Time for Equity
Expanding Access to Learning

About the Time for Equity Project

This issue of *VUE* emerged from AISR's Time for Equity project, our ongoing effort to support the Ford Foundation's national More and Better Learning Time initiative. Time for Equity builds the capacity of schools, districts, communities, and partner organizations to improve educational opportunities in the nation's most underserved school systems through expanded and reimagined learning opportunities. The approaches, organizations, and districts involved in this work are going beyond simply making the school day and year longer – they are also restructuring how existing time is used in school, as well as creating systemic partnerships, resources, and structures that link schools with public agencies or community organizations to create higher-quality teaching and learning opportunities. A set of guiding principles places equity at the center of implementation.

To support these efforts, AISR developed the Time for Equity Indicators Framework, which presents a set of twenty-four indicators that school communities can use as "yardsticks" to measure and refine their efforts to create more and better learning time for young people. The framework was developed through a participatory research process that engaged school designers, researchers, community organizers, and other Ford Foundation grantees from around the nation in defining what matters and what should be measured to help advance equity in our collective work.

The indicator framework can be found at timeforequity.org, a web tool that allows users to learn about what is going on in the field, zero in on the indicators most relevant to their work, and browse additional resources (academic articles, data tools, videos, and more). The related AISR research report *Leveraging Time for School Equity* can also be downloaded at this site.

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VUE

Time for Equity: Expanding Access to Learning

Creating Time for Equity Together

MICHELLE RENÉE

In urban communities across the nation, a broad range of partners have committed to reinventing educational time together to ensure equitable access to rich learning opportunities for all young people.

Denver, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Newark, Detroit – as some of our nation's largest cities, these communities share many traits: urban centers, diverse communities, challenging local politics. Yet each is also unique. As varied as each city's place on the map are the sectors, groups, and people involved in each city's education system – teachers, school and district leaders, school designers, foundations, businesses, community organizations, researchers. Understanding school communities like these – and the people who work in them – is critical to understanding how we can best build education systems that increase life opportunities for all young people.

The Time for Equity team at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) has worked to increase that understanding by meeting with and learning from grantees of the Ford Foundation's More and Better Learning Time initiative. This initiative aims to reinvent public schools in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty by adding and improving learning time. This approach goes beyond simply making the school day and year longer. The urban communities we work with are also reinventing how time is used both inside and outside the classroom as they seek to transform schools and communities into places where all children learn and thrive.

We are both inspired and humbled by the work our partners are doing. While there is much promise and many wins in this work, it is also challenging: we are not proposing any silver bullets. Addressing the systemic inequities that have plagued our public education system for decades will require hard work and a long-term commitment to the communities and school systems being engaged. This issue of *VUE* aims to share both the inspiration and the challenges of this work through the stories of a cross-section of our partners in the field.

Across the nation, we saw our partners using their creativity, commitment, and unique resources to create new school and system designs that challenge the *what*, *who*, and *why* of our public education system. Easiest to understand is the *what*. We learned about approaches like community schools, which surround schools in high-needs communities with a wealth of learning and support services; Generation Schools, which are reimagining the school calendar to make space for intensive learning in science, arts, and culture; and Promise Neighborhoods, which are working to create cradle-to-career pathways for young people and their families (see the sidebar for examples of more and better learning time approaches used in sites included in our study). Each approach is unique, but what links these models together is a shared commitment to ensuring equitable access for *all* young

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people to rich learning opportunities that prepare them for college, career, and civic life, particularly in the nation's lowest-income communities.

More challenging to understand is the *who*. In each city, the Ford Foundation staff has chosen to engage a broad range of sectors with many kinds of expertise in re-envisioning education systems. Rather than create a new brand or model of reform, the Foundation's goal is more to amplify the promising work already emerging. AISR and Ford teams worked with grantees – including school designers, system changers, advocates and organized communities, and researchers – to identify and describe the complex, cross-sector webs they are building. The result is a theory of change that places at its center well-educated, well-rounded, and healthy students, families, and communities, served by strong and equitable schools and school systems. Surrounding this center are the multiple actors that collaborate to create an ecosystem of reform for equity.[1]

Each author in this issue of *VUE* writes from experience in a particular sector: education agencies, nonprofits, and advocates (McAfee, Torre, Schwarz, and Shah); community organizing groups (Perez, Madera, and Capers); funders (Lopez and Rivera); and researchers (Snellman, Silva, Putnam, Mirra, and Rogers). Yet each author also references the many other sectors they work with. Capers and Shah, for example, writing about community schools, show the connections between grassroots action, research, and implementation. Perez and Madera show us that though the work is led by community organizers, reform support partners, and school leaders, a much broader school community is engaged and touched by the development of two powerful high schools in East Los Angeles.

Finally, working with our partners led us to the understanding that *why* people do this work is as important as understanding the *what* and the *who*. Common assumptions such as "to improve schools," "to help kids," "to fix communities," and "to increase test scores" are superficial at best. At their worst they are vague, easily misunderstood, and laden with unquestioned assumptions. As researchers and practitioners, we pushed hard to go past the superficial to a deeper understanding of why people take a systems approach to education change. Why work across sectors and communities? Why do we think this can change educational opportunities for our nation's young people? What do we hope will happen, and how will we know when we see it?

We aimed to capture the breadth of the answers we received to these questions by developing the Time for Equity framework of twenty-four *education indicators* that reflect the broad range of conditions and outcomes articulated.[2] The indicators include traditional academic measures such as test scores, grades, and graduation rates, but go far beyond them. They are organized into four broad categories: creating and sustaining the conditions for increasing education opportunities (e.g., school climate, community engagement); ensuring equitable access and implementation to programs and opportunities (e.g., student agency, support services); preparing students for college, career, and civic life (e.g., academic knowledge, student health); and scaling efforts up across systems and the nation (e.g., sustainable ecosystems of reform, widespread adoption).

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1   For a graphic representation of this ecosystem for educational equity, see timeforequity.org/ecosystem.

2   The report on the indicators, *Leveraging Time for School Equity: Indicators to Measure More and Better Learning Time*, and an online tool that allows users to zero in on the indicators most relevant to their work and browse additional resources, are available at timeforequity.org.

The indicators framework provides a broad picture of what could be measured or aimed for. But we also wanted to share the depth and promise of what we learned from grantees through this issue of *VUE*. Each author and organization included in these pages shares a deep commitment to equity – increasing the resources and opportunities provided to students in low-income communities of color. Likewise, the authors share a commitment to educational excellence. The breadth and scale of these changes vary, but all lead to engaged and deep learning.

Luckily, we are not alone in these shared commitments. There are countless other organizations and stories we could have included in this edition; their exclusion is only due to limits of space. Each author was asked to answer the question "How do we know that our work is advancing educational equity?" and then to elaborate on both their answer and our question from the unique perspective of their sector and expertise. We pushed authors to go beyond the story of what they do or what they created; we asked them to share stories of impact that bring to life the data they routinely share in policy settings.

This issue starts with researchers Kaisa Snellman, Jennifer Silva, and Robert Putnam, who use stories and statistics to illustrate the deep disparity in access to extracurricular learning opportunities between low-income and middle- to high-income youth – and why that matters. Amplifying this work is an article by researchers Nicole Mirra and John Rogers that demonstrates the stark differences in how existing learning time is experienced inside schools. They identify a series of time distractors and stressors that seriously impact the learning time in schools serving low-income students. Together, these two articles outline the inequity in educational opportunities that currently exist in our system – both inside and outside school.

The next two articles illustrate how allies across a city can come together to publicly demand school models that expand the depth and amount of student learning time, and then to collaborate in the implementation of these models. Though the two models are different, they both engaged school and district leaders, teachers, partner organizations, and students in developing and implementing new models. Perez and Madera share the collaborative work that Inner City Struggle has engaged in with numerous partners in one neighborhood, East Los Angeles, to increase learning opportunities in two high schools. Natasha Capers and Shital Shah describe similar cross-sector collaboration at the citywide level around the creation of community schools in New York City. They explain how and why teachers unions, community organizers, and other allies developed and advocated for the sustainable communities schools model locally and nationally. Key to the effort, the authors explain, is that community schools are not just about services or parent engagement but about transforming the teaching and learning that happen within schools.

The systemic implementation of this work is explored by authors Michael McAfee from the Promise Neighborhood Institute at PolicyLink and Mauricio Torre from South Bay Community Services in Chula Vista, California, near San Diego, using the implementation of the Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood to illustrate the local impact of this important federal policy. Their conversation highlights the need to set clear goals for collective impact and then support sites in creating and monitoring that impact. An excerpt from Citizen Schools founding CEO Eric Schwarz's new book lays out key requirements for effective teaching, including support, common planning time, communities of practice, and engagement with community experts.

Finally, philanthropists Janet Lopez and Peter Rivera reflect on how strategic investments by funders can leverage change across a community through a discussion of their work in Denver and Los Angeles, respectively. In this thoughtful conversation, they humbly explore their privilege, responsibility, and limitations as funders of initiatives that advance equity.

Together these voices, stories, and reflections remind us of the hope and urgency of working together to create more equitable education systems. They also remind us that each person working in this struggle has a responsibility to own our places of privilege and expertise, respect the expertise and efforts of others, and then humbly work together to bring about a more just society and school system.

EXAMPLES OF MORE AND BETTER LEARNING TIME APPROACHES

There is no one design for more and better learning time. Many approaches operate in different regions of the country to create scalable, effective school designs in "regular" public school systems and reduce the opportunity gap between affluent and less-affluent families. The following approaches are being used in different sites implementing more and better learning time.

Citizen Schools

Citizen Schools believes the achievement gap is driven by an opportunity gap. To close this gap, they partner with middle schools in eleven districts across seven states to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. Citizen Schools' "second shift" of AmeriCorps educators and community volunteers lead real-world learning projects and provide academic support in close alignment with schools, offering every student access to rich experiences and diverse social networks and helping all children to discover and achieve their dreams.

citizenschools.org

National Center for Community Schools at the Children's Aid Society

The Children's Aid Society National Center for Community Schools provides technical assistance to community schools around the country and operates sixteen schools in New York City in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. Children's Aid provides critical services to children and their families related to health, afterschool and summer activities, youth development, legal aid and juvenile justice, homelessness, adoption and foster care, and more.

childrensaidsociety.org

Coalition for Community Schools

The "community schools" approach is to link a network of local organizations and institutions committed to bettering outcomes for youth. Using schools as hubs, these partners offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities. The Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Educational Leadership serves as the research, policy, and advocacy organization for networks of community school initiatives and for more than 150 national, state, and local partners that support community schools.

communityschools.org

ExpandEd Schools by The After-School Corporation (TASC)

TASC was founded in 1998 to provide after-school opportunities for K–12 students in New York City and later moved to piloting longer school days through school/community partnerships. TASC's ExpandED Schools reimagine how time is used in schools to provide a balanced, rigorous education. ExpandED Schools increase high-quality learning time by about 35 percent, with an increase in costs of only 10 percent and provide students with more opportunities to discover and develop their talents, more support to overcome the challenges of poverty, and more time to achieve at the high levels of the global workplace.

expandedschools.org

Generation Schools Network

Generation Schools in New York City and Denver stagger teacher vacations to provide more learning time for students and for teacher collaboration and planning. The approach adds twenty days to the national average school year, without increasing teachers' total work time or overall costs compared with other schools in the city. In addition to "regular" courses, all students take rigorous, month-long, credit-bearing "intensive" courses twice a year, taught by a team of teachers and using the city as classroom: students explore college campuses, corporate boardrooms, community organizations, and public services.

generationschools.org

Linked Learning and ConnectED

Linked Learning Pathways across California use expanded and reimagined time to integrate college and career preparation in a range of fields such as engineering, arts and media, and biomedical and health sciences. The schools combine strong academics; a technical or career-based curriculum; real-world experiences with local businesses, higher education, arts agencies, and community-based organizations; and personalized support for students. The approach is supported by the James Irvine Foundation, a growing number of other philanthropic and corporate investors, and a broad range of business, education, advocacy, and research partners.

linkedlearning.org

Promise Neighborhood Institute at PolicyLink

Promise Neighborhoods are communities of opportunity that allow children to learn, grow, and succeed, based on the successful model of the Harlem Children's Zone. Partnerships between schools, community organizations and members, and local businesses provide children with high-quality, coordinated health, social, community, and educational support from cradle to college to career. Technical assistance from The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink supports local leaders' ability to achieve results through data infrastructure and leadership development; builds evidence of effectiveness; and advocates for policies that scale up and sustain Promise Neighborhoods.

promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org

TIME Collaborative of the National Center on Time and Learning

In 2012, NCTL and the Ford Foundation launched the TIME Collaborative, a multistate initiative to redesign and expand educational opportunities in schools serving students living in poverty. Through the TIME Collaborative, thirty-nine schools serving 20,534 students are adding 300 hours to the school year for all students. This approach focuses on teacher development and reimagines the school day through significant changes to core instruction and new opportunities for enrichment, differentiated supports, teacher collaboration, and student leadership and apprenticeship possibilities. Funding draws on state and federal resources.

timeandlearning.org/?q=time-collaborative

Inequity Outside the Classroom: Growing Class Differences in Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Kaisa Snellman, Jennifer M. Silva, and Robert D. Putnam

Research shows that extracurricular activities help cultivate the skills, connections, and knowledge that prepare children for lifelong success, but low-income students are increasingly excluded from participating.

Ethan, a college freshman at an elite public university, lives in a private housing development on the outskirts of Austin, Texas. His parents chose this neighborhood primarily for the excellent public school system, though the safe streets and leafy backyards with ample room for a swingset and basketball hoop were an added draw. But for Ethan's

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parents, learning did not begin and end in the classroom: they also invested significant time, energy, and money in extracurricular sports, clubs, and activities.[1]

Ethan started out in Cub Scouts in kindergarten with five other boys in his neighborhood and achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout by his senior year in high school. His final service project, designed to instill leadership and citizenship, was to build a horse bridge for a farm that offered physical therapy to disabled kids; his uncle, a contractor, helped him with the complex design and arduous construction. When we ask him why he decided to stick with Boy Scouts, Ethan points to his father: "Probably him." While his dad Blake acknowledges that scouting is "tough" because "kids have a lot more distractions" like television and video games, he tried to make it fun through two-week hiking trips to New Mexico where they tracked bears and practiced navigation. Ethan also played soccer, ran track, and participated in orchestra, his father taking on the

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1 Students' names in this article are pseudonyms.

responsibility of driving the orchestra bus. Ethan's mother, who was making chicken and dumplings when we interviewed him for our study, registered him to vote when he turned eighteen; he speaks passionately about a wide range of political issues like gay marriage and environmental protection, drawing on the knowledge he has picked up through a lifetime of family dinners.

Much of the current debate about the growing inequality in education outcomes has focused on the widening achievement gap between students from high-income and low-income families. But what happens outside the classroom is equally important to children's success. Ethan stood out to the admissions committee at his university not only for his high grades and stellar test scores, but also for this sustained engagement in Scouts, his wide range of interests and achievement, and his commitment to civic engagement. Ethan is lucky: with his parents' flexible work schedules, comfortable financial situation, and commitment to his social and intellectual development, his pathway into a middle-class adult life was almost seamless. But for many other children, the rising costs of sport teams and school clubs, combined with parents' uncertain work schedules and precarious household budgets, have made extracurricular activities a luxury they can't afford.

Struggling with budget cuts and deficits, many school districts have cut back on their funding for drama clubs and music programs and either reduced the number of afterschool sports offered or put a hefty price tag on participation. The end result is that an increasing number of low-income students find themselves left on the sidelines.

While public schools theoretically provide equal access to afterschool activities to all enrolled students, the reality is that access has become increasingly limited to children from middle- and upper-class families. In our recent study, we examined trends in extracurricular participation from the 1970s to today (Snellman et al., forthcoming). Our findings are alarming: while upper-middle-class students have become more active in school clubs and sports teams since the 1970s, working-class students have became increasingly disengaged and disconnected, their participation rates plummeting in the 1990s and remaining low ever since.

Ethan is just one of the 120 young adults we interviewed across the country. While his story illustrates the importance of afterschool activities for life success, other interviews shed light on why working-class students have been left behind, both inside and outside the classroom.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: PATHWAY TO SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND ADULT LIFE

Nicole, an eighteen-year-old who, like Ethan, lives in Austin, Texas, works in the kitchen at a three-star hotel. In her East Side neighborhood, with its bright flashing lights of police cars on every corner, it was too dangerous to play outside, and many of her afternoons as a child were spent watching TV alone. With both her parents working long hours to keep their family afloat – her father as a garbage collector and her mother as a hotel maid and a waitress – Nicole didn't have much supervision or guidance after school. She had trouble making friends in ninth grade and started taking pills with the other girls to fit in. Her sophomore year, however, Nicole joined the dance team, where she would perform at football games, and her parents sacrificed a lot to pay the $800 a year it cost to buy her uniform and pay for her travel to competitions. She explains that she got her grades up that year because "you had to pass to compete." But the $800 proved too much for the family, and she quit the next year.

Nicole soon met a boy in the neighborhood, and when her parents would leave for work early in the morning, she would sneak over to his mother's apartment to see him. Soon, she was pregnant. She moved in with her boyfriend and his mother, going to high school during the day, then running, even eight months pregnant, to catch the bus to get to work at Pizza Hut for minimum wage until midnight. Nicole, who left her boyfriend when he became abusive, wants to give her daughter a better life and recently borrowed nine thousand dollars for a year-long medical billing course at a for-profit college. But for now, simply buying her daughter food, diapers, and clothes at Goodwill leaves her with nothing left over at the end of the month.

Nicole's story attests to the potential rewards of extracurricular activities: her lone year on the dance team prompted her to earn higher grades and trade taking pills for daily dance practice, and perhaps taught her self-discipline, commitment, and teamwork along the way. But it also attests to the greater challenges she faced, compared with Ethan.

Compared with their middle-class peers, working-class youth are more likely to grow up in families, schools, and neighborhoods like Nicole's where violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and early sexual activity are common (see Figure 1). For adolescents like them, extracurricular activities may be particularly helpful in that they offer supervision, guidance, and future directedness. But for many families, participation fees required upfront at the beginning of each season simply prove to be too costly.

With schools struggling to fund activities inside the classrooms – teachers, books, supplies – should we really care about what happens to debate clubs and tennis teams? Research suggests that we should.

A growing body of research demonstrates that participating in organized activities outside the classroom helps cultivate the skills, habits, connections, and knowledge that prepare children for lifelong success: academic success in school, graduating from high school, going to college, getting a job, and participating in civic life. This is the very logic that fueled the High School Movement, a period of educational reform in the early 1900s that aimed to cultivate skills such as leadership, hard work, civic mindedness, and self-discipline across the class spectrum (Mondale & Patton 2002). Even after controlling for family background and cognitive ability, involvement in extracurricular activities predicts higher grades; higher college aspira-

Figure 1. Adverse experiences of U.S. children aged 0–17, by parental income
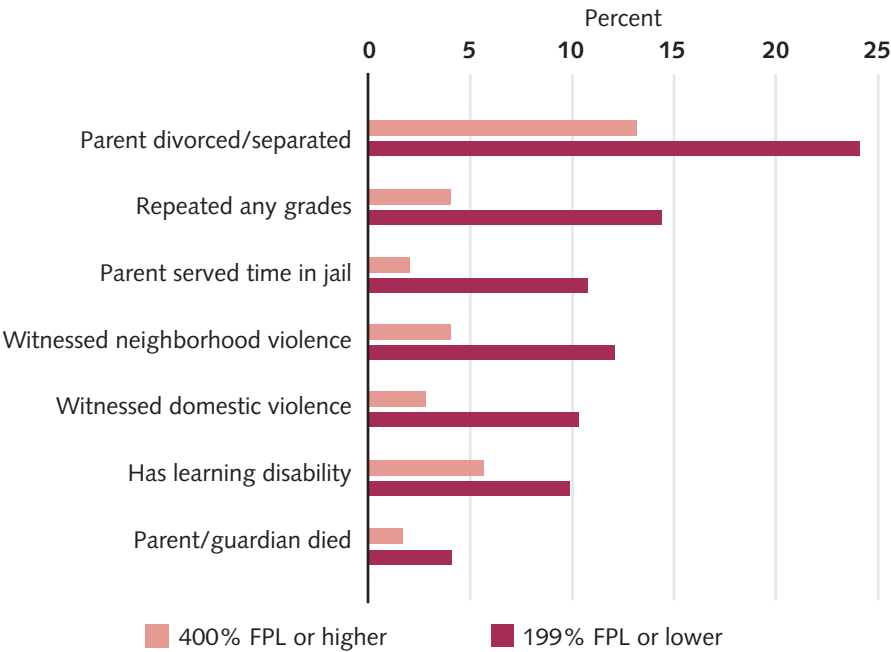
Source: National Survey of Children's Health (2011/2012), authors' calculations. FPL=Federal Poverty Line. Percentages are weighted to population characteristics.

tions, enrollment, and completion; greater self-discipline, self-esteem, and resilience; lower risky behavior such as drug use, delinquency, and sexual activity; and lower truancy rates (Zaff et al. 2003).

Furthermore, the effects of extracurricular activities appear to extend well beyond college: students who are involved in clubs and sports go on to earn higher wages, advance further in their careers, and even vote and volunteer more frequently than their less-involved peers. There is also evidence that students who hold leadership positions in high school are able to command higher salaries later in life (Kuhn & Weinberger 2005). Middle-class parents know this and groom their children from an early age to excel in competitive afterschool activities like soccer, chess, and dance (Levey Friedman 2013). If we could predict the future, we would not be surprised to see Ethan land a competitive professional job out of college, advance to a high-paying managerial position, and spend his leisure time volunteering in his local community.

BEYOND ACADEMICS: SOFT SKILLS

For Ethan, hiking trips with his Boy Scouts team taught him more than navigation: they taught him perseverance, teamwork, and resilience in the face of adversity. In building the horse bridge for the farm for disabled kids, he also learned to think creatively and to see a goal through to the end despite the lure of video games and television. These "soft skills" – working with others, leadership, grit, self-discipline, and endurance – are cultivated through participation in extracurricular activities. Scholars have found that these noncognitive traits are at least as important as cognitive abilities in predicting educational attainment and income ten years down the road, even

after taking into account family background. Today's employers look for workers who arrive on time, complete their assigned tasks, work well with others, and show initiative – all traits that Ethan learned simply through Boy Scouts.

Psychologists Claire Robertson-Kraft and Angela Duckworth (2014) studied the effects of extracurricular activities on career success. They collected resumes of novice teachers in low-income schools and rated them based on passion and perseverance in college activities. The teachers with highest "grit" scores – those who had been team captains or presidents of clubs – turned out to be the best teachers and stayed in their jobs longer. By contrast, other seemingly important characteristics such as SAT scores and college GPAs turned out to be poor predictors of teachers' retention or effectiveness. Clearly, extracurricular activities instill the skills and values that matter most for upward mobility.

MENTORS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTING WITH ADULTS OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Extracurricular activities also help build important connections to mentors such as soccer coaches, bandleaders, and youth group pastors, who can be paramount in a young person's life. Take the example of Carlos, an eighteen-year-old high school senior we met at a community center in Southern California. By middle school, Carlos had already been pulled into a gang in his neighborhood. He was inspired, however, by a woman in the neighborhood who was going to college classes, working, and raising three children; she caught his attention one day when she loudly mocked the clothes the gang members were wearing. After becoming friends with this young woman, Carlos

decided to leave the gang and do better in school. When he failed classes, he repeated them in the summer. He also started taking mixed martial arts lessons as an outlet for his anger – while he resisted the lessons for a while because he couldn't get a signature from his dad promising to pay the fees (he didn't even ask, knowing it was too expensive), the coach told him that he could wash his car in exchange for lessons. Carlos's love of martial arts led him to the school wrestling team, where he is one of the top competitors – he has even begun to hope to wrestle in college.

Studies of mentoring programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Philadelphia Futures Sponsor-A-Scholar have shown that these programs have broad positive social and academic impacts on adolescents like Carlos. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program pairs unrelated adult volunteers with youth from single-parent households for the purpose of providing youth with an adult friend. Economists Jean Baldwin Grossman and Joseph Tierney (1998) studied the effects of the Big Brothers/ Big Sisters program through a comparative study of 959 ten- to sixteen-year-olds who applied to the program in 1992 and 1993. Half of the children were randomly assigned to a treatment group, who all were matched with an adult mentor. The other half were assigned to a waiting list. After eighteen months, both groups were interviewed. The results were nothing but encouraging: the students who had been assigned a mentor were less likely to have initiated drug or alcohol use, to hit someone, to skip class or a day of school, or to lie to their parents; they also had higher average grades and were more likely to feel competent in their school work and to report a better relationship with their parents.

We can see the positive effects of informal mentoring in Carlos's story, as the generosity of his wrestling coach and the positive influence of an adult in the neighborhood inspired him to leave the local gang, focus on wrestling instead of drugs and crime, and even aspire to college. Carlos, unfortunately, is the exception to the rule: many working-class and poor students who need mentors the most don't have them. The 2011 National Survey of Children's Health asked children from middle school through high school about important adult mentors in their lives. Almost one in five low-income children reported not having any mentoring relationships through school, neighborhood, or community. In contrast, only five percent of middle-class children reported not having any important adult connections outside their immediate family.

Furthermore, while Carlos found mentors in his neighbor and his martial arts coach and a possible pathway to serious competitive sports, he faced obstacles that the more-affluent Ethan did not. In the Scouts and in the private housing development, Ethan was in a safe environment surrounded by a range of caring adults who likely mentored him about both college and career. Financial advantage, physical safety, and the social capital that comes from mentors and adult role models gave Ethan critical supports that were far less available to Carlos.

WHAT EXPLAINS THESE GROWING CLASS GAPS IN EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT?

Given the importance of extracurricular participation to children's future success, it is truly alarming that we see working-class kids increasingly excluded from after-school activities and disconnected from caring adults. Why are working-class students absent from the very activities that would help them climb the economic ladder? Nicole's story offers insights into the tumultuous worlds of working-class students.

Like many public schools, Nicole's high school is facing pressure to tighten its budget, raise test scores, and focus on academic "core competencies." This leaves no room in the budget for seemingly frivolous extras like dance team, so the cost of participation has shifted from the community (through taxes) to the individual parents. While affluent and poor school districts alike have felt this pressure to trim their budgets, they have responded in markedly different ways. Poorer school districts often simply cut their extracurricular offerings. As researchers Elizabeth Stearns and Elizabeth J. Glennie (2010) found in their study of North Carolina public high schools, the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch in the overall student body is negatively associated with the total number of extracurricular activities, sports teams, and service opportunities offered by the school. Affluent parents, on the other hand, have the means to subsidize school activities through private resources, whether fundraising to send the school orchestra to Japan or simply writing a yearly check.

But of most concern is the shift toward "pay to play," which puts more and more of the burden of participation on families whose budgets may already be strained. Many schools are implementing athletic participation fees to cover the cost of school sports. For example, the Arlington school district in Massachusetts charges $500 to join the football team and $480 to wrestle. To play on the tennis team in the Riverside Local school district in Ohio costs students $874. Other school districts have introduced fixed fees for all athletics: the Westerville school district in Ohio charges $240 for every sport and $50 for choir, marching band, and the theater club.

There are no national data that track trends in pay-to-play programs. However, according to a recent survey by the University of Michigan C. S. Mott Children's Hospital (2012), 61 percent of middle and high school students nationwide were charged a pay-to-play fee. While the average fee was $93, 21 percent of parents were charged a participation fee of $150 or more – and these numbers do not include the cost of equipment, uniforms, and additional fees like travel, which raise the average cost to $381. These fees disproportionately disadvantage children from families who earn less than $60,000 per year, as 19 percent of these parents reported that their children's participation dropped because of the cost. On the other end of the spectrum, among families earning more than $60,000 per year, only 5 percent reported lower participation due to increased costs.

THE DANGERS OF DISINVESTING IN CHILDREN'S FUTURES

The rise of pay-to-play policies and elimination of academic clubs and sports teams are seemingly natural responses to tightening budgets. When schools are furloughing teachers, laying off custodians, and postponing classroom renovations, it may seem frivolous to continue funding chess

clubs and cheerleading teams. For some, it may seem fair that students who want to participate should pay for the activities.

But the rising financial barriers to participation have serious consequences, especially for those who need them the most. Extracurricular activities help students like Nicole to keep her grades up; resist the pull of drugs and risky behaviors; and find inspiration and connection in the face of dangerous neighborhoods, financially strapped parents, and besieged schools. As Ethan prepares to graduate from college and pursue a lucrative career in engineering, Nicole is struggling to raise a child on minimum wage. The diverging destinies of these two American young adults serve as a cautionary tale of what happens when we disinvest in children's futures (Silva 2013). Cutting extracurricular activities from the school budget or attaching a hefty price sticker to them not only puts low-income students at a greater disadvantage, but it also robs all of us of the potential contributions that the Nicoles of the world could have made.

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The Negative Impact of Community Stressors on Learning Time: Examining Inequalities between California High Schools

Nicole Mirra and John Rogers

Allocated classroom time is not the same as time available for learning – a host of economic and social stressors undermine learning time in schools serving low-income students.

I'm trying to push my students toward academic excellence in the time that we have, but with so many pressures to handle, and with the combination of traumas that my students are exposed to and are constantly experiencing, sometimes the overwhelming need is overwhelming.

— California high school teacher

This California teacher voices a concern that is sure to resonate with many educators across the country: When time is limited, it is hard to meet rigorous learning standards. The challenge is compounded in high-poverty schools where community stressors place additional demands and strains on classroom learning time.

Our understanding of these challenges comes from a survey we conducted during the 2013-2014 school year with nearly 800 California high school teachers. The survey explored factors inside and outside of California public high schools that shape learning time for students and teachers during the school day and year. This survey is part of the Keeping Time project, a multi-year study of learning time supported by the Ford Foundation.[1]

While the number of days and minutes that students spend in classrooms is similar across most California high schools, we learned that the experience of these days and minutes differs drastically for students across different communities. We found that community stressors contribute to far higher levels of lost instructional time in high-poverty high schools compared

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1 The report on our survey is available at idea.gseis.ucla.edu/projects/its-about-time. A video of a webinar on the research is available at https://vimeo.com/112202578.

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with low-poverty or low-and-mixed-poverty schools by contributing to student absences from school and to students' difficulty in focusing on learning while in class.[2]

In order to quantify the impact of community stressors, we asked teachers to report how many students in one of their "typical" classes were currently affected by a set of economic and social challenges such as hunger or lack of medical or dental care. Across all ten stressors, teachers in high-poverty schools reported that far more of their students were impacted than did teachers in low-poverty and low-and-mixed-poverty schools, even though their typical class sizes did not differ significantly (see Figure 1).

In addition to asking teachers to report on the number of their students dealing with community stressors, we also asked them to report on how frequently these stressors impacted learning time in their classes. While teachers in all schools acknowledged that these stressors have impacted learning time by making it difficult for some students to focus in class or causing students to miss class, the impact in high-poverty schools was much greater.

Teachers reported that the stressors impacted learning time in high-poverty schools' classrooms three times as often as in low-poverty schools' classrooms. On any given day, there is a 39 percent chance that at least one of these stressors affected learning time in a high-poverty school classroom, compared with a 13 percent chance in a low-poverty school classroom.

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2   For the purposes of our study, "high-poverty schools" are schools in which 75–100 percent of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch, "low-poverty schools" are schools in which 0–25 percent of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch, and "low-and-mixed-poverty schools" are schools in which 0–50 percent of students are eligible to received free or reduced-price lunch.

Our survey revealed more factors in addition to community stressors that cause high-poverty schools to lose greater amounts of instructional time than more-affluent schools. Over the course of the school year, high-poverty schools experience more disruptions due to a variety of institutional factors, including teacher absences, emergency lockdowns, and preparation for standardized tests, than low-poverty schools. And on a daily basis, these schools face more time loss from factors ranging from incorporating new students into classes to phone calls from the main office. This time loss adds up. Students in high-poverty schools lose roughly two weeks more learning time over the course of the school year and about thirty minutes more per day than students in low-poverty schools.

In essence, California students in high-poverty schools are not able to access as much instructional time as the majority of their peers as a result of these challenges, creating a situation that threatens the very building blocks of educational opportunity.

Our broader study, of which this teacher survey is only one part, highlights the need for renewed attention to questions about learning time and equal educational opportunity. Because school days and minutes are distributed roughly equally across public schools, many have ignored time as a policy variable with implications for equity. The Keeping Time survey results remind us that allocated time is not the same as time available for learning. It points to the ways that economic and social stressors undermine the amount of available time schools can provide. For all California students to succeed, policymakers and educators will need to think about time in new ways. It is crucially important to recognize, grapple with, and redress inequalities in available learning time across public schools.

Figure 1. Economic and social stressors (number of students affected in a typical class)

Poverty Concentration   ☐ Low   ☐ Low and Mixed   ■ High

Stressor	Low	Low and Mixed	High
Hunger	1.95	2.66	7.07
Unstable Housing	2.03	2.57	6.21
Lack of Medical Care	2.13	3.08	8.40
Lack of Dental Care	2.34	3.45	8.99
Caring for Famiy Members	3.16	4.21	9.71
Economic Stress	4.82	5.84	11.80
Other Family Issues	2.93	3.66	8.15
Immigration Issues	2.24	3.12	9.08
Community Violence	2.09	2.68	8.57
Concerns about Safety	2.21	2.60	6.81

Mobilizing the Eastside of Los Angeles for Educational Justice

Henry M. Perez and Perla Madera

A ten-year effort led by youth, community organizers, and a range of partners resulted in two new, successful high schools and showed the power of grassroots mobilization for social justice.

I've seen students that started off at Torres High School, before we had all these partners, and some were struggling. Some were getting into trouble doing things that they shouldn't have been doing. But when you connect these same students with the right program it makes a big difference. They become more focused. Extended learning time is helping us keep our students in school. We are offering them more than just math and science and the whole practice of drill and kill. We are offering them art, music, and mentorship.

— Alex Fuentes, principal, Torres High School Engineering and Technology Academy

For decades, the Eastside of Los Angeles[1] has seen mainly low-performing schools with huge push-out rates, low graduation rates, and low percentages of students prepared to attend a four-year university. Eastside schools have been, and to an extent continue to be, some of the most overcrowded and underresourced schools, not only in the Los Angeles Unified School District, but in the entire nation.

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[1] The region East of downtown Los Angeles that includes unincorporated East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, El Sereno, and Lincoln Heights is popularly referred to as "the Eastside."

Henry M. Perez is associate director of InnerCity Struggle in Los Angeles. Perla Madera is a youth organizer for InnerCity Struggle.

But there are two schools in this neighborhood that have reversed these trends. Since opening in 2009 and 2010 respectively, Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez High School for College and Career Preparation and Esteban E. Torres High School have developed to be two of the more successful high schools in the Eastside. Located only five miles away from each other, they are the first two schools that have been built in the East Los Angeles region in more than eighty years. Just last year, Mendez High School was recognized for recording a more than fifty-point gain on its Academic Performing Index (API) score, one of the largest gains in the state of California (Watanabe 2013). In a September *Los Angeles Magazine* article ranking the top seventy-five high schools in Los Angeles County, Torres Renaissance Academy and Torres Engineering and Technology Academy, two of the five autonomous pilot schools on the Esteban E. Torres High School campus, were listed #32 and #60, respectively (Mathews 2014).

The progress and current standing of Mendez and Torres High Schools is something that has not been seen in East Los Angeles in a very long time. In this article, the authors draw on our own experience at InnerCity Struggle and interviews with a number of other stakeholders to detail how InnerCity Struggle partnered with students, parents, educators, community members, and nonprofits to implement a "community schools" vision at these two schools. The framework for the community schools vision consists of implementing strategies such as: 1) the establishment of school-based supports like wellness centers or health clinics; 2) the use of restorative justice as an alternative to punitive discipline policies like suspensions and expulsions; 3) the integration of Linked Learning[2] in the instructional curriculum; and 4) maximizing the use of after

school hours through the implementation of more and better learning time to assist in meeting the academic and social needs of the students and their families.[3]

This collaborative effort to create two new community schools shined a bright light on the crisis of public education in East Los Angeles. It also flipped the narrative of the education crisis in Los Angeles from one of scapegoating students and parents to one of recognizing systemic inequities faced by a mainly low-income, immigrant Latino community, which prevent them from accessing the education they deserve and limit their life opportunities.

HOW TWO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WERE BORN

The community schools approach differs from some other school design models in that there is no one blueprint for a community school. In some places, community schools are initiated and planned top-down from the school district. But in East Los Angeles, Community Schools strategies have developed from a grassroots, bottom-up approach through more than ten years of organizing campaigns – led by youth, parents, organizers from InnerCity Struggle, and key education partners – that have served as building blocks toward creating a successful and sustainable community schools infrastructure at Mendez and Torres high schools.

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2 For more on Linked Learning, see linkedlearning.org and the article by Janet Lopez and Peter Rivera in this issue of *VUE*.

3 For more on community schools, see the articles by Natasha Capers and Shital Shah and by Janet Lopez and Peter Rivera in this issue of *VUE*, and linkedlearning.org.

The Evolution of InnerCity Struggle

InnerCity Struggle began organizing youth and families in the East Los Angeles community of Boyle Heights in 1994. It started as an organization dedicated to reducing the violence in the community as well as supporting the victims and survivors of that violence, mainly mothers and youth, through gang intervention and support programs. In the early 2000s, with a new staff taking the helm of the organization, InnerCity Struggle shifted its focus from gang intervention to school-based youth organizing for education reform. The InnerCity Struggle staff created an educational justice vision based on improving graduation and college-going rates and creating a safe and healthy learning environment with holistic support programs for the youth and families of the Eastside. The staff developed a strategic plan to implement their vision and began organizing campaigns aimed at reaching that vision. InnerCity Struggle began working at two of the four high schools and soon was working at all four Eastside high schools.

In 2002, a group of youth from Garfield High School in East Los Angeles came together to discuss how they could improve the crisis-like conditions at their school. At that time, less than 50 percent of Garfield's students were graduating, and only about 16 percent were graduating eligible to attend a four-year university. The students from Garfield High School came together under the name United Students and were organized by youth organizers from InnerCity Struggle.

Trying to get a grasp on the key barriers that were hindering Garfield High School students from receiving a quality education, the students launched a survey gathering effort among their peers. The surveys asked students to identify the most pressing issues impacting their quality of education. Repeatedly, students identified overcrowding as their number one concern. In 2002, Garfield High School had approximately 4,700 students on a year-round school calendar with three tracks that alternated being in and out of session. This overcrowding and year-round calendar disrupted students' learning process and opportunities (one track would be in session two months and out of session the next two months year round) and led to a loss of seventeen days of instruction per year for students, as well as numerous other negative outcomes.

With the results of their survey complete, InnerCity Struggle youth felt like they had a strong mandate from the students at Garfield High School to fight for a new school and made the decision to launch the "new schools campaign" to win the construction of a new high school for their community. After months of organizing meetings with students and parents, collecting thousands of signatures on petitions in support of a new high school, conducting several delegations with decision-makers from the Los Angeles Unified School District, and conducting marches and rallies, the youth and families of InnerCity Struggle won their campaign for a new East Los Angeles high school in 2004. In the end, they not only won one new high school, but they won two new high schools, a new elementary school, and an adult school for the community.

Additionally, the "new schools campaign" gave InnerCity Struggle great momentum and support for continuing their educational justice vision for Eastside schools. InnerCity Struggle would then leverage this momentum and support to strategically push forward a community-led vision and effort for community schools at Mendez High School and Torres High School.

Turning New Schools Into Community Schools

Although approved in 2004, the two new schools were not scheduled to open until 2009 and 2010. Looking forward, InnerCity Struggle recognized that it had a tremendous opportunity to organize the community toward influencing how the schools would operate once they opened. Students and parents of InnerCity Struggle pressed forward stating that these new schools, that the community fought so hard to win, could not operate "business as usual" or in the "status quo" of what the community was used to. These schools needed to be drastically different. They needed to have a more personalized environment for students and parents, they needed to have high expectations and a college-going culture for students, and they needed to be community schools that would be open, accessible, and welcoming to the community and serve as a hub of enrichment and support programs and services for the community.

InnerCity Struggle understood that in order to achieve this vision, it needed a broad base of support from community and education stakeholders in East Los Angeles. In 2007, InnerCity Struggle launched the East Los Angeles Education Collaborative (ELAEC). This collaborative was made up of students, parents, representatives from community-based organizations, teachers, principals, and elected representatives. As the convener, InnerCity Struggle facilitated the collaborative in developing a "Community Vision for Public Education in the Eastside." It included the same elements that students and parents had pushed for but also included the desire for schools to have greater autonomy and flexibility over curriculum, budgets, governance, hiring, and schedules.

In 2009, the Los Angeles Unified School District launched an initiative known as Public School Choice. Although many in the education world expressed concerns over an initiative that would allow external operators to bid for any new and low-performing school in the district, InnerCity Struggle and the ELAEC saw this as an opportunity to carry out their community schools vision at one of the new high schools that was opening in East Los Angeles. With the support of the Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP), a nonprofit organization with expertise in providing teacher support, instructional development, and operating community schools, the East Los Angeles Education Partnership launched a pilot schools campaign for the Esteban E. Torres high school campus.

LAEP worked with five teams of teachers who developed five distinct proposals to operate five autonomous pilot schools at the soon-to-be-opened Torres High School. InnerCity Struggle worked with the teams to ensure that the proposals reflected a commitment to a community schools vision. InnerCity Struggle youth and parents also led a campaign to inform and engage the East Los Angeles community to support a student, parent, and community vote for the pilot school proposals. After months of organizing, the LAUSD School Board selected the community's pilot school proposals over the competing charter school proposals.

SUSTAINING THE VISION

The pilot school campaign victory won by InnerCity Struggle, LAEP, and the ELAEC sustained the energy and momentum for creating a new direction for public education in East Los Angeles. In the larger scheme of things, InnerCity Struggle understood that if the community was successful in

building an alternative school model at Torres High School, it would create the pressure and conditions for other schools in the community to improve as well.

Torres High School

As the new Esteban E. Torres High School was set to open in the fall of 2010, students and parents wanted to ensure that the commitment to a community schools vision was honored. Two top priorities for the community were the creation of a community schools coordinator position and the establishment of a wellness center on campus. The community saw a community school coordinator position as essential to facilitating the process of identifying school-based needs and finding partners that could assist the school in meeting those needs.

Additionally, InnerCity Struggle and the ELAEC learned from students that mental health services were a high priority. Many students shared their struggles with high stress and anxiety, as well as depression and suicidal tendencies. Immediately, InnerCity Struggle and LAEP created a school-based health task force charged with the responsibility of establishing a wellness center on campus. The health task force included community-based organizations, teachers, principals, school-based nurses and psychologists, students, and parents. This partnership enabled the school to quickly identify three community-based health providers that were willing to provide primary care and mental health care services at no cost to the school.

Even though the school had identified partners ready to provide free health care services to students of Torres High School, there still existed a challenge: the local Los Angeles Unified School District representatives wouldn't allow the health care providers to come onto

the campus until the district approved them. After months of no approval, InnerCity Struggle used organizing strategies to pressure the district to approve the providers and the space for a wellness center. InnerCity Struggle youth launched a petition demanding that the district provide the space for a wellness center. InnerCity Struggle organized delegations between the superintendent and students, parents, teachers, and principals to express the urgency of providing students with mental health services and the expectation for the district to follow through on its commitment. After an almost two-year campaign, the Esteban Torres Wellness Center was inaugurated in April 2012.

Extended Learning Time at Torres

Another important part of the community's vision for Torres was the implementation of an extended learning time initiative through LAEP. Today at Torres, more than twenty external partners are providing enrichment and support programs for the roughly 2,000 students attending the five pilot schools on campus. According to recent data compiled by LAEP, the twenty partners are serving approximately 761 students from all five pilot schools. The programs offered at Torres High School through the extended learning time initiative serve as a way to augment the existing curriculum of the five pilot schools.

As Cristina Patricio, community schools coordinator at Torres, states,

> Extended learning time provides the students at Torres the opportunities to explore courses and programs that LAUSD does not offer them.

For example, the Torres Engineering and Technology Academy, because of its career focus, is unable to prioritize music classes for its students. However, through extended learning time, they are able to offer their students music

classes provided by a local team of musicians.

Torres High School is currently in the process of offering a murals program through a local nonprofit called Self-Help Graphics & Art. This course will offer students the opportunity to gain an arts experience that currently lacks significant investment in districts throughout the country. At the same time, students will learn about the rich history of murals in their own community and become much more grounded in the history of their community.

Extended learning time is also providing Torres High School students with the opportunity to focus on health and wellness. The nonprofit group People's Yoga offers yoga classes to students at the school; another outside partner offers Zumba classes.

In addition to enrichment programs, Patricio shares that extended learning time gives many students the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Torres High School has a mentorship program offered by LAEP where upperclassmen take on the role of mentoring underclassmen. This opportunity has helped students like Santiago, who Patricio describes as a young man who dealt with serious anger issues:[4]

> In his first three years at Torres, no one knew what to do with him. They struggled working with him because of his anger issues. The mentorship program was a space that really worked for Santiago. He felt engaged by the school, and he was able to place all of his energy into something positive.

Alex Fuentes, principal of the Torres High School Engineering and Technology Academy, agrees that students are benefiting from extended learning time programs. He tells the story of Javier:

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4 Students' names are pseudonyms.

He was a troubled kid but is really talented at playing the drums. He was able to join one of our after-school music programs and that really grounded him here at Torres High School.

> “
> Today at Torres, more than twenty external partners are providing enrichment and support programs for the roughly 2,000 students attending the five pilot schools on campus.
> „

From Fuentes' perspective, extended learning time is critical to giving low-income students an opportunity to compete with students from more affluent families. He says,

> If you are from a middle class neighborhood you can afford for your kids to be involved in extra-curricular programs, such as piano classes. In East Los Angeles, parents want these opportunities but usually cannot afford to pay for them. For parents to receive it for free at Torres High School, and know that their kids will be safe, is an extraordinary benefit.

Torres stays open until six p.m. in order to offer students the array of expanded learning time programs. Students are even offered a meal for participating in the afterschool programs. Fuentes appreciates the fact that ELT is helping students do something positive in the afterschool hours rather than potentially getting into trouble out in the streets.

Fuentes sees ELT as part of the overall community schools vision that began with the organizing campaign of InnerCity Struggle and LAEP to win the pilot schools at Torres High School. He states,

> All of this support is helping us build a culture here at Torres High School. Where in the past, parents would try to send their kids to other schools outside of East Los Angeles, we now have a culture where parents want their kids to attend Torres High School because they see what we are providing the students here.

"The biggest impact for me is seeing that people care and that they are here to help us; lots of schools don't offer that."

– Victor Lopez, Mendez High School Student and InnerCity Struggle youth leader

And these programs are supporting the schools at Torres High School to make tremendous academic gains. The graduation rate at the Engineering and Technology Academy rose 17 percent from the previous year and is now at 77 percent for a four-year cohort. In addition, 75 percent of the academy's current senior class is eligible for a four-year university with a G.P.A of 2.5 or greater.

Mendez High School

Mendez High School developed its direction toward a community school vision through the process of applying to the federal Department of Education

Promise Neighborhoods initiative. In an effort to win the highly competitive federal grant, three organizations – InnerCity Struggle, Proyecto Pastoral, and the East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC) – came together to submit a collaborative proposal under the name of Promesa Boyle Heights. In 2010, Promesa Boyle Heights was awarded a Promise Neighborhoods planning grant.[5]

With the planning grant, Promesa Boyle Heights was able to facilitate a community-led process to establish a collective impact, community schools vision for families of Mendez High School in which a continuum of services and programs would support students in the Mendez High School area from cradle to college. Dozens of organizations came together and committed to supporting this community vision by offering their services in specific areas of the plan.

Even though Promesa Boyle Heights was not awarded an implementation grant for the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, going through the process of the planning grant and developing a collective impact plan fully engaged the community. Many of the organizations that were a part of the planning process reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the community schools collective impact vision regardless of not receiving the Promise Neighborhoods implementation grant. Many organizations were willing to provide in-kind services to move forward specific pieces of the plan.

Since then, Proyecto Pastoral, a community organization located in Boyle Heights, has served as the anchor organization for the Promesa Boyle Heights initiative and has taken the lead in moving the community schools collective impact vision forward. Deycy
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5 For more on Promise Neighborhoods, see the article by Michael McAfee and Mauricio Torre in this issue of *VUE*.

Hernandez, director of Promesa Boyle Heights, describes the initiative:

> Promesa Boyle Heights is a collaborative of organizations within the [Boyle Heights] community that developed a shared vision for where we want the community to be in the next ten years. It is a vision to ensure that students are able to succeed from the time that they are born to the time that they graduate from college.

The essence of a community schools vision is the partnerships and collaboration of individuals inside and outside of a school. Having a school open itself up to outside partners that are there to scrutinize and identify what are issues to resolve inside of the school is not always easy for school officials. Patty Kitaoka, an academic case manager placed inside of Mendez High School by Proyecto Pastoral, said,

> The first year that we were [at Mendez High School], we got the sense that the school did not want partnerships, and we were really trying to figure out how the partnerships fit and how they would be best utilized.

It didn't take very long for the leadership of Mendez High School to realize the benefits of these partnerships and the success that would come with working toward a community schools collective impact vision. Alejandro Macias is an assistant principal at Mendez High School. He has been present at the school since it opened in 2009, prior to the Promesa Boyle Heights initiative and at a time when the school was struggling to meet its potential. He said:

> 2011 to 2012 was the year Mendez was recognized by the LAUSD Board of Education for having the second highest percentage of students with perfect attendance. It was a big deal; we were actually the first Eastside school to get that recognition.

Macias recognizes that the staff of Mendez High School could not have accomplished that great achievement without the implementation of a collaborative community effort guided by a community schools collective impact initiative.

> To be able to accomplish what we have accomplished, it's not one person, it's not one teacher, it's not one student. It's really a team effort and a collaboration of parents, students, the partners, teachers, and administration. It really requires everyone to work together because it is a tough, tough job.

It is obvious that the most impacted by the efforts of the Promesa Boyle Heights initiative are the students. Victor Lopez is a current student at Mendez High School. He is also a youth leader with InnerCity Struggle and very engaged in the community assemblies to discuss the progress of the Promesa Boyle Heights initiative. He says,

> The biggest impact for me is seeing that people care and that they are here to help us; lots of schools don't offer that.

To Victor, it is very evident that there is a community schools effort being developed at Mendez High School. He sees the wealth of partnerships that his school now has and feels very appreciative for it.

> I personally take in a lot of love with having lots of partners within the campus. There are much more opportunities for myself and my classmates. We are really lucky and grateful for all the partnerships.

REVERSING SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES AND THE NARRATIVE OF FAILURE

More than ten years ago, students at Garfield High School decided to do something about their overcrowded, underresourced, low-performing school. They did not accept that these conditions were inevitable in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and large numbers of students of color. They believed that they and their families and their community deserved better.

The path leading to the two new, successful high schools described in this article was not easy. It required over a decade of hard work, grassroots organizing, and partnership building. But the vision of sustainable community schools that provide the learning opportunities and services that students need to succeed, and that act as hubs for community services and enrichment programs, proved to be powerful, gaining the support of an increasing number of partners.

The result is a model of bottom-up community mobilization for social justice that rejects blaming students and families for low-performing schools; rather, it addresses systemic inequities that deny low-income students of color their right to an excellent education. The authors hope that the story of Mendez and Torres high schools will inspire other communities to look at their own schools and know that the path to equal opportunity is difficult, but possible. This path requires that youth, families, and community members be at the center of planning and decision making. It requires a community-wide, long-term commitment to collaboration and support. The results – engaged students, surrounded by caring adults, prepared to succeed in college and life – are priceless.

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The Power of Community Schools

NATASHA CAPERS AND SHITAL C. SHAH

The community schools movement has led to powerful collaborations in New York City and nationally between educators, unions, families, communities, and other partners to provide services and transform learning.

The "community schools" approach builds networks of local organizations and institutions committed to bettering outcomes for youth. Using schools as hubs, these partners offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities. In this article, Shital Shah, who supports community schools as assistant director for educational issues at

the American Federation of Teachers, and Natasha Capers, a coordinator for the New York City Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ), a parent-led collaborative of unions and community organizations, discuss the community schools movement and how it has become a lever for equity and deep parent engagement in New York City and nationally. They also explore how this approach provides an opportunity

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for powerful partnership that joins educators and school staff and their unions with family and community members to improve learning opportunities.[1]

Q **How did you get involved with community schools work?**

A *Shital Shah*: Prior to working at the AFT, I did policy and partnership work for the National Coalition for Community Schools, managing networks of practitioners from across the country in places like Portland, Oregon,[2] and New York.[3] Three years ago I moved to the AFT to a position dedicated to the expansion of community schools – not just in practice, but also in policy and advocacy.[4] I do policy work and training around community schools – I work with labor, management, and communities. In some places they are already working together for solutions. In others, you might have unions and management working together, but the community is not so engaged. In others, unions and the community are pushing really hard on management.

The potential for bringing together multiple kinds of power is one of the biggest trends I've learned in my work with AFT. Organized labor brings one kind of political leverage, and community organizations can bring another kind of power, and each sector brings opportunities to work toward a common vision of how we want to support children and families for life success. For example, in New York City, advocates did a remarkable job of moving the work forward in a short period of time as they developed a education platform to present to candidates during the 2014 mayoral campaign, with support from unions (see sidebar on PS 2013 for more on this campaign).

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1 See the Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Educational Leadership (communityschools.org), which serves as the research, policy, and advocacy organization for networks of community school initiatives and for more than 150 national, state, and local partners that support community schools. See also Henry Perez and Perla Madera's article in this issue of *VUE* for the story of two new community schools in Los Angeles. For more on CEJ, see nyccej.org.
2 See https://multco.us/sun/sun-community-schools.
3 See childrensaidsociety.org/community-schools/community-schools-new-york-city.
4 For the AFT's position on community schools, see aft.org/position/community-schools.

THE PS 2013 CAMPAIGN

In 2012, with the 2013 mayoral campaign coming up in New York City, community organizers decided they were going to develop their own platform for what they really wanted in education and present it to all the candidates instead of depending on the candidates to come up with platforms that might not reflect parents' concerns. This developed into a citywide, cross-sector campaign known as PS 2013, which produced an "Education Roadmap" for the next mayor. Investing in community schools was one of the recommendations. Mayor de Blasio embraced the community's vision and promised to build 100 community schools in his first term.

The PS 2013 campaign is described in *VUE* no. 39, *The Education Election: Community Organizing to Envision and Advance a Progressive Education Agenda*, available at vue.annenberginstitute.org/issues/39. The education roadmap, *Whole Child, Whole School, Whole City*: *An Education Roadmap for the Next Mayor*, is available at aplusnyc.org/education-roadmap/ps-2013-education-roadmap.

Natasha Capers: I'm now the coordinator for CEJ. Three years ago, my children's school was on the list to be closed. Fiorella Guevara of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform was working with CEJ parents at my school, and after that work, I stayed involved in CEJ and became a parent leader with the coalition.

At CEJ, I learned about the community school model and went to Cincinnati to see it in action.[5] Now we're trying to engage the community around community schools in New York City. For the last year, we've been working with community organizations and parents to raise awareness around community schools, define what transformative parent engagement can look like in community schools, and explore how to develop the capacity of parents to be equal decision makers in schools.

Q **How are community schools different from traditional public schools?**

A *Shital Shah:* We know that too many of our children and families are not getting equal access to the opportunities and supports that are essential for their success. School is a public democratic institution, supported by tax dollars, so it should be the place in our neighborhoods that affords all children and families equitable education and life chances. All schools should be ones that everyone wants to send their children to. Families should not be at the mercy of "lottery schools" that boast offerings for student success – if the student is lucky enough to be chosen – or the schools in one particular well-off neighborhood that have essential supports and services for their students, plus a rich offering of extracurricular activities and a multifaceted curriculum that offers music, art, and dance as well as math and English. These are the

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5 See cps-k12.org/community/clc.

opportunities that *every* family and student has the right to access.

Community schools address this goal through their approach to school-community partnerships. Traditional schools tend to have a variety of ad hoc community partners working with their students, families, and teachers, with little coordination. In contrast, the infrastructure of community schools allow these partnerships to be intentional, aligned, and focused on results, thus maximizing their effectiveness.

This design includes a site resource coordinator and strong internal processes that engage parents, community partners, school staff, and school administration. A school-level leadership team includes teachers, school staff, community partners (sometimes the lead agency), a parent representative, and other key partners. This team is responsible for creating a shared vision for the school, as well as identifying desired results and helping align and integrate the work of partners with the school (Coalition for Community Schools 2014). Some community school site resource coordinators hold monthly meetings with all of the community service and support providers to discuss what is happening during the school day, what the needs (academic and non-academic) are, and how those partners can help address those needs. These sorts of regular conversations enable the community to understand how to contribute to the school and students. Their work becomes intentional and aligned, helping the school achieve its goals.

Another key to success is that this strategy must be deeply rooted in neighborhoods. Community schools serve as a hub for the entire community, rather than simply a place where classes and extracurricular activities are held. They develop and coordinate partnerships with community organiza-

tions, public and private agencies, and other key stakeholders to provide opportunities and supports for academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.

Q **What did organized parents and community members contribute to the community schools model in New York City?**

A *Natasha Capers*: When the parents of CEJ closed their eyes to envision an ideal school in the early years of the coalition,[6] they had no idea that all they wanted and more was already out there waiting. They knew it was important to have wraparound social services to address the obstacles that made it harder for our children to succeed in school. What they didn't know at the time was that a model existed that could educate their children, support them, and help rebuild their communities. It is called *community schools*.

CEJ ended up creating a platform and vision that would transform not only New York City schools but also the community school model itself. Where most saw the community schools model as a way to deliver critically needed services families wanted and needed, CEJ saw it as a way not only to engage parents and families, but also to transform teaching and learning.

It is important to understand that CEJ parents live in communities with the lowest-performing schools in the city. For example, District 9 in the Bronx has ranked last in the city for as long
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as the city has been keeping data on student achievement. Little to nothing was done by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) during the Bloomberg administration to turn the district around. The same can be said of other districts, especially in communities of color, including the one I live in. District 23 in Brownsville, Brooklyn, has struggled with bare-bones budgets and very few quality resources. Without proper support from the DOE these schools have been left to languish.

When the community schools model came to the attention of CEJ, the coalition developed a "College-Ready Community Schools" platform.[7] The Bloomberg DOE implemented small parts of it, but not enough to make a difference. But CEJ parents had a chance to move the community schools platform forward in a big way through the PS 2013 campaign, in which community organizers in New York City developed an education agenda to present to mayoral candidates in 2013 (see sidebar), with community schools as one of the recommendations. PS 2013 had a real impact on the candidates and their education agendas, and Mayor Bill de Blasio is strongly committed to building community schools. CEJ has now developed a policy brief with recommendations for the mayor on implementing his plan.[8]

Strong academics are another important theme. Parents didn't just want to be given access to social and health services like a health clinic or dental services. It's not enough for Johnny to have straight teeth if he still cannot do division. It would never be enough for Bianca to have a new pair of glasses if she were still unable to read. In order for the services to be used to their utmost potential, we must provide services *while* dissecting and improving what happens in the classroom. That includes how students are treated when they are disruptive. Suspension does

6 CEJ originally formed in 2006 as a citywide coalition of neighborhood-based organizing collaboratives in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. For the story of how CEJ came together and its early work, see Shaakir-Ansari and Williams (2009).

7 See nyccej.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CEJ-College-Ready-Community-Schools-Platform.pdf.

8 See nyccej.org/1292/community-schools-mayor-deblasio.

not resolve conflict, solve any problems, or add positively to a student's educational experience. In fact, it does the opposite and puts students on a path to dropping out of school. Restorative Justice and restorative practices, on the other hand, heal relationships, resolve conflict, and create a positive school climate, all while the student remains in school.
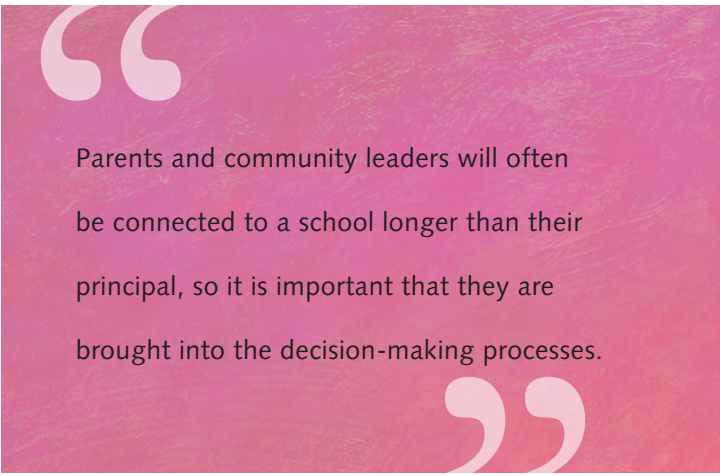
Parent and family engagement is the other critical difference built into CEJ's College Ready Community Schools platform and vision. Parents in New York City, especially in communities of color, were pushed out to the margins of their educational experience. At the same time, many traditional "experts" and the media were crafting and pushing out messages that families didn't care about their children's school or education and did not want to be involved.

One part of that was true. Parents throughout NYC did not want to be *merely* involved; they wanted to be *engaged*. Engagement is more work, because it means you have to create a partnership, and that requires respect. Parents should be seen and utilized as partners, change agents, and, most importantly, as experts.

What does it look like to utilize parents and communities in this way to build community schools?

Its looks revolutionary. To create partnership, there must be an acknowledgement of a relationship of equal power. Partners may not bring the same things to the table, but they both bring something that is critical and needed.

Parent and community leadership is key in making community schools successful. Parents and community leaders will often be connected to a school longer than their principal, so it is important that they are brought into the decision-making processes and are

> " Parents and community leaders will often be connected to a school longer than their principal, so it is important that they are brought into the decision-making processes. "

engaged from beginning to end. Parents also bring critical information and resources to the table that are often overlooked because administrators have a lack of knowledge about the neighborhood. CEJ's plan for transformative parent engagement offers a way for parents and communities to become strong and valuable partners in their neighborhood schools.

Q **What role can labor unions play in driving the community school agenda?**

A *Shital Shah*: Leadership is one important role. Researcher Anthony Bryk and his colleagues (2010), from the University of Chicago, identified school leadership as one of five essential supports for successful school transformation. Across the country, in places that have expanded and sustained community schools, school- and systems-level leadership have played a major role – for example, in Multnomah County, Oregon; Evansville, Indiana; and Cincinnati, Ohio. I would argue that union leadership also matters, including representatives of both teachers and school staff. When unions partner with community organizations, they are able to more effectively push forth a common vision for public education. By their very nature, they have the organizational infrastructure

to organize and mobilize. The question then becomes: What can our role be, as implementation of this strategy may not be our purview?

Some examples of leadership roles that labor and community organizing groups can play are:

- *Help create state and local coalitions that can push for policy change to support and fund community schools.* This is taking place in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York City. For example, the Connecticut Federation of Teachers was the driver in pulling together a coalition of the state affiliates of the NAACP, Connecticut Education Association, and University of Connecticut, and others that pushed through supportive policy. There is also a statewide effort through the CommPACT Community Schools Collaborative (commpact.uconn.edu).

- *Get community schools on political platforms.* The United Federation of Teachers collaborated with community organizations (e.g., Natasha's organization, NYCCEJ) across New York City, including community school practitioners such as the Children's Aid Society, to make sure that all 2013 mayoral candidates included expansion of the community school strategy in their platforms (see sidebar on PS 2013 on page 28). As a result, after he was elected, Mayor Bill de Blasio made a commitment to invest $52 million to create more community schools.

- *Build awareness around strategy in their communities.* Education on what the community schools strategy is, how various stakeholders can be involved, and what the eventual outcomes can be is critical to ensure that union members, community members, parents, students, and others are part of the conversation and visioning and have a voice and decision-making power at the school-leadership and systems-level tables. This piece often gets overlooked. We must also consider the implementation that will come after the organizing stage and how our roles will evolve. Baltimore Teachers Union is a great example of where this is taking place. In partnership with their Education Roundtable, they are holding trainings at schools, inviting community members and parents to learn more about community schools.

- *Use this strategy as common ground for labor-management relationships.* Conversations with the school districts around this need to take place, even in the instances where strong relationships don't exist. Ultimately, having labor, community, and management working together on this strategy will be a key factor in its sustainability. A great example of this comes from Cincinnati, where work has been taking place for over ten years. The superintendent is working with the Community Learning Center Institute[9] and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers.[10]

Teachers unions also have a major role to play in strengthening academics. Data show that community schools better support a strong, academic curriculum. That's another piece that AFT contributes in the community schools work. We want teachers in classrooms who can improve the academic trajectory of our children. Instruction is the key piece in how educators (including school staff, not just teachers) engage community partners to augment instruction.

The immediate notion of community partners is that they provide social services to students and families. That is true, but community schools are

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9 See clcinstitute.org.
10 See cft-aft.org.

more than just wraparound services. They also focus on strengthening academic instruction, through project-based learning, service learning, etc. Across the country teachers are working with community partners to provide engaging instruction that connects to the real world and isn't only relegated to the afterschool realm.

For example, in Cincinnati, Ms. Crawford at Roberts Academy has been partnering with the local fire department to provide mentors to her science and math class. Students spend the entire school year with a mentor, working on math and science tasks, as well as going on field trips. She works with her contact at the fire department to make sure that they are integrated into her instruction when they visit the classroom every month. Another example comes from Boston, where a second-grade science teacher has a partnership with a local garden nonprofit. The partner comes into the classroom to share the lessons with the teachers, working with the students on projects in the school's greenhouse. One of the United Federation of Teachers' Community Learning Schools, PS 30, partners with BookPALS's performing artists to do theatrical readings of teacher-recommended books that coincide with units of study.

Q **How do labor and community and parents work together and create successes?**

A *Shital Shah***:** Public education is not a business or a transaction. To rebuild, strengthen, and/or create relationships, there must be trust. The people in our schools and communities come with different assets and needs – the only way to provide access to opportunity for all is to collectively come up with solutions that go beyond our own organizational self-interests. Effective community schools make decisions by consulting with all stakeholders, including school staff and community partners.

One challenge many community schools face is lack of teacher and school staff engagement in the actual visioning and implementation of the community school strategy. Inside the school building, they are the ones who know their students best, so their input on the local site decision-making team (local governing team, etc.) is invaluable.

While it is obvious that labor and community organizations need to work together around the community school agenda, in places where community schools already exist they must also bring in the community school practitioners, who are responsible for working at the school with administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community partners. Their practice must inform local, state, and federal advocacy efforts. If we do not include them, there is a likelihood that our visions will diverge, rather than converge.

The more allies we have in this push, the stronger the movement and the more likely we are to secure the sustainable resources that our schools need. The Coalition for Community Schools did a scan of the community school field and identified the key players that need to be at a systems-level table, in their *Collaborative Leadership Framework*.[11] This collaborative leadership is what will eventually facilitate the sustainability of the strategy.

Natasha Capers: Collaboration is hard work. It means learning to work *with* and not *for*. It means respecting other points of view and always searching for common ground. But it also means respecting the knowledge that everyone brings to the table.

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11 See bit.ly/1uFbmKc.

Parents don't always come to the table with the same set of skills as teachers, administrators or CBO partners. But parents do bring a powerful set of expertise: their children attend the schools, and they live in the communities. They understand education problems because they see them daily, not just in a study or book. It is imperative that the decision-makers stop looking down at or doubting what we have to offer as parents. Often trust is broken when parents' unique expertise is ignored.

Q How do you sustain labor and community/parent engagement in community schools?

A *Shital Shah:* Community schools aren't a one-time program; they're a paradigm shift in how we think about schools. Schools need to grow and develop in ways that mitigate a variety of out-of-school factors by partnering with the appropriate local resources.

You might be wondering, *so how does this happen*? A big piece of this is trust and relationships – not just between community partners and teachers unions, but also between unions and school and district administrators. Often, despite differences on traditional labor-management issues, labor and management have come together around the community school strategy – for example, St. Louis, Kansas City (Missouri), Baltimore, and Evansville (Indiana). Unions and administrators both see how supporting the whole child can lead to better academic achievement and, eventually, stronger communities. It's a win-win. Coming together around this strategy can lead to a stronger relationship and trust when it comes to the other issues.

Another key sustainability piece, from the union perspective, is member education. Often we have local union leadership understanding and buying

into the community school strategy as a solution to supporting our children and families, but that message needs to be shared with teachers. Teachers, school staff, and nurses are our boots on the ground. Once they are educated about community schools, they are our ambassadors. They can share stories about how this is supporting their work and improving the teaching and learning environment and help push for more quality community schools. For example, the Baltimore Teachers Union has held several trainings with the schools' union representatives so that they can share with teachers what their role can be.

Finally, funding is a barrier to sustainability in many places, especially when there is not ownership around the common vision. The burden of funding does not lie solely on school districts and other public entities – the nonprofit community, the higher education community, and others must also come to the table. While we do want public funding (local, state, and federal) to be dedicated to helping implement the community school strategy, we must see it as a strategy of public *and* private partnerships. Where this work is being sustained – for example, in Multnomah County, Oregon – county, district, and private funding are all pooling together to support community schools. Of the SUN Community Schools' 2014-2015 cash operating budget of $8 million, around $4.9 million came from Multnomah County, $1.6 million from the City of Portland, $250,000 from the Portland Children's Levy, $210,000 from federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, and $1.1 million from seven school districts. In addition to this core funding, match/ partners services cash and in-kind contributions are expected to reach at least their 2012 levels of $10 million and $7 million, respectively, and the SUN Service System is likely to contribute at least $30 million cash

in additional aligned services (anti-poverty, early childhood, health, etc.).[12]

Natasha Capers: Building the capacity of parents is important. We have what we call Parent Power School (PPS).[13] It is designed to educate parents on an educational topic like community schools and teach a skill like how to lobby elected officials. We have held five of them this year with sixty to eighty parents from across the city. One element we explored in our Community Schools PPS is, what are some of the differences between traditional schools and community schools? We also have deeply explored the difference between traditional parent engagement and transformative parent engagement. We have also held a "train the trainer event" because so many parents wanted a more in-depth training on how to communicate the vision of community schools with multiple stakeholders.

Another important thing is to recognize that this is a long-term commitment. Something stuck with me that one of the planners for a conference on community engagement in Chicago said in a recent conference call: It can't be a year-to-year plan – you have to make a ten-year plan. How do you get people to commit to that?

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12 Source: SUN Service System & Community Schools.
13 For information, photos, and more on Parent Power Schools, see nyccej.org/category/resources.

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The Promise Neighborhoods Movement: Creating Communities of Opportunity from Cradle to Career

MICHAEL MCAFEE AND MAURICIO TORRE

The Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood illustrates how setting clear goals for collective impact and making sure local efforts get needed support can result in sustainable systemic change in low-income communities.

Seven miles from the Mexican border in the city of Chula Vista, California, seventeen-year-old Andrea[1] was close to her college dream, but reality was getting in the way. She had followed a perfect plan: good

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1 "Andrea" is a pseudonym.

grades, extracurricular activities, and even a part-time job. She had been a model student and good daughter. But even though she had already received two college acceptances, she was having second thoughts. Leaving home would mean leaving her mom and four sisters without her part-time earnings. The family relied on it. Leaving home would mean breaking tradition and breaking up the family.

Feeling like she had to choose between family and future, Andrea turned for support to Chula Vista Promise

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Neighborhood (CVPromise) on her school campus. The CVPromise team understood her struggles. Many of them had gone through similar experiences with their own families. The CVPromise team met with the entire family to create a plan for this college journey, not just for the student but for the family as well. Part of the journey was learning together about the value and benefit of higher education and another was dealing with the reality of economics. The CVPromise team linked mom to additional resources and employment opportunities, bringing new hope to a stressful situation.

CVPromise supports have since become a regular part of Andrea's senior life and an integral part of her siblings' academic experience as well. Andrea's younger siblings have a plan now as well. Not only do they join their sister at various college-related events, but they also now *all* are planning their college journeys – even the youngest child in the third grade.

This story is a common one. Beyond academic scores are the realities families are facing and the responsibilities students carry. Economics and culture play an integral part in our students' lives and in their choice to pursue higher education. It is important for systems, programs, and services to be aligned so that the needs of the family as a whole are taken into account. Neither educators nor community-based organizations can do this on their own. It takes the whole community to build the supports necessary to strengthen all families as key partners who not only understand how to help their children thrive, but also have the resources to do so.

In just a short year and a half, the CVPromise team has seen the impact not only on families, schools, and community – but in academic outcomes as well. As of 2013, English

language arts proficiency among fifth-graders more than doubled in a year, from 15.6 percent to 32.5 percent, and math scores increased dramatically, from 3.1 percent proficient to 33 percent of students at or above grade level. Results like this are being achieved across the board at Castle Park Middle School and at the four other schools in the Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood. And across the country, other communities are also transforming and getting results. Just a year or two into implementation, Promise Neighborhoods from Buffalo to Minneapolis to Los Angeles are changing the lives of young people and their families, including improvements in academic proficiency, attendance, high school graduation rates, college enrollment, and other performance indicators.

The federal Promise Neighborhoods program[2] brings together community partners to provide children and families with comprehensive, coordinated support to improve results and reverse the cycle of generational poverty. Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone,[3] Promise Neighborhoods create communities of opportunity, centered around strong schools, that allow children to learn, grow, and succeed. Rather than impose yet another program on low-income communities, the Promise Neighborhoods approach aims to amplify and accelerate local efforts in order to achieve *collective impact* at a systems level and at the scale needed to change the odds for a significant number of our nation's 14.7 million children living in poverty (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor 2014). Inspired by the successful model of the Harlem Children's Zone, the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink (PNI) supports Promise Neighborhoods – communities

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2 See www2.ed.gov/programs/
   promiseneighborhoods/index.html.
3 See hcz.org.

of opportunity centered around strong schools – to wrap children in education, health, and social supports from cradle to college to career. By effectively coordinating the efforts of schools, families, social services, health centers, and community-building programs, all children can fulfill their promise. South Bay Community Services (SBCS) is a multi-service agency in San Diego County that coordinates CVPromise. (See sidebar for more on PNI and SBCS.)

The collective impact framework that guides this work goes beyond the traditional idea of collaboration. Using this approach, a cross-sector group of stakeholders sets aside their individual agendas and strongly commits – in action as well as words – to a common agenda to solve a specific social problem. They agree to use common measurements, align their activities, communicate continuously, and create a backbone organization to coordinate and facilitate these processes (Kania & Kramer 2011). The collective impact approach is tough work. It means that every single partner must own the same results and indicators, whether the partner is a funder, business leader, school district, police department, or intermediary organization like PNI. Instead of competing for resources, and continuing to do business as usual, organizations align their work around particular results to achieve transformative systems change.

Promise Neighborhoods aim to bring consistent, intensive focus to children at every step of their lives, from cradle through college to career, by changing the way families and leaders from education, government, social services, philanthropy, business, and faith community work together. The program's hallmarks are cross-sector partnerships, a seamless continuum of solutions, a common set of ten academic and community results that make the biggest difference for

low-income children with fifteen associated indicators,[4] and shared accountability for results, using real-time data for continuous improvement and rapid response when interventions fall short.

In this article, the authors reflect on the successes and challenges of the Promise Neighborhoods movement as it works toward education equity, and on what it takes to effect large-scale, sustainable change for low-income communities and communities of color.

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4 See Federal Register, gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-04-20/pdf/2012-9597.pdf, p23,679. For more in-depth explanation of the fifteen indicators see: Urban Institute's Guidance document, www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/pndataguidance.pdf.

ABOUT PNI AND CVPROMISE

PNI, an independent nonprofit organization, helps more than sixty communities in the United States and abroad plan and implement Promise Neighborhoods. PNI provides communities with a system of support that aims to:

- Accelerate local leaders' ability to achieve results by providing wide-ranging assistance, including Results-Based Accountability training (Friedman 2005), supporting a community of practice, providing data infrastructure, and leadership development.

- Build evidence of the effectiveness of cradle-to-career strategies through research, data analysis, evaluation, and communication outreach.

- Advocate for policies that support the scaling up and sustainability of Promise Neighborhoods.

promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org

The Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood (CVPromise), in San Diego County, targets a 33-square-block neighborhood of nearly 7,000 residents, mostly Latino, where 67 percent of adults have not graduated from high school, 50 percent

of families are underemployed, and 27 percent of children live in poverty. With $57.8 million over five years from the federal government and a local match, the initiative involves twenty-eight partners, including K–12 schools, colleges, nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, health centers, and business.

cvpromise.org

South Bay Community Services (SBCS) is one of the largest multi-social service agencies in San Diego County, providing a comprehensive range of services and programs for children, youth, and families in San Diego County's southern region. SBCS coordinates CVPromise, bringing together a collaboration of partners focused on family, education, health, and community to provide children in Castle Park neighborhood with the kind of opportunities they need for success in school, college, career, and life.

southbaycommunityservices.org

Q **What is the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, and how does it differ from other federal and local programs to help advance education equity and build strong communities?**

A *Michael McAfee:* The federal government has applied lessons learned from past anti-poverty efforts in designing a program that catalyzes communities to organize themselves in new ways to achieve ten desired results, with fifteen associated indicators,[5] for low-income children and children of color. PNI supports the execution of this vision by grounding sites in a disciplined approach to doing their own, local work.

First, we believe that Promise Neighborhoods need a results framework that will guide their work on the ground. Second and equally important, the voice, wisdom, and experience

of community leaders must guide the work. For example, community leaders are clear that federal funding must be flexible and substantial. Promise Neighborhoods must provide the kind of funding that allows communities to capitalize the initial building of a cradle-to-career continuum of solutions. The Promise Neighborhoods initiative gives leaders the opportunity to serve an entire neighborhood comprehensively at scale, creating a pipeline of solutions, engaging community residents in this work, being very clear about how we will evaluate our results, and then creating a strong culture of accountability that allows us to move forward based on those results. These kinds of investments surround and support schools, making equity reachable.

Mauricio Torre: The results-based focus, the systems for accountability, the level of support and training, the flexible funding – I have never before seen these things at this scale. We are pleased to see the federal government trusting that at the local level, we understand our community and have the ability, knowledge, and discipline to design a project that is responsive to the needs of our children and families. Within our community, we're learning a more focused, disciplined way to work in strong partnerships and align resources.

Michael McAfee: Every Promise Neighborhood looks different, depending on the geography, the political landscape, and the nonprofit environment. But some elements are consistent. Leaders like Mauricio are reigniting conversations among people who are responsible for ensuring that children succeed at every developmental stage and leading the community to build a cradle-to-career system of supports that includes the appropriate mix of solutions, involving families, programs, policies, and/or systems.

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5 For a full listing of the indicators and results, see Comey 2013.

Promise Neighborhoods is not just about effectively managing the federal program. It's also about using the resources of the federal program to transcend siloed and one-off responses to complex problems. It's about achieving collective impact – or in the Results-Based Accountability language, population-level results. Federal Promise Neighborhoods funding is a catalyzing agent. For example, the Hayward Unified School District is now sharing their data with the Hayward Promise Neighborhood to ensure that each student is connected to the right resources and that a common case management system can hold data about those students.

The Promise Neighborhoods framework suggests a twenty-plus-year journey to improve the educational and developmental results for poor children. The federal funds are seeding the first five years of this journey. Consequently, we don't believe that a Promise Neighborhood should wash over all the good work going on in the community. Rather, it should be an opportunity to scale local leaders' proven contributions to achieving population-level results.

For example, a Promise Neighborhood should not necessarily come in and start its own program just because it has federal money and can do that. It should work with folks who are ready to co-invest in that result. Some Promise Neighborhoods – for instance in Hayward, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Buffalo, New York – use their resources to invest in existing community schools models (Potapchuk 2013). In Los Angeles, the full-service community schools model laid the groundwork for a robust expansion of the work already under way. In San Antonio, parent centers located in schools are a key component of the community engagement strategy under way and of resources provided by the Promise Neighborhood. San Antonio

has also passed a sales tax to fund pre-K in the city and has aligned it with their local Promise early learning network, connecting public financing, quality, and access to the Promise Neighborhoods strategy.[6]

Q **What are the main challenges of cross-sector partnerships and collective impact?**

A *Mauricio Torre*: We have many complex adaptive systems at play in every community, and we need to align them. In Chula Vista, our partners include health and human service agencies, business, community-based organizations, schools, educators, government, funders, and more. To paraphrase the Theory of Aligned Contributions (Pillsbury, n.d.), population-level change is most likely to occur if key multi-sector, cross-agency leaders not only respond to a call to action, but also take the aligned actions at scope and scale toward a result. Getting people to move from talk to action is difficult; moving into systems alignment is our greatest challenge. When properly done, it is a game-changer, and amazing results follow.

This was evident during the 2014 summer bridge programming. In 2014, Castle Park Elementary (CPE) went through extensive renovation that closed the school during the summer (all schools within CVPromise are year-round). This presented concerns about student mobility and loss of academic gains. CVPromise was aware, based on the neighborhood survey, that there are many families who rely on the year-round schedule to manage a working schedule and would consider moving their children to other schools outside the catchment area. In response to this issue, CPE, Chula Vista Elementary School District, Sweetwater Union High School District, Castle Park

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6 See policylink.org/sites/default/files/americas-tomorrow-march132013.pdf.

Middle School, Manpower, and Barrio Logan College Institute came together to create comprehensive summer learning opportunities for our most vulnerable children and parents at Castle Park Elementary. The following are examples of the contributions that were provided by each partner in this venture:

- CPE provided data that helped prioritize need, technological equipment, and technical assistance.

- Chula Vista Elementary School District provided access to transportation resources for field trips.

- Castle Park Middle School provided their campus as the venue to host summer programming for elementary students, on-site support, and technical assistance.

- Sweetwater Union High School District provided access to technological infrastructure to run academic software at Castle Park Middle School for elementary school students.

- Barrio Logan College Institute provided tutors and funding to support summer programming.

The manner in which all partners came together to address this need was truly remarkable. Such a venture highlighted how much impact a partnership can have when there is a call to action and systems align for common results. In this case, partners aligned under a vision of maintaining the number of elementary students within our neighborhood, supporting financial needs for families, and supporting academic proficiency among elementary school students.

The result of this venture was that CPE students remained within the catchment area, students participated in academic enrichment programs, and CPE students had a learning experience at the school where they will transition into middle school. CVPromise is currently tracking the academic impact for these students. Among the most valuable outcomes was seeing how children enjoyed this learning experience. Students were exposed to academic, recreational, leadership (evident when students decided to write to school administration about their thoughts and needs), and cultural experiences that would otherwise not be available to them due to their economic limitations.

Q **How does the Promise Neighborhoods initiative support the capacity building and infrastructure development needed to achieve collective impact?**

A *Michael McAfee:* It is one thing to talk about capacity building and the use of infrastructure, and it's another to recognize that we've never really paid for it to be built. This is a huge organizational burden that we put on nonprofit leaders. Most organizations do not have excess resources and capacity to build the infrastructure necessary to serve a community's effort to achieve population-level results. In the intermediary space that we occupy at PNI, we've been able to build infrastructure that helps the Promise Neighborhoods communities do the work.

For example, we invested in a national case management system, a data dashboard for the network, and the seamless integration of these systems. These investments save our network of sixty-one communities more than $2.5 million a year. Sites did not have to buy systems individually. And they were able to ramp up in six months to take advantage of the system, instead of spending three years building their own system. This eliminates the technical challenge of selecting the right tools and allows communities to focus on the critical and adaptive work of execution. It is a perfect example of how we should behave: with vision, courage, and discipline.

Mauricio Torre: The longitudinal case management system that PNI offered to us allows us to see in real time everyone who is receiving services, and we have been able to do that since we began our Promise Neighborhoods work. We now track attendance, behavior, academics, and any other contact with support services by a student or the family. We track interventions and identify patterns. We keep our eye on the data so we can make immediate changes and adjustments. This is such a powerful tool that we're using it not only for the Promise Neighborhoods work, but also for our organization as a whole. Now several large nonprofit organizations in San Diego County are going to use the system as well. Having such a system in place builds capacity for an entire community. We're only going to get transformative results when we know what's happening with our community.

Q **Describe results in Chula Vista and nationally.**

A *Mauricio Torre:* We're pretty proud of the progress we've shown. Here are just a few examples.

- Third-grade students:
  - Reading at or above grade level: in one year and six months we moved the baseline from 47 percent to 48 percent
  - Writing at or above grade level: from 3 percent to 22 percent
  - Mathematics: from 6.5 percent proficient to 37 percent

- Fourth-grade students:
  - Mathematics at or above grade level: from 9.8 percent to 15.7 percent
  - Reading at or above grade level: from 20 percent to 28 percent

- Fifth-grade students:
  - Reading at or above grade level: from 19 percent to 40 percent
  - Writing at or above grade level: from 13 percent to 25 percent
  - Mathematics at or above grade level: from 3 percent to 33 percent

- Sixth-grade chronic absenteeism declined from 11 percent to 3.4 percent.

- Parents who report that they read to their children (birth to kindergarten) three or more times a week: 53.5 percent at baseline; increased to 67.8 percent.

- Parent involvement in the school community: 19 parents volunteered regularly throughout the planning year of 2012. During our first year of implementation (January 1 – December 31, 2013), CVPromise increased these numbers to 350 regular parent volunteers with a presence at all five school sites, providing over 3,500 total volunteer hours throughout our community.

CVPromise has worked extensively to build accountability with partners to achieve collective impact. Although South Bay Community Services (SBCS) has worked closely with various organizations and has established partnerships that go back many years, it has not been until now that there's been a deeper investment in how we measure our impact. The most prominent example of this has been the data-sharing agreement with the school districts. The journey in achieving these agreements was not easy. As partners, we navigated through technical and political challenges around the disclosure of data.

Even after the data-sharing agreements have been signed, our partnership continues to work through challenges. Building our collective vision of what change looks like has been what has driven this effort forward. The construction of this vision has been perhaps the most significant effort in the way we've changed how we work together. It's taken us into a continuously evolving culture where we see

data as a top priority and has forced our partnership to infuse data conversations in the process of program development. Even further, it has taken conversations to deeper dialogue about what is the true impact we want to achieve. For example, previous programmatic efforts were focused on how many individuals we wanted to serve; whereas now, we are questioning why we want to serve a specific number and if such a goal will truly make population-level change.

Michael McAfee: What happens in Chula Vista is happening around the nation. The Promise Neighborhoods communities across the country are beginning to quantify and qualify the steady march of progress. In Buffalo, the mobility rate is going down, meaning that children are staying in the same school so they can receive the interventions they need.[7] Minneapolis is reversing what is referred to as the *summer slide* — children are maintaining academic proficiency throughout the summer.[8] In Los Angeles, Academic Performance Index (API) scores are going up.[9] A focus on results, coupled with disciplined execution, is resulting in a steady, incremental improvement in academic performance.

Q **How can educators and service providers outside Promise Neighborhoods apply best practices in their communities?**

A *Michael McAfee:* Infrastructure matters, and all partners must own the same results and indicators. Part of co-investment in common results is connecting to families and making sure they own a contribution

just like everyone else. You don't hold meetings without them. We have to abandon the idea that we have all the answers and truly partner with the men, women, and children we are privileged to serve.

Right off the bat, leaders must answer the following questions:

- What is the toughest work that must be done to get results at a scale commensurate with the problem?

- If you commit to using an evidence-based approach like Results-Based Accountability for moving from talk to action, what early results do you anticipate from leading multi-sector stakeholders through the process of answering questions about population and performance accountability and obtaining their commitment to contribute to solutions?

- What do you envision to be the key components of your cradle-to-career continuum of solutions?

- Who are the key partners at each developmental stage of your continuum?

- What are each partners' results, indicators, targets, and performance measures?

- How will you use data to ensure that your cradle-to-career continuum of solutions includes the appropriate mix of families, programs, systems, and policies?

- How is the capital of multi-sector stakeholders being aligned to sustain your continuum of solutions?

- To sustain achieving population-level results, what type of organization, infrastructure, and systems are being built by the backbone organization?

While you may not have a federal Promise Neighborhoods grant, millions of dollars come into communities every year through federal and state grants

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7 Source for the mobility trend information: Buffalo Public Schools.
8 See northsideachievement.org/wp-content/uploads/NEWS-RELEASE-NAZ-TFA-U-of-M-Partnership-1.pdf.
9 See ypiusa.org/dramatic-api-gains-for-ypi-and-los-angeles-promise-neighborhood-schools.

that are passed through directly to cities and counties; there are also private foundations that support this work. Although additional financial support is needed, we can and must commit to use our existing resources in more creative ways to achieve population-level results for our most vulnerable children and families.

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How Citizen Schools Support Teachers for Expanded Learning Time

Eric Schwarz

At Citizen Schools, a second shift of educators makes teachers more effective and happier, while also improving the outcomes of its students.

Of all the questions I get about Citizen Schools, perhaps the most frequent is: "Do the teachers like you?" Many questioners seem conditioned to expect the worst of public school teachers and assume that a second shift of educators, offering different approaches and taking less or no pay, will inspire resentment from the full-time teachers who lead classes for a majority of the day.

Generally, however, America's teachers have embraced Citizen Schools and embraced an expanded learning day and citizen power in their schools. While a few teachers may react defensively and hide behind the closed door of their classroom, the best teachers welcome any help they can get. Teacher unions such as the American Federation of Teachers (Weingarten 2011) and the Boston Teacher's Union (2011) have also generally embraced Citizen Schools.

Eric Schwarz is the founding CEO of Citizen Schools.

> By exposing students to exciting real-world projects, Citizen Schools helps make traditional school subjects become more relevant and enticing.

THE SECOND SHIFT

Adding a second shift of educators in schools could fundamentally change the teacher's job for the better, making it more sustainable and enjoyable while bringing more resources to kids and engaging families more deeply in their child's education. Suburban teachers often get this support from active families and well-organized extended-day programs. But most teachers in high-poverty schools feel overworked, undersupported, and unsuccessful. As a result, many of them leave teaching too soon, creating a higher-than-necessary teacher churn and more challenges for students (Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff 2013).

At the Isaac Newton School in East Harlem, New York, sixth-grade teacher David McKinney can teach his math class every morning knowing that every student in his class has done their homework from the previous day, because every student participates in the extended day with Citizen Schools and gets an hour of supported homework time from a second-shift teacher while still at school. Imagine this difference alone: Before Expanded Learning Time (ELT) maybe half of your students completed their homework, since many had no structured time and place to complete it. Now all of your students, or almost all of them, complete it. Imagine how that changes your job as a teacher.

Increasingly, Citizen Schools ELT schools include a thirty- to sixty-minute block where first-shift and second-shift teachers lead a class together. At Elmhurst Community Prep in Oakland, which in 2012-2013 had the most student learning growth of any middle school in the city, the teachers and teaching fellows co-teach an advisory block focused on goal-setting and on increasing students' ownership for their own success. Most days each adult in the room takes an advisory group of ten to twelve students, allowing students and adults alike to build meaningful relationships and trust, a sort of school-based social capital that often helps students advance. When students get better at asking for help, at speaking up when they don't understand something, and at holding give-and-take conversations with adults and peers, they are better positioned to move forward academically, socially, and professionally.

Allowing teachers time for pull-out tutoring, giving students extra academic practice time, and engaging parents in their child's learning are all important ways that Citizen Schools supports teachers. But the most important way we support teachers is by motivating students to try harder in school. By exposing students to exciting real-world projects, Citizen Schools helps make traditional school subjects become more relevant and enticing. All of a sudden a topic sentence becomes a key skill to win a mock trial, not just another academic standard on a long list that needs to be mastered. A student becomes motivated to learn the Pythagorean theorem because it helps unlock the secret of programming a video game.

Citizen Schools also supports teachers by allowing them to be mentors and master educators. With a second shift of eager young educators on the scene, experienced full-time teachers can not only *get* help in the classroom, but can give help by mentoring the young teaching fellows sourced by Citizen Schools.

We had a teacher who taught English and who was really skilled at ELL (English language learner) instruction techniques. She was often in the classroom when we were teaching, and she ended up working with our Academic Program Lead to help her rewrite some of the lessons to better align with where she saw gaps in student learning and with how she taught in her class. We rearranged our staffing so that our three teaching fellows who worked most often with ELL students could observe her teaching. It was great, because it showed students that we were all colleagues and that the teachers and Citizen Schools staff were in it together. It was great for the teacher to see the planning that went into our programming and to have input into our instruction. And of course it was fabulous for our staff to have great techniques modeled by a pro.

— Kendra Engels, former Campus Director at the De Vargas Middle School in Santa Fe, New Mexico

ELT also provides teachers with a pathway to leadership, often a tough road in schools where the typical management structure for a school of 600 students is one principal, one assistant principal, a director of instruction or dean of discipline, a secretary, and fifty teachers. In the second and third years of ELT at her school in Redwood City, California, Sara Sheckel actually split her time between the school, where she taught two instead of four classes, and Citizen Schools, where she served as the part-time instructional

coach, providing feedback and professional development to the first- and second-year educators in the teaching fellowship. The experience allowed her to continue adding value as a teacher while building management skills, ultimately leading to Sheckel's appointment for the 2013-2014 year as assistant principal of the Roy Cloud K–8 school in another part of Redwood City.

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

In many ways, the job of teacher as currently constructed is an outmoded relic of an industrial age. The teacher works mostly alone, putting equal attention into tasks he or she is great at and ones he or she struggles with. The job in year one is similar to the job in year ten or year forty. Just as students are treated too much like widgets in a factory, receiving the same dosage of multiplication tables and the same serving of Mendel's peas, regardless of their understanding and interest, teachers are asked to teach the same topics and in basically the same way regardless of their skill and experience and the needs of their students. It's as if students came into a hospital and received the same medicine and the same fifty-minute examinations from doctors and nurses who followed the same script regardless of the ailment and regardless of the particular specialty and previous training of the medical professionals.

The United States has roughly 5 million medical professionals but only 624,000 doctors who care for patients (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality 2010). At its best, the medical system leverages each of those 5 million professionals to do what they can uniquely do best, with the role of an intake nurse different from that of a nurse practitioner, and different still from the X-ray technician, the medical

resident, and the attending physician. Surely education could learn something from this differentiated approach.

Right now there are approximately 3.5 million full-time teachers employed to teach about 50 million U.S. students enrolled in about 100,000 K–12 schools (Hess 2010). There are another 2.5 million public school employees, ranging from special education paraprofessionals, to lunch monitors, librarians, secretaries, principals, custodians, and administrators. Whereas in the 1950s the ratio was one teacher for every twenty-eight students, today, in part due to growing numbers

> A model in which there were varying levels of teachers in a school would support educators at every level of experience, increase efficiency, and allow for more differentiation of student learning.

of special-education students, it is one to fifteen, and in urban districts it's one teacher for every twelve students (Scafidi 2012).

The sheer volume of teachers creates real problems for professionalization of the craft, as Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, among others, have described. Even with modest rates of turnover, schools across the nation need to hire 280,000 new teachers per year, many more than the 120,000 full-time registered nurses hired each year, or the 26,000 new lawyers (Rampell 2011). As Hess (2009) notes, hiring 280,000 excellent teachers every year when there are only 1.5 million

college graduates per year – and just 500,000 from competitive colleges – is an impossible task. A lot of people coming out of college don't want to be teachers, and yet we are trying to recruit almost one in five recent college graduates year after year. Imagine if we had slightly fewer teachers and paid them better and supported them with hundreds of thousands of teaching fellows, many of them training to become teachers but others taking a year or two to contribute to a local school before going on to careers in business or science or the arts. Most teaching fellows would be right out of college, but some might be older professionals transitioning to a new career in education.[1] This more flexible talent model would provide more continuity with better-supported master teachers staying longer, while also infusing schools with fresh energy and additional talented and caring adults.

A model in which there were varying levels of teachers in a school would support educators at every level of experience, increase efficiency, and allow for more differentiation of student learning. Master teachers who had demonstrated excellent teaching over a sustained period of time could earn 50 percent more than typical teachers today and could teach one or two fewer classes per semester so they had time to coach their younger peers. Core teachers might have a similar teaching load to teachers today but would receive help from a teaching fellow, offloading work such as grading of homework and tests, supervising student practice sessions, and manage-ment of field trips. This would allow core teachers to put more time into the development of great lesson plans.

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[1] For more information on these types of programs see: EnCorps (encorpsteachers.com) and Encore Fellowships (encore.org/fellowships).

Teaching fellows and volunteer citizen teachers could support the master and core teachers while also extending the learning day, providing more time for academic practice, more time for personalized learning (through online programs such as Khan Academy or software-based learning), and significantly more time for students to make and do things with real professionals. Together, this American Dream team of talented educators could build academic and social skills while also helping students discover the real-world applications of school-based knowledge.

> I was ready for a change and I was looking for leadership opportunities beyond the classroom. Also, I personally wasn't able to sustain the intensity at which I was working for that number of hours in a day. Since I was coming to Orchard Gardens at the start of the turnaround, the work was still intense and I was working just as hard that first year, but the difference was that the work with students ran until about 2:20 and then Citizen Schools took over and I could use that afternoon time to work with my colleagues. [Having a high-quality partner extend the day for students while teachers prepare the next day's lesson with colleagues] means that we have more time to create better outcomes for kids and it makes the profession of teaching more sustainable.
>
> — Erin Dukeshire, middle school science teacher at the Orchard Gardens K–8 School in Boston

WHAT THIS APPROACH LOOKS LIKE

In some respects this multitiered approach would look like the Isaac Newton Expanded Learning Time Middle School in East Harlem, which is located in the same building where my mom taught freshman English more than forty years ago. After many years of disappointing performance, Principal Lisa Nelson adopted ELT in 2011-2012 for all of the school's sixth graders and saw proficiency jump by 26 percentage points in math and 17 percentage points in English. Nelson, a veteran administrator, also saw a new spirit in her school. Her teachers and her leadership team felt buoyed by the energy of the Citizen Schools second shift, and she increasingly turned to Citizen Schools campus director Seth Miran as a trusted partner. Her school was infused with artists and engineers and financial professionals. My mom even came back to her old school building and taught an apprenticeship in organic farming and said she learned a few new teaching tricks she wished she'd had decades earlier.

Isaac Newton is now in the process of expanding ELT to all students in sixth through eighth grades. As part of this year's plan, Principal Nelson has asked her Citizen Schools teaching fellows to take the lead on interim assessments, including the administration of "exit tickets," which are two- to three-question assessments to check for understanding at the end of a single lesson. Teaching fellows will score the various interim assessments, load the data onto a spreadsheet, and conduct initial analysis that they can then share with Citizen Schools and school-day colleagues. The core teachers will have more time to focus on instruction and lesson planning and other high-value activities.

LOOKING AHEAD

In many ways American education overall is headed in a positive direction. Despite the challenges our nation's schools face, average college graduation and high school graduation rates are going up, math scores are improving, and we now have hundreds – maybe even thousands – of schools delivering excellent results for low-income students. More outstanding college graduates are choosing to teach. We are moving toward a voluntarily adopted national Common Core curriculum that focuses more on higher-order thinking skills rather than regurgitation of memorized facts. And tests are about to become better, assessing writing and scientific thinking, not just the ability to guess correct answers on a fill-in-the-bubble test. The challenge for America is that while our schools are improving, schools around the world are improving faster. And the challenge for low-income American students is that while they are learning more – and their parents and their teachers are working harder – they are falling relatively further behind, left in the wake of a tsunami of privatized extra learning opportunities that benefit their upper-middle-class peers.

As I look today over a troubled public education landscape – a landscape where innovation and personalized learning is growing rapidly, but so is inequality – I yearn for the chance to rebuild our national sense of shared public purpose. Public schools were intended to knit together a new country, giving children of immigrants and of business owners the same chance at an excellent education. Today public schools and their teachers feel under siege. Some of that is deserved, a consequence of resistance to fair-minded change and higher standards. But surely much of the acrimony is undeserved, driven in part by the lack of connection and therefore lack of empathy between upper- and lower-income parents, between business leaders and teachers, and between all of us as American citizens.

Gandhi said that we must *be* the change we want to see in the world. If we want better public schools, we can't wait for some new curriculum or management plan or market mechanism. We need to roll up our sleeves and make them better. We need to step into schools with minimal judgment and as much curiosity and energy as we can muster. That's how to change the opportunity equation.

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Increasing Time and Enriching Learning for Greater Equity in Schools: Perspective from Two Community Funders

JANET LOPEZ AND PETER RIVERA

More and better learning time funders in Denver and Los Angeles find that strategic investments can leverage community-wide change and lead to more equitable outcomes for young people.

Foundations across the country engage in grantmaking to eliminate the opportunity and achievement gaps in K–12 public schools. Many of the strategies and investments that funders have supported in recent years focus not only on *more time* but also on *better use of time* in schools. This better use of time centers on outcomes for students but also has substantial benefits to educators and staff who work with students.

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52   ANNENBERG INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Improving educational outcomes for youth is nuanced; any efforts to do so involve improving various in-school and out-of-school variables. In this article, two funders, from the California Community Foundation in Los Angeles and the Rose Community Foundation in Denver, share their perspectives on how they support an equity agenda in K–12 public schools in their cities, with an eye to a more and better learning time agenda.

Q Why is time a lever for equity for your foundation?

A *Janet Lopez*: If you were to walk into my office you'd see a life-size portrait that might surprise you. The portrait is World War II General Maurice Rose. Rose Community Foundation was the namesake for the Rose Hospital, the institution whose sale created our community foundation. What you might not gain from this portrait is that the Foundation is driven by Jewish-inspired principles – a commitment to philanthropy, social justice, and non-discrimination. These values shape our program areas, including the education portfolio, which focuses on educator effectiveness and systemic change in K–12 public education to eliminate the achievement gap in Metro Denver's public schools.

In 2013, we began researching and exploring time as a lever for equity within the systemic change priority of our education portfolio. In Colorado, the "Colorado Paradox" – the fact that Colorado has one of the highest number of college degrees per capita, but only one in five Colorado ninth-graders (and even fewer students of color and students in poverty) will earn a college degree – pushes us to continue our work in the area of systemic change and to grow our focus on more and better learning time strategies. Research demonstrates that additional time and better use of that time helps students who have traditionally been under-served by the current education system (Bodilly & Beckett 2005; Del Razo & Renée 2013; Del Razo et al. 2014; Duffett et al. 2004; Farbman & Kaplan 2005; Farbman 2012).

Peter Rivera: In the city of Los Angeles, the estimated median family income is $46,803 – only slightly above the income below which a family of four qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch – compared with the estimated median income in one of Los Angeles's affluent suburbs, La Canada Flintridge, of $148,996.[1] Last July, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a story detailing how students in Beverly Hills, La Canada Flintridge, and Arcadia paid in excess of $700 to take history, Spanish, and creative writing courses during the summer months (Ceasar 2014). In contrast, the majority of students serviced by the Los Angeles Unified School District qualify for free or reduced-price lunches and do not have access to enriching summer school courses; in some instances, they are fortunate to have access to remedial classes. The income disparities in a county as large as Los Angeles directly correlate to the inequity in educational opportunities for students in Los Angeles.

I believe that time is our most valuable and irreplaceable resource. What we choose to do with our time cannot be replaced or taken back. In a community as vast and diverse as Los Angeles County, some of our youth, whether it be once the final school bell rings in the afternoon or during the long summer months, do not have the opportunity to make choices with their time. Providing all students with access to more and better learning time is a need we recognize and a challenge we must embrace if we want to improve educational outcomes for all students.

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1 Free or reduced-price lunch is often used as an indicator of poverty.

Q **How do you begin a relationship or discussion about whether a school, district, or organization's work are a "fit" for the more and better learning time focus at your foundation?**

A *Janet Lopez:* Realistically, the need to support systemic change across Metro Denver far outweighs the resources our foundation has to support the effort. The focus on more and better learning time is one way to prioritize what we invest in regarding systemic change, but even this focus must have narrowed priorities. Colorado's support for public education (per pupil funding) ranks forty-third out of fifty states and the District of Columbia. This means that public schools must operate within the restraints of an education reform system that demands implementation of many important and critical reforms, but does so with limited resources to support those changes. In many cases, a Rose Community Foundation grant will support a school, district, organization, or the state for a year, but these additional dollars will not be permanently infused in the organization's budget. The goals of our grants are to build capacity, cause the "system" to be fundamentally different after the investment, and, as a result, achieve better academic achievement outcomes for students.

The best grant proposals are developed in partnership with the educators and leaders of a school or district community. Recently, I worked on a grant with Grant Beacon Middle School.[2] For the last three years Grant Beacon has added additional time to the school day for academic interventions and enrichment opportunities for its 80 percent free or reduced-price lunch student population. The additional time is a benefit for the students, but also for the teachers, who have

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2 See rcfdenver.org/content/stories-impact-grant-beacon-middle-school-success-story-k-12-school-innovation.

additional planning and collaboration capacity. The extended day also gives teachers the focused time they need for individual student support. Teacher Jacob benEzra says,

> If a student is struggling, we put them in an intervention class where it affords teachers one-on-one time to provide real interventions that are having a noticeable impact.

The results have been impressive. In three years, the school has moved from the district's school performance ranking of "on watch" to "meets expectations," attendance rates rose by 2 percent, and suspensions decreased by 110 percent. Grant Beacon saw proficiency gains and strong growth in all core subject areas in 2013, including a four-percentage-point gain in math.

But the school wants even more for their students, so with our grant dollars they have begun the process of integrating the Colorado Academic Standards into the curriculum of their enrichment activities and integrating the enrichment curriculum (much of which focuses on social and emotional learning components) into their academic content departments. Together, we crafted a grant proposal that focuses on the added capacity we can bring to this particular school and also the added capacity this work can bring and demonstrate as best practice to other schools. This proposal is a stellar example of "fit" for the more and better learning time portfolio on a number of criteria, including input and buy-in from teachers and community, increasing access to and quality of learning, connecting changes in the school to overall academic achievement gains for students, and creating a plan for long-term sustainability, given the limited resources of the public school system.

It is also important to note that the relationship between the grantee and our foundation is not one-sided. Two years ago I approached a local school district, Jeffco Public Schools, which had invested in several teacher-driven design models to support more and better learning time in their schools. The superintendent had invested additional resources at the district level to implement pilots in six schools. My initial reaction was to see whether the schools with high levels of poverty needed additional resources. The superintendent shared that one of the best ways to continue to support these changes at a systemic level was to make sure a valid and reliable evaluation of the programs was conducted. The resources to take this important step were missing.

While it was not the request I anticipated funding, I wanted to listen and be responsive to the district's needs, so instead we supported an evaluation of the pilot programs. And the results a year later unequivocally demonstrated that the Jeffco public schools that were implementing more and better learning time practices not only saw academic achievement gains for their students, but also saw positive outcomes for teacher effectiveness, better use of instructional time, and higher levels of student engagement.[3] The evaluation made a compelling case to continue the practices at the school level and to continue the investment at the district level, and it also serves as a demonstration that these practices work when implemented with fidelity in conversations with other districts.

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3 See rcfdenver.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ELOFinalReport2014.pdf.
4 For more on InnerCity Struggle, see Henry Perez and Perla Madera's article in this issue of *VUE* and innercitystruggle.org.
5 See cocosouthla.org for information on Community Coalition. For a report on Community Coalition's campaign to increase student access to college preparatory coursework, see annenberginstitute.org/pdf/Mott_LA.pdf.

Peter Rivera: Our more and better learning time work has been focused within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). In a system as large and complex as LAUSD – in the 2014-2015 school year LAUSD will have a $12 billion dollar budget – it might appear daunting for philanthropy to enter and create a focus on more and better learning time. But we have been fortunate that the conditions in Los Angeles have allowed us to make a meaningful impact through our investment in this approach. The strong presence of community organizers in the city creates the demand for the needs of our youth to be better serviced by LAUSD. InnerCity Struggle[4] and Community Coalition have advocated for access to college prep curriculum for all students,[5] for school choice, and for the elimination of "willful defiance" as a way to suspend students. Our community organizers have the pulse of their local communities, understand what our communities want in their schools, and mobilize students and parents to advocate for these changes. Any conversation about school reforms and what can be accomplished in Los Angeles begins with determining with community organizers whether it's a strategy important to communities.

The new school funding formula in California called Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) also presents an opportunity to better service students in Los Angeles. LCFF creates a base level of funding for students across California; additional funding goes to low-income students, English language learners, and foster youth. LCFF has created an equitable funding formula for students across California. Lastly, LCFF increases local school districts' ability to make funding allocations based on local needs. In theory, LCFF is an opportunity to allocate more resources to our neediest students and push these resources and

decisions to school sites. LCFF presents an equity opportunity for all students in California, and now is the appropriate time to take advantage of this opportunity and create systems to create equitable funding distribution.

In Los Angeles we have looked at two approaches for more and better learning time, Linked Learning[6] and community schools.[7] These two approaches are different from each other, but both offer students expanded learning opportunities. In partnership with the James Irvine Foundation, ConnectEd, and Center for Powerful Public Schools, we have created a comprehensive effort to implement the academic rigors and external learning features of Linked Learning. This summer I had the privilege of visiting the STEM Academy at the Helen Bernstein High School. Incoming freshmen were being exposed to the engineering and biomedical sciences curriculum, incoming juniors and seniors were being trained to mentor the incoming freshmen, and incoming seniors were given an opportunity to intern with Kaiser Permanente (a large California health care provider).

By strategically allocating facility bond dollars we have also expanded the community schools footprint in LAUSD. Community clinics have been brought onto high school campuses across the city. These clinics, along with the coordination of nonprofit partners providing services on these campuses, have allowed us to fully utilize the campuses and extend learning opportunities for youth. Organizations like Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) work intensively to coordinate the

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6 See linkedlearning.org.

7 For more on community schools, see Natasha Capers and Shital Shah's article in this issue of *VUE* and communityschools.org.

8 For more on LAEP's work in Los Angeles, see Henry Perez and Perla Madera's article in this issue of *VUE* and laep.org.

services and programs provided to students. They are also working with teaching staff to integrate learning opportunities for students outside of the traditional school schedule.[8]

In a school system as large and complex as LAUSD it can be easy to focus on the negative press and the challenges with the system. It's easy to overlook that there are extraordinary students, parents, teachers, principals, district administrators, community partners, and business partners working extremely hard together to improve the lives of youth in our city. This hard work is sowing the seeds of what is possible in LAUSD and is changing how the system services youth in our most challenging communities. Improving the lives and outcomes for Los Angeles's most vulnerable and underprivileged population is at the heart of our foundation's mission.

Q **What are the non-negotiable outcomes you need to see in advance of supporting a grant for more and better learning time?**

A *Janet Lopez:* Measuring outcomes in a new area of investment (we've invested in more and better learning time for less than five years) means a balance between asking a partner to share specific outcome goals and accepting a certain level of risk to support promising practices in a new field. At our foundation, the systemic change priority must be linked to eliminating the achievement gap. We look for concrete connections to evidence-based practices that act at a system level to increase academic achievement for students living in poverty and students from communities of color. Our work focuses on schools and districts that serve large numbers of students from ethnically diverse and low-income communities.

We also focus on investments that will be sustainable beyond our investment. We've had to turn down and shy away

from some great ideas to implement more and better learning time in an entire school or district when we realized that the price tag to implement would not be sustainable in the long term. We've been excited when a school or organization like Generation Schools[9] can think differently about the school day and year to improve student academic outcomes, give teachers more time to collaborate, and work within a district-run union contract. We are willing to take some level of risk with these new investments, but if the rationale for supporting academic achievement gains isn't strong, our foundation can't make the investment.

Peter Rivera: At CCF we work within the construct that all reforms must be done *with* a community, not *to* a community. The non-negotiable outcome we need to see in advance of supporting a grant for more and better learning time is true community engagement. Community engagement is the only means with which we can ensure the sustainability of more and better learning time strategies. Leadership at the district and school-site level can frequently change, but where there is true community engagement the strategies to address equity and student outcomes remain consistent. Community and parent engagement should exist before a grant is made and should continue beyond the grant period. Similarly to my colleague at the Rose Foundation, CCF is focused on serving the most vulnerable populations and focused on sustainability. We look for efforts that seek to transform our most chronically underperforming schools, and we look to ensure that sustainability exists beyond the initial grant.

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9   See generationschools.org.
10 See timeforequity.org.

A *Janet Lopez:* From a very basic standpoint, our grantees fill out an outcomes template that looks at outputs, activities, outcomes, and tools to measure those outcomes. This helps us understand the basic deliverables from the investment at an individual grant level. Measuring whether the larger portfolio of work and multiple investments are creating more equity is a much harder nut to crack and an issue that many foundations are wrestling with as they try to measure their larger portfolio of work in the aggregate. Questions we can continue to ask include: How much time does a school or district need to see these changes make a meaningful difference for kids? Have we attended to all parts of the ecosystem that need support for this work to be successful?

At Rose Community Foundation, we've focused on investments in parent and family engagement, teacher engagement, policy-level changes, and promising models and practices. We've relied on partners to invest in research. Promising new tools like the Time for Equity Indicators tools[10] from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform are helping us consider the additional ways in which we can measure whether schools are achieving equity and whether our overall portfolio is making a significant difference.

Peter Rivera: At the very core of my beliefs about how to measure impact is to see if we've changed the trajectory for youth in our community. I had the privilege of working with Superintendent Dr. Carl Cohn in Long Beach and San Diego Unified and once, during a contentious debate over the placement of a truancy center, Dr. Cohn said he wore it as a badge of honor when he influenced saving the life of one

youngster. All too often we get caught up in the metrics of measuring impact, but sometimes we forget that the impact on one youngster can be priceless. With our more and better learning time work we are also using the Annenberg Institute's Time for Equity Indicators tools to measure whether schools are achieving equity and whether our overall portfolio is making a significant difference. While these tools are necessary and important, I will never forget the true measure of our impact can sometimes be unseen or is sometimes told in the priceless trajectory of one youngster.

Q **Is it possible to scale promising practices around more and better learning time and equity?**

A *Janet Lopez:* This question touches on one of the biggest challenges of any education funder's investments in what's working: Is it possible to scale a great school or great organization into an entire district or state-level practice? This requires much larger buy-in from leadership, teachers, and the community or region of the city, or at large scale, an entire school district. It may also require that the whole ecosystem of education stakeholders in a community allocate resources differently. Hard questions like, What does a district need to stop funding in order to start funding more and better learning time? or Does this fit into the larger vision of whole-school redesign? need to be answered.

Leadership in a district must be willing, as a result of seeing positive impact, to make a great practice in one school a part of their larger priorities for district-level improvement. For Rose Community Foundation, similar to our colleagues at the California Community Foundation, when we see the children in low-performing schools making great academic achievement gains and becoming well prepared for college and career, that is the true

litmus test of when we are willing to continue to ask such hard questions and push for the system to adopt what works. This is not only our continued commitment to equity in Metro Denver, but also a larger commitment to addressing a life's work that General Rose reminds me of each day, of our values to make sure that every child succeeds.

Peter Rivera: In California, we are uniquely positioned to scale promising practices that are important to our communities. The premise of LCFF is that funding decisions are pushed down to the local level and should be pushed to school sites. If more and better learning time practices are having an impact and properly addressing the equity issues, they will be scaled, and LCFF provides the avenue to scale these practices.

Our Linked Learning work in Los Angeles provides an example of scaling in a school district. We currently have thirty-seven Linked Learning pathways in schools throughout LAUSD and there is dedicated staff in the central office supporting the implementation of these pathways. Our experience in Los Angeles started organically with a small number of schools and once other schools were interested and wanted to follow suit we saw a need to have central office staff that could support the growing demand. LCFF funded the position, which is now funded by the district. This is how we try to leverage our investment to increase capacity, which can then be sustained by the grantees.

Similarly to my colleague at the Rose Community Foundation I believe these practices require larger community buy-in, which provides the commitment to the practice and the commitment to success. Our work in Los Angeles has been to create evidence that can provide templates for success. We recognize that these are only

templates and there is no cookie-cutter approach to making schools better. If we can lift the elements of success and show what is possible, we create the means for people to scale promising practices.

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