



Community Schools in Washington, D.C.

This Spring, DC VOICE established four membership chapters within D.C. and began hosting monthly chapter meetings for each. The chapters fall along four primary groups – youth, parents, alumni parents, and young professionals. These three categories do not fit all of our volunteers. But they are the leading characteristics with which our members identify.

This memo is submitted on behalf of the youth, parent and young professionals chapter of DC VOICE in response to constituent meetings held with the Chairman of the City Council, The Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, The Deputy Mayor for Education and the State Superintendent of Education around the issue of creating community schools in the District of Columbia.



BACKGROUND

In the Spring of 2010 legislation authored by DC VOICE and its partners to establish at least eight community schools within DCPS was introduced by the District of Columbia City Council. This stemmed from three years of community action research at more than 100 DCPS schools, seven town hall meetings to review the findings of that research, and a community caucus to vote on recommendations to address the findings. The Community Schools legislation was re-introduced in January, 2011 as part of a new legislative season. This Spring and Summer, DC VOICE staff and volunteers met with the City Council Chairman and key members of the city administration to identify support for the bill and ascertain what additional information is needed to move forward with funding and executing Community Schools in the District of Columbia. This process included meetings with the Deputy Mayor for Education (DMOE), the Deputy Mayor for Health (DMOH), the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and the Chairman of the D.C. City Council. From these meetings, several new questions and commitments arose. The memorandum seeks to address these questions and put forth steps for moving this pivotal piece of community-driven legislation forward.

Particularly, four primary issues are addressed in this memo regarding the establishment of Community Schools in Washington, DC: 1) Whether there is a preferred model for such a school (put forth by the DMOH), 2) How such schools can be financed, (put forth by the office of the City Council Chairman 3) What are some school sites that could be considered to become community schools (put forth by the DMOE) and 4) What is the demonstrated academic impact of incorporating a Community Schools approach to the delivery of public education (put forth by OSSE). We also provide some background on community schools in general, including local and national research.

The need for establishing community schools in Washington, DC emerged from our community action research with DC Public Schools (DCPS) principals over the past seven years. A growing number of principals have voiced concerns about meeting the non-academic needs of their students and their families in order to help raise student achievement. This need has been confirmed by DC community residents at DC VOICE Town Hall meetings, and is buttressed by national research about the multiple conditions that can adversely affect student learning. According to a recent article, “American schools won’t achieve their goal of “all students at proficiency” unless they attend to nonschool factors” (Henig and Reville, *Outside-In School Reform: Why Attention Will Return to Nonschool Factors*, Education Week, May 25, 2011).

The authors say that a more “common-sense framing” is needed for school and social reform, and that schools cannot do it all alone. We agree.

What is meant by the term “community school?” The common vision for community schools includes “schools that are centers of community, open more hours per day and more days per year, with opportunities and supports for children and families...Unlike traditional public schools, community schools link school and community resources as an integral part of their design and operation.” (DC VOICE in partnership with the Coalition for Community Schools, *“Working Together for Community Schools in the District of Columbia, 2009.”*)

Aggressive school reform efforts remain necessary in Washington D.C., and must be expanded to include factors beyond the classroom. According to the Broader, Bolder Task Force, “...there is solid evidence that policies aimed directly at education–related social and economic disadvantages can improve school performance and school achievement. The persistent failure of policy makers to act on that evidence – in tandem with a school-improvement agenda – is a major reason why the association between social and economic disadvantage and low student achievement remains so strong.” (*Statement: A Broader, Bolder Approach to Education*, www.boldapproach.org.) They suggest four priorities: 1) Continue to pursue school improvement efforts, 2) Increase investment in early childhood, 3) Increase investment in health service, and 4) Pay more attention to the time students spend out of school.

Real progress requires action at a systems level, which includes system level changes in order to provide the coordinated resources needed. As teacher Sarah Fine notes: “What the creation of community schools does require...is a shift in thinking. Schools have to recognize that non-academic factors play a key role in determining academic outcomes, and service organizations have to re-imagine themselves as actors in the education domain.” (Fine, *Community Schools: Reform’s Lesser-Known Frontier*, *Education Week*, February 1, 2010.)

COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL

There is no one model for a successful community school that would fit all local situations. However the following components provide a common foundation that can lead to the success of any community school, regardless of site to site differences:

1. *A Lead Agency*

One organization or agency must serve as the locus for implementation and management of the initiative. In some communities this is the school system or other government agency, in others it is a community-based organization. Typical responsibilities include supporting a multi-stakeholder leadership group, developing a results-based framework, providing technical assistance and professional development, communicating with the general public, and evaluating the community schools initiative.

2. *Extended time*

Creating a community school means the school becomes the center of the community where educational, recreational and other kinds of programs and resources are available outside of regular school hours. For example, extended hours are necessary for students, parents, families, and community members to be able to take advantage of services such as student tutoring and enrichment programs, parenting workshops or English as a Second Language classes, sports, arts and music programs and other extra-curricular activities, career and technical training, etc.

3. *Additional staffing*

A site coordinator is essential to a community school. Key aspects of this role are recruiting and coordinating the various non-school resources in the school, and facilitating the involvement and engagement of parents and community. The coordinator must be in constant communication with the Principal, at several levels, including coordinating service delivery on a daily basis, and providing additional resources through grant writing and other fund development. Even if funded by a third party, the coordinator should be embedded within the school, working in close partnership with the school administration. A site coordinator is crucial.

4. *Shared space*

Because of the extended time use of the building and multiple programs operating, much of the school space will be used for more than one person or function, and must therefore be shared. Flexibility is essential in sharing space within the community school. The school administrator and site coordinator can model effective space sharing practices, even as they are called upon to create the conditions to make it work effectively.

5. *Productive partnerships*

A strong pro-family service delivery system is particularly important in a community with a weak infrastructure, and/or where families have few resources. Key to the success of a community school are the productive partnerships that make this delivery system possible. All of the partners involved in creating a community school need to have a clear vision of the outcomes desired and work together to maximize resources to fulfill those outcomes. Some community schools have multiple community partners, and others operate with a lead partner. One of the positive side effects of having multiple partners is the opportunity to maximize existing resources and services of multiple organizations/agencies serving the same families or community.

6. *Improved student achievement*

This is the bottom line. The reason schools and their communities need to work together on behalf of their students is to ensure their academic success in school and later in life. An initial needs assessment should be conducted to identify what is standing in the way of the students in that community achieving at their highest potential. Certain risk factors such as poverty, premature parenthood, substance abuse, unemployment, and homelessness may be present in the existing school's community. Alleviating the affects of those conditions

should drive what partnerships, programs and services are then initiated. But the bottom line should always be how all efforts can help students achieve well academically.

Finally, good communication is a key element to community school success in two ways: 1) internally, to facilitate collaborating between school and partners and among all the partners involved in the community school initiative, and 2) externally, being able to communicate to the broader community the necessity of launching the community school model and what its potential is for improving education for that community's children and benefiting the lives of community residents.

HOW TO FINANCE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools can provide substantial savings to the District of Columbia. By integrating and leveraging funding for schools, health and social service providers, youth development organizations, higher education institutions, and other public and private agencies, community schools make the most of scarce resources. As previously indicated, full-time, site-level coordinators are an essential component. This staff is one of the few fixed costs of community schools, however, and is relatively inexpensive, considering that schools can fund coordinators through Title I, and that coordinators themselves often generate revenue by writing grant applications and identifying additional eligible federal and state financial resources. In general, local funding for community schools has produced an impressive return on investment. A recent survey of 286 community schools found that, on average, **for every dollar of school district funding towards coordinators, afterschool activities, health services, adult education, and other community school programs, a community school received three dollars from state, federal, and private sources.** Overall, the majority of these resources went directly towards improving student learning, with the costs of on-site coordinators representing just 7% of the total. (For more data and examples see Martin J. Blank, Reuben Jacobson, Atelia Melaville, Sarah S. Pearson. *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success* (November 2010), p.8, available at: www.communityschools.org.)

Community schools do not require new public spending so much as they target existing spending, and so cost estimates associated with community schools can be deceiving. That said, the survey cited above found that mature, full-service community schools took in between \$500,000 to \$1.8 million per year from various sources to finance their programs. For any given school, funding came from a diverse mix of district, city, county, state, federal, business, private foundation, and community group resources. This diversified funding model makes community schools resilient in the face of budget fluctuations, and it also tends to connect schools to a wider range of technical, professional development, and operational assistance. Multiple-source funding strategies also help to overcome silo effects between existing resources for communities and schools.

Additional funding sources for community schools include:

Educational Streams of Funding

- Title I
- SIG – Title I School Improvement Dollars
- 1003 G – School Improvement Dollars
- Special Education
- Title II – Professional Development
- Title III – English as a Second Language
- Title IV – Safe and Drug Free Schools
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Full Service Community Schools Grant
- Carol M. White Physical Education Grant
- Safe Schools / Healthy Students
- McKinney Vento Homeless Grant
- Even Start
- General Fund

Non-Educational Public Streams of Funding

- **Local Sources**
 - City General Fund
 - Special Taxes
- **State Sources**
 - Children’s Services
 - Housing & Community Services (emergency housing programs, etc.)
 - Energy Assistance Programs
- **Federal Sources**
 - USDA CACFP (afterschool & suppers) & Summer lunch
 - Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - Community Services Block Grant
 - Energy Assistance & Weatherization Funding
 - SAMHSA
 - Head Start
 - TANF & Child Care \$

Private Funding Streams

- **United Way**
- **Businesses/Corporations (including Hospitals)**
- **Foundations**
 - Community Foundations
 - Grantmakers in Education
 - Other Foundations
- **Universities**
- **Fees**

POTENTIAL SCHOOL SITES

The following list of schools has not been vetted with the schools themselves, but could provide the basis for beginning discussions on likely sites. The list excludes schools that may be in the midst of leadership and building changes as well as schools with higher social-economic numbers of students.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Seven of the 10 comprehensive high school administrators interviewed in the fall of 2010 said that with sufficient resources they would be interested in being a community school. Given that several of the high schools are in transition either in staffing or building renovations and other changes, we suggest looking at the following three as potential community school sites at this time:

- **Anacostia – Ward 8**
- **Coolidge – Ward 4**
- **Roosevelt – Ward 4**

MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION CAMPUSES

Sixty-seven percent of all school principals interviewed in 2009 noted interest in becoming a community school. Education Campuses serve grades pk through 8 and have good potential to become community schools including the likely stronger parent involvement in the lower grades and the opportunity to serve a broad range of student grades and ages.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

MacFarland – Ward 4
Eliot-Hine – Ward 6
Kelly Miller – Ward 7
Sousa – Ward 7
Kramer – Ward 8
Ron Brown – Ward 8

EDUCATION CAMPUSES

Brightwood - Ward 4
Whittier – Ward 4
Burroughs – Ward 5
Emery – Ward 5
Noyes – Ward 5
Walker-Jones – Ward 5
WEST – Ward 4
Wheatley – Ward 5
Winston – Ward 8

ACADEMIC IMPACT

Systems of community schools are making a difference in the lives of children, youth, and families across the country.

Tulsa, Oklahoma

The Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI) was established through the Tulsa Metropolitan Human Services Commission (MHSC) in 2007. It is administered by the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa (CSC) and guided by a community steering committee which includes leaders from the Union and Tulsa school districts. TACSI operates 18 community schools that serve as centers of community life, offering comprehensive programs, services, and opportunities to students, families, and the neighboring community.

Results: Researchers compared 18 TACSI schools to 18 non-TACSI schools found that students in TACSI schools that had deeply embedded the community school model scored significantly higher than comparable students in non-TACSI schools on math achievement tests. Further, the eighteen TACSI schools had higher ratings of instructional leadership, effective supervisory practices, culture of faculty trust was stronger, Instructional agency, student trust of teachers, school identification among students, parent trust in school, and school outreach than comparison schools.

Hartford, Connecticut

In 2007 Hartford's Mayor and Superintendent convened The Community Partnership, a group of local leaders, to act as the planning body for the development of community schools in Hartford. In 2008, five schools were selected as the first cohort of Hartford Community Schools (HCS). In 2008, the Board of Education adopted a community school policy outlining the model and a framework for implementation. In the spring of 2011, two additional schools were being developed as community schools. Currently, a policy framework is also being established to plan for the evolution of all district schools as community schools.

Results: Despite being a relatively new initiative, HCS is already showing promise in improving academic outcomes. In 2010; HCS schools had a greater percentage of students proficient in reading than the Hartford average in 2010.

Multnomah County, Oregon

In Multnomah County, Oregon, Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) transforms schools into community learning centers. They bring together schools, community leaders and agency professionals to plan the best ways to support youth – in education, family involvement, and the community, providing services and making good use of community buildings. SUN uses the following teams to organize their work: an Operating Team consisting of the principal, site manager and lead agency; a Site Partners Team representing all the entities in the school that

work with the students; and a Site Advisory Body with broad representation from the school, youth, families and community. SUN is a partnership of Multnomah County, the City of Portland including Children's Investment Fund, local school districts, the Oregon Department of Human Services, a Business Leader's Roundtable, and non-profits.

Results: Data show that students who regularly participated in SUN activities showed strong gains in academics, attendance and behavioral areas. For example, 76% increased state benchmark scores in Reading and Math, the average daily school attendance was 95%, and 74% had a more positive attitude toward school.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati's community schools initiative started when the district engaged the community about how to bring about increased schools and community engagement. Cincinnati Public Schools decided to transform Cincinnati's schools into Community Learning Centers (CLC). Currently, all Cincinnati schools are using some level of the community school strategy. CLC has

organized city partners around core work areas such as physical and mental health, college access, tutoring, parent engagement, and early childhood. These partners are better organized to strategically meet the needs of individual CLC schools without duplicating services.

Results: Cincinnati Public Schools have been the most improved urban district in Ohio. It is the first urban district in the state to receive an "effective" rating. The district had a rating of "academic emergency" when the CLC work first began. Oyler Elementary School was once threatened with closure. The diverse Title I school is 1% Hispanic, 37% African American, and 62% Caucasian. Ninety-two percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Oyler has achieved above its expected level of growth for more than two consecutive years. The school's performance index has improved by 6% in the last two years alone.

Providence, Rhode Island

The Providence Public School district recognized the success of a local Federal Full Service Community School (FSCS) grantee and has decided to scale up the community school strategy district-wide. Superintendent Steven Adamowski said, "The normal day beginning at 8 o'clock and ending at 2:30 is not going to be sufficient for the community and student achievement for our students. We need a structure, a coalition of organizations, to assist what we're trying to do with the school district because it's a bigger issue than public education." The Providence FSCS Initiative will create an easily accessible, comprehensive set of services based in the school. By integrating these services with existing school systems and curriculum, children and families will experience success and maximize learning.

Results: The district started to fully implement the FSCS strategy during the 2010-2011 school year. However, results from Bailey Elementary School, the first FSCS, are positive. In 2009 Bailey met AYP in both math and reading for the first time in 4 years. In reading, third-graders went from scoring 27 percent proficiency in 2007 to 41 percent in 2009; fourth-graders jumped

from 28 percent proficiency to 59 percent during the same period and fifth-graders moved from 12 percent proficiency to 39 percent.

CONCLUSION

Community Schools legislation in Washington D.C. is necessary and urgent to “initiate public and private partnerships to coordinate educational, developmental, family health and after-school care programs for students, families and local communities, at a public school or public charter school with the objectives of improving academic achievement, reducing absenteeism, building stronger relationships between students, parents, and within communities, and improving skills, capacity, and well being of the surrounding community residents.” (*The District Of Columbia Community Schools Incentive Amendment Act of 2010*, reintroduced by the District Council in January, 2011.)

The volunteers, partners, staff and Board of DC VOICE look forward to hearing from you soon on scheduling a follow up discussion that will allow us to develop a plan of action to address this urgent need immediately.

DC VOICE Community Schools Task Force

21 st Century School Fund	DC Action for Children	The Flamboyant Foundation
American Federation of Teachers	DC Alliance of Youth Advocates	Metro TeenAids
The Arc of DC	DC Assembly on School-Based Health Care	Pre-K For All
The Brookings Institute	DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy	Sasha Bruce Youthwork
Coalition for Community Schools	DC Language Access Coalition	Teaching for Change
Communities in Schools	DC VOICE Board of Directors	Urban Alliance Foundation
The Community Foundation		The Urban Institute
Critical Exposure		Youth Education Alliance

DC VOICE Campaign for Equity Supporters

21 st Century School Fund	East of the River Community Development	Nat'l Commission on Teaching and America's Future
All Nations Baptist Church	East of the River Economic Development Corp.	NCNW Washington Section
All Souls Unitarian Social Justice Ministries	Ed Excelencia	Near Northeast Citizens Against Crime and Drugs
Alliance of Concerned Men	Elise Whitlow Stokes Community PCS	NFTE-Greater Washington
American Institute for Research	Empower DC	Ocean Conservancy
American Youth Policy Forum	Ethiopian Community Center INC.	On the Fly
ANC 1 B01, ANC 4 B04, ANC 7A	Excel Academy PCS	ONE DC
ANC7D, ANC 8A	Experience Corps DC	Opportunities Industrializations Center
Anacostia Coordinating Council	FACTS	Parents United
Arts Creates Life	Falconsedge Male Task Force Inc.	Parklands Community Center
Asian American LEAD	Fight for Children	Pleasant Plains Civic Association
Black Nurses Assoc. of Wash., DC	Ft. Stanton Civic Association	Prince William Health Partnership
Black Women United for Action	Georgetown University Perry School	Public Education Network
Booker T. Washington PCS	Greater DC Cares	Reach for College
Bridges PCS	Heads up	Septima Clark PCS
Cakelove	Healthcare Services Development Corp.	SHAPPE
Center for Child Protection & Family Support	Higher Achievement	Spirit of Excellence Inc.
Center for Community Change	Icon Chess Foundation	Teaching for Change
Center for Inspired Teaching	Imagine Photography	The Arc of DC
CentroNia	Independence Now, Inc.	The Children's Law Center
Chevy Chase Citizens Association	Innercity-Innerchild	Turning the Page
Children's Studio School of the Art & Humanities	Institute for Educational Leadership	Twight Light Legal Services
Cleveland Park Citizens Assoc.	JMC of Life Community PCS	U.S Committee for Refugees & Immigrants
Communities in Schools	Kingman Boy & Girls Club	Unique Inc.
Covenant Baptist Church	Kingman Park Civic Association	United Planning Organization
Covenant House	Latin American Youth Center	University Legal Services
Dance Institute of Washington	League of Women Voters DC	Urban Alliance Foundation
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates	Level Ten	Vietnamese-American Comm. Service Center
DC Area Writing Project	Little Lights Urban Ministries	Ward 8 Business Council
DC Arts & Humanities Collaboration	Live to Create	Ward 5 Council on Education
DC Center	Marshall Heights Community Development Organization	Ward 8 Democrats
DC Language Access coalition	Mary McLeod Bethune PCS	Ward 4 & 8 Education Council
DC NAACP	Mary's Center for Maternal & Child care	WE AIDS
Deal Academy PCS	Multi Cultural Services DC PIRC	Woodbridge Civic Association
E.L. Haynes PCS	Meridica PCS	Word-up Bible Study
Eagle Academy PCS	Momies TLC	Worth the Wait, LLC Worth the Wait
Early Childhood Academy	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Rev. Inc.
East of the River Clergy Police	Multi-media training Institute, Inc	YEA
Community Partnership	National Associations of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies	YMCA