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

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

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

Each stage of the spiral outlines a set of milestones that, according to experience, community schools partners will likely need to achieve in order to build a scaled-up system. The sequence can help community leaders see at what stage they are initiating the process and determine what they must do to keep moving forward.

In broad terms, partners come together to build a shared vision, develop a plan, take action, and then revise, improve, expand, and sustain their efforts. This approach is familiar to people who...
have already worked to develop a single community school as well as to those organizing a number of community schools within a school district or across several districts serving a local jurisdiction.

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

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

Here is an outline of each stage:

- An Overview lists major milestones, summarizes the characteristics of the stage, and suggests how that stage relates to building a more effective system.
- More on Milestones offers general guidance for approaching each milestone. Rather than providing step-by-step instructions that might suit some communities but not others, it recognizes that every community’s political, economic, and social context is unique.
- Stories from the Field provide some of the experiences, challenges, and solutions on which the stages are based.
- How You Know If You Are Making Progress outlines benchmarks to help leaders at the community and school-site levels as well as intermediary entities track their capacity across key functions.
- Pitfalls call attention to common missteps that can derail an initiative.
**STAGE 1: DECIDE TO SCALE UP**

**Overview**

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

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

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

**More on Milestones**

**Milestone #1: Convene Innovators**

Some things to think about:

Innovators are people who see the value in a new idea and take the lead in helping others see its advantages. School superintendents, United Way and other non-profit officials, community leaders, government representatives, members of faith communities, college and university educators, and participants in similar initiatives are just some of the people who have led the way in the initiatives profiled in Part Three. Innovators also may be mid-level staff in various organizations who see the value of community schools and want to promote the concept to organizational leaders.
In many communities, innovators may already have worked together to develop one or more community schools or other collaborative efforts. In other cases, they will start from scratch. It is helpful to engage people who demonstrate the following:

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

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

- **Share leadership.** Take turns hosting and facilitating each meeting. Make sure that all participants, including those who cannot tap organizational resources, have an opportunity to share leadership roles. Anticipate any special costs and discuss an equitable way to meet them. Assure participants that, at this stage, no long-term commitment is required.

- **Broaden perspectives.** Organize field trips to community schools, show videos about community schools, and invite students, staff, parents, and others to talk about the changes they envision. Encourage stakeholders to share personal and organizational stories about why community schools and scale-up interest them.

- **Dream big.** Ask a variety of big-picture questions. What would I want a full-fledged system of community schools in my community to look like? What might some of the possible results be? The idea is to generate enthusiasm and to think as broadly and expansively as possible.

- **Acknowledge self-interest.** Throughout the early stages, participants—including school districts—need to voice their concerns about community schools, recognize their advantages, and work through both personal and organizational costs and benefits. Separate, facilitated conversations at the site, organizational, and system levels may make it easier for stakeholders to speak candidly.

- **Encourage honest, shared exploration.** Look for common ground, but disclose concerns. Most concerns will not be deal breakers, and many will be resolved as participants continue to share information. Fully voicing any remaining concerns—and keeping them on the group’s radar screen—will help manage any potentially negative effects.

**NOTE:** Change starts with leadership and vision, not with money. Participants may take turns hosting conversations and providing facilitators if needed. They have the knowledge and experience to help make their case. While innovators need to be alert to possible funding streams, they do not need to concern themselves primarily with finances at this stage. The absence of funding does not provide an excuse to say “we can’t do this.”
Acknowledging power differentials.
Differences in relative power, expectations, and expertise among partners represent a major hurdle for many collaborative efforts. Anticipate these differences and begin early to mitigate them.

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

**Milestone #2: Assess Readiness**

**Some things to think about:**

A main objective of Stage 1 is to determine your community’s initial readiness for scale-up and to identify areas of strength and weakness. To what extent can the scale-up effort draw on the strategic leadership, existing infrastructure and management functions, technical and financial resources, staff, and networks of other groups and agencies? Are people ready for change? Pay attention to both the external environment in which scale-up will occur and the internal, organizational environments that will influence the direction and energy of scale-up efforts.

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

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

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

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

**Evaluate your findings.** Do the facts point to sufficient community desire and organizational capacity to build a large-scale system of community schools? If not, look at the areas in which capacity seems weakest and consider steps that could improve readiness in those areas. If the current political and economic context is not favorable, consider how you might keep interest alive until the environment changes. The profiles in Part Four show how some communities formulated plans to move forward.
EXPANDING INTENTIONALLY
The COMPASS community schools initiative in Pennsylvania’s Greater Lehigh Valley spans two counties and three school districts and serves 12 schools. Functioning as an intermediary, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley works with several lead agencies and has built partnerships with leaders in the business community, medical/health community, local family centers, preschools and daycare centers, after-school programs, and higher education community service departments, among others. Nearby districts—both urban and rural—have expressed interest in making similar community services available in their schools. The United Way chapter and its partners are excited about the possibility of sizeable expansion. At the same time, they realize that they need to expand intentionally and assess their own readiness before they launch a regional scale-up. Are the appropriate people at the table? What new challenges will arise with implementation in rural areas? What commitments are school districts willing to make? What changes in leadership need to be addressed? Partners are looking at these issues and taking appropriate steps. For example, to encourage continuing commitment in a district that will be hiring a new superintendent, community schools leaders met with school board members to suggest questions to ask candidates in order to evaluate their support for community schools expansion.

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

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

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

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

The initial phase of the SUN Community Schools gained the considerable support of policymakers, principals, and parents. Demand for additional community schools grew rapidly. Despite tough financial times, local leaders began to look to expand the effort. In the first few years, the number of sites grew from 8 to 19 through grants and alignment of similar school-based efforts into the community schools model. On the county end, a thorough analysis and planning exercise in 2002–2003 led leaders to conclude that it would be more effective and efficient to redirect existing funds allocated to fragmented family and youth programs into one aligned service system. The shift was part of a comprehensive retooling of the county’s youth and family service system into the SUN Service System, with community schools at the heart of that system. That planning effort set the stage for the phase-in of an additional 41 SUN Community Schools over the past eight years.
Milestone #3: Compile a Convincing Rationale for Scale-Up

Some things to think about:

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

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

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

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

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

- **Advantages.** The community will benefit along several dimensions.
- **Compatibility.** Changes will be compatible with public education’s core mission and values.
- **Simplicity.** The ideas underlying community schools are easy to understand.
- **Try-ability.** Community schools lend themselves to phased-in implementation.
- **Observability.** Positive results are visible.

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

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

Milestone #4: Broaden Collaborative Leadership

Some things to think about:

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

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

- **Reach out to families.** Recruit organizations that represent families, including education organizing groups, grass-roots neighborhood groups, parent universities, and PTAs.

- **Seek out other collaborative efforts focused on improving community conditions.** Scope out stakeholders in public, non-profit, faith-based, and collaborative initiatives to determine if their objectives for health, housing, economic development, workforce training, and youth development and family support complement the scale-up initiative. Involve early childhood initiatives as well as service learning and after-school initiatives.

- **Look for leaders of other key institutions.** United Way chapters, local governments, higher education policymakers, major CBOs, and other organizations can influence community decision makers.

- **Do not overlook the business community.** The expertise, resources, and political support of corporate champions can be invaluable.

- **Keep trying!** Do not let “skeptics” and “laggards” derail the initiative.

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

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

**What’s in It for Us?**

- Participants should have a clear sense of how involvement in community schools scale-up can support their professional and organizational goals. For *individuals*, how might participation strengthen their personal networks, build skills, and provide leadership opportunities?

- For *schools*, what district-wide, cross-system benefits and efficiencies are possible when a large number of schools and partners work toward shared goals?

- For *other participants*, how does scale-up make sense given their respective organizations’ mission and vision? Is there a close fit? What conflicts, if any, might arise with existing commitments? How might participation increase organizations’ operational opportunities and build internal capacity? What opportunity costs might be involved?
LOCALLY FOCUSED EVENTS FOR SCALE-UP
Leaders from Lincoln, Nebraska, directly experienced the benefits of learning from other community schools. Early in Lincoln’s community schools planning process, a group of about 60 leaders—including the superintendent, mayor, and others—visited Kansas City to learn about its community schools initiative. “Trips are a great way to get people to buy in to an idea. Also, when you travel together you bond around a shared experience. When you get back home you know your team better and you talk about how you can make the work we’re doing better,” said Cathie Petsch, co-coordinator of the Lincoln Community Learning Centers. She sees tremendous value in meeting people involved in similar work in different communities. “You learn so much from each other and use each other as resources and sounding boards.”

AVOIDING DUPLICATIVE LEADERSHIP COALITIONS
When Tom Brady, superintendent of the Providence Public Schools, decided to scale up community schools, he recognized that he needed someone inside the system who would embody the system’s commitment to engaging with the community. It was then that he hired Rebecca Boxx. Building on related initiatives in Providence, including the highly regarded Providence After School Alliance and Promise Neighborhood, Boxx decided to work through an emerging interagency cabinet organized by then-Mayor David Cicciline. Current Mayor Angel Taveras has retained the cabinet, which, among other benefits, provides the community schools strategy with direct connections to major institutions. As a leadership group, the cabinet helps guide the strategy and mobilize the resources and political will of a variety of organizations.
Milestone #5: Commit to a Motivating Shared Vision

Some things to think about:

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

(Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*)

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

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

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

Milestone #6: Increase Visibility

Some things to think about:

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

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

- **Create “brand awareness.”** The larger community must recognize and identify with the scale-up initiative. Partners in Portland’s SUN Initiative learned early that distilling the group’s vision into an easily recognized name and logo not only increased visibility but that the process of finding a name also built ownership at all levels.

- **Think regionally.** Efforts to increase visibility within a region or a locality can pay off by, for example, connecting your initiative to other initiatives from which you can learn, building peer-to-peer networks, and sharing the cost of technical assistance with or directly linking it to system-wide scale-up. As the experience of Pennsylvania’s Greater Lehigh Valley attests, state partners can be particularly helpful in developing regional visibility.

EVERYTHING IN A NAME

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

STATE SUPPORT FOR SCALE-UP

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

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

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

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<th>Supportive Policy</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Site</th>
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### Professional Development and Technical Assistance
- Partners participate in site visits, community forums, and other opportunities designed to familiarize them with the principles and practices of community schools, outline the assumptions and expectations of community-wide and site partners, and build common ground across the initiative.

### Broad Community Engagement
- The system-wide initiative’s name and logo are recognized and used throughout the community.
- Communication with the public occurs regularly through open meetings, social networking sites, television and radio spots, newsletters, flyers, posters, and so forth.
- Open meetings present community-wide data and invite feedback.
- Site visits to community schools for elected officials and potential partners as well as for initiative leaders, family members, and residents are well attended and designed to build community.
Stage 1: Decide to Scale Up

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<th>Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>support.</td>
<td>Two-way communication</td>
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<td>□ Two-way communication with state and federal officials is ongoing.</td>
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Pitfalls

- Not taking the time to scan the environment to see what else is happening that could support or derail a community schools strategy.
- Failing to reach out to key leaders of other collaborative efforts whose assets are vital to the success of the community schools scale-up effort.
- Overlooking what is already happening in particular schools that could demonstrate the power of a scaled-up system of community schools.
- Neglecting the value of a powerful vision for mobilizing the entire community.
- Not being transparent about the work and aggressively seeking out additional stakeholders.
STAGE 2: DEVELOP AN OPERATING FRAMEWORK

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

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Define Key Functions
Some things to think about:

Clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms. In Stage 1, policymaking partners began to create the context for change. Now, new questions arise. Who should do what? By when? The Collaborative Leadership Framework in Part Two describes the partners and functions that, according to experience, are required as scale-up progresses. The framework will help you understand the sequence of actions needed for implementing your vision of a scaled-up system and then help you consider how best to get the job done.

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
To strengthen fidelity to the community schools collaborative model and capacity among site partners (particularly principals, non-profit lead agencies, and site coordinators), SUN developed an inter-organizational accountability checklist. The checklist emerged as an idea from the SUN Districts Council, an operations-level group that includes representatives of affected school systems, the city of Portland, and Multnomah County. As intermediary for SUN, the county designed the tool by drawing from existing partnership agreements and partner input. Such a tool has proven valuable in keeping the work of the SUN collaboration at all levels on track, ensuring progress toward its broader vision. The checklist focuses on items such as vision, operational structures, leadership integration, and communication.
Provide extended opportunities for partners to discuss key functions. Partners need to see that their participation is valued. They also need to agree to support activities in their respective areas of influence and expertise. A review of the comprehensive benchmark list organized by function and leadership level at the end of Part Two can help partners understand how an organizing framework can facilitate their work.

Milestone #2: Distribute Leadership
Some things to think about:

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

Community-Wide Leadership

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

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

- Influential public and private sector representatives granted decision-making authority by their respective institutions?
- Representatives of local and state government bodies and agencies, philanthropies and businesses, school districts, higher education institutions such as community colleges, community- and faith-based organizations, and civic groups, along with student, family, and community leaders?
- Champions with access to information that can significantly affect scale-up planning and the ability use the information to sustain the initiative?

School Site–Level Leadership

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

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

Intermediary Entities

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

Develop clear criteria for selecting an intermediary. Your initiative may already have developed mechanisms for managing, planning, and communicating across a relatively small
number of existing community schools. Does this arrangement provide the capacity needed to develop a substantially scaled-up system? The choice of a skilled intermediary depends on the following:

- **Legitimacy** in the community. Will the intermediary adhere to its stated mission and professional standards?²
- **Credibility** as a change agent. Does the intermediary have a successful record in working on collaborative initiatives?
- **Community relationships.** Does the intermediary enjoy productive relationships with the school district and other partners?
- **Technical capacity.** Does the intermediary demonstrate strong administrative and management capacity in planning and evaluation, finance, resource development, marketing, and communication?
- **Staff.** Are the people who will do the work politically astute, flexible, and skilled in balancing top-down and bottom-up decision making?

Consider the range of possibilities for intermediary entities. Community schools initiatives have developed successful intermediary relationships with a wide variety of entities, including the following:

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

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

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**Key Characteristics of Intermediary Leaders**

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

Some might say that intermediary leaders are “unique heroes.” The rise of community schools across the country belies this notion. Every community can point to boundary-crossing leaders with the right mix of political and technical skills to make community schools a reality.
- Clarity about which participants will be accountable for which functions and the steps to be taken to ensure that these responsibilities are a priority for the respective participants
- Sufficient involvement of school district leaders to align community schools activities with the other work of the school district

**Be flexible.** In the initial stages of developing a scale-up initiative, the arrangement for an intermediary may be informal, with one or two organizations taking the lead. Over time, community leaders may recast the arrangement to meet changing needs. Ultimately, regardless of the organization selected, the intermediary needs to earn the trust of community leaders.
ALIGNMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP NETWORKS
In Cincinnati, Ohio, district-level delivery of enrichment services is the work of partnership networks rather than of a single intermediary organization. A Cross-Boundary Leadership Team consists of leaders of networks concerned with a range of needs and opportunities from after-school and mental health services to physical health to tutoring and mentoring. To ensure coordination with the curriculum and increase efficiency, organizations interested in partnering with the public schools become part of a partnership network that responds to specific school needs. Site-based governance teams and resource coordinators at individual community schools work with the partnership networks to select the providers most suited to meet the needs and culture of a given school. Such an approach gives the provider “exclusive rights” to a school, prevents service overlap with other providers, and ensures that all schools have equitable access to services. The networks support implementation in line with school plans, provide ongoing quality control and professional development, and develop business plans and financing strategies to sustain their work. Some networks are staffed by volunteers; others have sought foundation support as non-profit entities.

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

A midlevel operations team is “the glue,” says Diana Hall, program supervisor for the SUN Service System. When the composition of top-level leadership on the Coordinating Council changes, staff at the “operations level” – such as Peggy Samolinski and Diana Hall (employed by Multnomah County) and Mary Richardson (employed by the city of Portland) – provide and consistency to the work. They helped develop the initiative’s top-down and bottom-up alignment and communication by working closely with members of the Coordinating Council as well as with principals and SUN Community School managers at the site level (the third level). The third level identifies needs, develops partnership opportunities, and implements activities at individual schools.
Milestone #3: Plan to Plan
Some things to think about:

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

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

**Formalize intermediary role.** A formal agreement needs to spell out the intermediary’s role and responsibilities with respect to the school district and other partners. The agreement should state how partners will oversee the intermediary’s performance and, if necessary, either replace the intermediary or redirect its work in the event of unacceptable performance. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and interagency agreements should clarify how partners will share financial accountability.

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

Remember that the power of this 6-stage strategy comes from its iterative design. Each stage builds on the work of each preceding stage. Although every stage brings a new set of benchmarks by which to measure progress, that does not mean that work in earlier stages is finished. Continued attention to benchmarks from earlier stages develops capacity throughout the system. At the end of **Stage 2**, look for the following new benchmarks of progress in key functional areas.

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

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

### Pitfalls

- Putting too much leadership responsibility on a single individual or organization.
- Not thinking through how the same functions apply to various leadership levels even though functions will not receive equal attention at the same time.
- Ignoring the importance of defining benchmarks for partners’ accountability to one another.
- Putting too much emphasis on dollars at the outset of planning and forgetting to look at how existing planning, research, and program development assets may be redirected to support the initiative.
STAGE 3: PLAN FOR SCALE-UP

Overview

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

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

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

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

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Define Desired Results

Some things to think about:

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

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

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

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

**USING RESULTS TO DRIVE PROGRAMMING**

The Greater Lehigh Valley United Way COMPASS Community Schools initiative uses Results-Based Accountability planning to drive its work.¹ The approach to planning starts with the end in mind. What results does COMPASS want for children and youth? What indicators require measurement? Planners map backwards to develop programs and services to achieve results. Lehigh Valley finds the approach particularly useful because it leads people to think about who is responsible for a particular indicator and what organizations need to join forces to “turn the curve” in a positive direction on a particular measure. The Results Leadership Group provided training to selected COMPASS staff in planning systems. COMPASS Director Jill Pereira is a strong believer in results-based accountability and planning.
Figure 7. Results Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>INDICATORS THAT ALIGN WITH EACH RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Children are ready to enter school | - Immunizations  
- More children with health insurance  
- Children in expected height and weight range for their age  
- Availability of early childhood education programs  
- Attendance at early childhood education programs  
- Parents read to children  
- Vision, hearing, and dental status |
| Students succeed academically | - Reading on grade level by third grade  
- Daily attendance  
- Early chronic absenteeism  
- Tardiness  
- Truancy  
- Standardized test scores  
- Teachers support students  
- Grades  
- Graduation rates  
- Dropout rates |
| Students are actively involved in learning and their community | - Students feel they belong in school  
- Availability of in-school and after-school programs  
- Students feel competent  
- Schools are open to community  
- Attendance at in and after-school programs  
- Partnerships for service learning in the school/community  
- Post-secondary plans |
| Students are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally | - Asthma control  
- Vision, hearing, and dental status  
- Physical fitness  
- Nutritional habits  
- Positive adult relationships  
- Positive peer relationships |
| Students live and learn in stable and supportive environments | - Students, staff, and families feel safe in school  
- Families provide basic needs  
- Incidents of bullying  
- Reports of violence or weapons |
| Families are actively involved in their children’s education | - Families support students’ education at home  
- Family attendance at school-wide events and parent-teacher conferences  
- Family experiences with school-wide events and classes  
- Family participation in school decision-making  
- Trust between faculty and families  
- Teacher attendance and turnover  
- Faculty believe they are an effective and competent team  
- Community-school partnerships |
| Communities are desirable places to live | - Employment and employability of residents and families served by the school  
- Student and families with health insurance  
- Community mobility and stability  
- Juvenile Crime |
Milestone #2: Create a Results-Based Logic Model

Some things to think about:

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

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

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

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

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

The Coalition’s Results-Based Logic Model provides an instructive example (Figure 8).
Figure 8. Community Schools Results-Based Logic Model

Community Schools Logic Model

**Inputs**
- Community School Coordinator
- Sufficient staff (expertise + availability)
- Sufficient resources (e.g., funding, facilities)
- Available/relevant partners
- Leadership & Initiative level infrastructure
- Support from schools and community

**What Can Happen at a Community Schools?**
- Family engagement
- Extended Learning Opportunities/Youth Development
- Health, mental health, and social services; family support
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Early Childhood Development
- Professional development (school staff and community)
- Linkages between schools and partners

**Outputs**
- Supported Families
- Comprehensive learning supports
- Integrated academic enrichment and social services to support children’s intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development
- High quality, engaging, instructional programs
- Partner integration into school day

**Short-term Results (proximal)**
- Children are ready to enter school
- Students attend school consistently
- Students are actively involved in learning and their community
- Families are increasingly involved in their children’s education
- Schools are engaged with families and communities

**Long-term Results (distal)**
- Students succeed academically
- Students are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally
- Students live & learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment
- Students graduate ready for college, careers, and citizenship

**Impact**

**Your Planned Work**

**Your Intended Results**

www.communityschools.org
Milestone #3: Prepare for Evaluation
Some things to think about:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to continuously refining its evaluation design, Evansville has significantly expanded its ability to use and share data. With a data warehouse that collects cross-district student information, Evansville tracks students within schools as they advance through the system. Rather than expecting partners to “fish” for data on their own, the district executed MOUs that stipulate the information requested by a partner and the justification for the request. Release forms for personal data are fully disclosed to parents before they are signed and then kept on file.
Milestone #4: Develop a Rollout Strategy

Some things to think about:

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

- **Student need.** Poverty, low achievement, English as a second language, and other student concerns are likely to be primary considerations in every rollout strategy.

- **School readiness.** Schools that have already put in place many elements of a community school—willing leaders, strong partners, and staff dedicated to coordination—may provide the best opportunities for rapid scale-up.

- **High-needs neighborhood.** A focus on schools within a specific geographic area offers the opportunity to replicate “a community where learning happens”—neighborhood by neighborhood—according to need.

- **Grade level** (elementary, middle, high school). High-need sites that are linked by school level across the district or within neighborhoods provide opportunities for cross-school planning for curriculum and instruction aligned with community schools.

- **Existing connection to early childhood programs.** Linking schools that enjoy strong partnerships with early childhood providers ensures that children entering school are ready to learn and that relationships with parents are already strong—important conditions that set the stage for higher student achievement in later grades.

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

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**EARLY CHILDHOOD: A KEY PART OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SYSTEM**

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

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

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

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

Select a site coordination approach. An important question for a community schools initiative is where to lodge responsibility for day-to-day management of school sites. Should a community partner, often called a lead agency, assume primary responsibility? Should the school system assume primary responsibility? This important question raises issues of power, control, and vision; the answer depends largely on community context.

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

The lead agency approach is often a natural choice when site coordination is funded by organizations (e.g., city and county governments and United Way chapters) that routinely work with community agencies and do not typically fund school systems. This approach offers the further advantage of demonstrating the school system’s ability to work with community partners as well as its commitment to community engagement, collaborative partnerships, and promotion of community schools.
It should be noted, however, that the process of building effective relationships between lead agencies and schools is not without challenges. Differences in culture, goals, staffing standards, and other factors can affect these relationships, but experience shows how to avoid and resolve issues:

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

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

“A PERFECT PARTNERSHIP”

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

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

A few examples follow:

- In Multnomah County, Oregon, when the city of Portland and the county decided to pursue a community schools approach, they believed strategically and politically that they could not give money directly to the school system for on-site management. The county historically has worked through contracted private non-profit agencies and community-based organizations. Instead, leaders adopted a model with a non-school lead agency at individual school sites—an approach that has resulted in strong and sustained cross-sector buy-in, a rich pool of expertise, diversified funding, and strengthened community engagement.
- In Chicago, then-school CEO Arne Duncan recognized that CBOs had the expertise and resources needed by the school system. He therefore decided to fund CBOs to coordinate community schools and provided additional enrichment during scale-up of an initial pilot. Many of the community partners have brought valuable services and opportunities into the schools through their own fund-raising and community mobilization efforts.
- In Evansville, Indiana, the school system is the intermediary for the entire initiative and oversees day-to-day management of school sites. The structure of the school district’s central office underscores the district’s commitment to community schools and collaborative work. Most notably, an associate superintendent for families, schools and community partnerships, supported by a director of full-service community schools, coordinates the work of the initiative, which represents a “big table” of more than 70 partners.

Establish a timeframe for rollout. It is essential to specify the number of community schools that will be phased in and to determine the criteria by which individual schools will be eligible to receive scale-up resources and services (e.g., professional development and technical assistance). Phase-in may need to be adjusted later when a funding strategy is fully developed. At this point, however, it is important to focus on the design of an effective system rather than on its cost.
Multnomah County started with 8 pilot schools (sufficient to draw the attention of policymakers) and then scaled up to what is now 60 community schools.

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

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### What It Takes to Be an Effective Community School Coordinator

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

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

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

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

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<th><strong>Stage 3: Plan for Scale-Up</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Leadership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Staff convenes discussions among community and site leaders to ensure buy-in to the community-wide vision, results framework, and rollout strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Results-Based Vision</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ A rollout strategy, including a plan and time line for selecting community schools, is in place.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data and Evaluation</strong></td>
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## Stage 3: Plan for Scale-Up

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<th>Community</th>
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<td></td>
<td>assess the systemic effectiveness of the initiative (creating a shift in ownership, spread, scale, and sustainability) as well as progress toward results for children, families, schools, and communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Evaluation designs include comparison schools and show longitudinal trends to the extent practical.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance and Resource Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment and Integration</td>
<td>□ Community partners participate in developing the school system’s strategic plan. The school system’s plan reflects the results framework.</td>
<td>□ Conversations are convened to ensure that district school plans incorporate community schools principles as related to the results-based framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive Policy</td>
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<td>Professional Development and</td>
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Pitfalls

- Underestimating the importance of using results and related indicators to drive the work of the community schools initiative at the community and site levels.
- Saying “we will get to evaluation later” when everyone is looking for early data, even though such a response may be inappropriate.
- Lacking a clear set of criteria for the selection of potential community schools for communication to all stakeholders.
- Overlooking the importance of determining whether a community partner or the school coordinates community and school resources at the site level.
STAGE 4: PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Overview

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

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

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

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

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Build Financial Capacity

Building the financial capacity of a community schools initiative poses three sets of challenges: the cost of planning and management at each school site; the cost of program and service delivery at each site; and costs to support the collaborative.
The Coalition report, *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success*, provides detailed examples of how some community schools have creatively funded their work and lists common federal funding sources.

**Some things to think about:**

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

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

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

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

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

**ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTNERING**

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

**Support the collaborative leadership structure through intermediary services and other costs.** The costs related to building the initiative’s capacity extend to all the key functions needed to develop a scaled-up system of community schools. Included are the cost of personnel and related assets redirected to support the collaborative leadership structure, e.g., planning, data systems, and professional development staff.
FINDING RESOURCES TO FUND COORDINATORS OVER TIME

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

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

BLENDING FUNDING STREAMS TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

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

GOVERNMENT AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

The distinguishing trait of the SUN Community Schools initiative is the financial investment by local government—Multnomah County and the city of Portland, including Portland Parks and Recreation and the Portland Children’s Levy. Together, they provided the large share of cash contributions—$5.3 million in support of SUN Community Schools— in the 2010–2011 school year. Each school is able to fund a SUN site manager through a community partner and offers academic support along with family engagement opportunities. SUN site managers broker resources and service opportunities from an array of community partners.
**Milestone #2: Build Political Capacity**

*Some things to think about:*

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

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

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

**Support activities that provide roles for families and community residents.** The initiative’s results-based logic model—and the tailored versions of the model to be developed by school sites in Stage 5—should specify activities that are designed to build on families’ strengths and engage families in decision making about their child’s learning. It is essential to tap networks in which parents and community members are already connected (e.g., community organizing groups, faith-based organizations) and to seek new people and connections.

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

Parent participation succeeds when it involves the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Reach out and communicate.** Communicating with the leadership networks of the community schools initiative, maintaining contact with leaders of other institutions, and keeping the public apprised of progress are other essential elements of building political capacity. When Evansville decided to propose a major bond issue to fund its community schools initiative, it engaged the support of the entire community. Effective strategies at every stage of the 6-point process involve carefully targeted communications:

- **Publish a brief newsletter.** Particularly at an initiative’s outset, a newsletter is a simple and useful vehicle for describing the activities and achievements of community schools. Hard data lend themselves to future reports and stories.

- **Reach out to the media.** The local education reporter and the publisher of the newspaper and its editorial board will likely be interested in your story. Make your case clearly and passionately. Provide opportunities for visits to school sites and for conversations with teachers and parents.

- **Connect with local civic and business groups.** Kiwanis, Lions, Jacks and Jills, Chambers of Commerce, and other business groups are often interested in education issues and may be receptive to your story.

- **Develop a web site for the initiative.** High school and college students might assist with the design and maintenance of a web site while intermediary staff and leaders provide the content.

- **Produce a video.** The story of a community school makes a compelling video. High school students or members of youth organizations might be persuaded to produce a video about the initiative.
KNOW THE QUESTIONS; FIND THE ANSWERS

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

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

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

CONTINUING EXPANSION IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

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

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

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

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<th>Alignment and Integration</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ RFPs, grant opportunities, and other potential funding requests developed by school districts, United Ways, local government, and others are aligned with the initiative’s results framework.</td>
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<td>□ School improvement plans provide for the coordination of school district resources to achieve agreed-upon results.</td>
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<th>Supportive Policy</th>
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<td>□ A statement of support for community-wide results and the expansion of community schools is included in the strategic plans of major partners (school board/district, city, county, United Way, community foundation, other funders).</td>
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<td>□ The school district has set forth administrative guidelines enabling the effective operation of community schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Partners amend policies within their own organizations to support scale-up.</td>
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<th>Professional Development and Technical Assistance</th>
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<th>Intermediary</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ Intermediary staff coordinate technical assistance to help the initiative implement and sustain its expansion plan.</td>
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<td>□ Community issues that affect schools (e.g., safety, housing, immigration policy) are tracked, evaluated for their impact on the initiative’s work, communicated to the initiative, and considered for community-wide</td>
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<td>□ Technical assistance and professional development respond to needs identified by participants.</td>
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## Stage 4: Plan for Sustainability

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<td></td>
<td>□ Staff ensure that participants and technical assistance providers jointly design, implement, and evaluate training.</td>
<td>action.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Two-way communication with state and federal officials is ongoing.</td>
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### Broad Community Engagement

- □ A strategy for finding new champions has been designed and implemented.
- □ An increasing number of people are active advocates for community schools.
- □ Communication with the public occurs regularly as planned.

## Pitfalls

- Thinking that running a community school is all about money and programs rather than about focusing on the importance of mobilizing families, residents, business and civic organizations, and the broader community in support of agreed-upon results.
- Not being willing to ask the hard questions about how existing resources are used, whether they are achieving the desired results, and whether something needs to change.
- Not realizing that building a system of community schools is inherently more a political than technical challenge.
STAGE 5: IMPLEMENT SYSTEMICALLY

Overview

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

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

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

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

Milestone #1: Align Principles, Practice, and Policies

Some things to think about:

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

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

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

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

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

DEEPENING THE PRACTICE

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

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

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

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

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

- Invite the entire school (families and their students) to learn about community schools and to be a part of the school’s role in a scaled-up community schools initiative.
- Create opportunities for conversations with staff whose routine may be affected by new activities. The conversations should draw in support personnel such as custodians, food service workers, and bus drivers as well as professional staff and demonstrate that everyone plays an important role in community schools.
- Open up planning for the results-based framework to the entire school. Post updates on the planning process and acknowledge participation through whatever communication channel is most appropriate.
- Work with partner staff to understand school rules and to help school staff tap community partners’ expertise.
- Clarify site coordinators’ responsibilities and lines of authority.
- Ensure that other school staff understand the coordinator’s role and affiliation so that differences in hours and reporting requirements do not become issues.
Milestone #2: Initiate Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Some things to think about:

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

Use professional development and technical assistance resources earlier rather than later. Professional development activities can assist classroom teachers and principals, mid-level administrators such as instructional supervisors and curriculum developers, and policymakers in achieving the following:

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

Embedding the community schools vision and practice into principal and teacher preparation is a particularly challenging task for local initiatives, but it is nonetheless essential to developing a pipeline of practitioners skilled in implementing the community schools strategy. More opportunities for such preparation may be opening up as schools of education consider clinical approaches to principal and teacher preparation. Community schools coordinators must also participate regularly in professional development.

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

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

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

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- Organizing webinars on issues identified by sites

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

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

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

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

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

CONNECTING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS TO THE CURRICULUM

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

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

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

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

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)
## Stage 5: Implement Systemically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive Policy</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ The district has set forth administrative guidelines enabling the effective operation of community schools.</td>
<td>□ Technical assistance helps sites develop a results and evaluation framework.</td>
<td>□ A clear and coherent set of practices and policies with respect to site-level implementation guides both school staff and community partners and fosters integration between in-school and after-school activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Partners, including the school board, enact specific policies to support and sustain community schools.</td>
<td>□ Staff organize pre-service training for community school coordinators and facilitate their continued training in appropriate, district-led professional development.</td>
<td>□ Personnel policies of school sites, lead agencies, and partner agencies are aligned and reviewed regularly to foster positive working relationships across shared staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Partners act to change policies within their own organizations to support scale-up.</td>
<td>□ Technical assistance and professional development respond to needs identified by participants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ School board and/or district policy allows community partners to use school facilities at no charge to implement activities aligned with site-level results.</td>
<td>□ Staff ensure that participants and technical assistance providers jointly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Site</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated into higher education and district-run educator preparation professional development for principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, nurses, and others.</td>
<td>□ Staff organize pre-service training for community school coordinators and facilitate their continued training in appropriate, district-led professional development.</td>
<td>□ School staff and site-level partners participate in joint professional development and planning time designed to deepen integration between in-school and after-school teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The principles and practices of community schools are incorporated into professional development for partner staff.</td>
<td>□ Technical assistance and professional development respond to needs identified by participants.</td>
<td>□ Community school coordinators receive pre-service training from the initiative, and site-level partners participate in relevant school-run professional development activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Joint, ongoing professional development for school and partner</td>
<td>□ Technical assistance facilitates the work of school-site teams.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Stage 5: Implement Systemically

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

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

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

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

More on Milestones

Milestone #1: Collect Data to Assess Progress

Some things to think about:

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

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

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Milestone # 2: Use Data to Strengthen the Initiative

Some things to think about:

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

- Are we reaching and keeping the intended students and families in the numbers and with the impact we hoped for? If not, why not?
- What internal and external factors may be affecting participation? Which factors can we address?
- What internal and external factors may be affecting impact? What needs to change?
- What are the differences across sites? What accounts for them?
- What additional implementation supports are needed in key functional areas?

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

Strategies for Engaging Staff in Data Collection

- Communicate value. When people are convinced that continuous improvement data will be used to improve their work, rather than simply to grade it or add to it, they are more likely to give the task their best effort. Before data collection begins, it is helpful to give staff examples of how data collection has resulted in unexpected or counterintuitive findings—and how those findings have led to beneficial changes in policy and practice.

- Work in teams. Ideally, teams rather than single individuals should follow clearly established data protocols. Although specific point people will be responsible for the overall effort at sites and at the systems level, team members will need assistance to find all the information they need. Involving the teams from the outset will save time and ensure better results. Teams should have a picture of the entire process, from data collection and review to analysis and distribution; they also need to understand how people can benefit from the collection of data. Help teams see that their work is important and that assistance is available as needed.

- Provide support. Short and easy-to-complete collection instruments should include written, step-by-step instructions and due dates. Make sure that teams understand and are comfortable with computerized data collection. Involve teams in establishing timeframes that are reasonable given their other duties. While initial training can minimize difficulties in data collection, time for review and revision should also be a part of the process. If the collected data are neither consistent nor accurate, they have no value.

- Recognize contributions. Finally, recognize the important contributions made by the data collections teams. Initiatives can do this in e-mails; web postings, or newsletters. Include useful facts from data collection efforts as soon as possible. Follow up with opportunities for sites to learn from and use the data collected by the teams.
Use communication mechanisms. Use the mechanisms you established in Stage 5 to ensure a regular, two-way flow of information between and among sites and the initiative. Communication should include not only evaluation data but also relevant practice knowledge and field experience that can shed light on concerns, strengths, and opportunities—within the initiative, at school sites, and in the surrounding community. To ensure useful information and to build connections between site and initiative leaders, consider the following:

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

Milestone #3: Publicize Progress

Some things to think about:

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

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

COMMUNICATION POWER

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

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

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DATA AND INFORMATION

Continuous improvement depends on the ability to drill down to see what is happening in classrooms and to children and families. In Evansville, Indiana, district leaders wanted to understand why students missed 10 or more days of school. When they looked at high-absentee students in schools with very low poverty rates, they found that time spent on vacation was the primary reason for poor attendance. For high-absentee students in high-poverty schools, the reason was head lice. By asking a specific question, staff used district data to generate useful information and tailor improvement strategies to fit different circumstances.
measures of increased parent capacity to support children’s academic success. In addition, findings highlighted “what went right” such as effective recruitment and strong parent participation and pointed to “what needs to change,” including greater family awareness of available resources, improved recognition, and the need to communicate in several formats and reinforce key messages.

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

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

- Define your audience. Whom are you interested in targeting? Older community residents? Families without children? Homeowners? People who speak English as a second language? Partner organizations can share access to their e-mail list serves to target groups potentially interested in community schools. Identify online social networks that appeal to your target audience(s). Examine sites such as Facebook; Gather.com; LinkedIn; and others for chat rooms where people talk about education, family, and community challenges.
- Craft a take-away message that is short, clear, and memorable. Partners with communication expertise can help initiatives design and produce video messages and manage feedback. One suggestion is to give community school students or family members disposable cameras or camcorders to take pictures of their world and what is important to them—in their communities and in their community school. The common themes that emerge can be distilled into a powerful message.
- Involve community school students and families as much as possible. Developing a large-scale communication strategy should be part of—not separate from—the real-world, hands-on learning and relationship building that are at the core of community schools. Initiatives need to tap the knowledge, insight, and enthusiasm of their students in order to tell stories that ring true while helping students connect their classroom experience to opportunities for improving a range of literacy and critical thinking skills. In addition, communication strategies should provide students with a chance to practice new skills in, for example, web site design and maintenance.
The Most Effective Messages*

- **Tell a story.** People are wired to learn through stories. When people listen to a story, they use their ears, eyes, and heart.** Community schools are full of stories. Which story best describes the evolution of your community schools strategy?

- **Provoke emotion.** Make sure that your message speaks to the heart. What does it make your listener feel? Curiosity, surprise, compassion, outrage, delight? Messages that provoke a strong response in the emotional center of the brain are perceived as important and remembered. They also help initiate action.

- **Keep it short and simple.** Less is more. Know the message you want to convey and the emotion you want to provoke. How can you do that as simply as possible? Look for design help from local arts groups and universities. Consider “serializing” a story message. Provide a compelling beginning to pique interest; the rest is follow-up.

- **Make it easy to find and share.** Technically, your message should be easy to open and share with others. Include instructions for downloading and uploading information. Find ways to motivate people to forward your message to others in their network. Something as simple and straightforward as “If you care, please forward!” can work.

- **Encourage back-talk.** Input and participation are your goals. Provide easy links to sites where people can make comments about what they have seen and communicate with other people. Include sites such as Twitter that invite short responses, along with blogs that allow for commentary and reflection. Show your audience what other people are doing in their communities and how to initiate similar activities.

- **Feedback fast.** Let people know you’re listening to what they have to say; find ways to build on your basic message. Share some of the comments you pull from their input. Follow up with “behind the scenes” photos and videos that help people see what went into crafting your first message. For example, include a series of portraits of individual community school participants with simple, relevant quotes. Assess progress toward desired results on a regular basis.


Milestone #4: Expand Rollout

Some things to think about:

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

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

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

CONTINUED GROWTH

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

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

In Evansville, Indiana, the school district has embedded family and community engagement in its strategic plan and expects all schools to be community schools. Evansville has made a strong commitment to integrating federal funding streams with the work of community partners, preparing principals to function as leaders, and developing an evaluation strategy that captures data on indicators for success.
Milestone #5: Preparation and Professional Development

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

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

Milestone #6: System Scan

Sustaining a scaled-up system of community schools requires constant attention. Leaders should not take their eyes off key systemic challenges that can derail change efforts. Regular system scans across all four characteristics of effective scale-up—shared ownership, spread, depth, and sustainability—can help identify areas that need attention. The Community School System Benchmarks Chart (Appendix) lists expected areas of accomplishment as you build the collaborative leadership infrastructure. Here are some questions to get you started. After you answer each one, consider how you can strengthen each area.

Shared Ownership

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

Spread

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

Depth

- Do the initiative empower students and their families to be their own agents of change?
- Do professional development programs incorporate the vision and principles of community schools for educators, social workers, youth development staff,
• health and mental health providers, and everyone else working with children and youth?
• Do we have appropriate data? Do we use the data effectively?
• Do our data collection systems permit school-site personnel to track students on key indicators of success and allow policymakers to make informed policy and resource alignment decisions at the community level?

**Sustainability**

• Does our strategy continuously engage new organizational and community leaders so that community schools remain a priority during leadership transitions?
• Is a constituency for community schools evident and sufficient to leverage redirected funding for community schools?
• How clearly do partner agencies’ policies foster collaborative work, resource sharing, and strategies to support agreed-upon results for children, schools, families, and communities?
How You Know if You Are Making Progress
At the end of **Stage 6**, look for these new indicators of progress in key functional areas.

**Stage 6: Continue Improvement and Expansion**

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

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Stage 6: Continue Improvement and Expansion</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ The school district uses data collected by the initiative to improve the school system’s strategic plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Sites package data-based findings into appropriate recommendations for changes in policy, resources, and/or training and professional development.</td>
<td>□ Sites communicate policy, resource, and professional development needs to community-wide leadership based on data collection; they regularly scan across all functional areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Policy</td>
<td>□ Partners solicit and are responsive to resource and policy requests based on site data and practice knowledge. □ Partners change policies within their own organizations to support scale-up. □ A clear and coherent set of practices and policies with respect to site-level implementation guides both school staff and community partners, fostering integration between in-school and after-school activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development and Technical Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Community Engagement</td>
<td>□ Published data on the performance of each community school and on system-wide expansion are easily accessible to the public and policymakers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pitfalls

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

Summing Up

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