Each year since 2004 Herzl has developed workshops addressing positive approaches to parenting, the support of student learning, and related issues in nutrition. These offerings are supplemented by a steady offering of brief information and coaching sessions in the Herzl Child Parent Center.

As Herzl’s lead partner, CCAP has always understood the centrality of parent involvement to Chicago’s model of community schooling.

But it has taken time to develop a service strategy for engaging parents that equals its program agenda for students. To this end, CCAP initiated an ambitious partnership with Columbia College’s Harris Center for Early Childhood Education (or ECE) in 2007 to develop “…an arts-based, inter-generational, community-centered approach to parent involvement” that articulates to State academic standards and local school needs. This CCAP-ECE collaboration will implement this approach state-wide as administrators of the **Illinois Parent Information Resource Center** (or Illinois PIRC), with funding from the Illinois State Board of Education and the US Department of Education. The primary missions of Illinois PIRC include providing parents and their advocates with access to enriched information about parent engagement (web-based, phone-based, and mail-based), and providing technical assistance to schools and CBOs to implement innovative models of parent involvement. Illinois PIRC marries CCAP’s experience as an arts-based community school lead partner with Harris Center for Early Childhood Education’s grounding in the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. With close ties to Montessori and other child-centered educational philosophies, Reggio Emilia emphasizes deep respect and attention to children’s natural rhythms of learning. In practice this means assembling learning materials that encourage children to pursue curiosity through all five senses, and allowing children considerable freedom to choose their activities. The role of parents as active collaborators in the child’s learning is equally emphasized, from creating safe and encouraging space for play, to working with teachers to shape curriculum and

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educational policy. For Columbia’s Harris Center for Early Childhood Education (ECE), PIRC presents an opportunity to elaborate its arts-focused approach to implementing RE in ways that advance child-centered principles in early childhood education, yet also articulate to the urgent need to ready children in underserved communities for school success. Early contributions to Herzl will include materials from ECE’s highly regarded Tot Time and Hug-a-Book curricula. PIRC also expands opportunities for ECE early childhood education majors to train for effective practice in schools such as Herzl.

CCAP’s first step in implementing PIRC in Herzl involves hiring a part-time parent coordinator, a position until now precluded by funding limitations. Starting in fall 2007, this parent coordinator has been working closely with the CCAP resource coordinator as well as parent resource teachers in the Child Parent Center to build relationships with social service and family support providers in the area, and advance the quality of adult development programs. A dedicated Parent Resource Room has been established on Herzl’s second floor, creating space for a Columbia College writing instructor to mentor parents as writers, with strong writing emerging from the process. Plans include publication of parent writing at year’s end.

A thriving Child Parent Center (CPC). Herzl illustrates several ways in which the presence of a Child Parent Center can complement the implementation of community school strategies. Along with Head Start, Child Parent Centers were first authorized in 1967 through the federal ESEA Title 1 legislation, to link spaces dedicated to high quality early childhood education closely to inner city elementary schools in underserved communities. Chicago is nationally recognized for its commitment to CPC, while Herzl CPC has been highlighted as one of the most faithful and effective implementations among the 24 schools that currently sponsor the program. In Chicago the formula for CPC includes early assessment of learning strengths and deficits among 3 and 4 year olds, an enriched developmental curriculum addressing motor skills and language development, and consistent and respectful parent involvement. Long-term evaluation of Chicago’s CPCs shows that child participants were more likely to graduate from high school and avoid prison than those enrolled in Head Start or Pre-kindergarten programs (Reynolds, Ou & Topitzes, 2004).

Currently the Herzl CPC services 130 children, most ages 3 and 4, providing a half day program of child development activities. The 15 full- and part-time staff include Parent Resource Teachers focused on provision of parent development workshops and family support information. Child care for younger children is available to facilitate the involvement of parents with their enrolled children. Many parents have children enrolled in both buildings, and regularly stop at the CPC for coffee and informal socializing. It is not uncommon to find 20 parents assembled in the CPC parent room on any weekday morning. The combination of building and staff has created an alternate, dedicated space for daytime parent programs, and a receptive core of parents as participants and after school volunteers. The community school resource coordinator has use of both buildings to plan meetings, program for parents, and facilitate community health offerings.

Addressing health and wellness. Herzl has developed both programs and provider relationships that address the health needs of students and families. The school approaches health education from several directions,

including sponsorship of health fairs during report card pick-up days and other large parent gatherings, allowing several community health providers to publicize services. The CPC sponsors classes in family nutrition, while partnerships with businesses like LensCrafters and organizations like Oral Health America help provide most students with eye glasses and annual dental sealants. Through Nourish for Knowledge, an initiative of the Greater Chicago Food Depository in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, Herzl students receive parcels with nutritious foods each Friday to bring home to their families. Mobile care vans from local hospitals make regular visits to the school. Bethany Hospital, an important North Lawndale health care provider, also receives Herzl students in need of more intensive treatment, for example, in cases of asthma attack.

Herzl maintains a particularly close and highly appreciated relationship with Lawndale Christian Health Center, a community-based, not-for-profit health provider committed to eliminating health disparities in the Lawndale and Garfield Park sections of Chicago, without regard to ability to pay. LCHC maintains one central and three satellite clinics in the North Lawndale area, and provides physicians to visit schools when requested. In 2004, Herzl turned to LCHC for help when administrators discovered that a high percentage of students lacked mandatory immunizations, and risked exclusion from school. LCHC staff filled the need, and Principal Allen-Green responded in turn by dedicating a second floor room as a part-time clinic where LCHC staff could address issues ranging from vision and eye care to asthma control and obesity. On average LCHC professionals have visited Herzl about once each month since 2004.

Committed partner organizations. We have already mentioned several organizations that partner with Herzl to deliver specific programs or services. While JP Morgan Chase plays a central role in Herzl’s community school design, four other organizations have gladly engaged Herzl’s leadership and community in a more flexible manner, and contributed significantly to community school development. Of notable importance have been:

The Steans Family Foundation (SFF), which has been engaging the needs of North Lawndale residents and institutions with an agenda of equitable community revitalization since 1995. The Foundation funds a range of NL organizations and initiatives, concentrating in education, family support, and community development. At Herzl, SFF has been a highly reliable advocate and patron. In 2004, for example, SFF covered the purchase of medical equipment to enable Lawndale Christian Health Center to deliver school-based health services at Herzl. SFF has also provided steady support for the professional development of Herzl’s faculty, and included the school among several North Lawndale schools funded to provide new teachers with one-to-one mentoring and collaborative teaching experience (the New Teachers Support Initiative, 2004-2007).

Communities in Schools of Chicago (CISC), an organization devoted to brokering relationships between schools and community service providers at minimum cost to school affiliates. Beginning in Fall 2000, CISC trained a Herzl teacher to help connect the school more

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25 For more information on Nourish for Knowledge, see: http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/site/PageServer?page name=2006nfk.

26 For information, see: http://www.steansfamilyfoundation.org/home.shtml.

27 For an overview of Communities in Schools of Chicago, see: http://www.chicagocis.org/.
effectively with community health and service providers, serving also on the community school advisory committee. A CCIS veteran school coordinator remains available to Herzl to consult on service needs, provide or identify training opportunities for staff. Several observers we spoke with noted that Herzl made exceptionally effective use of the resources afforded by CSIC.

**North Shore School District #112**, located in suburban Highland Park. Through a network of personal and professional connections, and facilitated by the CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities, Herzl and District 112 classes began to visit one another in 2003. In February 2008, for example, over 170 Highland Park students came to Herzl to share a day of African American history and culture with Herzl students. As Dr. Green related, “It’s just great for them to have the opportunity to come together and interact, and realize right away that they’re more alike than different.” District 112 has also donated in-line skates to support Herzl’s gym-based roller skating program for primary level students.

**Carol Kaplan** of the Kaplan Family Foundation has adopted Herzl’s 3rd grade through the “Hooked on Books” program. Student teachers from the DePaul University School of Education mentor each 3rd grader, and take the 3rd grade on an annual shopping trip to Borders Bookstore to build home reading libraries. Each 3rd grader receives a $70 gift certificate, while parents receive $25 gift certificates.

**Complementary Capacity in a Three Dimensional Partnership**

Several factors have advanced community schooling at Herzl, including availability of space, access to supportive community partnerships, and a legacy of affiliation and trust between the school and generations of local families. However, it has taken exceptional human resources, contributed by all three partners in this community school effort, to turn physical and neighborhood resources into community school assets. Here we highlight several critical roles and role players.

**“The Dean of the West Side.”** Ask informed observers of Chicago elementary schools for a short list of the city’s most effective community educators, and the name of Dr. Betty Allen-Green will likely appear. Three attributes particularly distinguish Dr. Green as a community educator. First, she brings to her role a heart-felt yet also well informed understanding of the needs of the “whole child,” and communicates her vision of a school embracing the “whole child” to everyone with whom she works and collaborates. From her perspective, the community school concept creates opportunities to reach children who do not always learn most effectively in the structured classroom setting. As she told us, “In our after school program we use a more hands-on approach, a more free approach, yet the children are still learning. Our object is for the children to learn. So what we’re learning is that maybe, if we use some of those techniques [in our classrooms] that we’re using in community school programs, we’ll be able to reach more of our children.”

Second, Dr. Green consistently thinks “out of the box” when it comes to the traditional boundaries separating times of day, professional roles, and the uses of space. As she put it, “Our community school is not just an after-school program. It’s a singleness, a continuation from early morning to late evening.” Beyond the obvious example of CCAP’s Project AIM, this perspective finds concrete expression throughout the school day and across individual roles and responsibilities. With her faculty, for
example, Dr. Green challenges teacher resistance to the use of classrooms for OST programs or actions to exclude students from programs. But she also encourages teachers to propose innovative and collaborative program ideas, and willingly funds staff to run after school activities. She invests key role players such as the community school resource coordinator to exercise authority in arenas such as program development and scheduling, and connects external partners with her staff in oversight and planning processes.

Third, Dr. Green has long been an entrepreneurial self-starter when it comes to securing resources for her students and families, both from within the CPS system and from community and city-wide sources. Joanne Vena, CCAP Director of School Partnerships, described Dr. Green as “…the best person I’ve ever seen to leverage resources outside – community or service resources,” adding that Herzl’s principal had been “deft” in engaging the resources of Communities in Schools of Chicago (CISC, profiled earlier) to gain targeted services for students and families. Dr. Green has also been involved in efforts to maintain Section 8 rental units in Herzl’s immediate neighborhood, and has cultivated relationships with rehabbers to connect her families with affordable housing. From the perspective of a corporate partner, this attribute is particularly reassuring and attractive, a signal that they are partnering with a kindred professional. When Chase Vice President Joan Klaus was assembling its first class of community schools in 2003, Herzl was “a slam dunk.” As she put it: “Betty Green from Herzl was already doing it…doing so many programs that she gets any kind of money for. Yet her school is so large and her children’s needs so great – she’s an ideal principal in many ways.”

A mature expression of these attributes in Dr. Green’s ethos and leadership is her recent initiative to mentor the children of incarcerated parents at Herzl and other North Lawndale schools. Modeled on a nationally recognized, faith-based initiative in Philadelphia, Amachi, Dr. Green’s program grew from her first-hand awareness of the proportions of young parents in North Lawndale doing extended jail time, and the often devastating impact on their children, and by extension, the teachers and schools that serve them. Building on relationships with local churches as well as the 13 principals who comprise the North Lawndale Learning Community, of which she is Executive Director, Dr. Green will devote her imminent retirement to connecting these children to adult mentors inside and outside of the community. To support the effort she has assembled a board that links community school staff, including Herzl’s resource coordinator, Rachel Culich, with her long-time patrons at Steans Family Foundation and JPMorgan Chase, who also are providing office space and staff support.28 The combination of vision and skill evidenced in this

new initiative gives some sense of why many of Dr. Green’s professional peers refer to her affectionately as “the Dean of the West Side.”

A collaborative and child-centered faculty. While Dr. Green has focused considerable energy on community partnerships, she remains primarily devoted to the development of her faculty. In recent years her efforts have centered on shifting her teachers from a collection of hard working “solo performers” into the sort of instructional team that school reform scholars call a “professional learning community,” (or PLC).29 One of Chase’s first grants to Herzl, in fact, funded a faculty retreat away from the school to permit more sustained conversation about building a team culture within the faculty. Since then, Herzl’s faculty has invested considerable attention to mentoring its new teachers, including those affiliated with Teach for America, through innovative techniques like collaborative teaching and one-on-one mentoring with experienced instructors.30 Other professional development efforts have focused on collaborative teaching with specialists from the Literature and Writing Magnet Cluster Program, and training in recent instructional initiatives from CPS such as the Chicago Reading Initiative.

Investment in professional development has shaped several features of the current faculty


30 Herzl was among the most consistently engaged schools participating in the New Teachers Support Initiative, funded by the Steans Family Foundation from 2004 through 2007.

that support the community school effort. Attention to practices of mentorship and adult support, for example, has deepened a general culture of support for all school community members, including students and parents. The same practices have encouraged teacher retention at all levels of professional tenure, resulting in a faculty with energy for after school programs and a wealth of experience with families and their issues. At the same time, Herzl’s culture encourages children to state their preferences respectfully and engage adults intentionally, much in the way that middle class children learn to advocate for themselves in school (Lareau, 2002; Sampson, 2007). One 8th grade teacher related an incident in which her students lost their privilege to a holiday party based upon behavior infractions. The students appointed spokesmen, and asked their teacher to allow them to petition Dr. Green to regain their party through an alternative restitution plan. The teacher agreed, and marched her class to see the principal, standing back to let her students state their case. Dr. Green was very impressed, both with the students and their teacher. As the teacher told us:

She thought it was very adult of them in a sense. We talk so much about giving each other respect. And I try to show students respect and what you do to diffuse a situation and change something if you don’t like it. They knew what to do, and actually put it into good use. And I was proud, because they actually learned something from me. They were the only class in the building to have a party on Friday. So they worked hard and they got it.

Input and oversight among community stakeholders. Herzl solicits input and ideas for improving community school activities at several levels, ranging from personal and informal contacts to more formal processes. Key program staff such as the resource coordinator and the principal consistently ask participants for feedback on their program experiences. Assessments and surveys are used through the
year to determine the satisfaction of participants with specific programs. Herzl’s Local School Council (or LSC) also plays an important advisory role through the year. It is typical for Herzl LSC meetings to leave ample time for a presentation of community school developments from the resource coordinator, typically toward the end of each meeting. This is followed by a “town hall” discussion of the presentation involving both LSC delegates and those highly committed parents and community members who attend LSC meetings. This practice has led to considerable ownership of the community school concept by Herzl’s LSC, with important implications for processes like budgeting and selecting a new principal, both core LSC roles. At Dr. Green’s request, the LSC agreed in 2007 that buy-in to the practices of community schooling would be a central criterion for selecting Herzl’s next principal upon Dr. Green’s retirement.

Herzl also maintains a small Advisory Committee to focus more specifically on assessing program quality, resolving immediate operational challenges, and undertaking longer-term sustainability planning. This is considered a standard forum for management within Chicago’s community school model, although “oversight committees” vary considerably in their reach and membership across the Community Schools Initiative.31 Herzl’s 2008 Advisory Committee includes a cross-section of community members, parents, and teachers, plus the principal, resource coordinator, CCAP lead partner liaison, and a student representative. It plays an executive role in tandem with the LSC’s consultative role, giving Herzl two consistent and overlapping arenas for stakeholder feedback throughout the school year.

A capable and experienced resource coordinator. While many roles contribute value to a community school effort, the functional lynchpin of Chicago’s community school design is the full time, school-based resource coordinator (or RC). This position is implicated in every feature of community school life, from management of OST programs, to recruitment and coordination of community partners, to liaising with teachers, parents, students, and neighborhood stakeholders. Further, Chicago’s RCs are employed by lead partner agencies like CCAP, but spend most of their work day under the supervision of their school’s principal and senior staff. When agencies and principals are aligned, RCs can count on aid and support. But when relations are strained, RCs absorb the brunt of the stress. Not surprisingly, turnover among RCs remains a significant annual challenge facing Chicago’s community school design.

Herzl has been fortunate in both the quality and the sustained tenure of its resource coordinator. Rachel Culich came to her position in 2002 from within CCAP, where she assisted the Director of School Partnerships in the early phases of the agency’s community school work. She gained respect for her resilience and poise, and gained first hand experience with the challenges of translating her agency’s arts integration philosophy into urban school practice. At Herzl, she quickly won the trust of both Dr. Green and the faculty by following through consistently on commitments to after school teachers and staff, and establishing an orderly but friendly climate for collaboration and experimentation in out-of-school time. Above all, Rachel has brought a diverse skill set to her work, a commitment to being present from morning through evening, and an unusual combination of big picture thinking and detail orientation. She thus

emerged as a manager whom Dr. Green could trust to monitor the quality of OST in her absence, and exercise authority with a light but determined touch.

Dr. Green has supported and structured Rachel’s role in ways that have furthered her performance. On the school side, Dr. Green has integrated her RC into several leadership processes. Rachel consistently attends and reports to the Local School Council. She participates actively in faculty meetings, where she presents updates on OST activities, and is included among the school administrators and senior teachers who conduct observational “walk throughs” of classrooms in session. As one teacher told us, “I feel like she’s one of the faculty.” Further, Rachel shares office space with an assistant principal and school counselor, and works adjacent to the school’s business manager. This situates her at the center of much of the school’s daily business, and establishes working relationships with staff who can expedite access to resources inside and outside of CPS. At the CPS central office level, Rachel can count on the support of the Office of Extended Learning Opportunities whose small but committed staff frequently facilitates access to resources administered by sister offices across the CPS system.32

An adaptive lead partner agency. Among the early lessons that CCAP learned in its lead partner role was the need to educate its school-based artists and coordinators about the art of collaborating effectively with urban schools. Much of this educating involved building internal capacity for information sharing and reflective practice. Thus Rachel has benefited from CCAP’s investment in supervisory support for school-based staff, and its development of a working network of resource coordinators across its six community schools. While some resource coordinators rarely see another representative of their agency at school, Rachel facilitates the work of several CCAP employees and affiliates in a typical week. She can count on the support of her immediate supervisor, Associate Director for School Partnerships April Langworthy, who visits her partner schools frequently to consult jointly with her principals and RCs.

In turn, CCAP’s six RCs convene as a team with their supervisor monthly to plan joint activity across their community schools. RCs join a monthly meeting of CCAP’s full school partnership staff, including staff from Project AIM and the Saturday Scholars program. While it can be a challenge for RCs to coordinate these meetings with their school responsibilities, their participation connects them with a broader network of support, broadens their perspective on the Center, and allows CCAP to harvest their insights into quality school-based practice. The results are reflected in CCAP’s development of a powerful conceptual framework for arts-based community partnership.

A catalytic corporate partner. JPMorgan Chase’s approach to community school partnership is distinguished for its combination of activism and collaborative responsiveness. In part this reflects a genuine embrace of social responsibility within the Chase’s culture, and a willingness to authorize senior staff to engage “hands-on” in the public and not-for-profit sector to catalyze social change. This includes sustaining many of its traditional activities with partner schools, including sponsoring corporate volunteers to contribute directly to school activities, and the sponsorship of programming in financial education like “Bank at School.” At the same time, in choosing CCAP as a community school partner, the JPMorgan Chase recognized that some features of full service schooling, especially in the social service arena,

32 See the website of the CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities: http://cpsafterschool.org/
would require active partnership with CCAP and their schools.

Over the first five years of the Chase’s work at Herzl, that active partnership has been expressed through a cycle of consultative, brokering, and informal and formal oversight activities. JPMorgan Chase staff typically establish with their school principals and not-for-profit partners a frequent pattern of communication, focused on consultation and a give-and-take of ideas about the client school’s needs. At Herzl, this has evolved into a high level of relational trust between principal and funder, in which each proposes candidate projects, and a transparent discussion of available resources leads to mutual agreement on goals for funding.

Such discussions often are followed by brokering activity, connecting external service providers with Herzl and CCAP staff, and often drawing from within the network of JPMorgan Chase not-for-profit grantees. In some instances the brokering began when a new not-for-profit approached Chase for funding, and Chase recognized a link to Herzl’s needs and resources. In 2004, for example, JPMorgan Chase funded the Chicago Culinary Arts Partnership to implement its innovative cooking-based academic enrichment program using Herzl’s spacious first floor kitchen. The result was a delightful program that matched a working chef with older students several time each week to learn the art and professional techniques of cooking. JPMorgan Chase also engaged Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) to provide parent leadership training. Several other service relationships in the health arena were brokered or facilitated through Chase contacts.

Frequent and informal contact between Chase staff, school, and lead partner also accelerates cycles of reflection, assessment, and accountability within the partnership. As CCAP senior staff admitted, this active funder role has required some adjustment, and has placed considerable pressure on resource coordinators to be ready with information for JPMorgan Chase staff when they visit school, sometimes unannounced. But this approach has also encouraged what one CCAP administrator called “…a fast track implementation cycle,” in which quick consultation with the funder helps support iterative, real-time improvements in program development. Engagement with Chase also has expanded CCAP’s program profile, most notably through acquisition of the Saturday Scholar’s Program as an initiative of Columbia College. On the JPMorgan Chase side of the equation, close engagement with program development through the year, through informal consultation, program observation, and a standing monthly meeting with the principal and lead partner staff, yields deeper information about how the Chase program model is evolving.

Moving Forward - Challenges of Capacity and Sustainability

Five intense years of collaborative practice have raised the aspirations and the capacity of all three contributors to the Herzl community school partnership. Growth and success have also posed new challenges and forced discernment of alternative directions for further development. At a time when many North Lawndale public schools face falling enrollments and potential loss of funds, Herzl Elementary has significantly expanded its developmental and academic supports for students, and consolidated its support among parents and community neighbors. Test scores have improved in balance with a school culture that values the whole child, body, mind, and spirit. Enrollment has stabilized, and a large percentage of parents commute daily with their children to assure that they keep their places at Herzl despite living outside the enrollment area. In short, community schooling has enhanced
Herzl’s status as a “school of choice” for current and former North Lawndale residents.

Several challenges now face Herzl staff and leaders as they seek to sustain these accomplishments. To begin, the school community must identify a successor principal with both the credibility and the entrepreneurial zeal that have won Herzl the respect and commitment of funders like JPMorgan Chase and the Steans Family Foundation. In the short run Dr. Green will inevitably be a hard act to follow. In the longer run, Herzl’s new principal will also face the challenge of taking the school’s professional learning community from “good to great,” and developing an instructional program that is fully equal to the most effective schools serving urban African American students in Chicago.

Some data suggests that the school is not yet there. While Herzl’s 8th graders have performed well on standardized tests, for example, 6 of every 10 graduates appear to falter in their transition to local high schools - which include some of the city’s largest and roughest – and are not considered “on-track” for graduation by the end of 9th grade. Why remains unclear, although both intensified neighborhood stress and the faculty’s resistance to using departmentalized strategies in its upper grades may be contributing factors. In spring 2007 Herzl succeeded in polling nearly all its parents as part of the first CPS Voice of the Parent Survey. While over 50% of parents registered satisfaction with the school and opportunities for parent involvement, over 25% rated their overall satisfaction with Herzl very low. Pressure to prepare older students better for the high school transition will likely come from the same parents whose expectations for Herzl have grown with the community school effort.

In the case of CCAP, engagement with community school ideas and management has coincided with development of a more ambitious conceptual framework for arts-based school partnership, and its transition in scope from a limited “office” to an integral College “center.” Today’s CCAP is the face of the College’s urban mission to several prominent Chicago funders and foundations. Yet with growth comes challenge, and for CCAP leadership two obstacles loom largest. First, in relation to the scope of service envisioned by CCAP and championed by JPMorgan Chase, Chicago’s community school design is an under-resourced model. Overall annual funding for CCAP’s community school activities at Herzl approximates $275,000 annually, compared with the larger operating budgets ($600,000 or more) of the community schools run by the Children’s Aid Society in New York City. In addition, the categorical structure of funding streams like the 21st Century Community Learning Center program can make it difficult to allocate existing funding flexibly. The pinch for CCAP comes particularly at the central administrative level, where limits on the hiring and training of teaching artists and supervisory staff constrain how many schools can be added to their current school network, and how fully arts integration can be implemented in existing schools.

Second, as the agency’s scope of service has increased, CCAP has struggled with the pressure imposed on a small school-based team, and in particular on the shoulders of a single resource coordinator. One CCAP administrator called this the challenge of “leadership density” – that is, the need to recruit a consistent corps of stakeholder volunteers with sufficient training and commitment to help manage the many functions that comprise a dynamic community school. Indeed, part of the agency’s investment

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33 This response rate in itself was far higher than the CPS average (roughly 65%), and reflected a concerted effort by the CCAP resource coordinator and Herzl faculty to survey every family at two large after school events.
in its Illinois PIRC initiative is the potential to build “reciprocal partnership” with parents and community members in ways that sustain quality and scope of service, especially in out-of-school time. Similarly at Herzl, the development of a community school advisory committee could deepen shared responsibility for an ambitious scope of community school activities. As CCAP’s April Langworthy expressed it:

*Sometimes it’s implied with Community Schools that the community will walk in the door, and be ready to ante up, but that’s not the case. We will never be able to reach a full-service school model on the backs of one person in every school. A lot of times, the leadership density at our schools – the number of people who take responsibility for the movement - is the principal and maybe the resource coordinator. And so building leadership density among parents is really a next important step for us that we’ve started to tap.*

For JPMorgan Chase, partnerships with community schools such as Herzl have energized the funder's on-going project to expand both the scope and impact of its community development activities. The early successes of schools like Herzl have convinced Chase's philanthropic leadership that community schools can serve as anchors for more ambitious and comprehensive neighborhood revitalization. These efforts would link local investment in housing, small business, and workforce development to educational investment across the school day and after school hours. Currently JPMorgan Chase is restructuring several philanthropic and community development assets to better integrate and coordinate financial services with investments in education, arts, and cultural partnerships. As Vice President for Community Relations Beverly Meek put it:

*We’ve based our new approach to community development on research and the alignment of the needs of our communities, businesses and employees. We see education as a key core competency of the firm and as the 21st century response to poverty alleviation. In Chicago we engage the Community Schools Initiative and use these schools, which would otherwise be closed after 3:00 PM, to provide after school programs, arts training, adult services, such as English as a Second Language, job training and providing health and social services. Basically, the schools serve as the hub of the community and should be fully utilized.*

Moving forward, Chase’s focus on facilitating community development around a hub school is likely to mean less customized, “hands-on” school sponsorship of the sort that has marked its close relationship with Herzl. Instead, the Chase leaders will seek a stronger voice in educational change at the systemic level, through investments in curriculum and program development with potential to scale system-wide. In Chicago, for example, Chase is collaborating with the Chicago Public Schools Office of Arts and Education to craft a fine arts curriculum across the grade levels, with modules targeted to classroom instruction as well as out-of-school time. Chase will also play an active role within the new Federation for Community Schools to influence local and state policy around community schools, and will continue to collaborate with the CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities to build local capacity for community schooling. Funding will continue to build capacity within community based organizations that can manage the breadth of services required of a full service community school partner. And Chase will continue to support the training of talented resource coordinators with strong partners such as the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.34 As the Bank elaborates this ambitious agenda, its successful experience with Herzl and its sister community schools may yet yield a model for corporate engagement that

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34 For details, see: http://www.ssa.uchicago.edu/programs/special.shtml.
supports the aspirations of low- and moderate-income residents who seek a place and a voice in transforming communities like North Lawndale.

References

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Acknowledgements

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A Word about Data and Method

Several approaches to data collection and analysis were synthesized to produce this profile. During spring 2007 and winter 2008 UIC researchers conducted individual and group interviews with key community school collaborators including the principal, the school resource coordinator, CCAP’s community school staff, and a senior official of JPMorgan Chase. These interviews were combined with interviews with teachers, students, and parents from three prior years of study, transcribed, and analyzed for the themes explored in the narrative. A wide range of documents from both the school and its partners were collected and analyzed, most notably the 2006 School Improvement Plan (or SIPAAA), out-of-school time program schedules, and web-based documents from the school, CCAP, and JPMorgan Chase. Community census data for North Lawndale and the two census tracts surrounding Herzl Elementary were derived from the website of the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC). School achievement trend data were derived from the University of Northern Illinois’ Interactive Illinois Report Card website. Other aggregate school data (e.g., 8th grade on-track trends; 2007 student connections survey; 2007 Parent Voice Survey; student discipline data) were acquired from the on-line website of the Chicago Public Schools, or supplied by the CPS Office of Safety and Security. Community safety information was derived from the Chicago Police Department’s CLEARMAP system.
A strong body of research has documented the continued financial dividends of graduating from high school and completing a college degree (Center for Labor Market Studies, 2007). Most Chicago public high school students, however, encounter numerous challenges that compromise achievement of college graduation, beginning with the struggle to stay on-track to graduate from high school. According to a recent report from the Consortium on Chicago School Research, 83 percent of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) seniors aspire to earn a bachelor’s degree or higher, and an additional 13 percent want at least a two-year or vocational degree (Stevens, 2008).

Yet a recent report by America’s Promise Alliance ranks Chicago 31st among the nation’s 50 largest cities in its high school graduation rate, only graduating 51.5% of students (Swanson, 2008). Further, as reported in From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College, only 41% of Chicago seniors complete the steps necessary to apply to college, while roughly one-third who aspire to a college degree enroll in colleges well matched to their qualifications. Research bears out the importance of sustained academic as well as social and emotional support to cultivating the motivation and skills necessary to attend and succeed in college, especially for minority students (Murnane & Levy, 1996; Newton & Vogt, 2008).

Since 2000, the Chicago Public Schools has advanced several large-scale initiatives to mobilize high schools for improved high school achievement, graduation, college readiness, and successful college degree completion. These include efforts to elevate the coherence of curriculum and the engagement of students, as well as new strategies to improve how high schools and their surrounding communities collaborate to support successful youth development. In this community school profile, we explore how one new high school complex on Chicago’s south side is integrating two of the city’s groundbreaking efforts to improve schools as catalysts for youth development – the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (or CHSRI) and the CPS Community Schools Initiative (CSI). The Little Village Lawndale High School (LVLHS) incorporates these and other high school reforms in a concerted effort to realize
the educational aspirations of students and families in the Little Village and North Lawndale communities. To do so, the four small high schools of the LVLHS campus must confront dangers to youth within each community as well as on-going tensions between them. We focus particularly on two of the four small high schools within LVLHS that have partnered closely with Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVCDC), an organization that helped lead the fight to establish the school and remains a critical community ally of school reform.

Serving Two Distinct Communities: Little Village Lawndale High School’s Mission to Provide High-Quality Secondary Education for Little Village and North Lawndale

The Little Village Lawndale High School, located at 3120 S. Kostner Ave. in Chicago’s Little Village community, is a multiplex campus housing four autonomous small high schools, each with its own thematic focus. Each school enrolled 100 freshmen in the fall of 2005, and has added approximately 84 additional students each subsequent year to reach its current enrollment of 1039 students. In the 2008-09 academic year, LVLHS will operate at full capacity. The overall demographics of LVLHS are 75% Latino, 24% African-American, and 1% multi-racial or other. Nearly all LVLHS students (95%) meet low-income criteria (eligible for free or reduced lunch). Approximately 10.5% of students are considered limited-English proficient (LEP), across all four schools, while about 11.2% were identified for special education services in 2008 across the four small high schools. See Table 2 for a demographic summary.3

Each LVLHS small school has its own principal and teaching staff. A Campus Manager supports cohesive decision-making among the leadership of the four small high schools, which share several common facilities within the state of the art, $63 million building and grounds. For example, students share the library, swimming pool, courtyards, auditorium, dance studio, child care center, gyms, health center, long distance learning labs, and the literacy center. Otherwise the building is organized into four co-equal wings, color coded to signal the location of each of the small school classroom and laboratory areas.

While a walk through the halls and classrooms of LVLHS suggests a wide range of influences, four factors in the community and school system have particularly shaped the origins and early development of this remarkable high school. These factors include: 1) the educational aspirations of the Little Village community, 2) the educational aspirations of North Lawndale, 3) Chicago’s agenda for small high school reform, and 4) the influence of Chicago’s agenda for community schooling.

The Educational Aspirations of the Little Village community

Community activists and visionary leaders have historically used hunger strikes as an extreme measure to give a voice to and champion the causes of marginalized and disenfranchised peoples. On May 13th, 2001, fifteen Little Village residents (primarily mothers and grandmothers) participated in a 19-day hunger strike to wrest the attention of city and school district leaders and secure the construction of a long-promised high school. The action reflected deep community concern over high school overcrowding, especially at local Farragut High School, and frustration with the failure to break ground on a new state-of-the-art high school in western Little Village (Friedman, 2007). The principles and tactics of Cesar Chavez guided the group’s actions, and “Camp Chavez” became a focal point of media attention and community resistance. Almost four years later, in fall 2005, the Little Village Lawndale

High School Campus opened its doors, as the most expensive Chicago public school ever built. The architecture of the school reflects Mexican culture and aesthetics, paying symbolic tribute to the 19-day fast in a massive sundial located in a foyer at the heart of the building. The school’s murals also celebrate Chicago’s African American and Hispanic civil rights legacy, asserting a common agenda for social justice and human development across community boundaries.

Each school highlights a thematic, curricular focus, as outlined in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Thematic Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinity Math, Science, and Technology High School</td>
<td>College-preparatory curriculum, utilizing project-based learning, with an emphasis upon development of mathematical, scientific, and technological skills and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Arts High School</td>
<td>Arts-integrated curriculum and instruction, with extensive partnership with the School of the Art Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice High School</td>
<td>Student senate, town hall meetings, colloquia, and student leadership projects engage students in applied opportunities to learn about peace, social justice, self-determination, and community participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language High School</td>
<td>College-preparatory curriculum and instructional focus, offering students language enrichment in English, Spanish, and Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>English Language Learners (LEP)</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>Freshman On-Track-to Graduate</th>
<th>Students Making Expected Gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinity</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>71%; CPS Rank 12 of 78</td>
<td>61%; CPS Rank 2 of 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Arts</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>63%; CPS Rank 24 of 78</td>
<td>50%; CPS Rank 17 of 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>70%; CPS Rank 14 of 78</td>
<td>51%; CPS Rank 14 of 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>78%; CPS Rank 5 of 78</td>
<td>59%; CPS Rank 5 of 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farragut</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>39%; CPS Rank 71 of 78</td>
<td>47%; CPS Rank 28 of 89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although South Lawndale may be the official name of North Lawndale's southern neighbor, this community is much better known as La Villita, meaning "Little Village" in Spanish. Community boundaries include the Stevenson expressway (I-55) on the south, Cermak Road to the north, Western Avenue on the east, and Cicero Avenue on the west. The name is well-suited, as La Villita is the largest Mexican neighborhood in the city of Chicago, hosts one of the most active commercial districts in the city, and serves as a gateway for Mexican-American migrants for much of the midwestern United States. Little Village was formerly the home of large Italian, Polish, Czech, Irish, Lithuanian, Croatian, and Slovene ethnic communities.5 African-Americans gradually moved to the neighborhood in the 1950s. As Latino families moved west from Pilsen since 1960, Little Village became predominantly Hispanic. “Bienvenidos a Little Village” welcomes travelers on the arch over 26th Street while as they head west at Albany Avenue, proclaiming the Mexican and Mexican-American character of today’s community.

Table 3 provides a demographic overview of Little Village, according to the 2000 Census. [See also Appendix Table 1.] Among this population of 91,071, the large majority in 2000 (83%) were Latino and nearly half were foreign-born, a considerable increase from the 47% Latino population in 1980 and 4% in 1970. By 2000, African Americans comprised 13% of the population, up from 9 percent in 1990. 2005 and 2010 Census population projections report that by 2010, Little Village will experience a slight drop in population to 87,847 and remain predominantly Latino. Similar to other Latino communities, Little Village is also one of the most youthful neighborhoods in the city. Over the last several decades, 40 percent of the total population has been under 20 years of age. The Little Village community contends with gang activity with a chapter of the Latin Kings and also members of the 2-6ers, a rival of Latin Saints in the Back of the Yards.6 Overcrowding in the local public schools has accompanied this demographic trend, further exacerbated by fiscal instability in parochial schools.

In an analysis of income diversity across 11 Chicago neighborhoods, the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC) characterizes South Lawndale as “Emerging Low Income” (Taylor, 2007). Core characteristics of Emerging Low Income neighborhoods include a high proportion of families who have lived in the neighborhood a long time, a high proportion who have not completed high school, and a high proportion unemployed or on public assistance. In such neighborhoods, the work of community development organizations generally involves “community organizing, enforcement of housing quality standards, increased protection from crime, and commitments of financial resources and infrastructure improvement in order to stem the tide of disinvestment and withdrawal,” (Taylor, 2007). Such is the nature of the work of the Little Village Community Development Corporation in South Lawndale.

See also the Encyclopedia of Chicago at: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1174.html. This source reports about South Lawndale: “With more than five thousand inmates, the Cook County Jail and the city of Chicago's House of Corrections add many non-Hispanics to the area's overall demographic profile.”
Table 3. Little Village (South Lawndale) Demographic Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>91,071</th>
<th>Almost 10,000 new residents in 10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Chg. (1960-2000)</td>
<td>30,131</td>
<td>Has surpassed earlier peak of 84,000 in 1920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing units (2000)</td>
<td>20,991</td>
<td>Up 961 since 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacant units (2000)</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>8.4% rate is up one point since 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing (2000)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>Little change from previous decades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop. below poverty level (2000)</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>Up from 22% in 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hholds w/ pub. assistance (2000)</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>(7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hholds w/ income above $35,000/year (2000)</td>
<td>7,623</td>
<td>(40%) 1,644 households had income above $75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Educational Aspirations of the North Lawndale community

North Lawndale residents have also struggled for improved high schools, while resisting both community disinvestment and gentrification. Chicago’s historic North Lawndale community is located roughly 5 miles from the downtown Chicago Loop, stretching from the central west side to the border of Cicero township. Escaping the Great Chicago Fire in the 1870’s, the community grew both as a population center and an industrial corridor. The presence of large employers such as Sears and International Harvester helped to maintain a strong local employment base through the 1940’s, and fueled the development of small businesses and cultural institutions.

This equation of local employment and community vitality shifted swiftly after the Second World War, as African American families moved to North Lawndale from the South and Chicago's south side, seeking work and a better life. As whites left and the Black population burgeoned, discrimination related to employment and housing set in motion a sustained pattern of community disinvestment that attracted the attention of Dr. King and remains persistent to this day. The riots that followed the King assassination and the economic downturn of the early 1970’s only advanced disinvestment and job loss, leading to a severe erosion of population, deepened poverty among the remaining African American residents, and a landscape of deteriorated properties. Today’s North Lawndale is among 11 Chicago communities fitting what the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC) calls a pattern of

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8 For a succinct summary of the history of North Lawndale, see the website of the Encyclopedia of Chicago: [http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/901.html](http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/901.html)
“desertification,” in which “…very few moderate- or high-income families remain in the neighborhood, leaving a high concentration of low-income families” (Taylor, 2007). “These are areas where the cycle of disinvestment and abandonment has reached its pinnacle, and the remaining population is abandoned in an area of few jobs and services,” reports MCIC.

North Lawndale’s community advocates actively confront discrimination and disinvestment. Since the 1960s, several comprehensive housing and community development initiatives target North Lawndale. Each has attempted through varied strategies to shift the neighborhood toward a mixed income pattern that would attract new residents, anchor small business, and link residents to job training, affordable housing, and vital social services (Keating, Krumholtz & Star, 1996). The theme of combining local community- and faith-based organizations with philanthropic and government actors to achieve mixed income development remains the core strategic vision of more recent initiatives. Building community involvement in such ventures, however, must overcome considerable local distrust that redevelopment is not a prelude to gentrification of the sort that has cleared large African American communities from other near-Loop neighborhoods. Additionally, mounting such ventures means overcoming what a recent United Power report calls a “perfect storm” of factors favoring private, market-rate development over mixed-income policy considerations in the City of Chicago.

All evidence suggests that grinding poverty and its social correlates take a severe toll on the both the psychological and physical health of many North Lawndale residents. While disparities in health outcomes between white and minority Americans have generally declined in recent years, research indicates that Chicago has resisted this trend (Margellos, Silva & Whitman, 2004). In a series of studies by the Sinai Urban Health Institute, North Lawndale exceeded five other high risk Chicago communities in several measures of health risk, most notably in rates of heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, and suicide (Whitman et al., 2004). Birth rates among older teens and childhood obesity also significantly exceed Chicago averages. In addition, children face elevated risk of physical and psychological abuse, and may experience acute levels of grief and depression associated with the health and stress-related conditions of the adults in their lives. The fact that North Lawndale is among seven Chicago communities receiving over half of male prisoners released to Chicago each year, with few employment prospects, suggests fertile conditions for both re-offense and recidivism (Visher and Farrell, 2005).

As populations, North and South Lawndale differ in several respects, based on US Census 2000 statistics (See Table 4 and Attachment A). Little Village carries more than twice the population of North Lawndale, although both have about the same percentage of teenagers (9-10%). There are fewer families living below the poverty level in Little Village (23.7% vs. 41.7% in North Lawndale), and the median housing value is higher in Little Village. Unemployment is higher in North Lawndale, as is the percentage of the population in sales and office occupations (28.8% vs. 18.4% in Little Village). 2010 Census projections indicate that Little Village will remain predominantly Latino, and North Lawndale will stay predominantly African-American.

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9 United Power for Action and Justice, an alliance of over 300 churches, unions, and civic organizations, successfully placed affordable homes in North Lawndale through its Ezra Community Homes project.

10 Local organizations such as the Lawndale Alliance vehemently oppose the City’s plans to assign TIF status to the area surrounding the intersection of Pulaski and Ogden Avenues, complaining that under-appraisal of property values and property tax hikes will force long-time residents and property owners out of North Lawndale. See the Chicago Defender: http://www.chicagodefender.com/view.php?f=483.

At the same time, with its large Mexican population, Little Village contends with the political, economic, and social issues of undocumented immigrants, likely a significant percentage of its population. The exact number and economic impact of undocumented immigrants is very difficult to measure, for several reasons, including that Chicago passed an ordinance in 2006 forbidding police officers from inquiring into a person’s legal status. Among an estimated 302,000 undocumented immigrants in Chicago in 1996, the Little Village community deals with this population, and among them, undocumented Latin-American women experience unemployment rates that approach 20%. Challenges faced by undocumented workers include significant lower wage differentials, lack of health insurance coverage (only 25% have coverage), poor work conditions, and low usage of government services, benefits, and programs (UIC, 2002).

Both communities share high aspirations to provide their youth with quality educational resources, while community advocates battle to address threats to youth like gang violence and poor public health conditions. Prior to the school’s opening, the Chicago Public School Capital Planning Group drew school attendance boundaries such that 30 percent of student slots would be allocated to students from neighboring North Lawndale, a predominantly African-American neighborhood, to accord with Illinois’

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Table 4. North Lawndale Demographic Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
<th>Down 5,528 since 1990, leveling off after huge decline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2000)</td>
<td>41,768</td>
<td>Down 5,528 since 1990, leveling off after huge decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Chg. (1960-2000)</td>
<td>Down 83,169</td>
<td>Fell by 30,000 in 1960s, 30,000 more in 1970s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th></th>
<th>Down 1,066 from 1990, leveling off somewhat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing units (2000)</td>
<td>14,620</td>
<td>Down 1,066 from 1990, leveling off somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacant units (2000)</td>
<td>2,218</td>
<td>Rate of 15.2% is nearly twice city average of 7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing (2000)</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>Continuing steady climb as # of rentals decreases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
<th>Fourth highest rate in city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop. below poverty level (2000)</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>Fourth highest rate in city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hholds w/ pub. assistance (2000)</td>
<td>2,461 (19.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hholds w/ income above $35,000/year (2000)</td>
<td>2,905 (23%)</td>
<td>761 households had income above $75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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desegregation consent degree. This determination brought deeper historical community tension between Little Village and North Lawndale to the surface. The school’s name originated to represent both community populations served. However, the front of the building bears the name “Little Village High School” in large block letters, reinforcing the contested political struggle of school ownership among these two communities (Friedman, 2007).

Chicago’s Agenda for Small High School Reform

The small schools movement in Chicago first gained momentum in 1995 when CPS issued a resolution identifying small schools as a promising way to impact high school student achievement, especially for low-income communities. With funding support from several foundations and the Chicago Public Schools in 2001, the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative (CHSRI) launched its mission to open more than two dozen small high schools across Chicago. Over six years, CHSRI has guided development of 22 small high schools – both conversions of larger high schools and new start ups of small high schools. Most students in these small high schools are African-American or Latino, and do not perform well on academic achievement tests.

LVLHS schools began participation in the CSHRI network, during the 2004-2005 planning year. Subsequent to LVLHS’ opening in 2005, each of the four principals have participated in CSHRI network activities, which includes professional development on the creation of personalized, academic learning communities. The new small schools campus of LVLHS is considered a demonstration site for CSHRI, and each school has received start-up grants for $500,000 over a three year period. Schools have received other grants for specialized programs, such as for schoolwide academic orientation retreats to an offsite location to nurture team-building, personalized learning, and collaborative problem-solving among students and faculty.

LVLHS exemplifies most of the lead features of CHRSI small high school design (see box), particularly those referred to as the “seven autonomies.” CPS grants CHSRI schools latitude to experiment with innovative designs and protocols in seven broad operational areas, and are held accountable for demonstrating how those innovations

Source: CHSRI New School Starts Grant: Request for Creating Small Chicago Public High Schools at the Lucy Flower Campus (August 2003, p. 6)14

14 To review full text of this CHSRI Request for Proposals, see: http://smallschools.cps.k12.il.us/Flower_RFP4.pdf.
advance student success. Taken together, autonomy in these seven areas is intended by CHSRI to build faculty trust and buy-in to the difficult work of overcoming contemporary gaps in achievement, graduation, and college readiness.

Apart from sharing many of the characteristics of small schools, CSHRI schools also commit to instructional leadership and practice of Authentic Intellectual Achievement (AIA). Authentic Intellectual Achievement (AIA) is a theory of teaching and learning that grows out of the work of Dr. Fred Newmann and his associates, begun at the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research in the mid-1980s and extended in projects for the Consortium for Chicago School Research in the 1990s. The core belief of AIA is that students will learn material more effectively if their teachers offer them learning opportunities—tasks, projects, assignments—that are both rigorous and relevant. In CHSRI schools, students commit to active construction of knowledge, engagement in disciplined inquiry, and relevant applications to their problem-solving. At Infinity HS, for example, students engage in project-based learning, which reflects principles of AIA.

New research by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (April 2008) reports that while CHSRI schools demonstrate success in collaborative work in school activities, they are “less successful at consistently strengthening the school experience or course performance of freshman students.” While the World Language HS principal and Infinity HS principal discuss concentrated efforts to establish a rigorous, challenging academic environment for first year and ongoing students at their schools, they also point out obstacles to achieving it in a new school with less experienced staff. Over the first three years of development of LVLHS small schools, two of the principals and the LVCDC resource coordinator report similar challenges in creating a thematically focused, personalized, and yet rigorous academic experience for students. Initial indicators show that LVLHS students perform better academically than the larger CPS general high school alternative of Farragut High School. Social Justice High School has been invited to replicate their school at another location by CPS administration.

The Influence of Chicago’s Agenda for Community Schooling

The Chicago Public Schools’ Community Schools Initiative (CSI) is a groundbreaking effort to take to scale a framework for community schooling within a large American urban school system. CSI builds upon the core features of the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program as well as local and national community school designs with the aim of developing a distinctive Chicago approach to community schooling. As of July 2008, CSI includes 150 elementary and high schools working closely with more than 400 non-profit organizations to stay open longer, open resources such as gyms and computer rooms to after school and community use, welcome parents as full partners, and deepen social and family support services.15

Chicago’s community schools include neighborhood elementary and high schools, magnet and specialty schools, and charter and contract schools involved in the city’s new Renaissance 2010 Initiative. A vigorous public/private partnership representing the business, philanthropic, and not-for-profit sectors helps finance and advocate for CSI. The community schools affiliated with the CPS Community Schools Initiative share a number of core distinguishing features:

1. Extension of the time in which the school building is open and in use, typically to include activities in the evening hours, with adequate security and physical plant support.

15 See website of CPS Office of Extended Learning Opportunities: http://cpsafterschool.org/program/.
2. Hiring of a full-time Resource Coordinator (RC), with primary responsibility for developing and managing programs during the after school hours in partnership with key school and agency staff

3. Engaging of a Lead Partner Agency (LPA) to collaborate with school administrators in supervising the RC, connecting the school with other community resources, supporting planning activities, and providing some direct services

4. Developing a mechanism for planning and oversight of community school activities that broadly represents community stakeholders, especially those who do or can contribute to improved student learning and the further development of the community school (e.g., teachers, parents, social service providers, community based organizations (CBO’s), churches, and local business people)

5. Deepening sources of information about the needs and desires of students, families and other community school participants upon which to base the development of new strategies, resources, and programs.

Little Village Lawndale High School reflects the core features of the Chicago Public Schools’ Community Schools Initiative, which dovetail in most respects with CHSRI’s seven autonomies. Each of the four small high schools work with community organization partners to enhance the regular school curriculum; offer after-school enrichment programming; and broaden parent and community engagement in ongoing education, enrichment, and positive youth development. The Multicultural Arts High School and Social Justice High School have another community schools partner organization, Youth Struggling for Survival. The Multicultural Arts High School also have cultivated a wide range of supportive partnerships, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, the School of the Art Institute, Northeastern Illinois University (during planning), Instituto de Progresso Latino, and various arts organizations such as the Hothouse.

Roles of the Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVCDC)

The Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVCDC) has been the official Lead Partner Agency (or LPA) for Infinity and World Language High Schools from 2005-2008, and gradually has served as a community resource organization to the whole LVLHS campus. LVCDC will be the official lead partner agency for all four LVLHS small high schools in the 2008-2009 school year. There are several campus-wide initiatives led through the efforts of LVCDC such as support to the school-based Alivio Medical Center and advocacy for broadened community use of the facility, reflected in swimming classes in the pool and theater productions in the auditorium. Over the past three years, LVCDC offered a slate of programming for both youth and adults – open to students from all four high schools, which have been primarily supported by contractual partnership with Infinity Mathematics, Science, and Technology High School and the World Language High School. Over three years, LVCDC has worked closely with school stakeholders including – the campus manager, engineers, principals, faculty, students, parents, and community residents – to advance the development of small schools and community schools implementation.

16 Youth Struggling for Survival describes itself as “…a youth empowerment organization working towards the goal of obtaining equality, justice, peace and power for all young people. Using our natural gifts of dance, poetry, music, and art we merge our spiritual, cultural and social awareness to create a sanctuary for all young people—a place where their voices are heard and their contributions required to make our communities fuller and richer in spirit.”
Little Village residents formed the LVCDC in 1990 to redevelop the abandoned industrial park at 26th Street and Kostner Avenue. LVCDC founders envisioned a community-based organization to engage neighborhood residents in planning for their community’s development. The board hired its first executive director in 1998, a former Little Village alderman and Illinois state senator. Ten years later in 2008, LVCDC employs approximately 15 staff and expands its work to include economic and educational development. The LVCDC mission is to: “Ensure a balanced development of the Little Village community that respects the wishes of community residents, including working families, local businesses, faith-based organizations, senior citizens, and youth.”

LVCDC’s work with LVLHS occurs in a broader context of work to improve the Little Village community. The range of LVCDC’s projects includes several accomplishments:

- Leadership of a five-year, comprehensive, quality of life planning process in Little Village through New Communities Program, involving hundreds of residents.
- Assistance to secure $2 million to fund streetscape renovation and facility expansion along the industrial corridor, which resulted in the creation of 80 new jobs.
- Work with a master developer to create a comprehensive design for the redevelopment of a 44-acre site between 26th Street and Kostner Avenue. Plans include the development of commercial/retail businesses, mixed-income residences, senior housing, a community center, and recreational space.
- Creation of the Mexican Immigrant Resource Center, in partnership with Erie Neighborhood House, which provides legal assistance to immigrants. The center also offers educational resources, such as computer literacy, English as a second language, and citizenship exam preparatory classes.
- Procurement of a Housing Resource Center designation from the Chicago Department of Housing (a designation which allows LVCDC to offer a wide range of financial literacy seminars, housing workshops, informational fairs and direct counseling).
- Founding the Little Village Violence Prevention Collaborative (VPC), a group comprised of 20-plus community organizations and residents, including the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Central States SER, and Pilsen-Little Village Community Health Center. This group has helped to reduce gang violence and increased access to educational institutions, recreational facilities, jobs, and affordable health care.
- Creation of a partnership with Illinois State University, the Chicago Public Schools, LISC and State Farm Insurance to develop a Student Teacher Residence Hall in Little Village, allowing ISU Student Teachers to live and work in the community.

LVCDC served a primary leadership role in organizing the community to lobby for the development of the new high school at 31st and Kostner. Funding for LVCDC’s work with LVLHS comes from the Polk Bros. Foundation and the Chicago Public Schools’ Community Schools Initiative general funds and sustainability funds. LVCDC also serves as the community resource organization partner for elementary schools in the area, including Eli Whitney and Rosario Castellanos. In summer 2008, LVCDC’s ongoing negotiations with Farragut High School resulted in the organization’s selection as lead community

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17 See the Little Village CDC website: http://www.lvcdc.org/
19 Non-Profit Community Building Award: Little Village Community Development Corporation article, retrieved from: http://www.lisc-cnda.org/display.aspx?pointer=3652
resource partner for supplemental educational programming for students, analogous to work with Little Village Lawndale High School.

**Distinguishing Features of Community Schooling at World Language and Infinity High Schools**

Identification as a “community school” fits well with the LVLHS’s founding history, mission, operating culture, and desired future. There are several distinguishing features of the community schools model in partnership with the Little Village Community Development Corporation and its two initial primary school partners on the LVLHS campus: World Language and Infinity High Schools.

**State of the art community center.** This large, new campus offers a clean, spacious environment for both education and recreation in its classrooms, swimming pool, gymnasiums, and auditorium – inviting to students, parents, community members, and school personnel – to utilize the space. In 2007-08, LVLHS opened its swimming pool for community residents through the advocacy of the LVCDC. LVLHS now offers water aerobics and lap swim Monday-Friday from 5:30-8 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. – noon (includes open swim at 11 a.m.), during the school year. Summer swim hours will also be available to community residents. LVCDC works with LVLHS leadership to provide a significant range of sports activities and youth development programs for youth, in which approximately 60% of students participate over time. Classes for parents and community members are also provided during these after-school (5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.) and Saturdays.

**Wide-ranging enrichment and youth development programming.** Volleyball, Soccer, adult basketball, and youth basketball are offered in the North Gym. Martial arts and choir are additional offerings. LVCDC offers dance classes, including Latin Aerobics and Step, Capoeira Angola: Dance, Movement, and Music, and Mexica Danza in the Dance Studio and the Cone. LVCDC’s community schools partnership also includes tutoring for students from each of the four high schools on the LVLHS campus. Students apply state-of-the-art technology in classrooms, including video cameras, computer-based applications such as PowerPoint presentation, and digital cameras in academic enrichment programs that cultivate talent in journalism, theater, music, art, and design. The *Buzz* is the resulting newsletter of LVLHS students, approximately 20 pages of stories and photos, published with side-by-side stories in both English and Spanish.

LVCDC’s fashion program has remained popular since the start of the community schools initiative, attracting approximately 20 students on a consistent, daily basis. A Youth Leadership program, offered during the school year and the summer, provides approximately 20 students with opportunities to study civil rights and immigrant rights movements and develop their own leadership projects. The summer program includes a trip to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Strategic partnerships to increase community participation and educational opportunities.** LVCDC partners with Malcolm X Community College to offer ESL, GED, bilingual computer literacy, and citizenship classes in World Language High School classrooms. LVCDC also worked with the leadership of LVLHS to develop a partnership between Teatro Vista, one of Chicago’s only Latino theatre companies, to provide a professional training program for LVLHS students in dramatic performance and production. Professional actors coach LVLHS students and offer workshops in auditioning, staging, singing, presentation, body movement, and career development. Recent performances include *La Posada Magica* in December 2007 and *Machos* in May 2008. LVCDC staff
broadcast regular electronic and paper announcements regarding public events like these at LVLHS which further establish the high school campus as a central location for community events.

The recent performance of *Machos* was specifically geared to adults in the community, and served as a fundraiser for CAUSE, a scholarship fund for undocumented students. Performance content drew from interviews with 50 men nationwide, and cast an all-Latina cast in drag. As described in the promotional literature, *Machos* is a play about contemporary masculinity: “From a young man’s relationship with his correctional officer father to a man cheating on his wife with himself to an epic confrontation between fraternity brothers, *Machos* presented a range of true life stories with Teatro Luna’s trademark humor and unique Latina point of view.” Tell Your Story is a complementary program for LVLHS students that provides approximately 25 students with training in self-expression through performance arts – theater and music. Students write their own screenplay and music script, which culminates in production for students and community residents.

Each school creates partnerships that extend academic enrichment during the regular school day, as well. For example, Infinity High School has worked to replicate program features of the New Tech High Schools in California. These schools support the development of students’ online portfolios from 10th to 12th grade and strengthen students’ use of modern technology throughout the academic disciplines with “project-based learning.” There is a 1:1 student-to-computer ratio at Infinity High School, so students are not limited by computer access for academic work.

**School-based health clinic.** With support of LVCDC advocacy, Little Village Lawndale High School opened the LVLHS Alivio Health Clinic on October 25, 2007 with hours until 7 p.m. By May, 2008 the clinic has registered 408 students, several uninsured adults from the community, and ten families on KidCare. Staffing of this campus-based clinic includes the Director, two certified medical assistants, a licensed counselor, and nurse practitioner. Doctors and midwives are on call through the Alivio Medical Center. The clinic functions independently of the schools on campus and of the LVCDC, maintaining confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA privacy laws.

Services include psychotherapeutic counseling, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, pregnancy testing, immunizations, school sports physicals, and medical triage from headaches to injuries. Community invitational events such as health fairs offered services such as blood sugar testing to community members, which resulted in several critical medical referrals for care. Further work remains to foster full community access to this resource. As described by the principal of Infinity High School: “The clinic has been an important addition. They are really amazing! But it is not a free clinic. You have to have insurance. In emergencies, they take care of anyone. The clinic signs eligible families for Kid Start. Students sometimes need a free physical or immunization. The Chicago Board of Education provides a lot of support for dental care, eyeglasses, and things like that.”

**Facilitating Factors to Community Schools Implementation**

There are several primary facilitating factors to the implementation of community schooling on the Little Village Lawndale High School campus, as described by two of the principals and the resource coordinator from the Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVCDC). LVCDC provides a solid organizational structure to the work of the community schools resource coordinator for LVLHS.

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20 See: [www.newtechhigh.org](http://www.newtechhigh.org) for more information about the program features and model.
The four principals on the LVLHS campus each bring complementary leadership skills and experience to their respective roles, and continuously work to build an effective academic and educational foundation in this new educational facility. Governance structures, such as the weekly principals’ meeting and new leadership roles in the Campus Manager and the Parent Coordinator support the implementation of community schools programs on the LVLHS campus.

**Lean and integrated community school staff.** Due to its partnership with several Little Village schools including LVLHS, the LVCDC cultivated a high-performing team of resource coordinators to serve as managing liaisons to each school, who meet periodically to lend support, discuss effective strategies, and ways to advance community school goals in partnership with school principals and key school stakeholders. LVCDC offers a larger community organization infrastructure to support the community schools partnership with fiscal controls and administrative support, yet the responsibility for coordinating partnership activities for each school rests with one person, interfacing with key leadership of the school partner. In this way, there is continuity and consistency with communication, as well as a deepened opportunity for strengthening the partnership’s impact over time through enhanced services.

**Committed resource coordinator linking LVCDC’s two school partners.** Over two years, the LVCDC resource coordinator has worked successfully to increase the level of trust and communication with building leadership in the four high schools that supports improvements and expansion in programming. At the beginning of the partnership between LVCDC and Infinity and World Language high schools in February 2006, the resource coordinator worked to establish a routine of communication with the principals to advance after-school and community programming at the LVLHS campus. Today, the resource coordinator handles a full range of logistical and programmatic challenges of coordinating youth and adult programming during after school hours, in partnership with the principals, campus manager, building engineers, security personnel, and instructional staff. This have meant acquiring a detailed knowledge of CPS and local building policies, to address contingencies such as maintaining out-of-school time programming in the absence of a CPS administrator, or the impulse of a building engineer to shut down the school due to snowstorms or personal schedules when programming and staff were scheduled to be present. Other arrangements requiring the RC’s attention have included paying overtime for the building engineer, collaborating with both external and internal instructional staff for adult and youth classes, and coordinating security checks through the one campus entrance.

**Capable and community savvy principals.** The CPS principal selection process requires interaction with community leadership, as community leaders serve on the Transition Advisory Council. Each principal participated in individual selection processes geared towards the specific aims of each of the four high schools. As described by both LVCDC resource coordinators and the World Language high school principal, the first step was to establish trust among school staff, community members, students, parents, and district colleagues. The Area Instructional Officer serves as a catalyst for instructional leadership, enforces accountability to state and district academic standards, and works with each principal to cultivate the unique identity and character of each high school.

Among the four LVLHS principals, Principal Phillips of World Language High School is the only African-American. One of the factors she attributes to her success in this educational environment is her capacity to speak Spanish. Some of her challenges are coaching and developing a new, young instructional staff and providing both demanding, highly-disciplined leadership and yet accommodating students, staff, and parents needs as they emerge. Each of the four high schools work on the
development of a rigorous curriculum, the provision of differentiated instruction based on students’ academic progress data, and effective strategies for gaining the partnership and support of parents and students. Each school provides professional development for instructional staff in accordance with the specific mission and developmental stage of the faculty. The LVCDC coordinator describes one of his key responsibilities as understanding each principal’s work style, primary motivations, and current demands and responsibilities to offer desirable and meaningful solutions in a timely, efficient manner.

**Governance structures linking the four small high schools.** Every week, the principals of the four small high schools on the LVLHS campus meet to coordinate administrative and instructional leadership concerns. As described by one of the principals, each of the schools “is at a different stage” of instructional and educational development. Each brings their own leadership style, whether highly assertive and decisive and less inclusive in decision-making or more accommodating and inclusive, less directive and rigid, more creative and varied with instructional diversity, or highly focused and concentrated in a few key programs. “You cannot fight every battle,” says Principal Phillips of her interactions with other principals. “We talk with each other, listen, and have to give each other space” to provide the leadership required for each school’s program.

Every week there are new challenges to work through, such as how to coordinate the bill for prom and set policies regarding chaperones, disciplinary consequences, etc., and the weekly principals’ meetings provide a forum to air concerns, questions, and differences. One of the facilitating mechanisms for community school programming across the four schools, is a division of responsibility among the four principals, that rotates every two years. Currently, the principal of the Multicultural Arts School is in charge of after school programs, the World Language principal is in charge of security, the Infinity principal is in charge of facilities, and the Social Justice principal is in charge of athletics.

**Links to key school roles such as the Campus Manager and Parent Coordinator.** The LVCDC resource coordinator to LVLHS describes communication with the Campus Manager as a critical factor, due to the campus-wide programming that LVCDC offers across the four high schools. As LVCDC’s RC, Rudy Lozano described it, “The campus manager is my ally. He is a retired CPS principal, and when I go to him, he has the broader vision of how the school should run – as a high school, as a community school. He’s always thinking long-term – how we upkeep the building.” The Campus Manager mediates conflicts that arise among principals, building security, engineers, and others, as needed. “It is a serious challenge to work with a multi-school campus because it’s not centrally coordinated in the same way as other schools,” reports the resource coordinator. The Multicultural Arts High School and Social Justice High School organize their community schools programs differently with different community organization partners, which adds another layer of coordination with principals and the Campus Manager. In addition to establishing regular communication with the Campus Manager, the LVCDC resource coordinator to LVLHS regularly attends faculty meetings at his two partner high schools, along with establishing regular communication with all faculty through email and mailbox mail.

The parent coordinator works to increase parent participation in school events. As expressed by the World Language principal, the LVCDC contributes to developing instructional rigor “as the principals have become more aware of what we need. We realized a need for more parent participation and training.”

*Their work is more rigorous as we become better leaders. LVCDC is very good at responding. The LVCDC hired a parent coordinator to increase their effectiveness in getting the parents involved.” In terms of improving personalization, LVCDC is “good with connecting with the parents of one community- in Little Village. They
put out flyers, but our black parents don’t generally come in.” We discuss how to improve the situation with North Lawndale, but the organizational capacity may not be there. They are good with working with the administration and the faculty, and it’s OK with the students.

Moving Forward – Challenges and Opportunities

Several perspectives inform the developing vision for community schooling at LVLHS and the challenges that must be surmounted to achieve that vision. Current and former LVLHS students, school faculty, the principals of Social Justice and Multicultural Arts High Schools, parents and community members attending classes and programs at LVLHS, adults in the community who are prospective participants in programming at LVLHS, the campus manager, engineers, other resource organization partners, contractual instructors, and facilitators leading programs for students and adults, school district leadership, including the Area Instructional Officer, and many others – all play an on-going role in the emergence of a distinct agenda for youth development and academic success at LVLHS. Moving forward, we explore three themes that bear on the cohesion and impact of LVLHS and its partnership with Little Village Community Development Corporation.

Integration and independence of programming at four high schools. The founding vision for the LVLHS campus was to have four distinct small high schools with their own programmatic emphasis and yet, collaborate with each other to coordinate shared, effective use of the school facility and campus. As described by the LVCDC resource coordinator, “working on a multi-school campus is a real different situation. It’s not coordinated under one system, which is a serious challenge. Having accountability and transparency across the four schools is also a challenge. MAS [Multicultural Arts High School] and SOJU [Social Justice High School] organize their community schools separately, which is difficult process.” LVCDC staff met with the campus principals about bringing community schools partnerships for the four schools through LVCDC to better coordinate outreach, programming, and management of community schooling processes.

On a multi-school campus such as LVLHS, the community schools resource coordinator must manage security and facilities issues, in close partnership with the Campus Manager, engineers, principals, and others: “In the after school program, there is an integrated sharing among the schools…people are lobbying for space. Coordinating flow is a big task. There are not as many turf issues during the school day…The common facilities were supposed to have separate entrances and exits, apart from the school building. They are intermixed right now. You would have to have security at every turn, even during the evening [to manage students and adults participation in all the programs].”

One of the challenges expressed by the World Language principal has been tracking participation and outcomes of after-school programming led by the LVCDC. Over time, the LVCDC has worked with partnering schools and principals to establish a system for registering and tracking the participation of students in programs across each of the four schools. As described by the LVCDC resource coordinator: “Now there is a central accessible record for every student. We purchased an ID system to log student in who are attending various after school program activities.” There is a desire to have the opportunity to support the development of student portfolios that could be shared across the schools, but this will require more planning and development. Thus far, there is not a system for tracking student accomplishments and achievement longitudinally in community schools programming. LVCDC has created a system for registration of every student, student emergency contact information, and individualized student schedules to track where they are registered for programs each day.
Both the World Language and Infinity High School principals expressed that participation in the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative has helped their schools to further strengthen their unique school identities as well as hallmarks of excellent small schools. Each school is in its own unique stage of development. Multicultural Arts High School and Social Justice High Schools, for example, have received competitive grants from the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative for the hiring of instructional coaches for faculty and postsecondary education coaches for students to support 11th graders now entering 12th grade to surmount the obstacles required for successful college enrollment and ongoing coaching and longitudinal tracking through the college years.

While each school has their own unique approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment with their own faculties and developmental processes, there are some efforts to share resources and programs. For example, Infinity and World Language students will have the opportunity to take Chinese language classes in 2008-2009. Students from these two schools also have the opportunity to participate in a two-year nursing preparation program, for which students receive a certificate. “We are very much autonomous, but we make arrangements for students to benefit from programs in other schools when they request it,” reports Principal Irizarry.

Furthering communication, respect, and trust among North and South Lawndale students, families, and community members. Both principals and the high school resource coordinator acknowledge tension among students and parents from the school’s two constituent communities. As described by Principal Alice Phillips of World Language, there is “unrest between the two communities. In the community, not the school. But it affects the school. It has to do with frustrations that express themselves as racial tensions. You have gangs and unemployment. The black gang members will come over as a result of something they’ve heard…They have frustrations with own lives…The kids discuss the fact that they don’t have problems with each other. Because the parents have discomfort in visiting the school, we have to worry about how African-American kids get home. We bring buses in, but some students choose to walk. Kostner or 31st is the primary walking corridor. That corner between Pulaski and Komensky – there are a lot of gang members.” As an African-American principal, one of Ms. Phillips strongest assets is her ability to speak Spanish. “Because I speak it well, I slowly gnaw away at mistrust. Many cannot speak English, so I have an advantage. I am building from a blank slate. People will think based upon how I act during our interaction.”

Rudy Lozano, Jr., LVCDC Resource Coordinator, estimates that “little blowups at the high school are 95% gang-related.” He does not characterize the tension as specifically racial, but it can manifest between individuals and groups of different racial backgrounds. Addressing these conflicts has become an important part of the work to ensure smooth community schools programming. As described by the Resource Coordinator:

> Our goal is to strengthen the relationship between North Lawndale and Little Village. It’s not enough that people just get along. It’s an issue of meeting common needs. We share a history of discrimination and lack of resources. We are trying to build solidarity with the African-American community, and North Lawndale in particular. Violence prevention is an issue we work on together. The clearest example of how we work together involves our outreach workers. We provide alternatives for students to work and play together in after school programs. There are relationships through the New Communities Program. We have not been as good at working with North Lawndale as we have been with working with Pilsen. We are always plugging into partnerships, such
School leaders seek ways to draw together parents and students through programs held at the school and experiment with strategies to best support the African-American minority in the school. For example, LVCDC recently launched a joint youth leadership program in which youth themselves will organize and lead a deeper conversation across communities. The Chicago High School Redesign Initiative also has provided a grant to the Chicago Public Schools to develop and sustain a campus wide student council at the Little Village Lawndale High School campus, over the 2008-2009 school year. This initiative is designed to support community building and student leadership development across the campus.

From the perspective of LVCDC’s Rudy Lozano, school and community leaders must work together to bridge cultural understanding in order to move community relations at the high school forward. “The school cannot work in a bubble, and then expect society to be the same. Everyone has a different take. Security has one level of consciousness. Police another. Teachers another. Community activists another. Gang interventionists see another. There are forces outside of the school that want the campus to be a “Little Village” school. There was a referendum by State Senator Sandoval in March (two years ago) – students who attend Little Village should live in and around the area. Include the east side of Little Village and not North Lawndale.” The Infinity High School principal reports that when she hears parents say that the African-American students should not be at the school, she affirms that “cultural diversity makes us richer.” She views it as an issue of adults not taking the time and opportunity to get to know each other. “Once they get to know each other and they hear how much the [African-American] parents are concerned about safety, as much as they [Latino parents] are, there is a bonding that takes place.”

**Complementary development of personalization and academic rigor.** As previously reported in this document, each of the LVLHS schools received professional development support, funding, and coaching on the development of personalized, rigorous learning environments to promote “authentic intellectual achievement.” Each school has experienced different challenges in their efforts to build their own professional learning community. One of the challenges in the World Language High School has been changes in the principalship. Principal Phillips will enter her third year at World Language in 2008-2009, and has worked to turn a “surviving community” of young, inexperienced teachers into a strong, professionally-oriented, collegial faculty. Principal Phillips came to World Language High School with seventeen years of experience at Kenwood High School and after serving as a principal intern at Corliss High School.

The Area Instructional Officers have played an important role to push the development of rigorous instruction and assigned one instructional coach for each area such as science, mathematics, language arts, social sciences, and arts and language. Principal Phillips points out the importance of leading by example and providing feedback for instructional improvement in the moment: “I can push people up to a certain expectation as long as I model it. I do not wait until the end of the school year [to provide feedback to teachers]. If I see something that needs correction, we talk about it.”

Both the Infinity High School principal and World Language principal talk about how important the summer faculty retreat has been to cultivating a personalized, rigorous instructional climate. Principal Phillips described that one of the most pivotal discussions occurred around teachers saying “what ten
skills their students will have ‘over my dead body.’” The teachers were able to admit to themselves the need for a more rigorous curriculum and that they “teach to the middle.” External consultants provided counsel on the implementation of differentiated curriculum and instruction. The faculty worked to define academic rigor in their content areas. Topics of conversation included: how to best use quizzes, how to bundle units, what should be included in interim assessments. World Language teachers are facilitating professional development now, and the principal offers supportive data, research, feedback, and coaching.

Principal Irizarry describes the retreat as an engaging, powerful, uniting experience, especially for incoming freshman. Among incoming freshman in fall 2008, 90% will participate in a five-day off-campus retreat, which in summer 2008 will be in Lake Geneva, IL. Faculty, administrators, and staff work with the students 24 hours a day, cultivate team building skills, and close with an indigenous ceremony. One of the challenges to surmount is the development of cultural and inter-racial understanding. In Infinity High School, 72% of the students come primarily from Mexican backgrounds, and 28% come from African-American backgrounds, while the staff is primarily Caucasian. Principal Irizarry sees communication barriers that the retreat supports students to overcome and build a more supportive learning climate throughout the school year. LVCDC participates in the retreat, which helps set a good foundation for relationships with students and faculty in the upcoming school year. At the same time, both principals discussed the importance of working with teachers to have good rapport with students, to support students in learning new content with strategies that engage and enliven them, and maintain a positive attitude in noticing students’ progress and growth on a daily and longer-term basis.

Both principals interviewed expressed numerous strengths that the Little Village Community Development Corporation partnership brings to establish rigor and personalization among students, community, faculty, and others. The key, from the perspective of the LVCDC resource coordinator, has been intensive commitment to relationship building with faculty:

> The first year it was walking on eggshells. This year, it is more comfortable. Prospective teachers approach me to facilitate programs. For example, martial arts taught by one of the engineers. They write a proposal, and I talk with them. The choir was teacher led. A World Language teacher came up with the Summer youth leadership program. I have improved my ability to relate to teachers by attending and interacting at faculty meetings. I went to every clerk and have all the teacher emails, and I email teachers regularly. I now know 85 of 100 teachers personally. I’ve also been integrated into teachers’ classes several times.

To conclude our profile, Little Village Lawndale High School blends two important educational reforms – small high schools and community schools – to support the academic achievement and youth development of students from two neighboring but contrasting communities. While most LVLHS students are Latino and come from the Little Village community, African-American students from North Lawndale comprise more than one fourth of students on campus. As LVLHS juniors move into their fourth year in 2008-2009, the campus will reach its full capacity and present new challenges and opportunities. Though the Little Village Community Development Corporation first began primarily as a community resource partner to World Language and Infinity High Schools, LVCDC has gradually expanded its capacity to serve students across the LVLHS campus. In autumn 2008, LVCDC will officially assume the role of Lead Partner Agency to all four high schools. This data indicates that community school practices contribute rich and unique resources to the ongoing effort to shape small
urban high schools of excellence. There are positive signs that LVLHS’s community schooling model fuels the aspirations of youth and families from both of Chicago’s historic Lawndale communities.

References


Acknowledgements

The authors extend appreciation to Martha Irizarry, principal of Infinity High School and Alice Phillips, principal of the World Language High School, for generously sharing their time and insights. We thank also the staff of the Little Village Community Development Corporation, especially Rudy Lozano, Jr., resource coordinator for the Little Village Lawndale High School community school program, and Director of Education Katya Nuques. Marissa Filippo of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative also provided thoughtful background and updates. The contents of this community school profile remain solely the responsibility of the authors.

Data Collection Summary

Dr. Whalen and his staff conducted a group interview with the key staff at the Little Village Community Development Corporation serving as resource coordinators for several elementary schools and Little Village Lawndale High School in April 2007. Follow-up interviews with World Language High School principal, Alice Phillips; the Infinity High School principal, Martha Irizarry; and LVCDC Resource Coordinator to Little Village Lawndale High School, Rudy Lozano, Jr. occurred in May 2007. Community profile data primarily comes from the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC) and the LISC New Communities Program websites. Additional data on the individual high schools comes from the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability and Northern Illinois University’s *Interactive Illinois Report Card*. Data analysis includes review of LVCDC service plans and program artifacts (e.g. newsletters, student newspapers, and schedule).
## Attachment A. Comparing Chicago’s North Lawndale and South Lawndale Communities on Selected Census 2000 Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North Lawndale</th>
<th>South Lawndale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000 Number</td>
<td>% Pop. 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>41,768</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>18,581</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,896</td>
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<td>African American</td>
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<td>% Ages 14 or below</td>
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<td>% Ages 15 to 19 years</td>
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<td>Social Indicators</td>
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<td>*Living in Same House as 1995</td>
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<td>Median Housing Value</td>
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* Against population sub-total (not total population)