



Inside Full Service Community Schools
 by Joy Dryfoos and Sue Maguire

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Inside Full Service Community Schools is a step-by-step practical support, youth development and other community services to researcher-advocate Joy Dryfoos, who has tracked the development across the country, joins with school principal Sue Maguire, at a school at the Molly Stark School in Vermont to create this high-quality school. This book is an extraordinary contribution to the community school movement: "What is the prognosis?" for community schools below.

Topics include:

- Getting started;
- Building a range of services;
- Collaborating with the government and private sector;
- Staffing: what works and what doesn't;
- Involving parents;
- Funding;
- Working in rural settings.

Chapter 11: What Is the Prognosis?

SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

This book combines the day-to-day experience of a committed worker in the trenches, the principal of an emerging community school and the observations of a long-time researcher, admittedly

a strong advocate for these models. We started by exploring the need to change the way schools and community agencies operate and how these stakeholders could be brought together to envision a full-service community school. We showed the large number of diverse services and programs that might be carried out during the school day or during extended hours, particularly in after-school programs. Consideration was given to the problems of staffing for these complex models, mixing school and community-based organization people, and how the design of the partnerships might influence the staffing patterns. We have placed a lot of emphasis on the people factor the importance of committed individuals in these kinds of enterprises.

Parent involvement is another area we explored, trying to broaden our thinking on roles parents can play in schools. Evaluation research was cited to show evidence that the changes going on in the Molly Stark School and many others can positively affect educational, health, and social outcomes. In the discussion of barriers, we tried to emphasize that before a well-functioning, sustainable institution can be created, many issues must be resolved, including turf, space, and transportation. I hope we have made it clear that none of this is easy.

The financial picture is also complex. Molly Stark is typical of full-service community schools, relying on an array of federal, state, and local resources that must be combined to make good things happen under one roof. We can be somewhat optimistic about the future of community schools, given the existing resources that can be used and the growing movement to stimulate further development of community school concepts. We can temper our enthusiasm with the recognition that this movement is still largely invisible to the massive school reform action taking place in this country. The education establishment seems quite bogged down in an unending and often acrimonious debate over the efficacy of test scores and, at the same time, is unable to find a way to produce certified and able teachers and the classrooms to put them in.

This final chapter addresses several important questions about the outlook in each of the areas we have covered. It concludes with some ideas about who needs to do what at the national, state, and local levels to legitimize community school principles and vastly expand the network.

Should Every School Be a Full-Service Community School?

Should universality be our goal? My answer is yes and no. Yes, all schools should be accessible to the community and serve as hubs for educational, social, and cultural enhancements. The constituents of the school children, parents, staff should all think of the school as community owned. And within almost every school, certain students need individualized attention that can be most effectively delivered through school-community partnerships. But no, not every school needs to be full service, not all schools must

have built-in health and social service centers to help families and children overcome the barriers to learning. These barriers are heavily influenced by social class. Poor communities obviously face more difficult barriers than middle-class communities.

Priorities have to be set based on volume and intensity of need. Every school already has an indicator: the percentage of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Schools in which more than 50 percent of the students are eligible are deemed especially needy. It is estimated that about one in four of the 85,000 public schools in the United States meets that criterion. Thus nearly 22,000 schools should receive priority in planning for transformation into full-service community schools. Although we do not know how many fully realized community schools currently exist (probably a couple of thousand), the potential demand is enormous.

Are We Talking About Charter Schools?

No. We don't have to tear apart the public school system to come up with solutions. All the many programs cited in this book have been developed within the traditional framework of local boards of education that are fully responsible for the operation of the schools. Unquestionably, some charter schools are configured along the lines of the full-service community schools described here: open for extended hours, based on partnerships, parent friendly, community oriented, and so on. I would be delighted to see charter schools adopt these concepts. But it is important to show that public schools can be transformed into child- and family-responsive institutions without destroying public education.

Should Public School Systems Be Encouraged to Lengthen the School Day and/or the School Year?

In some parts of the country, schools are adding hours to instructional time to improve test scores. In other places, schools are changing class schedules to be open all year because of overcrowding. In my view, neither of these rationales is valid. We know that effective schools can teach children within traditional school hours, using extended hours for youth development and enrichment in voluntary programs. We also know that year-round scheduling is disruptive to family life, parental work plans, and teachers' contracts. Most important, it has no positive effect.

On the other hand, I am strongly supportive of having the doors of the school open all the time, including a rich summer program, though I have some concerns about laying the whole responsibility on the school system. The best approach seems to be combining the efforts of the school system with support from a well-run CBO that can take over the responsibility for everything else, except excellent teaching. Work during before- and after-school hours, weekends, and

summers can be assumed through creative partnerships.

What Is a "Quality Program"?

One of the more elusive subjects is the quality of programming. We have seen that some community schools can produce better results than their traditional peers. What is the quality outcome we are seeking? Is it just educational achievement, or is it more complex, including such goals as social competence, good behavior, or even community development? Most of the evolving financial support mechanisms for these efforts place a high premium on accountability. Programs will have to prove that they are meeting their goals, although the goals of an after-school program and those of a school-based primary health initiative may be vastly different.

The question of quality may be addressed through research. First, we must identify community school models that are effective in both improving educational outcomes and enhancing youth and family development. This work is already under way; for example, the Coalition for Community Schools is working on a study called *Linkages to Learning* (2002). Now the models have to be examined qualitatively to find out what aspects of the program influence the outcomes. What are the pieces that are absolutely necessary, and what are merely "add-ons" that sound interesting but have little effect?

What About Planning?

After looking at this diverse collection of community schools and school-community partnerships, I am convinced that a major component of successful implementation is careful attention to planning. Partnership is critical. Because so many relationships, policies, and regulations must be jointly addressed and issues about them resolved, the planning process sets the tone for the work that follows. Inclusiveness from the start will ensure broader participation in the long run; this means bringing together school and community agency people, parents, other interested stakeholders, and students. Careful gathering of the necessary data (needs, services, unmet needs) and creating an appropriate design that responds to those data are necessary steps.

If you are interested in pursuing the concepts of full-service community schools, be prepared to spend at least a year planning the program. Track down the many resources that can support this work, visit the various models, and take advantage of one or more of the sources of technical assistance.

What About Services?

In a school building, you can do almost anything that is required to promote a healthy and productive educational environment and reduce barriers to learning. In this book, you can find references to programs

now being brought into schools that address health, mental health, social service, drug and violence prevention, educational enrichment, before- and after-school programming, juvenile justice, recreation, the arts, culture, business practice, and so on. A review of the list of services attached to the Hoyer bill (see Chapter 10) verifies the claim that almost any human service can be provided in a school building.

This is not a pitch to simply move every human service into school buildings. The important point is to find the appropriate intervention that will help solve the problems in a particular school. The program has to be needed (or it won't be used), and it has to be effective (or it won't make any difference). The program must not place additional burdens on the school system; rather, it should remove some of the burdens. As Sue has pointed out, flexibility is necessary. If a program doesn't seem to be working, discontinue it.

What About Staffing?

Without question, this work is labor intensive. No school principal or guidance counselor or interested teacher should imagine that he or she can do it alone. No community agency person or youth worker or child advocate should think that he or she can just go into a school and open up shop. I have stated repeatedly that community schools require the full-time attention of a coordinator or director, who may work for the school system, the lead community agency, or a consortium set up just for this purpose.

This is a relatively new category of labor. Although we have found many such people with various titles currently working in community schools, few universities have set up courses that might prepare people for this new profession. In my view, a community school coordinator is someone who understands both educational systems and human service systems, with knowledge that may come from combinations of graduate pursuits, such as education and community psychology or social work and public administration or even public health.

The same cross-disciplinary approach should be present in schools of education. Principals and teachers need to be exposed to ideas about child, youth, and family development as part of their training. They should learn about community school models and what's required to start one. At the same time, youth workers have to learn what goes on in schools and how they can play a role in creating new kinds of institutions.

Unions can play an important part in furthering the community school movement. Both major educational unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), are already part of the Coalition for Community Schools and have indicated their support for these concepts, including keeping school buildings open for extended hours. As Joan Devlin, associate director of the AFT, stated, "Full-service schools require knowledge, collaboration,

and the interest of political power brokers to marshal the resources needed. It takes a collective will and vision to think beyond traditional funding streams and power bases and focus on a single set of commonly agreed to goals." (e-mail, August 6, 2001). But many teachers in school systems around the country and youth workers employed by community agencies are not covered by union contracts and work at very low wages. In general, salary scales for youth workers are way below teachers' levels. And high turnover rates for all personnel are endemic.

What About Parent Involvement?

Despite the perceptions of many schools and community organizations that parents are hard to involve, we have shown numerous examples of very successful programs. The key here seems to be ensuring that the services and opportunities made available are ones that parents really want and need. They do not respond to invitations to attend professorial lectures in child development, especially if they have limited English proficiency or are otherwise alienated from the school; they do respond to small workshops on similar subjects held in parent resource rooms in which they feel comfortable. Home visiting reaches parents directly. Parents sign up in droves to volunteer in classrooms, cafeterias, site-based management teams, and playgrounds, and they are eager to enter training to become paid teacher's aides and to participate in adult education of all kinds.

What About Governance?

The design of the school-community partnership is basic to the discussion of full-service community schools. As you have seen, the number and diversity of the models are daunting. Molly Stark exemplifies the principal-run approach; Sue Maguire reorganized her school, invited a number of community agencies to help, and arranged for their funding. School principals also play a major role in the governance of Missouri's Caring Communities program, but integrated state grants go to established community partnerships, school and community collaboratives charged with achieving specific goals to improve the lives of children, families, and the community.

Some community schools are initiated not by a school but by a community organization. The Children's Aid Society partnership at the school level places a full-time coordinator next to the principal, with formal written agreements to guide the relationship. The community school district is also a partner in this collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding, and so is the central school district by means of a formal resolution.

One might conclude that no two community schools have the same governance structure. All have some combination of school authority with outside community agency participation. Whether the lead agency should be the school or the CBO is a debatable issue and will probably not be

resolved in the near future. The important point is that in each case, the responsibilities and roles have to be clearly established for such areas as keeping the school open and integrating the support services with the educational program.

What About Barriers to Implementation?

I hope potential community school developers are not turned off by our discussion of barriers. We have emphasized throughout that establishing a partnership and implementing a full-service community school is not an easy assignment. Knowing about the stumbling blocks in advance should help practitioners deal with problems of money, space, staff, transportation, turf, equity, and all the other items that appear in various studies and reports about implementing programs.

These kinds of issues are not found only in community schools; they are integral to any human endeavor that is built on relationships. The words that come up repeatedly are communication, negotiation, patience, and fortitude. Sometimes it helps to have outside facilitators who assist school and community people in working their way through these issues. I have noted throughout that technical assistance is available from a number of sources.

What About Accountability?

We are learning quite a lot from emerging school-community partnerships. The people in this work are vitally interested in research and accountability. Most of the community school initiatives have an evaluation component, particularly those that are foundation funded. The C. S. Mott Foundation's effort to support and track the success of the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) has stimulated unprecedented evaluation projects in the after-school arena. As this research is completed, we will have access to considerable knowledge about how extending the hours a school is open can influence outcomes for students.

It is my view that after-school programs are a primary entry point for the development of full-service community schools. It is probable that some of the almost 7,000 schools that have received CCLC grants to open their schoolhouse doors and establish partnerships with community agencies will move on from after-school programs to other aspects of community schooling (for example, primary health clinics and family resource centers). An important area of research will be tracking the further development of these programs.

Evaluation of complex school-community programs is not a simple matter. The academic testing situation in this country is already in total chaos, and that covers only one piece of the community school action. Efforts are already under way to figure out how to capture the other pieces, such as tracking student and parent use of the various services and programs offered before, during, and after school. Surveys have been designed to measure behavioral outcomes and psychosocial attitudes.

Some programs, such as California's Healthy Start, have excellent management information systems. The situation requires that universities actively seek partnerships with community school programs. As always, however this all comes together, it will be costly.

What About Financing?

So here we are, back to the bottom line. Our nation cannot embrace the concept of full-service community schools without a major commitment to funding them. If my figure of 22,000 schools with very needy populations has any validity, and if it costs around \$100,000 a year to set up the infrastructure, we're talking about \$2.2 billion for starters. And if it costs around \$250,000 for a fully functioning program for 1,000 students (\$250 per student per year, a minimum estimate), we're talking about \$5.5 billion a year. Although that sounds like a lot, it is just about half of the Title I Elementary and Secondary Education Act appropriation for 2002, which was about \$12 billion. And some of that money could come from existing resources, such as the CCLC after-school funds and others mentioned in Chapter 10.

Sustainability is the desirable goal. What happens to these community school programs when the five-year grants run out? Some of the CCLC after-school programs are already faced with this situation after three years. Perhaps the concept to pursue is entitlement, meaning that every child is entitled to go to a school where he or she can gain access to the supports needed to overcome the barriers to learning. I do not know how this could be accomplished. But I would certainly encourage advocates for community schools to pursue this line of thinking.

States already play a major role in supporting community schools and after-school programs, as do foundations and local resources. Their potential roles are discussed later in the chapter.

What Can Be Done at the National Level to Promote Full-Service Community Schools?

A simple solution to all of this would be for the federal government to just write a big check for \$5.5 billion, but of course that is not going to happen. And even if it did, the potential stakeholders are not quite ready to move forward. It would make a big difference, however, if there were legislation that moved in the direction of supporting coordinated school-community partnerships that go beyond after-school programs.

Two of the major bills introduced in the 2001 Congress, the Hoyer Full-Service Community Schools Act and the Reed Child Opportunity Zone Family Center Act (described in the previous chapter), didn't get very far, but at least the concepts have been introduced. A third

bill, the Younger Americans Act, is still sitting in the appropriate committees awaiting action as we write. But Congress is so fixated on testing issues and negotiating the amount of money that will back up their proposals that it is unlikely they will take up youth development issues in the near future.

However, I can think of six actions that would be helpful at the national level, building on some of the ideas in the Hoyer bill.

1. **Community School Authority.** In the federal government, create a community school authority, jointly administered by the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The primary function of the authority would be to award five-year grants to school-community agency partnerships in high-need areas. Assuming about \$100,000 for the first year to create a plan and \$250,000 for each of the next four years to bring in services, the total grant would be \$1.1 million per site for five years. The school-community group would have to deliver matching funds, such as for space rental, personnel, or equipment.

The community school authority would be backed up by a congressional working group on community schools. This group would bring together members of Congress to learn more about full-service community schools and would make sure that they visited model sites (in their districts).

2. **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building.** Technical assistance can be provided by both the public and the nonprofit sectors to help communities plan, implement, and sustain programs. The federal government could support a national center for community schools located in the DOE, with joint oversight from the DHHS as well as the departments of justice, labor, agriculture, and HUD, all of which have resources in community school programs. In the nonprofit sector, the Coalition for Community Schools could provide technical assistance and/or work with the many federally supported centers (such as the two Centers for Mental Health in Schools) and national intermediary organizations (such as Communities-in-Schools) that already have the capacity to do this work.

3. **Community Schools Awards Program.** Develop an awards program for effective school-community partnerships, recognizing the most effective coalitions. The program would have two components: (a) recognition and awards for a certain number of schools and (b) efforts to develop standards or criteria for what a community school is. The intent would be to raise the visibility of the movement. This could be jointly funded by foundations and the DOE.

4. **Expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Centers.** Support the expansion of 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Make sure that some of the grants go directly to community-based organizations. If states administer the program, they should be prepared to offer technical assistance, adequate funding, and training for coordinators and other staff. Monitor the process through which after-school programs are a first step in creating full-service community schools.

5. Support for Research on Community Schools and After-School Programs

Foundations can play a major role in conducting research on and evaluating community schools. Development of management information and student tracking systems can be furthered. Studies of implementation are important.

Make sure that all federal grant programs include an appropriation for evaluation.

6. Support for the Coalition for Community Schools. As one of the founders and steering committee members of the Coalition for Community Schools, I would like to see it gain significant support for the essential role it plays.

More than 170 national organizations have joined forces to work together and promote community schools. This is an avenue through which education and youth development people, administration and union representatives, and risk-reduction and asset-building experts communicate regularly.

As Joan Devlin sees it, "The coalition provides an opportunity to lay down the burden of protecting turf long enough to listen to the ideas and dreams of others. It helps to raise areas of agreement and finds ways to make disagreements less volatile." (e-mail, August 6, 2001). The coalition can mobilize the voluntary sector to work with the public sector to see that these models are widely replicated and that the backup research and evaluation take place.

Martin Blank, director of the coalition, believes,

The next several years represent a critical juncture for community schools.

If the movement can build on its success and continue to engage people with its vision, educate policymakers, and make the case with educational leaders, leaders in other sectors, and the public, there is the potential to secure federal support for community schools in the next five or six years. Federal funding will remain a tough challenge, however. In this era of high-stakes testing and accountability, where the success of students, teachers and principals often rides on a single test, [the challenge is] getting them to focus on anything other than academic performance. The community schools movement must continually demonstrate how a community school approach impacts student learning and helps to create the conditions for learning." (e-mail, August 7, 2001)

What Can States Do?

Some states have played major roles in initiating full-service community schools and school-community partnerships for after-school programs.

As state administrations change, it is important to make sure that those programs continue and expand. In some states, new programs may be initiated. One approach for state governments might include the creation of a coordinating agency that draws in resources from education, health, and social services and awards grants directly to community coalitions (as in Missouri). States can develop a technical assistance capacity to work with communities in pulling together local groups, planning, implementation, and evaluation. State agencies, public and nonprofit, can sponsor conferences and workshops to spread the word and make these programs visible.

What Can Communities Do?

The movement for community schools originated at the local level. The first action was truly "bottom up," with the major models emerging one at a time from the hands of dedicated charismatic individuals or small groups. The next stage has been the emergence of intermediary organizations, the parent group for each of the models (such as the Children's Aid Society, the University of Pennsylvania, Beacons, the National Center for Community Education, and Schools of the 21st Century) with the capacity for providing technical assistance (see Resources). This has resulted in scattershot adaptations all over the country.

The next stage in the proliferation of community schools is to go system-wide. Boston may be the first city in the country to achieve this goal. School and community agency stakeholders are talking together about creating the Boston Full-Service Schools Roundtable as a vehicle for helping school and community agencies to jointly develop and expand Boston's supply of full-service community schools. Other cities attempting to influence a whole system are Buffalo, New York; Plainfield, New Jersey; Hartford, Connecticut; Portland, Oregon; Kansas City, Missouri; and Birmingham, Alabama.

The process for local change begins with planning. Any community agency can take the leadership role in calling together an inclusive group from one school or neighborhood, a cluster of schools, or the whole system. Local chapters of national organizations such as the United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, the Public Education Network, and Communities-in-Schools have developed the capacity to initiate collaborative planning groups. Indigenous CBOs can do the same. A local school-community planning group may be brought together spontaneously, or it may be responsive to a call for proposals from a funding source.

Philip Nobel (2001), writing in the Education Life section of The New York Times, portrays a massive school-building boom across the country, and in every one, attention is being paid to community needs.

An idea that first emerged in the late 1960s but didn't fly until the '90s, the concept is variously known as community schools, community learning centers, shared facilities or full-service schools. Where older buildings endeavored to create an icon to represent "education" within the community--but kept that community at bay by creating an insular world of learning within--these new schools are attempting to bring the life of the community into the building itself. (p.22)

What Can You Do?

If these ideas interest you, you do not have to wait for the federal government to act or a state agency to offer you a grant to get started. The first step is to bring together a group of stakeholders and start moving toward envisioning what your local school could become if those concerned put their heads together. In this arena, one person can

make a difference. One person cannot do this alone, but he or she can serve as a sentinel in a community to indicate that changes are both necessary and feasible. We dedicate this book to those sentinels all over the country who we know are out there ready to get to work.

THE FUTURE AT MOLLY STARK

So what's the prognosis for full-service community schools in our country, in the state of Vermont, in my community, at Molly Stark? I really can't answer that. When I am talking with my colleagues at school, with Joy, or with Doug Racine, Vermont's lieutenant governor, I quickly get into the mode of "We just have to do this in a bigger way!" But in the day-to-day whirlwind of running a full-service school, I don't take a lot of time to think about the bigger picture.

We may not have figured out all the answers or cured all the ills of our students and their families, but what I can say for certain is this: We have taken a risk to try to do the right thing. And speaking only for myself but being sure that it's true for those I work with each day, I can say that never has there been such a feeling of triumph, exhaustion, frustration, and pride all at the same time. We have created a community where kids can feel valued, parents can feel welcomed, and staff can feel proud. And whether or not it is the total answer isn't as important as that we have done, small step by small step, things that will in some way change many lives for the better.

Before I first presented our full-service school plan to the entire Molly Stark staff, I kept remembering the novel *Dominic*, by William Steig (1972), that I used to read to my fifth graders when I taught. The message became so clear to me that I printed it on top of the staff meeting agenda before my presentation of the journey that was about to begin. I'm sure some thought it was great, some thought it was corny, and some didn't have a clue what I was trying to say, but it didn't matter. I just had to give them this message from the alligator witch:

I hope you don't mind if I tell you this much . . . that road there on the right goes nowhere. There's not a bit of magic up that road, no adventure, no surprise, nothing to discover or wonder at. Even the scenery is humdrum. You'd soon grow much too introspective. You'd take to daydreaming and tail-twiddling, get absent-minded and lazy, forget where you are and what you're about, sleep more than one should, and be wretchedly bored. Furthermore, after a while, you'd reach a dead end and you'd have to come all that dreary way back to right here where we're standing now, only it wouldn't be now, it would be some woefully wasted time later.

Now this road, the one on the left this road keeps right on going as far as anyone cares to go, and if you take it, believe

me, you'll never find yourself wondering what you might have missed by not taking the other. Up this road, which looks the same at the beginning, but is really ever so different, things will happen that you never could have guessed at--marvelous, unbelievable things. Up this way is where adventure is. I'm pretty sure I know which way you'll go. (pp. 7-8)

Ten Reasons Principals Should Think About Developing Full-Service Community Schools

1. Full-service community schools are a natural way to develop collaborations with community partners that will enhance services for kids and families.
2. Life for children and families is more complex than ever; the role of schools must shift to meet changing needs.
3. You can't do it alone. It makes sense to work together with others interested in helping children and families.
4. Lack of money is an ongoing issue. Working with others toward common goals maximizes your resources. In addition, taking a less traditional approach increases your chances of receiving funding.
5. All children need and deserve opportunities; these services may well be the only opportunity some children get.
6. It's more efficient not to be always in a crisis mode putting out fires, which is where many of us find ourselves much of the time. Although not a cure, more preventive services may lessen the crisis for the next generation.
7. Full-service community schools allow access to children and families who are already at the school, so providing services is more effective and efficient.
8. We must continuously look at what our schools are doing for children and families: Are we successful? Are our services and programs furthering our short- and long-term goals? If not, it's important to reflect and possibly use our resources differently.
9. If our commitment is to the success of children, assisting them in developing to their full potential, why begin our efforts at age five when we know through research that the years between birth and five are so <->critical?
10. It is important to feel that you are making a difference.

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