

RECONNECTING SCHOOLS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

An introduction to school-centered
community revitalization

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Enterprise Community Partners is grateful to Capital One for its financial support on the Community Development and Schools Collaborative. Together with Abt Associates, Inc., one of the nation’s premier research and consulting firms, Enterprise has brought together the best community developers currently working on projects linking neighborhood improvement. This will provide an opportunity for leaders of these efforts to learn from each other and see the lessons of their work used to create a national agenda.

This is the first of three reports.

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Introduction

Common sense tells us there is a strong connection between school quality and neighborhood quality. Good schools can attract families to a neighborhood and boost property values, while poorly performing schools can exacerbate the cycle of disinvestment and population loss. But despite the obvious synergies between schools and neighborhoods, educators and community development practitioners often work in isolation from one another. Organizations and individuals involved in neighborhood revitalization efforts tend to see schools as the purview of the school district and beyond their control, while many educators are skeptical of involving community-based organizations and neighborhood residents in the operations of the school. The result is neighborhood strategies that fail to address what is a central concern to all families: the education and well being of their children.

School-centered community revitalization seeks to redress this imbalance by making school improvement a core component of neighborhood revitalization in low-income communities. School-centered community revitalization combines the improvement of at least one elementary school in the neighborhood with housing, health, and economic development strategies that help children succeed in school. The concept does not replace the best practices in community development that have emerged over the past two decades; rather, it simply suggests that neighborhood strategies must be coordinated with school improvement activities in order to be most effective.

This paper provides an introduction to school-centered community revitalization. Part 1 presents the case for integrating school improvement into community development, drawing on the academic research linking school and neighborhood quality as well as early results from school-centered community revitalization projects across the country. Part 2 presents the core components of school-centered community revitalization, including both school-based activities and neighborhood-based activities. The final part of the paper illustrates the diverse approaches currently being taken to improve schools and neighborhoods, drawing on the experiences of eight school-centered community revitalization initiatives in five cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Paul.

1. Why School-Centered Community Revitalization?

Public schools in low-income neighborhoods face numerous challenges, including: erosion of the tax base supporting school budgets; high rates of student mobility and absenteeism;^a buildings that lack the infrastructure to support modern teaching methods; a parent population struggling with employment, housing, and health issues; declining enrollments; and a high proportion of students with special needs. At the same time as they are challenged by neighborhood conditions, poorly performing public schools may accelerate neighborhood decline by hindering the preservation or creation of stable residential communities. Most importantly, poor quality schools do not offer the educational opportunities needed to help children overcome intergenerational poverty.

Coordinated investment in neighborhood revitalization and school reform has the potential to reverse this downward trend. In particular, a neighborhood revitalization strategy that includes a school improvement component will be more successful and more sustainable than a strategy that focuses only on the neighborhood. Research shows a clear link between school and neighborhood quality, and early indications from the field suggest that combining school improvement with community development can yield impressive results.

What the research tells us...

Since the 1960s, it has been understood that family background characteristics are a primary determinant of student achievement, accounting for as much as 93 percent of the variance in student achievement, according to one study.^b However, recent research has reclaimed the centrality of the school and neighborhood with new results derived from better quality data about students' classrooms and communities.

Although there is no consensus on the exact contribution of family, school, and neighborhood to student performance, this research shows that school and family factors contribute equally to average test scores, with neighborhood conditions explaining a smaller, but third-largest portion of student performance.^c Family members influence children through their attitudes towards education and work, as well as through the resources they provide for their children's safety, security, and well-being.^d At school, teaching methods, how children are grouped together in classes, and curricular content all affect what children learn. Finally, neighborhoods can affect children by influencing the extent to which children have access to adults who serve as role models or who monitor the neighborhood and the extent to which they are exposed to violence and environmental conditions that can affect health and learning. Neighborhoods also influence children's peer groups.^e

Families, schools, and neighborhoods also influence each other. Families can reinforce or detract from school activities, and schools can influence family behavior by encouraging certain educational practices within the home. Neighborhoods can influence families by providing access to jobs, a sense of physical safety, and social networks. In addition, advantaged families tend to select prosperous neighborhoods where other affluent families send their children to school. The influence of families, schools, and neighborhoods are decisions are interconnected, making it exceptionally difficult to quantify the independent effect of each on children's academic performance. Nevertheless, all three forces clearly play a role in shaping children's outcomes.

Studies of parental preferences for individual schools within a district or individual teachers within a school show: that parents tend to value documented academic achievement.⁵⁸ Studies of school performance and neighborhood quality have tended to focus on property values – people are willing to pay more for housing in neighborhoods where schools have higher test scores. More research is needed to establish a definitive link between school performance and other important indicators of neighborhood health, such as: residential stability, housing quality, levels of crime and juvenile delinquency, and residents willingness and ability to organize on behalf of the community.

The multi-directional influences of home, school, and family underscore the need for a coordinated approach that draws on the resources of each. From an economic perspective, school quality capitalizes into home values, which can also determine the potential for commercial and business development within the neighborhood. From a sociological perspective, neighborhood population delimits school population, which heavily influences—but does not necessarily determine—the school’s performance. Several of the initiatives studied for this paper started from the premise that revitalization efforts that do not include a school improvement component have trouble retaining families who have school-aged children and choices about where to live. The developers, housing authorities, and educators leading these initiatives have observed that families with choices tend to move out once their children reach school age unless there is a good public school.

Early results from school-centered revitalization initiatives across the country...

The following examples of current school-centered community revitalization initiatives illustrate the impact that these initiatives are having on local schools and communities:

- In *East Lake* (Atlanta, GA), the East Lake Foundation helped spearhead the development of a new charter school to serve neighborhood residents and to support a newly built mixed-income community of approximately 550 homes. For an innovative performance-based contract for the educational management organization that runs the school, three-fourths of students passed Georgia standardized tests last year compared to the one-third who did so in the first year of the school’s operation. Meanwhile, area home prices are six times what they were when the initiative started in 1996.
- In *Sandtown-Winchester* (Baltimore, MD), Enterprise Community Partners leads a neighborhood transformation initiative that includes a wide range of social supports for children and their families. In addition to sponsoring curricular reform and professional development within two elementary schools, the initiative provides a home-based early childhood education program, summer school, health and mental health clinics at the two schools, and mentoring. Scores at the schools have improved dramatically since the start of the initiative: the percentage of first graders meeting state standards for reading jumped from 15 percent in 1998 to 64 percent in 2003 at one school, and from 19 percent in 1998 to 78 percent in 2003 at the other school.
- In *Revere* (Chicago, IL), the Comer Science and Education Foundation began by investing in a single elementary school and expanded its focus to include the entire neighborhood. The Foundation provides funding and staff for a wide range of school improvements as well as extended supports such as the revival of resident-led neighborhood associations, a school alumni association

coordinator, home improvement assistance matched by city funds, and the construction of 90 new for-sale affordable homes. The percentage of students who score proficient or higher on state tests has more than doubled over the last four years, even though the school still struggles with high rates of mobility and poverty.

- In *Murphy Park* (St. Louis, MO), the developer McCormack Baron built a new 400 mixed-income development in a high-poverty neighborhood and led an effort to reconstitute the existing failing elementary school. The school was renovated and it adopted a research-based reading curriculum, after-school arts programming, and summer school. A nonprofit was formed to provide ongoing organizational support to neighborhood institutions, including the school. Test scores have increased somewhat, and enrollment is strong in an otherwise shrinking city. However, sustaining the gains made in student achievement has been challenging. In 2006, only 11 percent of students scored proficient or higher on the state test in communication arts, despite reaching a high of 56 percent in 2004.
- In *University City* (Philadelphia, PA), the University of Pennsylvania undertook a major revitalization strategy to improve the conditions in its immediate neighborhood. The cornerstone of this initiative was a new public elementary school, supported by a neighborhood strategy that included housing loans, anti-crime, and business and economic development programs. The school opened in 2001 and quickly became one of the best performing public schools in Philadelphia, with 75 to 80 percent of students scoring proficient or higher on state reading and math tests in 2006. Property values in the neighborhood have increased significantly and the neighborhood is a much more desirable place to live. The school remains economically and racially diverse.
- In *Centennial Place* (Atlanta, GA), the construction of a new public elementary school together with over 800 new units of housing has revived a formerly isolated area dominated by public housing into a vibrant mixed-income community. Today, the school ranks among the best in Atlanta. In 2004, the latest year for which test score data are available, 94 percent of Centennial Place School students met or exceeded state standards for reading and 89 percent met or exceeded state standards for math. Given its performance, the school has become a strong marketing tool for both the subsidized and the market-rate homes in the neighborhood.
- In *Payne-Phalen* (St. Paul, MN), an abandoned former high school was redeveloped in a public-private partnership between an area foundation and the school district into an elementary school and an adjacent YMCA. Together, the school and the YMCA provide a full range of supportive services, including housing counseling and support to families whose children attend the school. Neighborhood investments include a 72-unit senior rental facility two blocks from the school, the planned construction of 26 for-sale homes in the neighborhood, and the reconstruction of the major roadway connecting the neighborhood to downtown. Although crime and a weak housing market have slowed the neighborhood's recovery, test scores have improved at the school. In 2005, between 54 and 69 percent of third and fifth graders tested at grade level or above in reading and math, compared to 20 to 22 percent in 2002.
- In *Mechanicsville* (Atlanta, GA), a non-profit works with the local elementary school to help improve its status from one of the worst in the district. Besides school improvements such as a new computer lab and curricular reforms, the school also hosts resident leadership training and

workforce development activities. A \$20 million federal grant will help to fund the redevelopment of three public housing sites in the neighborhood into mixed-income rental and homeownership communities. The school's test scores have improved dramatically: in 2004, 58 percent of 4th graders met the state standards in math, compared to 17 percent in 2000, the year before the initiative began. The neighborhood is also starting to change, but experience from other cities suggest that full impact will not be realized until several years after the new housing is completed.

2. Core Elements of School-Centered Community Revitalization

In the simplest terms, school-centered community revitalization means a school reform strategy that is integrated with and supported by a neighborhood improvement strategy. This is not a “one size fits all” approach; instead, both the school strategy and the neighborhood strategy must be tailored to fit the specific goals of the community and the scale of the initiative. Part 3 of this paper highlights the diversity in approaches used across the eight school-centered revitalization initiatives studied.

School-centered community revitalization does not replace what we already know about what works to improve poor neighborhoods. Instead, it encourages community development practitioners to think of school improvement as a core neighborhood revitalization strategy and to make sure that the other neighborhood strategies (housing development, economic development, workforce investment, anti-crime) reinforce the school improvement effort. Within that framework, what makes a community revitalization effort “school-centered” is its focus on five core elements:

1. **Improvement of one or more schools in the neighborhood** – to increase the academic achievement of neighborhood children, to retain families with children in the neighborhood, and to attract new families to the neighborhood.
2. **Housing that is safe, affordable, and attractive to families with children** – to keep these families in the neighborhood and attending the school and to attract new families to the neighborhood.
3. **High-quality child care and early childhood education programs** – to help ensure that children start school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed academically.
4. **Affordable health services for children** – so that health problems are not a barrier to academic achievement.^h
5. **Workforce and economic development programs** – to keep families in the neighborhood and to help families out of poverty.

Each of the core elements is described briefly below.

Core element 1: School improvement

Improving one or more schools in the neighborhood is the linchpin of school-centered community revitalization. While many revitalization efforts will focus on a single neighborhood school, some communities may opt to work with clusters of schools – for example, all of the elementary and middle schools feeding into a particular high school.

Whatever the scale of the school improvement effort, it should include *at least one neighborhood-based elementary or elementary/middle school*. Since attendance at public high schools is often not specific to neighborhoods (i.e., assignment is choice-based or from large enrollment zones), they are excluded from this discussion. If the school improvement is to contribute to the revitalization of a particular neighborhood, families must be required to live in the neighborhood in order to be able to send their children to the school.ⁱ

The school improvement effort should also have *clear goals that relate to the goals for the neighborhood*. The starting point for all efforts will likely be the desire to improve academic outcomes for children attending the school and living in the neighborhood. Other core goals include reducing student mobility by increasing residential stability and making the school an asset for the community and a source of neighborhood pride. Beyond these goals, school reform initiatives may emphasize different dimensions of school quality. For example, some schools are interested in creating a replicable reform model for how to improve academic performance of low-income children. Where creating a mixed-income community is an explicit goal for the neighborhood, the school vision will likely include making the school a place where middle-income families with choices send their children.

School-centered community revitalization recognizes that there are many paths to improving low performing schools in poor neighborhoods. Depending on the goals for the school and neighborhood and the opportunities presented by the local school reform environment, the school improvement might take place through creating a charter school,^j reconstituting an existing public school, creating a new public school, or working within an existing school structure. School-centered community revitalization efforts around the country have used each of these methods for changing the school. According to the experienced educators and community development practitioners who have implemented school-centered community revitalization, the most important ingredient to improving schools is the ability to *bring in new school leadership and staff as needed* who share the vision for the school's improvements.

To obtain control over staffing decisions, site-based school management may be an option for traditional public schools in some school districts and is almost always exercised by charter schools. Other communities may not have access to site-based management but may negotiate with the school district to provide input into personnel decisions at the school.

Given that a holistic approach to school improvement attends not only to students' academic performance, but also to children's and their families' physical, social, and economic well-being, it is easy to burden the school principal with not only the management of classroom activities but also the social services happening in tandem. The eight initiatives studied unanimously sought to *preserve the school principal's time for instructional leadership* by hiring other staff or developing partnerships to manage the social services component.

Once the vision for the school is set and a mechanism has been created for creating reform, the specific school improvement strategies will largely depend on the goals for the school and neighborhood and the characteristics of the student body. However, educators and community development practitioners involved in the eight profiled school-centered community revitalization efforts suggest that all school improvement efforts should include:

- A *research-based curriculum* (or curricula) designed to meet the needs of neighborhood children and support any broader goals the school might have (e.g., attracting families from outside the neighborhood);
- *Training* and *professional development* activities for teachers to ensure the successful implementation of the curricula and better classroom management techniques;
- A *physical environment* that is healthy, safe, and supports modern teaching and learning methods;
- *Formal after-school and summer programming* for all students;
- A strategy for *extended support of children's academic progress beyond matriculation* from the elementary or elementary/middle school. This may take the form of an alumni club, targeted tutoring, or counseling for high school placement;
- A strategy for encouraging *parental involvement* in their children's education that addresses common barriers to parent participation in school activities such as lack of child care for younger siblings, language and literacy issues, and parents' past negative past experiences with schooling; and
- A strategy for ensuring *regular communication and coordination between the school and key neighborhood institutions* that work with the families of school children, such as rental housing property managers, health center staff, supportive service providers, and churches.

Core element 2: Housing

The purpose of school-centered housing investment is to help families with children remain in the neighborhood and to attract new families to the neighborhood. The starting point for the housing strategies of the eight school-based community revitalization initiatives studied for this paper was the desire to improve conditions for people living in the neighborhood and to increase residential stability, which would in turn contribute to lower rates of mobility at the school and improved academic achievement. In addition, some initiatives sought to create a wider range of incomes in the neighborhood and at the school by attracting middle-income families.

School-centered housing strategies may include the development of new homeownership or rental units, cash transfers to families in order to subsidize the cost of their current housing, or training to help families purchase or improve the value of their existing home. Across the eight initiatives studied, investments in new housing ranged from large-scale redevelopment of distressed public housing funded by federal grants to smaller forms of new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation of rental housing or homeownership units (both market-rate and subsidized). Another approach was to provide incentives to make the existing housing stock more affordable or attractive to families who might choose to move into the neighborhood and send their children to the school. For example, the University of Pennsylvania offered its employees low-interest mortgages and down payment assistance to purchase homes in the University City neighborhood of Philadelphia. In St. Paul, Minnesota, a local foundation operates a fund to provide housing assistance to families whose children attend a specific elementary school. In Chicago, a local foundation matches City funds to provide home improvement grants to homeowners in a targeted neighborhood.

Core element 3: Early childhood education

High-quality early childhood education has a proven impact on the IQ and academic achievement of low-income children. For example, three separate studies found that low-income children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs are more likely to complete high school, attend college, and be employed in their twenties than similar children who do not participate in early childhood programs. Common features of the three programs studied included: an early start (no later than age three); well-educated, well-trained, and well-compensated teachers; small class sizes and high teacher to child ratios; and intervention beyond the pre-school years.^k As such, early childhood education can contribute to closing the achievement gap that exists even before children's entry into kindergarten.

Not only do high-quality early childhood programs lead to better academic outcomes for neighborhood children, they may also help parents obtain and retain jobs by providing affordable daycare. Engaging parents in preschool activities—a stage when parents are most likely to be involved in their children's education—also makes it more likely that they will be involved in their children's later schooling.

Educators and community development practitioners engaged in school-centered community revitalization view early childhood programming as a critical component of improving schools and neighborhoods in low-income communities. The types of early childhood programs offered across the eight community revitalization initiatives studied for this paper include traditional pre-kindergarten classes at the school, subsidized child care located near the school (for example, in an adjoining YMCA), and a nationally recognized home-based preschool instruction and parenting program.

Core element 4: Children's health

Children need to have their health and mental health needs addressed in order to succeed in school. To that end, leaders of school-based community revitalization efforts stress the need to provide basic health and mental health services to students of the school targeted for improvement. These services can be provided at the school itself, through school-based health centers, or through partnerships with community-based organizations. If health services are provided on the school site, it is important that the school principal not be charged with managing the services. Principals who are required to manage the school space and work directly with service providers may “burn out” more quickly and may not be as effective as instructional leaders.

In addition to the provision of health services for children or their families, parental training about promotion of their children's health can provide an important preventative measure. Parent training can include broad range of subjects including brain development, discipline, immunization, safety, asthma, lead poisoning, parental stress, and parent-child bonding.

Core element 5: Workforce and economic development

A school-centered community revitalization initiative should include a combination of workforce development and economic development activities aimed at helping families out of poverty and stabilizing the neighborhood. Most of the eight initiatives provide some job training programs and local job development activities to increase employment among neighborhood residents. Others have

sought to attract new businesses to the neighborhood to provide needed goods and services to existing residents and to draw in new families.

The diversity of local markets precludes the recommendation of any single workforce or economic development strategy. In some neighborhoods, an element of the strategy may be to organize transportation to a major employer located in another neighborhood. In other communities, the optimal economic development activity may be to invest in façade and roadway improvements along a major thoroughfare as a means to attract more businesses to locate within the neighborhood. Although the specific activities will depend upon the local context, workforce and economic development activities (like housing and health) should be aligned around the central mission of creating meaningful and sustainable school improvement. This generally includes supporting the parents of children who attend the school in ways that will improve the economic stability of those families.

3. School and Neighborhood Strategies in Action

The variety of local circumstances precludes a uniform approach to school-centered revitalization. The methods for both school and neighborhood improvement will vary according to local community needs and the sources of funds available to address them. A scan of school-centered community revitalization initiatives underway in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Paul reveals a wide range of school and neighborhood strategies, summarized in the table below.

School and Community-Centered Activities Across Eight Sites

	East Lake, Atlanta	Centennial Place, Atlanta	Mechanicsville, Atlanta	Sandtown-Winchester, Baltimore	Revere Community, Chicago	Murphy Park, St. Louis	Payne-Phalen, St. Paul	University City, Philadelphia
School-based activities:								
New charter school	●							
New or reconstituted non-charter public school		●				●	●	●
Reform of existing public school			●	●	●			
Pre-kindergarten offered on school site			●	●	●	●	●	●
Health clinic for children on school site				●			●	
Adult programming or supportive services on school site			●	●	●	●	●	
School-centered community strategies:								
Construction/rehab of affordable/mixed-income rental housing near school	●	●		●		●	●	
Construction/rehab of affordable/mixed-income homeownership near school		●	●	●	●		●	●
Housing subsidy programs (down payment assistance, rental vouchers, home improvement assistance) for school and neighborhood families							●	●
Organization created to support/coordinate school and neighborhood activities	●		●			●		
Parenting and early childhood education program			●	●			●	●
High-quality child care available	●	●					●	●
Programs to increase employment opportunities			●	●	●	●	●	●

Conclusion

Foundations, schools, developers, and community-based organizations are increasingly breaking down the traditional divisions between school reform and community development to coordinate their efforts to revitalize neighborhoods. Scholarly research and early results from school-centered community initiatives across the country suggest that investments in schools reinforce investments in neighborhoods and vice versa. Over time, we expect the local initiatives to show that investment in the intersection between schools and neighborhoods will realize greater social and economic returns than investment in schools and neighborhoods alone.

The handful of school-based community revitalization efforts currently underway provide a starting point for identifying the core components of this type of coordinated investment strategy—investment in the improvement of one or more local schools, together with investment in housing, early childhood education, children’s health, and economic and workforce development. These local efforts also suggest that school-centered neighborhood revitalization can be accomplished using a range of school reform strategies and community development approaches.

There is reason to believe that the eight local initiatives profiled in this paper are forerunners of a broader trend. For example, the new proposal to include school planning in 2008 HOPE VI grants, a major funding vehicle for the creation of mixed-income housing, suggests that pairing school reform with neighborhood revitalization will become more commonplace. This movement toward the greater coordination of neighborhood and school investments and the promising results identified thus far should motivate local community development practitioners and educators to engage in meaningful dialogue about how best to address the problems of their schools and neighborhoods and to translate that dialogue into action.

Notes

a Student mobility refers to changes in school enrollment between the first and last day of the school year. A high student mobility rate means that a large percentage of students are transferring in or out of the school during the school year.

b Determining the relative contribution of the home, school, and neighborhood on student outcomes is controversial. Hoxby examines the performance of more than 16,000 twelve graders in 1992 and finds that family variables account for 93% of the variance in the sampled students' achievement. See Caroline Hoxby, If families matter most, where do schools fit in?, in *A Primer on America's Schools* 89, 96-98 (Terry M. Moe ed., 2001).

c For data on within-school factors' association with student outcomes, see Wenglinsky, H. (2002, February 13). How schools matter: The link between teacher classroom practices and student academic performance. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10(12). Retrieved March 20, 2007 from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n12/>. For a review of the mixed evidence about neighborhood impact on student performance, see Sonbonmatsu, L., Kling, J., Duncan, G., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2006). *Neighborhoods and Academic Achievement: The evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment*. Working paper 11909, National Bureau of Economic Research. Accessed March 20, 2007 at <http://ideas.repec.org/p/nbr/nberwo/11909.html>.

d See for example, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, DHHS. (2006). *The NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD): Findings for Children up to Age 4 1/2 Years* (05-4318). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

e Sampson, R., Morenoff, J., Gannon-Rowley, T. (2002). Assessing Neighborhood Effects: Social Processes and New Directions in Research. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 443-78.

f Examples of recent studies that have found this include Black, S.E. (1999). Do better schools matter? Parental valuation of elementary education. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(2), 577-600; Downes, T.A., & Zabel, J.E. (2002). The impact of school characteristics on house prices: Chicago 1987-1991. *Journal of Urban Economics* 52(1), 1-25; and Bayer, P., Ferreira, F. & McMillan, R. (2004). Tiebout sorting, social multipliers and the demand for school quality. *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 10871*.

g Hastings, J.S., Kane, T.J., & Staiger, D.O. (2005). Parental preferences and school competition: Evidence from a public school choice program." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 11805*; and Jacob, B.A. & Lefgren, L. (2005). What do parents value in education: An empirical investigation of parents' revealed preferences for teachers. *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 11494*.

h Affordable healthcare for adults is clearly also important, but is not a focus of school-centered community revitalization. It is expected that a well-funded neighborhood revitalization effort will include a health component for all neighborhood residents, but in order to be "school-centered" the initiative *must* provide health services to children of the school targeted for improvement.

i In some communities, it may be possible to have a school-led neighborhood revitalization effort in which enrollment in the school is only partially neighborhood-based. In the Centennial Place community of Atlanta for example, about half the children that attend Centennial Place School live in the neighborhood, while the others are accepted to the school based on a citywide lottery. For more on the Centennial Place initiative, see eight profiles of local school-centered community revitalization initiatives, available on Enterprise's Schools and Communities web page.

j A charter school is a publicly funded school that enjoys greater freedom from state rules and regulations than traditional public schools. Charter schools are typically free to hire or fire personnel, design curriculum, and promote specific values. A charter school must negotiate a contract (charter) that must be renewed periodically, usually with a local school district or charter authorizer designated by the state. Typically states limit the number of charter schools that may be authorized to operate within a given area.

k Ellen Galinsky (2005) *The Economic Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Programs: What Makes the Difference*.

Appendix A

Profiles

Centennial Place School in Centennial Place - ATLANTA

The Centennial Place neighborhood is located in downtown Atlanta, across the interstate from the central business district. Prior to the revitalization effort that began in the 1990s, two sprawling public housing projects, Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes, were almost the only housing in what was a predominately industrial and institutional area. Other than the public housing, the neighborhood consisted of the academic and student housing facilities of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Coca-Cola's corporate headquarters, and a low-performing elementary school with declining enrollment. In 1990, the neighborhood was extremely distressed, with 66 percent of the population living below the poverty line, and 85 percent of families with children headed by single mothers.

The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) began planning for the redevelopment of Techwood and Clark Howell in 1991. The planning went through several stages and was heavily influenced by the decision to locate the Olympic Village for the 1996 Summer Olympics on the campus of Georgia Tech. Ultimately, the redevelopment plan called for creating a mixed-income community, with 738 rental units (40 percent public housing eligible, 20 percent affordable, and 40 percent market rate) and approximately 85 homeownership units. The plan also included the creation of a new Math, Science & Technology Themed Elementary School – with a new building, a new name, and a new location – to replace the existing failing school. The new school was seen as a critical component in attracting families with choice to Centennial Place.

Although the original proposal submitted by the Developer included the school as an essential part of the Redevelopment Vision, Dr. Norman Johnson, Executive Assistant to the President of Georgia Tech, was instrumental in bringing the vision to life. Dr. Johnson, an experienced educator, brought practical knowledge and experience to the development team and helped it understand what kind of school was needed, what was possible, and how to go about it. As a member of the Atlanta Board of Education, Dr. Johnson also brought his standing with the school district to the project.

Dr. Johnson's vision was to create a state of the art school that would make it possible for a child from the neighborhood to attend an institution such as Georgia Tech – something that had never happened. Several factors made this vision realistic: first, the public middle and high schools into which the neighborhood school fed were the best in the city. Second, redeveloping Techwood and Clark Howell would make middle class families more willing to send their children to a school located in the neighborhood. Third, the \$153 million investment in the neighborhood, leveraged by a \$42 million HOPE VI Grant, as well as resources that Georgia Tech brought to the table, helped to mitigate school district concerns about spending capital funds on a school before the housing was complete. In the end, \$10 million for the new school building was raised as part of a "penny sales tax" for the construction of new schools.

Centennial Place School (CPS) opened in 1998 and currently has about 580 children in kindergarten through fifth grade. CPS is a Math, Science & Technology Themed School that uses the research-based CO-NECT curriculum, with a language and arts overlay. The school building is designed with an open floor plan, with flexible space for combining and separating groups of students. In addition to a computer lab, there are five computers in each classroom. The school is programmatically connected

to an adjacent YMCA (built at the same time), which is used for gym classes and after school programs and has an early childhood development center.

CPS does not provide health or supportive services on site, but offers weekly health clinics and dental services by appointment through satellite organizations. The school also has strong partnerships with Georgia Tech (for curriculum and technology support), Coca-Cola (for mentoring), and with several other institutions and corporations in the neighborhood. CPS's founding principal, who recently retired, was instrumental in building partnerships between the school and the broader community.

About half of the children that attend CPS live in the neighborhood; the others are accepted to the school based on a citywide lottery. Sixty-two percent of CPS students qualify for free or reduced lunches. The management agent of Centennial Place estimates that most of the families in the development send their children to CPS, which has become one of the top schools in Atlanta. In 2006, with few exceptions, CPS met or exceeded statewide averages on Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRTC).

The management agent staff at Centennial Place work closely with the school to ensure that students are attending school and to address problems. The principal of Centennial Place School meets regularly with housing managers and representatives from the YMCA and Georgia Tech.

The Centennial Place neighborhood has changed dramatically since the demolition of Techwood and Clark Howell Homes. The rental portion of the Centennial Place development is complete and fully occupied. As of December 2006, 45 for-sale units had been built and all but eight had been sold. Nine of the 45 for-sale units were designated affordable and sold to lower-income families with second mortgages from the Atlanta Housing Authority. Within a couple of blocks of the Centennial Place development and CPS are new office buildings and 100 percent market-rate housing. In addition, a \$300 million Aquarium was recently opened and a \$200 million "World of Coke" museum is under construction. Given the rapid changes in the neighborhood and the consistently high performance of the school, the challenges for this initiative are making sure that the most disadvantaged children in the school achieve the same results as children from higher income families and that the initial vision of creating a top-quality school in a mixed income community is not diluted over time.

Drew Charter School in East Lake - ATLANTA

East Lake is an Atlanta neighborhood six miles from downtown and on the border with unincorporated DeKalb County. Originally developed as summer cottages for wealthy Atlanta residents, the neighborhood includes the East Lake golf course, a private, historic golf course that gained an international reputation as the home course of golf legend Bobby Jones. By the mid 20th century, the neighborhood and golf course were in decline. The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) acquired part of the golf course from the East Lake Country Club and, in 1970, built a sprawling barracks-style 650-unit public housing development called East Lake Meadows on the land. Twenty years later, the development was in decline, with a blighting effect believed to stretch a mile into the rest of the neighborhood.

In 1993, the AHA received a \$33.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to rehabilitate East Lake Meadows under a program called Major Reconstruction of Obsolete Projects. Meanwhile, an Atlanta real estate developer, Tom Cousins, decided that his foundation should focus its giving on the East Lake community. In 1993, Cousins bought the East Lake Country Club and turned it into a golf club for corporate members, with fees that would support the revitalization of the broader neighborhood.¹ In 1995, he created the East Lake Foundation (ELF).

ELF was part of the planning committee for the redevelopment of East Lake Meadows, alongside the AHA and neighborhood residents. Ultimately, the development was demolished to make way for a 542-unit mixed-income development called the Villages of East Lake, which is 50 percent public housing and 50 percent market rate housing. All units were occupied by February 2001. A work requirement for Atlanta public housing residents means that almost all families in the Villages' public housing tier have working adults. The development is a gated community and across the street is a large supermarket that opened in 2001.

The planning committee for the Villages of East Lake recognized early on that the mixed income housing model would only work if the neighborhood also had a school that (1) served children from the neighborhood who had been underserved for so long and (2) was good enough to attract families with choice to the neighborhood. As a result, starting in the late 1990s, ELF began focusing on creating a top-flight elementary school in the neighborhood. The Foundation wrote the charter school application, which led to the first charter school in Atlanta, and Tom Cousins raised the \$17.5 million in capital funds needed to build the new school. Drew Charter School opened in 2000 and now serves approximately 800 students in kindergarten through eighth grade, 85 percent of whom qualify for a free or reduced-price meal.

ELF chose to contract with the Edison Company, a private for-profit education management organization, to run the school. With Edison, the Foundation conducted a nationwide search for the founding principal. The Edison curriculum uses the research-based *Success for All* reading program and *Everyday Math*, a National Science Foundation curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. Teachers at Drew Charter School are grouped into multi-grade-level

¹ The membership fee was \$275,000, of which \$200,000 was a tax-deductible contribution.

“houses” (K-2, 3-5, and 6-7), with a lead teacher for each house who has extra responsibilities and pay. The teachers have two planning periods a day, one of which is with their “house” and focuses on a specific topic, such as curriculum, student concerns, teamwork, or technology. Edison provides computer-based benchmark tests, which the students take monthly. Teachers have laptop computers, and the school has three computer labs, plus two or three computers in each classroom.

When Edison’s contract was up for renewal in 2005, the Drew school board (which includes the executive director of the East Lake Foundation) negotiated a new contract with Edison to move from a “B” to an “A+” school. The contract includes 12 specific metrics (beyond the base metric of meeting the Georgia Adequate Yearly Progress goals required under the federal No Child Left Behind law) to which a bonus fee is tied. These metrics include various forms of improvements in Drew students’ test score performance (e.g., students scores on par with statewide averages in math and reading), reductions in student absenteeism and lateness, increased placement of students in a high school of their choice, and increased satisfaction ratings by students and teachers on school surveys. In the 2005-06 school year, three-fourths of students scored proficient or higher on the Georgia standardized math and reading tests, compared to one-third in the first years of the school’s operation.

As student performance at Drew has improved, an increasing proportion of market rate families living at the Villages have enrolled their children at the school. ELF no longer provides an operating subsidy to the school but continues to fund the majority of before and after school programming. ELF also funds a program called CREW teens, which supports Drew alumni and other area teens through high school with mentoring, tutoring, SAT/ACT test preparation, volunteer opportunities, and service learning. ELF also runs First Tee of East Lake, a golf instruction and mentoring program for local youth, and several scholarship programs.

The presence of middle-income families in the neighborhood has attracted commercial investment such as a grocery store, a bank, and Wal-Mart. Whereas home prices in the neighborhood were approximately \$45,000 in 1996, today homes sell for \$280,000. To retain affordability, the Foundation is looking to develop mixed-income homeownership units across from the Villages.

Dunbar Elementary School in Mechanicsville - ATLANTA

The Mechanicsville neighborhood lies one mile south of downtown Atlanta, adjacent to Turner Field and several colleges. It is a high-poverty neighborhood challenged by high rates of unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, and deteriorating housing. In 2001, Enterprise Community Partners created the Mechanicsville Community Learning Collaborative (MCLC) to improve performance at the local elementary school and make school reform the catalyst for broader community investment and neighborhood change in the area. MCLC was funded by a five-year, \$12.5 million grant from the Annenberg Foundation.

MCLC began with three goals: (1) to improve students' academic achievement; (2) to build community capacity; and (3) to support the revitalization of the community's infrastructure. The initiative started by implementing reforms at Dunbar Elementary School. When the initiative started, Dunbar had about 260 students and was one of the Atlanta Public School's (APS) lowest performing schools. The reform initiative received the support of APS because it coincided with a district-wide reform strategy that involved allowing the school, teachers, and parents to help select principals. The first principal of the new Dunbar School was chosen by MCLC in partnership with APS. The school was not formally reconstituted, but most of the original teachers have turned over since the start of the initiative.

Following the model of the Enterprise Education Initiative in Baltimore, the reforms at Dunbar included: implementing two new research-based curricula, Direct Instruction and CO-NECT; providing leadership training for the principal and professional development for teachers; filling school personnel positions not funded or only partially funded by the district (including an assistant principal and arts, foreign language, nurse, social worker and technology positions); creating after-school and summer enrichment programs; buying books for the school library; creating a technology center for parents and students; and supplying computers for teachers and students. Physical improvements were made to the school building, including putting in a glass wall to increase the amount of natural light in the school. MCLC also runs an early childhood development program (from birth to three years) designed to help neighborhood children start school better prepared.

In the neighborhood, MCLC's efforts have focused on leadership training and workforce development for residents and capacity building for community-based organizations. The leadership training and workforce development activities are closely linked to the school, making use of the school's new computer lab. Part of the leadership training program involves increasing resident involvement in community planning activities, all of which take place at the school. In addition, in the early years of the initiative, neighborhood associations, school staff, and teachers were encouraged to play an active role in the school PTA. MCLC has engaged in a number of efforts to increase parental involvement in the school while also building parents' skills, including sponsoring family game nights and creating a summer parent academy in conjunction with the summer school program.

Alongside school reform and community capacity-building, the MCLC initiative includes housing redevelopment. In 2003, the Atlanta Housing Authority received a \$20 million HOPE VI grant to revitalize the sprawling McDaniel Glenn public housing development, located in Mechanicsville. The redevelopment plan calls for demolishing one site and renovating two others to create a mixed-income rental and homeownership community. MCLC has participated in the redevelopment effort by

working with a longstanding local CDC to develop homeownership units. Thus far, the CDC has built 11 single-family townhomes and it recently received a loan from Enterprise to develop an additional 64 homes on a site adjacent to Dunbar School. This site became part of the revitalization plan after Dunbar students identified it as a blight on the community, a place where “ghosts” and “bad men” lived.

The five-year Annenberg grant ended in 2006. Now funded by Enterprise, MCLC continues to be active in the neighborhood, but on a more limited basis. Dunbar Elementary School’s test scores have improved significantly, but it is not yet among the best schools in the city. The neighborhood is starting to change but the experience of other HOPE VI sites suggests that the full impact of the HOPE VI redevelopment will not be felt until several years after the new housing is completed. The challenge for Dunbar and Mechanicsville will be sustaining both the educational gains made thus far and the ties made between school and neighborhood activities without a new source of funding.

Jefferson Elementary School in Murphy Park - ST. LOUIS

The Murphy Park neighborhood is part of a larger area north of downtown St. Louis that for the past 50 years has been dominated by public housing. In 1996, the developer McCormack Baron Salazar constructed The Residences at Murphy Park on the site of the former Vaughn public housing development. The development consists of new, low-rise townhouses fronting a traditional urban street grid, with gated interiors of the square blocks serving as secure parking and recreational space for small clusters of housing units. Half of the 413 units at Murphy Park are public housing, 10 percent have Tax Credit income limits of 60 percent of area median, and 40 percent of the units have market-determined rents.

The vision for the Murphy Park neighborhood was one of a healthy community with strong institutions through new housing for moderate- to middle-income families. A revitalized elementary school was an essential part of this vision, to serve as a platform for improving the lives of the public housing residents and to attract families to the tax credit and market-rate units in the development. In the late 1990s, the developer of Murphy Park, with the support of several local businesses and foundations, led an effort to reconstitute the existing failing school, Jefferson Elementary School.

A new principal assumed leadership at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year and implemented a new instructional program, including a research-based reading curriculum (Success for All), after-school arts programming, summer school, and training for teachers in the use of technology in the classroom. The school building was also renovated, funded in large part by corporate donations. The renovations included new wiring, fiber optic cable for Internet access, and two computer labs (one for children and one for adults).

Supporting the parents of Jefferson School students and encouraging their involvement in the school has been an important component of the reform effort. The school has three parent liaisons on staff who conduct home visits to school families and work with parents to address the myriad of issues affecting their children's academic performance. Once they have gained their trust, the parent liaisons also encourage parents to participate in report card conferences, PTA meetings, and volunteering at the school.

A non-profit called COVAM, which was created during the planning phase for Murphy Park, provides ongoing organizational support to neighborhood institutions, including Jefferson School. COVAM's Board of Directors is made up of neighborhood residents, church leaders, investors in Murphy Park, managers of the other housing developments in the neighborhood, and the principal of Jefferson School. Through the Murphy Park operating budget, COVAM funds a resident liaison specialist, located in the Murphy Park leasing office, who advocates for residents and helps connect them with resources needed for family problems. The resident liaison specialist forms part of the bridge between the housing development and the school. She spends a substantial amount of time at Jefferson School, serving as the "eyes and ears" of the community there and supporting activities that link the community to the school, including the after-school programs and computer and job training for adults. In addition, the resident liaison meets monthly with staff from the school and from the health clinic located across the street from the school to discuss individual families and address problems.

The reform program at Jefferson School has not changed significantly over the past eight years, despite

several changes in school leadership. Test scores have increased, enrollment is strong, and the arts programming and adult computer training have been successful. The school was used in marketing of the third phase of the Murphy Park development in 2003. However, the initiative continues to wrestle with the challenges presented by a troubled school district and the lack of good educational options for students once they complete elementary school. The Murphy Park developer would like to make Jefferson School a K-8 school and has been pushing for the abolition of middle schools in St. Louis, but his progress toward those ends has been stalled by turnover in the school district leadership.

The current focus of the initiative is on health services and early childhood education. The developer of Murphy Park recently helped negotiate a takeover of the health clinic across the street from Jefferson School, and services have much improved under the new management. The developer is also planning to create an early childhood center at Jefferson School, with links to the senior housing in the Murphy Park development, to strengthen further the ties between the school and community.

John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary in Payne-Phalen - ST. PAUL

In the 1990s, when the St. Paul school district was looking to open a new school to accommodate the influx of immigrant children into the city, a state senator and a city councilmember advocated for the renovation of an abandoned high school in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood in East St. Paul. Since the 1970s, this former blue-collar neighborhood had become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse but also increasingly poor. The East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC) had invested in economic development and housing in Payne-Phalen, but its efforts were unequal to the area-wide economic decline. Sitting on top of a hill and unused since 1963, the high school had become a blight. The state senator and city councilmember thought that renovating the building and creating a new school had the potential to catalyze broader change in the neighborhood.

In 1997, the Wilder Foundation formed a partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools, the State of Minnesota, Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul to operate the “Achievement Plus” model in three St. Paul public schools. Achievement Plus is a whole school reform model whose goal is “to establish high-quality, comprehensive, family-supportive community schools” that close the achievement gap between low- and middle-income students.¹ The abandoned high school in Payne-Phalen was selected as the site for Wilder’s third Achievement Plus School and a yearlong community planning process ensued, which resulted in recommendations to renovate the school building into a K-6 elementary school, plus ideas for the curriculum and for the selection of a principal. The Saint Paul YMCA joined the planning process, resulting in a new building operated by the YMCA that is attached to the elementary school. The total cost to build the complex was \$29.5 million, including \$6.8 million for the YMCA.

The John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School opened in 2000. John Johnson is a K-6 school with approximately 300 students, 92 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Working from the model of Children’s Aid Society’s partnership with the New York City Board of Education, the school has a wing for offices and meeting rooms to house supportive services. The school has a therapist, a full-time family outreach worker, a part-time early intervention program staff person, and a part-time nurse practitioner. In addition, the ESNDC operates the Eastside Family Center at the school, which provides housing assistance, referrals, English-language classes, and school conferences. As evidence of its community orientation, 174 community events and activities were held at the school within the first three months of 2004. The school is open from 7:30 am to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, while the YMCA opens at 5:30 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m. everyday of the week.

Around that time that John Johnson elementary school was to open, the Wilder Foundation was concerned about a lack of improvement in children’s performance at the first two Achievement Plus schools, prompting the Foundation to obtain a new executive director for Achievement Plus who would strengthen the curricular aspects of the reform model and be more selective about which

¹ Achievement Plus was adapted by the Wilder Foundation from the Adelman/Taylor framework, which was created at University of California Los Angeles.

support services were most effective. The executive director called for the full implementation of America's Choice, a standards-based instructional model, chosen in part because the package included three years of teacher training on the curriculum. As the third Achievement Plus School in the St. Paul district, the John Johnson Elementary School has operated with America's Choice curriculum from the start. Children's performance on tests has not been consistent from year to year, but there are promising signs of improvement in reading.

To reduce the high rate of student mobility within the school, the East Side Neighborhood Development Company in partnership with the Wilder Foundation and the Saint Paul Foundation created the Opportunity Housing Investment Fund, a \$610,000 revolving loan fund comprised of \$5,000 donations from individuals, to renovate or develop housing for John A. Johnson families. ESNDC also created the East Side Housing Opportunity Program to provide social services, housing advocacy, and Housing Trust Fund vouchers (rental assistance) to Johnson families. Direct investment from the fund has resulted in 17 units being rehabbed or built and the stability index (percentage of kids that start at and stay at the school all year) has increased to 87 percent. It had previously fluctuated between 78 percent and 83 percent.

Other wealth creation programs developed by ESNDC to support neighborhood and Johnson families include the Prosperity Campaign (grassroots organizing and marketing campaign to inspire families to own homes, start a business, get a better job, open an Individual Development Account) the Community Saving Center (a partnership with US Federal Credit Union, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Thrivent for Lutherans to provide main stream financial services credit union and financial literacy training), and the Center for Working Families (a partnership with ESNDC, LISC, and LSS to help people get better jobs).

Neighborhood investments in the redevelopment area around the school include the completion of a 72-unit senior rental facility two blocks from the school and commercial redevelopment along Payne Avenue. Phase II of the redevelopment is the construction of 26 for-sale homes in the neighborhood.

Just below the school, a new roadway – The Phalen Boulevard – was built along an abandoned rail corridor. The project took 12 years and was a partnership of 65 public, business, non-profit, and neighborhood entities. ESNDC was the program sponsor and fiscal agent for the Initiative. New manufacturing and a new hospital facility have since located along the roadway. 1,000 jobs have already been created. The 2.5 mile long road has spurred over \$600 million in private and public infrastructure, housing, and commercial investment.

Despite these investments, crime and a weak housing market have slowed the recovery of the Payne-Phalen neighborhood and the immediate area around the school. ESNDC, the Wilder Foundation, and their many partners remain committed to creating a prosperous multi-cultural neighborhood, and the John A. Johnson School remains at the center of the neighborhoods efforts to create wealth and well being for neighborhood businesses and families.

Penn Alexander School in University City - PHILADELPHIA

The Penn Alexander School is located in the University City, a diverse neighborhood in West Philadelphia that is close to downtown. The University of Pennsylvania is a major presence in the neighborhood, although it did not become actively involved in neighborhood revitalization efforts until the mid 1990s. Parents' growing concern about their children's safety culminated in 1996 when a graduate student was murdered in the neighborhood, prompting the University to invest aggressively in the area.

Undergraduate students dominate the areas of the neighborhood nearest to the campus, but otherwise the neighborhood is economically and racially mixed. Some areas are solidly middle-class, with longtime homeowners, while other areas have high poverty rates and a more transient population. In 2000, the census tract in which the Penn Alexander School is located had a poverty rate of 37 percent. The tract was 46 percent white, 30 percent African American, and 18 percent Asian. Overall, the housing stock is quite attractive, dominated by well-built, early 20th century row houses. In 2000, the median value of owner-occupied units in the census tract in which the Penn Alexander School is located was \$105,600.

The University hired The Community Builders to lead a planning process that resulted in 1996 in a comprehensive revitalization plan named the West Philadelphia Initiatives. With direct support from the President's Office and the Trustees, the University undertook the following neighborhood initiatives:

- The University spearheaded the development of a special service district that is run by a newly formed non-profit (funded by volunteer donations from Penn, other local universities, businesses, landlords, and community residents) that provides street cleaning, security patrols, sidewalk lighting installation, and retail development. A non-profit community greening organization provides tree plantings and other community greening supports.
- The University offers a mortgage guarantee and down payment assistance to University faculty and staff who purchase a home within the designated University City zone; over 400 families received this assistance between 1998 and 2004. The University also offers a forgivable loan of up to \$7,500 to existing owners for home improvements.
- The University acquired 20 vacant homes that it rehabilitated and sold to homeowners, and through a partnership with Fannie Mae, acquired approximately 200 dilapidated rental units for rehabilitation and new management.
- The University invested in retail development, by moving its bookstore off campus to a location more accessible to the community, and entering into partnerships with private developers and operators to develop other neighborhood retail, such as a multi-screen cinema and a 24-hour grocery store.
- The University sponsored economic inclusion and economic development programs to increase job opportunities for neighborhood residents, including a local/minority/women-owned business

purchasing program, an economic inclusion program for construction hiring, and skills development efforts.

Since one of the goals for the neighborhood was to attract and retain middle-income homeowners, the University also decided that a good neighborhood school was essential. In 1998, the University entered into an agreement with the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to create a new public school for up to 700 neighborhood children, from pre-kindergarten through the 8th grade. The Penn Alexander School opened in fall 2001. The school district provided the capital funding, the teacher's union agreed to make the school a demonstration with site-based staff selection by the principal, and the University agreed to provide an annual subsidy of \$1,000 per child for 10 years and to provide programmatic and planning support coordinated by its Graduate School of Education (GSE).

The Penn Alexander School has flexibility in its curriculum but is accountable for the same outcomes as other public schools. Teaching strategies draw heavily on the research expertise of the GSE. A national search for a principal led to the choice of an instructional leader whose primary focus is on students' academics (rather than, for example, fund raising for the school). One of the key features of the Penn Alexander School is smaller class sizes than is typical for elementary schools in Philadelphia—a goal of 17 to 1 in kindergarten and 23 to 1 in grades one through eight. The classrooms are built in clusters that open onto shared study spaces, with conference rooms that can be used for parent-teacher meetings, individual tutoring, or as general meeting space. The school has a liberal arts focus, with more music and art incorporated into the academic program than other Philadelphia public schools. The school also has computers in every classroom as well as a computer lab and broadcast studio staffed by a full-time technology specialist.

Between 75 and 80 percent of Penn Alexander students scored proficient or higher on the Pennsylvania reading and math tests in 2005-06, making it one of the best performing public schools in Philadelphia. The school remains both racially and economically diverse. In 2006-07, the school is 50 percent low income and 72 percent minority, with 48 percent African American, 28 percent White, 13 percent Asian, 6 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent other ethnicities.

University City has improved considerably in the decade since the University launched the West Philadelphia Initiatives. House prices in the target zone have appreciated greatly, prompting the University to expand the geographic area for which it offers employer-assistance to home purchasers. The challenge University City now faces is to manage its growth so as to retain an economically and racially diverse population.

Revere Elementary School - CHICAGO

In 1999, Gary Comer, the founder of Lands' End, visited his childhood elementary school. On his tour, he was distressed to see new computers in the school with no network connections or sufficient electrical power. This concern spurred a partnership between Revere School and the Comer Science and Education Foundation that began with networking the school and grew to encompass community redevelopment activities in the school's attendance zone.

The Foundation's investments in the school are guided by three primary goals: (1) decrease student mobility¹ within Revere; (2) increase Revere students' academic performance to meet or exceed statewide averages; and (3) support Revere's eighth grade graduates to complete high school. Revere is a traditional PK-8 public school with approximately 560 students, almost all of whom are African-American and qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The neighborhood in which the Revere School is located is extremely challenged. In 1999, based on Census data, about a third of households in the Revere Community lived below the poverty line, a third of the adult population had not graduated from high school, and the median household income was approximately \$25,500.

In the first three years of its involvement, the Foundation focused exclusively on school-based improvements such as establishing new computer labs, equipping each classroom with computers, purchasing reading and math software, and providing teacher training on the newly acquired software. With restricted "buy in" from teachers, the investments had limited success initially. However, this support was combined with the strong effort to bring on new staff, overall student performance improved. More than half of the students scored proficient or higher on Illinois state tests in 2006, whereas only 20 percent did so in 2002.

At the same time, with student mobility rates hovering around one-third, the Foundation felt from the start that its investments in school improvements would be insufficient to meet the challenges students faced. The logic was that increasing parental and community involvement in the school and increasing parental income (through job training, GED courses, and social services) would discourage the transfer of students out of the school.

Comer's neighborhood investment began in 2002 with strategic planning for the school and community by Foundation officials and the school's principal. This resulted in monthly meetings with the Revere school principal and community residents and changes at the school such as keeping the school open late to offer GED and computer courses for adults. The monthly meetings also led to the revival of resident-led block clubs—neighborhood associations for residents to strategize how to improve the block on which they live—with the Foundation hiring a full-time community organizer to provide technical assistance and leadership to the 10 block clubs that emerged.

Meanwhile, the Foundation hired a number of other staff to augment the school's programming and to coordinate the interface between neighborhood and school services. These hires include a full-

1 Student mobility is defined here as any enrollment change between the first school day in October and the last day of the school year.

time social worker placed at Revere, a community school resource coordinator, and a Revere Alumni Association coordinator who tracks graduates of Revere to offer continued support such as tutoring and mentoring so that Revere students finish high school. The Foundation's investment in after school programming led to its construction of a \$30 million youth center that opened its doors in June 2006.

The Foundation has also contributed to physical improvements to the neighborhood. As of 2002, the Foundation partnered with the City's Neighborhood Housing Services to offer community homeowners home improvement assistance through the Revere Neighborhood Housing Improvement Program. In 2003, the Foundation formed a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), Revere Community Housing Development, to develop Revere Run, a development project of 90 for-sale homes, which are made affordable via Foundation-funded subordinate mortgages provided to purchasers. The subsidy is tiered over the three phases of construction such that the largest amount (\$80,000 mortgages) was offered in phase one and \$50,000 mortgages are offered in phase two. The first 30 homes were constructed in 2004-05, and the LLC is currently completing the second phase. Since 2004-05, the Foundation has sent over 25 community residents through pre-apprenticeship construction training. Since graduating from the training program, community residents have been part of multiple neighborhood construction projects, including the Gary Comer Youth Center, Revere Run homes, and new garages for community homeowners.

The Foundation augments its own investments with partnerships from other Chicago institutions. For example, the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago annually places up to seven social work interns among the various components of the initiative. City Year provides volunteers for daily one-on-one tutoring for students and assists with after-school programming. The University of Chicago Hospitals provides free immunizations for Revere students through its Mobile Health Van Program.

Although the percentage of Revere students who score proficient or higher on state tests has more than doubled over the last four years, increasing student achievement at Revere is still the primary focus of the Foundation. In addition, even with its investment in the youth center and Revere Alumni Association, the Foundation is exploring the possibility of establishing or partnering with a new public high school. The Foundation is also working with community residents, city departments, and city officials to continue supporting future revitalization efforts for the community such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) designation and beautification projects.

William Pinderhughes Elementary School and George G. Kelson Elementary/Middle School in Sandtown-Winchester - BALTIMORE

Sandtown-Winchester is a large, predominantly African-American neighborhood located about three miles northwest of downtown Baltimore. It is a struggling neighborhood, with a poverty rate in 2000 of 34 percent, high rates of single-parent households, and low levels of educational attainment. Sandtown-Winchester has been the focus of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization effort since 1990. Enterprise Community Partners, in partnership with the City and neighborhood residents, leads that effort. The vision for the neighborhood includes improving opportunities for existing residents and attracting new stable, low-moderate income households to the community.

Alongside the development of affordable housing that includes more than 600 homeownership units, capacity building for community-based organizations, and job training for neighborhood residents, a major component of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative is school improvement. In 1995, Enterprise entered into an agreement with the Baltimore City Public School System to introduce curriculum reform, academic enrichment programs, professional development, and social services at three of the elementary schools serving Sandtown-Winchester. The Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative began with a \$1 million grant from the Annenberg Foundation and has since received numerous smaller grants from foundations and corporate donors. In 1999, the Initiative received an additional unsolicited \$1 million grant from the Annenberg Challenge to continue its work.

At each of the schools, new principals were hired and new curricula introduced in 1997. The schools were not formally reconstituted but some teachers were encouraged to retire or transfer to make room for teachers who supported the school's vision. One of the schools failed to implement the reforms and, in 2000, was placed under state reconstitution and private management. At the other two schools, William H. Pinderhughes and George G. Kelson Elementary, the reforms were fully implemented.

Both schools use the Direct Instruction and Core Knowledge curricula. Direct Instruction is highly scripted and involves continuous assessment. The Education Initiative chose Direct Instruction to achieve basic skills improvements in a short period of time and to mitigate the effects of the high rates of student mobility and teacher turnover, which have been major problems in this community. Core Knowledge is a research-based curriculum that focuses on teaching a common core of concepts, skills, and knowledge typically possessed by educated, "culturally literate" people in the United States. It is less scripted than Direct Instruction and covers a broader range of subject matter. The Education Initiative provided teachers with training in both Direct Instruction and Core Knowledge.

In 2003, the Baltimore Education Initiative received permission from the school board to expand Kelson School through the eighth grade, in order to protect the academic gains made by children graduating from elementary school. The expansion was completed in 2005 and elementary school students from both Kelson and Pinderhughes now attend middle school at Kelson. Results have been good for those children who have completed both elementary school and middle school under the Education Initiative – including admittance to some of the most prestigious public high schools in the city. The Initiative recently established a relationship with one of the city's alternative high schools

to provide an academically enriched and supportive high school option for Pinderhughes and Kelson graduates.

Test scores at the two schools have also improved dramatically since the start of the Initiative. In 1998, just 15 percent of first graders at Kelson met national standards for reading. By 2003, this percentage had increased to 64 percent. Similarly, the percentage of Pinderhughes first graders meeting reading standards went from 19 percent in 1998 to 78 percent in 2003, reaching a high of 88 percent in 2001. However, the academic achievement and school culture that the Initiative has achieved in the elementary schools has been challenged in recent years at the middle school by large numbers of students transferring in from failing schools elsewhere in the city. While Pinderhughes has met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements on the Maryland State Assessment every year since 2003, Kelson failed to meet AYP requirements in 2005 and 2006.

The goal of the Baltimore Education Initiative is to provide a continuum of support for students and their families from early childhood to high school. In addition to the curriculum and teaching reforms described above, the Initiative features an early childhood education program (HIPPI, Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters); additional academic supports (summer school, music enrichment, library renovations, computer labs); health and mental health clinics at the two schools; and mentoring. Also, a community resource center (CRC) has opened at Kelson School and is planned for Pinderhughes next year. The CRC connects the schools to the community by providing technology and literacy training for adults and referrals to supportive services. The CRC coordinator is an employee of a community-based organization, not the school. This allows the school principal to focus on instructional leadership, while the CRC coordinator focuses on addressing the non-academic needs of parents and students and building relationships with local service organizations. The goal is for the CRC to serve as a vehicle for community partnerships that will help sustain the school improvement effort. To this end, Enterprise is also supporting a community schools initiative citywide.



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