

nsbn monograph with funding from the stuart foundation

what



next

new schools | better neighborhoods | more liveable communities



Real World NSBN Example #6 – Lennox

a common vision
tempered by experience

new schools
better neighborhoods
more livable communities

“Working to ensure that schools are the center of our communities couldn’t be more timely. With waning state resources to fund critical services—from education to parks, health care to transportation—local communities must be empowered to leverage multi-agency capacity to help families get what they need during these difficult times. Neighborhood schools provide a unique opportunity for these efforts to connect and better address the needs of California’s diverse communities.”

– Darrell Steinberg,
CALIFORNIA SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEM

“. . . [N]eighborhoods most in need of more school seats are also the neighborhoods most in need of access to family health care, green space, affordable housing, and early childhood and adult education. We also know that the social and physical environments of neighborhoods contribute to the ultimate success of students and their families.”¹

– Dr. Jonathan Fielding
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

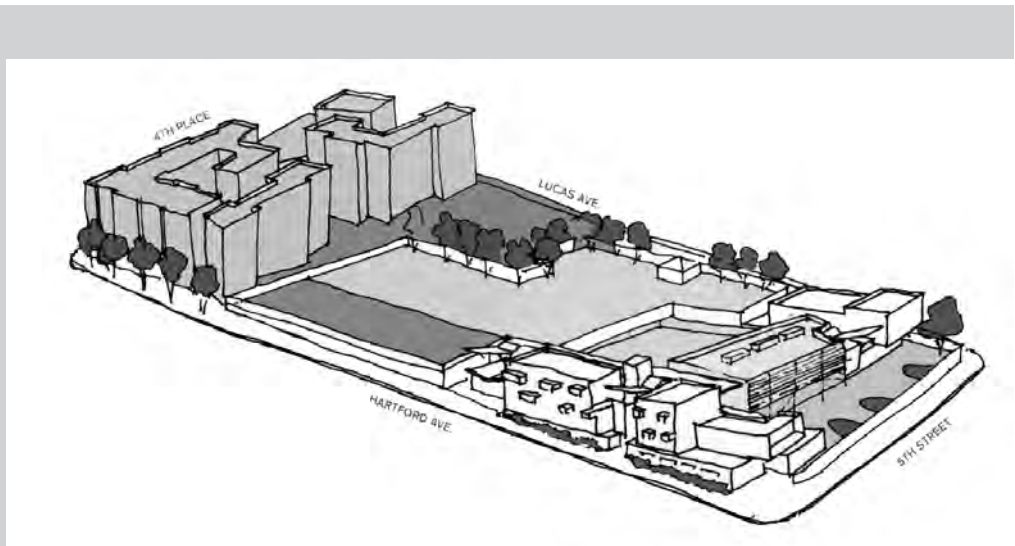
“The attitude of the LAUSD was ‘get ‘er done.’ It had to be almost from day one. The voters had approved the first \$2.4 billion school bond. In order to pass a second bond, we had to show progress. And we did show progress. We ‘got ‘er done.’ We got projects sited. We closed on projects. We got things built! On the other hand, as David Abel said: ‘There was no client directing what got done; there was a lack of leadership other than to ‘get’er done.’ The lack of clarity in the sense of (instructional) purpose of the (new school building program) was a hurdle that was met by ‘analytics.’ ”

– James Sohn
INTERIM CHIEF FACILITIES EXECUTIVE, LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



contents

3	A Common Vision Tempered By Experience
5	Table of Contents
7	NSBN Forward: What Then? What Now? What Next?
10	What If: Ten Year History of Putting “Facts on the Ground”
14	What Now: Challenges and Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative Management• Systemic Economics• Integrative Policy• Nexus Planning• Engaging the Community• Moving from Sustainability to Transformation
29	What Next <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A New Call to Convergence• Making It Happen
32	Acknowledgments
33	Case Studies – “Facts on the Ground”
39	References



Real World NSBN Example #1
Westlake/Gratts

DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS: Affordable housing for large families, Boys & Girls Club invited to manage playgrounds after school, 3-story school building – allowing for more open space, and early education center on lower level of school building.

forward

WHAT Then? What Now? What Next?

NSBN's first monograph, "What if"^{II}, published in 1999, envisioned an ambitious leveraging of billions of taxpayer bond dollars slated as public education facilities investments into a powerful force for reshaping blighted low-income neighborhoods into vital communities with schools as their vibrant centers.

The forward of "What if" read: "New Schools / Better Neighborhoods is no longer just the title of a one-time Spring gathering of civic and educational leaders at a Getty Center Symposium. It is the vision of a committed cadre of neighborhood, regional and state leaders who see the potential of voter-approved school, park, library, health and other public funds being intelligently utilized to build not only public facilities that keep the rain out, but more livable urban communities in California. As this compelling report by Steven Bingler makes clear, to fully realize the promise of such an investment strategy in our State, the Smart Growth and School Reform movements must "converge."

Drawing lessons from a decade of NSBN and like efforts and accomplishments, NSBN again has invited urban designer and architect Steven Bingler, with generous funding from the Stuart Foundation, to:

- analyze the altered political and regulatory landscape that fuels continued public and private sector focus on building place-based, neighborhood serving partnerships around educational facilities
- summarize specific cases that provide "facts on the ground" as a springboard for future efforts
- document significant lessons learned, best and promising new practices, and new opportunities

The product of his research is this monograph: "What Next?"

This new monograph begins with NSBN's creation in 1999 following a conference at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, to celebrate not only the passage of Los Angeles Unified School District's first school bond in 25 years, but also the passage of multi-billion dollar state and local library and park bonds. The galvanizing mission of the conveners was: to advocate for a vision of public facilities, most especially schools, that would breathe new life into underserved neighborhoods by integrating what communities need – more preschools, recreational centers, adult education centers and health-related services sites – into traditional single-use, public school buildings and campuses.

NSBN placed schools as the nexus of a revitalized community, a learning center with more grandmothers strolling than police officers patrolling, a safe place where families and residents could come to play sports, take a parenting class, drop their children off for pre-school, get their blood pressure checked and more – a vision that contrasts sharply with fenced-in urban mega-school campuses that shut the community out by having restricted access and limited hours.

The recommendations in NSBN’s “What if” were informed by a holistic view of how students learn and develop sociallyⁱⁱⁱ, and by a commitment to inclusive community planning. This James Irvine Foundation funded monograph anticipated the fusion of state and national school reform and smart growth initiatives; and, included policies and practices critical to building not only new schools, but also healthier neighborhoods and more livable communities.

Moving from vision to real-time facilities projects, NSBN identified four key goals for investing more than \$100 billion in California state and local bond monies dedicated for such school, library, park, housing and health facility investments:

- Create a strategy for including community dialogue in determining the optimal location and design of schools, parks, libraries, pre-kindergarten and other public serving facilities.
- Move from the outmoded single purpose “factory model” that previously defined public school building design to a model of community-focused schools that anchor increasingly diverse, family-centered neighborhoods.
- Understand how place-based, joint ventures between schools and other social services (family resource centers, health, recreation, libraries) can leverage scarce assets and help make schools the centers of community.
- Promote changes in statutes, regulations and/or decision-making processes necessary to implement policies that comprehensively align government and neighborhood service delivery systems.

Unfortunately, while school district building design has improved and new legislation offers promise, most states and school district have not made sitting, designing and building joint and shared use schools easier or mandatory. Nor have school districts embraced silo-bridging concepts and strategies to fully leverage all resources available to offer and enhance neighborhood and family services on school campuses. Nevertheless, over the last 10 years, a number of instructive examples of joint-use community schools in California and nationally have been “smartly” sited, designed and constructed. Individually and collectively these “facts on the ground” offer us an opportunity to imagine success at scale.

NSBN proudly counts as successful a number of metropolitan Los Angeles urban learning centers that now extend the learning environment further out into the community to take better advantage of a wider range of community resources. They include: Lennox (Whelan Elementary Project), Pico Union (Westlake-Gratts Project), Paramount (Los Cerritos Elementary

Project), and East Hollywood (Santa Monica Boulevard Community Charter School). A dozen preschool sites were developed with support from Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP).

Also documented herein are like national and international examples of success.

Along with achieving some measure of success come lessons learned. The vision and goals outlined by NSBN too often ran contrary to the way things are done. There's no way to easily align the silos: school, park, library, early education and health-care accountability and funding streams; and few, if any, public authorities exist to demand cross jurisdictional and program collaboration. The status quo has defined the success of most school building programs with metrics - demographic projections, cost of real estate, ease of securing approvals, seats added. Less valued were pedagogical needs, smart planning principles, community health imperatives; these intangibles were viewed by public officials and facilities authorities as more difficult to measure and evaluate and too time consuming to accomplish. The challenge of implementing NSBN's vision was further compounded by what might be called public indifference – no informed, organized and determined constituency demanding new, holistic ways to solve inner-city service delivery problems.

Ten years after publishing “What if”, the institutional and bureaucratic silos remain and the current economic crisis pervading every level of government have become more dire. The increasing lack of service funding and program collaboration compounds the threat to our children's education and our quality of life in urban neighborhoods. Despite the challenges, NSBN and similar intermediaries are better prepared to advance and more committed than ever to the core principles of neighborhood centered, joint use planning. And thankfully, there's still time and opportunity to build new and “greener”^{IV} schools, better neighborhoods and more livable communities.

LAUSD, for example, still has a guaranteed \$8 billion or more in bond money available over the next 10 to 12 years. And the district has three years to plan—time enough to look at how it designs the next stage of facility projects. The staff of LAUSD facilities department is engaged presently in a process of surveying the physical environment of all of its schools on a complex-by-complex basis. The district then will create a priority list, which in the words of LAUSD Interim Chief Facilities Executive, James Sohn, “must adjust to our pedagogical mission and have a (more community oriented) focus for each complex and school facility.”

NSBN believes the fresh insights included in this monograph serve as a resource for school districts, citizen leaders, community organizations, service providers, and elected officials who share the call for urgent action toward the creative deployment of California's vital human, financial and environmental resources to our inner city and inner suburban schools and neighborhoods.

David Abel

CHAIRMAN

New Schools / Better Neighborhoods

April, 2010

what if

“ . . . (W)e are in a new time where we need to see school facilities as community learning centers—buildings that are open longer, later and for more members of the community, schools that become the hub and center of the community. Now this is not a new concept. The community school movement has existed for well over 60 years. What’s different is the scale of this movement. Many urban mayors are working hard to support full service community schools that link education, health and recreational needs together.”

– Richard Riley (NSBN Getty Symposium, 1999)
FORMER UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Ten-Year History of Putting “Facts on the Ground”

In May 1999, New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) convened a key symposium at the Getty Center in Los Angeles to explore a more collaborative and systemic approach to building new urban schools, urban design and community development in California. Local, state and national officials, experts in education, planning and architecture, public health, as well as community activists and financial partners gathered at a time when \$14 billion in state bond money and \$2.4 billion in local school bonds had been set aside in “silos” for schools, libraries and parks facilities. During the course of the day, one key emerged: Should the funds be spent on single-use buildings and sites or would communities be better served with a shared-facilities model? Participants became invested and excited about the idea of developing schools that could serve as shared-use centers of their communities would serve a broad group of constituencies.

After the symposium, NSBN and its sister organization, the Metropolitan Forum Project, with financial support from the James Irvine Foundation published a monograph called “What if” that melded the “schools reform” movement with emerging smart-growth principles of urban and regional planning. To connect the idea with real-world examples, “What if” proffered a series of simple questions aimed at revolutionizing thinking about creating better neighborhoods and more livable communities:

What if school gymnasiums and play fields could double as community parks and recreation centers?

What if school auditoriums could also serve as community theaters?

And *what if* centralized libraries, health clinics and other community services could be incorporated into the design of school sites to facilitate greater community access and engagement?

What if early childhood and adult education classes could be on K-12 campuses?

What if affordable housing could be planned to abut new school facilities and parks?

The “What if” approach could also be applied to existing community assets—YMCAs and YWCAs, community centers, museums and zoos—to increase the breadth and quality of real world learning while leveraging public and nonprofit investments.

At the time, many city planners, community organizers, educators and others were concerned about how increased population growth would impact California’s economic, environmental and educational future. Growth forecasts for the state of California projected a 37% increase in population by 2020, which translates into adding nearly 4 million new residents, the equivalent of the population of Los Angeles, every seven years.^v To prepare for such growth, the hope was that if public entities responsible for the development of all of the state’s interrelated programs and facilities could plan and implement their work collaboratively, the result would be a more cost-effective and equitable collection of new facilities and programs for California’s neighborhoods and communities.

“What if” also identified some concerning environmental implications tied to emerging urban and regional planning principles of smart growth. The car and its attendant infrastructure – streets, highways and parking lots – were already consuming at least a third of all developed land in California, causing increases in traffic congestion and loss of productivity as well as the loss of open space, air pollution and other public health issues.

With these challenges in mind, “What if” called for a realignment of policies around more livable and cost-effective strategies for allocating the state’s resources. By embracing this more collaborative and community-centered approach to planning, schools, cities and towns would become more attractive to live in because they would be:

- creating magnets for urban development;
- encouraging the development of inner-city housing and employment;
- improving mobility;
- reducing suburban migration; and
- conserving green fields for agriculture.

In addition, “What if” proposed that California’s system of education would be improved by encouraging the creation of learning communities within the infrastructure of the urban environment, enhancing opportunities for community access and participation and supporting teachers and school administrators by providing more affordable and attractive places to live and work.

To address these goals, the report called for changes in policies and practices to support participatory and community-based planning; shared school and community use of public facilities; planning of urban and suburban projects based on smart growth principles; leveraging school bonds with voter-approved bond measures for libraries, parks and early education; assessment of all public

expenditures based on the concept of integrated resource development; and the creation of an ongoing vehicle for communication and decision-making between all agencies, institutions, and organizations involved in education reform and smart-growth planning and development.

NSBN developed an operating mission to serve as a catalyst and third-party intermediary to front-fund and collaboratively manage the master planning of joint-use, community-centered schools, pre-K facilities, affordable housing, libraries and parks as healthy centers of their neighborhoods. With funding from foundations and other grantors, NSBN's portfolio of joint-use projects in Los Angeles County showcases the civic and educational value of leveraging more than \$20 billion of voter-approved school bonds to build not only better public schools but sustainable and healthy family-centered neighborhoods.

NSBN offered neighborhood stakeholders and collaborating school districts:

- third-party facilitation and underwriting of architectural/technical predevelopment services for site identification, development of facilities designs and master site plan, and project budgeting;
- coordination and facilitation of meetings among collaborative stakeholders and community members;
- access to business and political leadership to form relationships in support of projects;
- coordination and facilitation of relationships between residential and institutional stakeholders;
- a project facilitator to work alongside the stakeholder groups on an as-needed basis to insure that projects maintain forward momentum from concept through construction and occupancy;
- identification and facilitation of other potential joint uses of proposed projects and other potential joint development partners;
- identification and facilitation of potential funding opportunities and other resources for implementing the master site plan; and
- establishment of agreements to develop community-centered projects through Memoranda of Understanding signed by the collaborative partners.

NSBN's first project was in Pico-Union/Westlake, an area west of downtown Los Angeles and one of the nation's densest neighborhoods with a significantly underserved population. Pico-Union, as it's called, was in desperate need of new schools, preschools and child-care facilities as well as quality affordable housing and open space. At the request of the mayor and local city councilmember, NSBN worked in partnership with community stakeholders, the City of L.A and LAUSD to plan for and co-locate investments in early education, housing, open space, schools and other community essentials (leveraging voter approved bond funds). Parents and community stakeholders participated in a six-month collaborative planning process sponsored by NSBN that culminated in a joint-use development whose major components were adopted and are now being built by LAUSD and a developer of affordable housing.

Over the past decade, NSBN has collaborated with other metropolitan school districts, architects, and community stakeholders, including public health leaders, to offer technical support and models of success to emulate. The result is an accomplished portfolio of early prototypes that reveal different aspects of the community joint-use model: Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Wakefield Community of Friends and Sun Valley/Yaroslavsky Champions in Los Angeles, the Huerta Elementary School in Lennox and the Paramount Project in the city of Paramount.

The Need for Joint-Use Community-Centered Development

Families with infants and young children who have few economic means are seriously challenged, socially and educationally, in Los Angeles County and across the United States. Wages and formal education levels of these children's parents often fall well below minimum standards required for daily living. Public schools in these areas are overcrowded with low high school graduation rates. Gangs, crime and lack of regular maintenance have taken their toll on neighborhood parks. These low-income families have inadequate access to daycare, early childhood education facilities, family resource centers and health clinics. Housing available to their income level often is substandard. Compounding these community deficits, the older inner-city and inner-suburban neighborhoods have little available open land and, until very recently, lacked the investment capital necessary to build new housing, preschools, day care, pocket parks, branch libraries and the kind of community amenities that help revitalize neighborhoods and nurture families who live in those neighborhoods.

Studies conducted by UCLA's Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities and The Advancement Project, a policy action group based in Los Angeles, confirm that deteriorating schools and neighborhoods disproportionately affect the life prospects and school readiness of poor children living in inner-city communities and in low-income suburban enclaves. More specifically, the physical and social health of entire neighborhoods remain at risk when the institutions expected to educate and support children have been relegated to second- and third-rate status. Failing to build public schools, especially in poor communities, as mixed-use, family resource centers, as holistically integrated centers of community learning, not only defies economic sense but also creates inequity and injustice.^{VI}

Two seminal reports published in January 2007 further highlight the pressing need for broader community development opportunities:

- “Citywide Gang Activity Reduction Strategy: Phase 3 Report” by The Advancement Project documents the impact of gang violence for the past 20 years in Los Angeles. Specifically, this report advocates that “comprehensive, neighborhood-based, school-centered strategies for effective prevention, intervention, and community development will be needed in order to . . . pull ‘sliding communities’ with emerging violence back to safety and keep safe areas safe.”

This study concludes that the solutions to the gang crisis in Los Angeles “require cross-silo creativity, bold leadership, smart strategy, and sustained focus.” We believe these findings confirm NSBN’s outside-the-box approach to community service delivery problem solving and dovetails with the values that lie at the core of NSBN’s mission to improve the lives of children and their families throughout Los Angeles County.

- Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s report titled “The Schoolhouse Framework” illustrates the need for new and innovative ideas for realizing a great public education for every child in Los Angeles. Specifically, the mayor’s report calls for schools to be “neighborhood centers” with strong family and community involvement. He proposes that this “neighborhood-centered” model support schools by establishing relationships with a broad range of partners including parent groups, local businesses, health-care agencies, libraries, parks, and others. The mayor invited NSBN to help develop the schoolhouse framework, further validating the need for, and value of, the organization’s approach to community development.



what now

“For public education to really reach its potential, you have to rally the entire city behind the effort. You have to have the parks, the police, the private sector, the philanthropic community, the not-for-profit, social service agencies, and religious leaders backing you. Again, rallying the whole city, you can do some things differently . . . I think the problem is that public education has been an island. Our mayor is adamant that the best gift he can give to the city is well-educated children.”

– Arne Duncan

U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, FORMER CEO FOR CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“This approach is unique and exciting because it envisions schools as central to a community. It’s long understood that communities need strong foundations in order to be healthy and grow, and this approach recognizes that schools are central to that foundation. Understanding a school within the context of its community, and better integrating the life of that school into the life of its community will produce synergistic benefits to both the school and the community.”

– John Perez (2010)

SPEAKER, CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY

Challenges & Opportunities

“We’ve got to say, if a facility could be used by a school district, and a facility can be use by the city, and they can jointly work out between the two of them how they can be used, then the taxpayer’s a winner, the school’s a winner, the city’s a winner. Everybody’s a winner!”

– Jack Scott

CHANCELLOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND FORMER STATE SENATOR

National and international strategies for systematic planning and design concepts have continued to evolve along the lines of what NSBN proposes for California. These new planning models focus on an evolving and comprehensive nexus of the physical, cultural, social, educational, organizational and economic domains of community infrastructure. At the core of these emerging models are qualitative ideas about: community place-making; more collaborative management of service delivery, systemic leveraging of public resources, integrative public policy, nexus planning of facilities, sustainability and community engagement.

NSBN’s collaboration with the Lennox School District in Los Angeles County underscores what happens when collaborative planning for community schools is taken seriously. Ken Knott, assistant superintendent for the Lennox School District, wrote at the conclusion of NSBN’s collaboration: “What is exciting about the process that NSBN provided us with was the opportunity to include other folks that generally cannot afford to come and join us in our facility planning conversations. Through NSBN’s collaborative master planning effort, the opportunities for shared and joint use expanded.”

Randall Lewis, a master developer/builder of communities in Southern California, summed up the potential of joint-use community /school planning to improve the health of communities: “The ‘un-built’ environment provides some interesting opportunities for us. We try to attack it on four different fronts. The first is to have a plan that in itself promotes health. We want to make sure that there are places to go, there are parks, trails, safe streets that kids can walk on. The second approach is to create uses within that plan that encourage healthy living. These could be community centers, swimming pools, tennis courts and gymnasiums. Third are the partnerships and the programs that go on within our planned communities. Finally, we look at some of the policies of the city itself. For example, the school district in the City of Chino has pledged to serve healthier food and is considering a policy to encourage more physical education.”

But despite successful projects like the above – including one in Pico-Union/Westlake, one of the area’s densest neighborhoods – institutional challenges to joint use development of public schools and learning centers remain daunting.

In most jurisdictions, public funding streams for schools, parks, family resource centers, libraries, early education and housing developments are encased in impenetrable policy and organizational “silos,” with few incentives to collaborate and little cross communication. For example, in California, school facility funding is state-driven while affordable housing

funding is locally driven; each jurisdiction requiring adherence to unique requirements and rigid timelines. Similarly, each library and park bond includes voter-approved project qualifications that rarely include incentives to collaborate with other providers of neighborhood services. There also is the risk that delays from joint-use collaboration will negatively impact construction labor and materials cost. Lastly, restrictive zoning and planning constraints, as well as environmental review and remediation requirements create project pro forma uncertainty.

Thus, the promise of beneficial public outcomes and financial rewards for smart collaboration are outweighed by the short-term construction and operational costs of silo-linkage. The aforementioned have led most school district's to: "get'er done on time and on budget" by avoiding "complexity."

Collaborative Management

“ . . . (A)s long as you're in the business of acquiring land and building schools, it doesn't take that much more effort - and not even that much more money- to make the school site a broader community-based site with all kinds of community-based assets.”

– Zev Yaroslavsky
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR

The building of successful, planned, mixed-use schools and inner-city development projects, with a partnering venture between numerous public agencies and community stakeholders, remains the exception rather than the rule.

Some of the greatest challenges in implementing systemic planning and development can be found in organizational and bureaucratic management practices. In Los Angeles, the prevailing mind-set behind these isolated organizational practices is the district's reliance on a non-integrated approach to analytics. While LAUSD, over the last ten years, has invested \$14 billion in construction of new schools, and thousands of children no longer have to ride a bus and attend year-round schools – the district's reliance on analytics has been responsible for some significant missed opportunities.

In 1999, NSBN strongly encouraged LAUSD to adopt more integrated practices, but little was accomplished. The district's facilities program, which had not built a school in more than three decades, was in need of triage and was unable to consider NSBN's recommendations. In 2000, NSBN supported a second successful LAUSD bond measure after receiving assurances from the district that more progressive community-based planning and design practices would be forthcoming. Yet in the second phase, many of the same shortcomings were repeated.

Kathi Littman, former director of Facilities Planning for LAUSD, offers the following explanation of why the district's management challenges were too difficult for NSBN to overcome:

"I think originally the idea of building schools as centers of community was endorsed by a lot of folks and accepted by the community.... But the facilities design got driven by state standards as opposed to how educators want to teach and how LAUSD could use the new design concepts to enhance learning. Thus, commitments to design and build centers of community were limited to those ideas that were the easiest to push off as "collaboration".

". . . The hurdle for joint use collaboration was established when the school, park, and library bond were written without an umbrella framework of rules for accessing and utilizing the funds for joint use. Once policy is set, it is nearly impossible to then begin a dialogue about how funds could be comingled or leveraged without violating each individual agency's set of rules.... We didn't catch it in the first challenge; but, by the second round of bond funding, we should have been able to gauge where housing and transportation, parks, and all of the other bonds for community services could be leveraged. Unfortunately, it just never happened because all parties viewed information sharing as a competitive disadvantage."

"Another challenge is that once you have external forces pushing for collaboration on the decision-making process, but don't have the collaboration strategy to support joint design, you either have external forces driving your design or you're left to the internal facilities team that just simply has to meet compliance requirements.

"Candidly, there wasn't a learning culture in LAUSD that was built within the design team or a joint use dialogue among agencies around facilities. That's bad. To be fair, it is really hard to engage with those other agencies. Each does what it was designed to do. Its DNA says, 'We're going to do this.' LAUSD is still hampered with its board's policies and procedures. They are still hampered with the staff in their buildings. They have the same old budgets. They have the same old procurement. It's new makeup on the same pig. You have to take it apart before you can transform the underlying structure- and collaborate."

"It is this wholesale restructuring that must now be the focus of policymakers in Sacramento. The ability to transform the system (for building communities) is an opportunity that in the short span of ten years has passed from guarded to urgent."

"(Lastly,) we don't need only a construction solution. Until the school district goes into the community and says: 'we plan to build centers of learning and encourage students to learn in your hospital, your community center,' LAUSD will never solve the problem of what is happening "in" the building – the school's walls must open to the neighborhood. So, James Sohn's challenge in finishing the district's remaining 52 schools (out of 131) is to create community-oriented schools that provide for the care of those children that have absent meaningful adults; schools must afford students opportunities for authentic apprenticeships in their neighborhood centers, that show them that there is a link between what happens during the day in their brains and what can happen in their community."

Systemic Economics

“Improvements in the learning of students from low income families will have to come as much from improvements in their outside-of-school lives as from their inside-of-school lives. To achieve this perspective, school leaders will need to widen their peripheral vision of school reform. They will need an eye for the whole chessboard of school and neighborhood and act on the obvious symbiosis. They will see school reform not as an end in itself but as an integral part of a system of interventions to rejuvenate learning for all, revitalize neighborhoods, and contribute to the economic and cultural development of the community. Adequate and stable mixed-income housing is as necessary to the establishment and generation of strong neighborhoods as strong schools.”

Elliot Washor

CO-FOUNDER, CO-DIRECTOR, BIG PICTURE

Some of the most complex challenges of community development are wrapped up in the management of competing issues and organizations. These challenges have typically been addressed through a set of organizations that focus on their own unique interests. School districts are charged with increasing student achievement. Health care providers are responsible for improving health and wellness. Housing agencies and authorities build affordable housing, and so on. Each entity does its best to contain costs and deliver its product within the limits of its own budget and staff. But people don't usually talk to each other, and that creates the aforementioned “silo” mentality. More systemic methods of planning and design can identify and achieve common outcomes with fewer resources.

A good example that illustrates the value of more systemic planning and design methods is the hybrid car. For years one set of auto engineers was content to use the internal combustion engine as a source of power while other engineers worked to perfect a sustainable electric car. It was only when creative minds put the two together, linking the gas-powered internal combustion engine with an electric generator in a single integrated system that a more practical approach to fuel economy could be realized. Although the initial cost of the two systems may have seemed redundant at first, the increased efficiency in fossil fuel consumption delivers a net reduction in financial, environmental and social liabilities over time.

Similar to the engineers of internal combustion automobiles, the planners of California's public educational system have focused their designs for student achievement squarely on academic test scores. This policy encourages school administrators to be selective about the students they enroll and retain. One easy way to achieve higher student averages, for example, has been to trim the number of underperforming students. Add to this that the cost of keeping these students in school is generally much higher than the cost of other higher achieving students.

Columbia Teachers College researchers Clive R. Belfield and Henry M. Levin in a study titled “The Price We Pay” detail some of the social and economic costs of school dropouts. The study notes that: “Although researchers generally agree on what makes for a good school environment,

not all children will succeed from exposure to the same conditions. Educational strategies and reforms may benefit students differently according to gender, race and other factors. The study goes on to show how decreases in labor market income and tax revenues along with increases in the cost of health services, criminal justice welfare programs result in a cost to public resources of \$209,100 for every school dropout.^{VII}

In the state of California, an average of 1 in 4 students drop out every year. More than 40% of these students are African-American and 30% are Latino. (California Department of Education Dropout Research Project 2008). Given the significant and sustained social and financial costs demonstrated by the Belfield/Levin study, it's clear that more creative and systemic solutions must be found.

These solutions include the Big Picture Company schools in Sacramento, Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego. Big Picture represents a paradigm shift in educational delivery systems by concentrating on the interests of students rather than relying only on teachers to mastermind all of the student's coursework. Every student is asked to come up with a project that they would find compelling. These projects are based in the community and involve community mentors.

Say, for example, a student decides that they would like to do a project involving health and wellness. Then the student's advisor (not teacher – but advisor) helps him or her find a doctor, nurse or other health practitioner in the community to work with. The school also requires the parent to engage in the process. Throughout the course of completing the project, this three-way adult support system is in play. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday the student meets with their advisor at school. On Tuesdays and Thursdays they meet with their mentors – in this case at a hospital or health clinic somewhere in the community.

The entire delivery system is focused on transforming the student's health and wellness project into a study of the mathematical, scientific, language arts and social studies content that they will need to graduate from high school and succeed in life. In this way each student is exposed to core educational content in a way that resonates with their own passions, interests and motivations for staying in school. Additional attention and support for all of the child's physical, social and psychological needs is accomplished through students, parent or guardian, and the school advisor. Through this nurturing triangle of caring support, each student is given the resources they need to survive and succeed.

With more than seventy Big Picture Company schools nationally and abroad, the model has achieved success in some of the most challenged inner-city communities. In 2009, Big Picture Company schools in California graduated 92% of their students. It is important to note that 70% of these students were enrolled in the school for a full four years. A total of 85% of graduates are now enrolled in post secondary education. The Big Picture model is systemic in nature, involving a wide range of public financial and human resources. This approach to student achievement points the way to the kinds of educational models that can make a difference, providing that public policy can be revised to encourage their replication.



Levin and Belfield's conclusions are further reinforced by recent findings at the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) - a holistic system of education, social service and community-building programs aimed at helping the children and families in a 97-block area of central Harlem in New York City. The programs that the Harlem Children's Zone offers are all carefully planned and well run, but none of them on their own are particularly revolutionary. It is only when they are considered together - as an integrated network - that their greatest value becomes apparent. Services, which start at birth and follow children to college, are meshed with an interlocking web that is dropped over an entire neighborhood.

In 1997, HCZ began within a 24-block zone. It soon expanded to 60 blocks – an area with about 6,500 children, more than 60 percent of whom live below the poverty line and three-quarters of whom score below grade level on statewide reading and math tests. In 2007, the project grew to almost 100 blocks, serving 7,400 children and over 4,100 adults.

The HCZ initially worked inside the New York public school system with greater and greater intensity, but eventually opted out by establishing charter schools. This charter school venture began in September 2004 with the opening of the first Promise Academy Charter Schools. In 2006, a health clinic opened in the middle-school building so the students could get free medical, dental and mental-health services. A program known as Beacon Community Centers turns public schools into community centers for children and adults during after-school, weekend and summer hours. Another program called Foster-Care Prevention Services strengthens troubled families so that children can remain connected to their parents and families. Altogether more than 20 programs operate simultaneously as a part of the HCZ integrated educational and community program support system.^{VIII}

Roland Fryer, a Harvard economist, and his colleague Will Dobbie have just finished a rigorous assessment of charter schools operated by the Harlem Children's Zone. They compared students in these schools to students in New York City as a whole. They found that the Harlem Children's Zone schools produced "enormous" gains. The most common education reform ideas produce gains of about 0.1 or 0.2 or 0.3 standard deviations. Promise Academy produced gains of 1.3 and 1.4 standard deviations. "The results changed my life as a researcher because I am no longer interested in marginal changes," Fryer observed in a subsequent e-mail. What Geoffrey Canada, Harlem Children's Zone's founder and president, has done is "the equivalent of curing cancer for these kids. It's amazing. It should be celebrated. But it almost doesn't matter if we stop there. We don't have a way to replicate his cure, and we need one since so many of our kids are dying – literally and figuratively."^{IX}

Combining the economic cost/benefit analysis of Henry Levin and Clive Belfield with the substantial achievement outcomes documented by the Big Picture Company and the Harlem Children's Zone creates compelling evidence that a more integrated and holistic approach to community schooling can increase student achievement and graduation rates and create systemic economic benefits at the same time. When implemented at scale, these benefits could result in increases in student achievement and workforce development while reducing the financial burden on taxpayers for educational and social rehabilitation programs and services.

Like the example of the hybrid car, it may take new combinations of people, programs and policies to pull it off, but the results could be well worth the creative effort.

In California there are some similar projects that deserve mention, like Redwood City 2020, San Pablo's Center of Community and the proposed Emeryville Center of Community Life project in Emeryville, California. Meanwhile, Price Charities has been growing its innovative City Heights project in San Diego for many years now.^x At the national level, Chicago and New Orleans are well on their way to developing more integrated, equitable and sustainable systems citywide. In the United Kingdom, all programs directed towards children and families have been merged into a single national enterprise, shedding new light on what might be possible through collaborative leadership and conviction at the scale of a whole nation. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has suggested that all schools should be "the center for the support and nurture for the future generation – not simply education in the narrow sense . . . and they [schools] need to be a resource and a source of strength not just for the children in the school, but for the whole of the community."^{xi}

Intergrative Public Policy

"The attitude of the LAUSD was 'Get'er Done'. It had to be almost from day one. The voters had approved the first 2.4 billion-school bond. In order to pass a second bond, we had to show progress. And we did show progress. We got'er done. We got projects sited. We closed on projects. We got things built! On the other hand, as David Abel said: "There was no client directing what got done; there was a lack of leadership other than to 'get'er done'. The lack of clarity in the sense of (instructional) purpose of the (new school building program) was a hurdle that was met by 'analytics'."

– James Sohn

INTERIM CHIEF FACILITIES EXECUTIVE, LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

"We conclude that only by unifying student and learning supports will it be feasible to develop a comprehensive system to directly address many of the complex factors interfering with schools accomplishing their mission. And only by developing such a system will it be feasible to facilitate the emergence of a school environment that fosters successful, safe, and healthy students and staff. It is emphasized that school climate is an emergent quality that stems from how schools provide and coalesce on a daily basis the components dedicated to instruction, learning supports, and management/governance."^{xii}

– Dr. Neal Halfon, M.D., M.S.W.

UCLA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

One of the most significant barriers to the development of more community-oriented schools in California has been an outdated state policy that encourages “silo” planning and budgeting, i.e., keeping funds and/or projects within an agency or organization and avoiding shared accountability.

So it is encouraging that the California Department of Education’s School Facilities Planning Division has identified opportunities for redefining policies and regulatory frameworks for the design of schools in the state. In October 2008, its director, Kathleen Moore, organized a California roundtable called “Re-visioning School Facilities Planning and Design for the 21st Century, Creating Optimal Learning Environments.” The discussion was facilitated by the UC Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools, which emerged in 2004 to join NSBN in its struggle to push the state policy agenda. More than 50 state and national thought leaders attended. There was much discussion about the integration of school sites with community assets. Recommendations of the summit proceedings state: “The CDE envisions school facilities that are learner-centered, safe, sustainable, centers of community, and that enhance all students’ achievement.” The vision statement was accompanied by the following recommendations:

1. Establish a state vision and guiding principles on the role of school facilities in supporting student achievement and closing the achievement gap.
2. Incorporate the new vision and principles into the California Code of Regulations, Title 5.
3. Increase collaboration among state agencies to aid local education agencies in the design of 21st-century learning environments.
4. Increase state focus on standards and policy governing the modernization of existing schools to provide 21st-century learning environments to the greatest number of students.
5. Review and restructure the linkage between school facility finance and design.

Meanwhile, as the California Senate Select Committee on School Facilities uses these and other future policy issues for school facilities planning and funding, the California Department of Education is also pushing for updates to the California Code of Regulations, Title 5. School Facilities Planning Division has also implemented a new plan review process that emphasizes and requires an educational specification as the cornerstone document for meeting Title 5 requirements because “we believe that thoughtful, community-based planning is an essential component of successful facility projects as emphasized by the roundtable discussions.”^{XIII}

Furthermore, the California Department of Education's Intersegmental Relations Office has also been charged with developing a "Multiple Pathways Project." The project was developed in response to California Assembly Bill AB 2648 authored by then Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and co-authored by Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg. (Both Bass and Steinberg were early NSBN supporters). In April 2009, the department held a "Multiple Pathways Feasibility Summit" to explore a multi-year high school program of integrated academic and technical study that is organized around a broad theme, interest area, or industry sector; and focused on ensuring that all pupils have curriculum choices that will prepare them for career entry and a full range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year college, apprenticeship, and formal employment. The summit also included proposals for community schools and nexus neighborhoods.

These two California Department of Education initiatives could open the door to new state policies that support more integrated and effective educational programs and facilities for all Californians. And at the same time these programs boost student achievement, they can also be reducing costs for California's taxpayers. Through more integrated and participatory planning and implementation that addresses the nexus of California's physical, cultural, social, economic, organizational and educational needs all at once, there is ample room to combine economic efficiencies with opportunities for educational and community development.

Some similar thinking is also under way at the national level. A recent report sponsored by the Urban Institute, called *Vibrant Neighborhoods/Successful Schools*, references some cross-jurisdictional recommendations for schools and housing that correlates the quality of children's education with the quality of the neighborhoods they live in. The study itself embodied a collaborative of researchers from the Urban Institute, New York University's Furman Center, Brookings Institute's Metropolitan Policy Program and the Enterprise Foundation. Their conclusion: "Public policies have helped shape today's disparities in neighborhood affordability and school quality, although programs focused on affordable housing rarely take public schools into account and school officials typically assume that they have no influence over housing patterns. But policy makers can do better. By strategically addressing the connections between schools and housing, they can trigger positive feedback that enhances neighborhood vitality, improves school quality, and promotes equity and opportunity for families and their children".^{XIV}

The report also calls on the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to work together with the Department of Health and Human Services and Labor to assure that their respective interventions (HUD on housing and neighborhoods, DOE on schools) can yield better outcomes for both housing and education by enabling low-income children to benefit from schools serving middle income students, improving school options in high poverty neighborhoods, reducing housing instability and school turnover, and enhancing child health, nutrition, and school readiness.

Even more encouraging is the emergence of new federal programs to support these concepts. Among these are the Department of Education's "Promise Neighborhoods" initiative, which with the help of the California based PolicyLink research and action institute, was fashioned

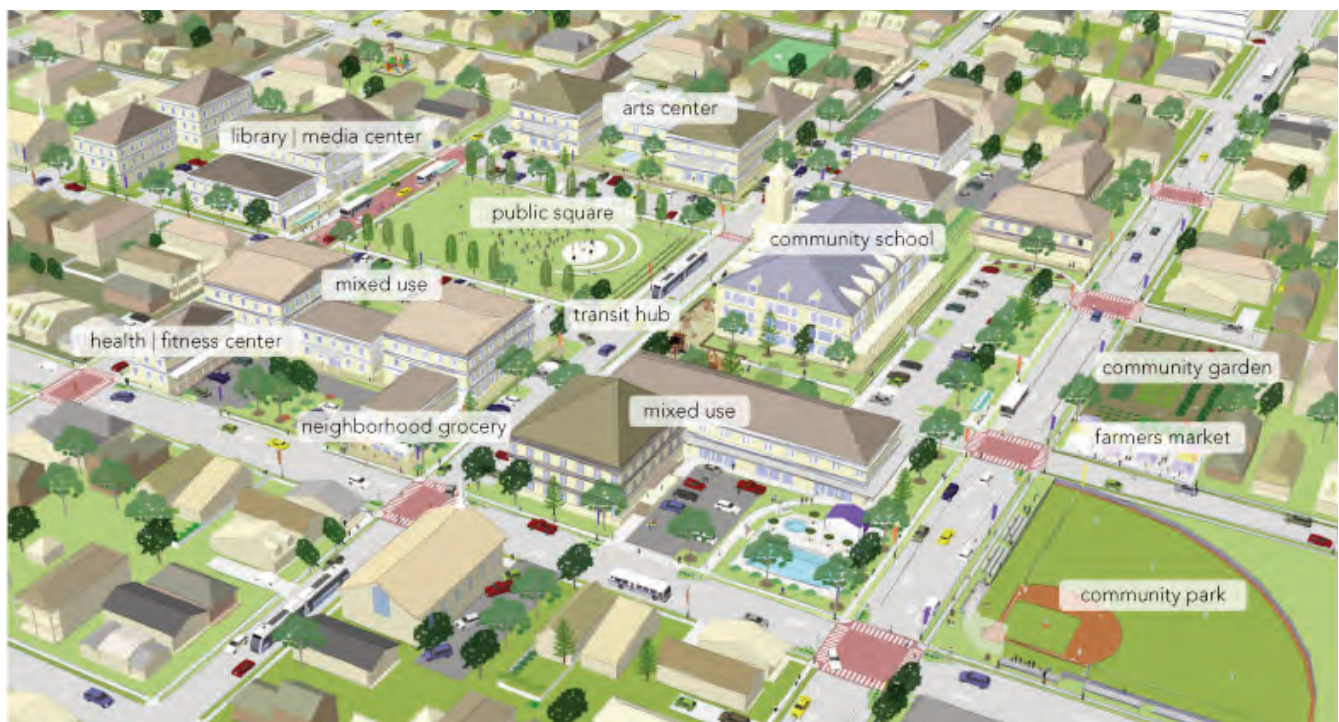
after the Harlem Children’s Zone’s multi-service “Promise Academies” model; and HUD’s new “Choice Neighborhoods” project that will encourage more integration between public housing and other community needs and services. Another HUD program, called “Sustainable Communities” has been developed through a multi-agency collaborative involving HUD, DOT (Department of Transportation, and the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency).

Nexus Planning

“I heard in the Senate Education Committee that school districts were having great difficulty working with cities to plan their sites and mitigate accompanying traffic, sidewalk improvements and related infrastructure. I then introduced a bill that will both allow for master EIRs and encourage more collaboration between cities and school districts to facilitate getting their sites approved at the local level.”

– Tom Torlakson

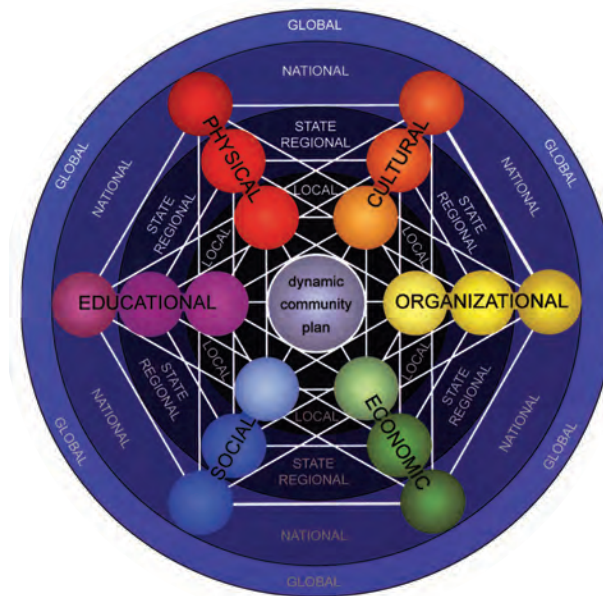
CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLYMAN AND FORMER STATE SENATOR



As outlined earlier, a more systemic approach to educational delivery can increase student achievement, reduce dropout rates and lower real costs to taxpayers. An even more effective strategy is available by looking beyond school facilities to the larger context of urban and rural planning as a whole. Here, private, non-profit and governmental organizations of all kinds can work together to create a more effective confluence - or nexus - of the people, programs and places that support the complex structure of community life.

A successful community nexus is a physical place with an effective combination of facilities and programs that may include a school, a park, a healthy grocery store, a community garden, a farmers market; a community health and wellness center, an auditorium, a library, day care, foster home, senior center and more. And unlike most community schools, where facilities and programs are usually co-located on school property, the elements of the nexus may be located on separate but proximate sites and collaboratively governed. When appropriately implemented, a community nexus can:

- provide more equitable access to services for all citizens;
- foster more walkable, bikeable and sustainable communities;
- increase efficiency by reducing duplicative services;
- coordinate and leverage public and private investment through collaboration among agencies and institutions that can help support and sustain local programs over the long term;
- increase connectivity between local residents and the power of resident voices to create and manage facilities and programs in their neighborhoods;
- improve educational outcomes
- improve overall neighborhood health and well-being.



Creating a community nexus requires careful planning to accommodate a wide complement of local assets and needs. These assets and needs can be organized into six general domains of community life.

- The first of these is the physical domain, which encompasses all of the community's built and natural resources – buildings, bridges, highways and electronic communications infrastructure. The physical domain also includes natural resources like parks and recreation areas.

- A second category of community needs falls within its cultural domain. Included are programs and artifacts related to individual and collective values, including ethnic, religious and aesthetic diversity.
- The third domain incorporates a wide range of the community's social needs. This includes all aspects of well-being, including programs related to health, human services and affordable housing.
- A fourth component of the community's assets and needs encompasses the economic domain which includes programs, activities and initiatives that maintain a healthy balance between financial, human and environmental capital.
- A fifth domain addresses all of the community's organizational programs and services. These include everything from families to specialty clubs, city and county school boards and councils to special interest groups – as well as political parties and other private and civic entities. The organizational domain also includes the wide variety of mechanisms through which community issues are deliberated and implemented.
- The sixth domain of the community nexus incorporates all of its educational resources and learning assets, including everything from prenatal to early childhood, primary, secondary, community college, college, university, adult education and workforce training programs and services. All of these physical, cultural, social, economic, organizational and educational domains of community life incorporate and define the community's most vital support systems.

Although each domain of community needs may include a different set of assets, it is the interactions between them that can most effectively support the health and well-being of the whole community system. When the nexus of community resources is functioning at its full potential, all community assets will be operating in a synergistic and harmonious mode.

Educational assets can connect with social services to improve student achievement and graduation rates. Public green space can be integrated with underutilized human resources to support micro-gardening and healthy food alternatives. Cultural resources can be integrated with social assets to create innovative workforce opportunities – and on and on – through a living web of relevant and appropriate interactions that combine to reinforce each other through a system of open source information and transparent communication.

When the community system is operating in full swing – in tune with the heartbeat of its communal rhythms – all of its parts will support the collective whole and at the same time strengthen each of its component parts.

Engaging the Community

The planning and design of more integrated and systemic living and learning environments, programs and services is best accomplished when community stakeholders are authentically engaged in the process. But for issues as narrow as selecting a park site or as broad as comprehensive budgeting and fundraising, the method of public participation can often be a topic of intense debate. This deliberation often revolves around the degree to which the community is allowed or encouraged to engage in the decision-making process.

The options usually fall into three broad categories. First is the opportunity for stakeholder contributions through proxy. Here elected or appointed officials assume full responsibility for interpreting the wants and needs of their constituents. The second model increases stakeholder engagement to a mode that we call community participation. Here citizens are invited to contribute their ideas and opinions through blue ribbon committees or a limited number of large and small group public hearings. In this scenario, a group of pre-determined options are usually presented and individual comments taken under advisement or adjudicated by the appropriate governing authority. The third option is through a process of community engagement. This model involves more extensive levels of partnership and collaboration with community stakeholders through all aspects of the decision-making process. Here large groups of participants that represent a cross-section of the community's constituents assemble at regular intervals to review data, investigate options and make concrete recommendations to public and private governing bodies that then carry out the collective community will. This model often results in more effective ownership patterns to support funding and implementation. Although the community engagement model is sometimes considered to be more expensive or time consuming, it is more common that its integrated format of open dialogue leads to issues being resolved without costly delays that often result from isolated infighting and protracted debate.

The most prevalent strategy for coordinating large group decision-making is through the use of organized steering committees, task forces and focus groups. These are effective tools – and each has its own unique application and characteristics. But whether the process is by proxy, community participation or community engagement, certain time-honored principles of engagement will always apply. Noted jazzman Wynton Marsalis describes these as the principles of swinging. “Swing demands three things. It requires extreme coordination, because it is a dance with other people who are inventing steps as they go. It requires intelligent decision-making, because what’s best for you is not necessarily best for the group or for the moment. And it requires good intentions, because you have to trust that you and the other musicians are equally interested in making great music and are not guided by ego or musical shortcomings that haven’t been addressed. ... Our current lack of respect for the swing can be likened to the current state of our democracy. Balance is required to maintain something as delicate as democracy, a subtle understanding of how your power can be magnified through joining with and sharing the power of another person. When that is no longer understood, it becomes a battle to see who is the strongest, who is the loudest, who can get the most attention”^{xv}

Moving from Sustainability to Transformation

In less than a decade, Americans have set new priorities about the importance of environmental sustainability. Architects, landscape architects, engineers and others in the design field have taken on the creative challenges of alternative energy sources. New industries across the globe are reorganizing to produce the products and tools needed to rebuild large segments of our physical and economic infrastructure. Many of these new systems are all being designed to sustain our current quality of life, but if we aim to achieve our goals for rebuilding rural and urban programs and infrastructure, we will need to do better than just prolonging the steady state. We must aim instead for a healthy and transformative balance between growth and equity.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated most of New Orleans lowest lying neighborhoods in 2005, the need for transformation was clear to all involved in the recovery process. Would it be enough to rebuild the city as it was previously or were there better ideas? To address the challenge more than 9,000 of the city's diverse constituents participated in the development of a Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) for the city's recovery.^{xvi} One important component of the plan was a call by 65% of the participant/stakeholders for schools that could serve as centers of community life.

At the present time, as a hedge against previously underperforming public schools, the New Orleans educational delivery model provides parents and students with citywide access and choice schools. Meanwhile, a robust state supported charter school movement that now educates about 60% of the student population has gained national attention for its innovative new strategies. The latest report from the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) finds that K-12 students in New Orleans have made significant gains in school achievement during the last few years. With hundreds of neighborhood leaders now taking ownership of the situation by serving on charter school boards and a small army of bright, resilient and enthusiastic young teachers at the helm in the classroom there is a palpable sense of hope that the trend will continue. Provided that the performance of schools continues to improve, the local desire for more walkable and accessible community schools can be more effectively addressed. And since more than 30% of New Orleans residents cannot afford to own an automobile, a new system of academically successful neighborhood schools, combined with a nexus of programs and services could create more equitable access for some of the largest groups of underserved citizens. And with more students and parents walking to get to schools and other clustered community services, the city's environmental footprint, as well as the personal health of all New Orleanians, can be markedly improved.

Authorizing agencies have now approved many of the core elements of the community schools concept, including a citywide school facilities plan that locates all K-8 schools within approximately a one-half mile walk of every child and family in the city. A total of \$700 million in FEMA and CDBG funding has been allocated for the first 29 community school facilities. The design of all schools will provide public access to all gyms, auditoriums, and libraries. Each school design will also meet a minimum of the US Green Building Council's LEED silver energy conservation certification. Through another community-based planning initiative led by the Louisiana Public Health Institute, a new geo-coded website will increase public access to data resources and community indicators, and yet another foundation-funded study has identified neighborhoods that could serve as pilot nexus community sites.^{xvii}

One of the most important lessons from the New Orleans recovery process is that a plan that focused only on status quo sustainability would not satisfy the needs of the city's diverse constituencies. Through a process involving the extensive engagement of community stakeholders, community organizations and public and private institutions, more transformative solutions have been envisioned to promote greater equity and harmony among the city's diverse and disparate parts.

what next

Today LAUSD's facilities program has about \$4.7 billion in the bank and outstanding commitments for about \$3.2 billion. This means LAUSD has about \$1.5 billion that is either in reserve or being held in contingency. In addition, the District has guaranteed another \$8 billion in Measure Q bond funding that will be sold when the its median property value assessment projection comes to equilibrium in late 2015. So the district has, in addition to a billion dollars in previous bond money available, three to five years to plan for Measure Q funding. This provides an invaluable opportunity for LAUSD to take the time to examine how it designs the next stage of facility projects—an opportunity almost no public agency has ever had, and that is time to truly plan.

Presently, LAUSD facilities staff are engaging in a process of surveying the physical environment of all of its schools on a complex by complex basis, so by the end of the year, LAUSD will have a full inventory of its physical assets. From that, according to James Sohn, Interim Chief Facilities Executive, the district is creating a priority plan – half of which “must adjust to the educational mission and focus of the district's schools.”

A New Call to Convergence

The 1999 “What if” monograph ended with a call for convergence between the emerging principles of smart growth and community centered educational reform. It proposed that community programs and facilities could become more consolidated — preserving green fields while at the same time encouraging the development of more learning-rich and community centered living environments.

Over the past 10 years, both the challenges and the opportunities of working towards this vision have increased. California and the nation as a whole are in the middle of an economic crisis requiring massive adjustments in programs and services, especially those designed to serve the most disadvantaged populations. Californians are now faced with an even more accelerating need to deliver efficient and effective programs and services – at a lower cost.

NOW is the time for individuals, agencies and organizations involved in delivering community programs, services and facilities to prepare an honest assessment of what's working and what isn't.

NOW is the time for government agencies and organizations to join forces in an attempt to maximize all of the state's financial, human, and environmental resources.

NOW is the time for governmental and non-profit organizations to work together to eliminate competition and wasteful duplication of services.

There is no pretending that this kind of convergence would be any easier now than it was ten years ago, but the needs are growing more pressing with every day that passes. There is an urgent imperative to create mechanisms for both planning and practice that will guide California's near and long-term growth in ways that respect the limits of its available resources. And since the time required for creating these tools is also limited, the urgency to take immediate action is also more acute than ever before.

Making it Happen

So what will it take to support a transformation to more systemic quality-of-life planning and design principles in California?

First there is a need to identify and embrace the current research and apply the best practices in systems-based planning and design. This research would be best implemented through innovative collaborations across many disciplines and knowledge bases. For example, the on-the-ground work of organizations like New Schools/Better Neighborhoods; UC Berkeley's Center for Cities and Schools and PolicyLink should be reinforced and expanded to include a wide range of the state's public, private and non-profit research institutions.

Second, there is an opportunity to develop advanced relational tools to analyze and manage complex data interactions towards predictable outcomes. These tools could build on work currently under way by organizations like Healthy City in Los Angeles and the Healthy Communities Institute in Oakland, who are already working to build more user friendly and transparent community data systems and websites.

Third, there is a mandate to revise local, state and federal policies to support more integrative models of planning and governance that operate from the principles of collaborative and self-organizing systems. Current work at the federal level on the Choice and Promise Neighborhood initiatives may, for example, provide insights related to these goals. With respect to educational delivery models, the California Multiple Pathways project may be another important program to watch.

Fourth is the need to engage community stakeholders in creating, documenting and continuously improving the principles and practices of stakeholder engagement in planning and implementation. Community engagement facilitators and mediators with the skills and know-how to support this critical component of the transformation process can be found in the growing organizational development profession.

Fifth is the need to develop more collaborative models of funding and finance, including more effective alignments between public, private and philanthropic resources. In New Orleans, for example, the foundation funded Unified New Orleans Plan is an example of how philanthropy can work with local government leaders to both expedite the planning process and assure that authentic community engagement goals are met.

As we continue to grapple with the challenges of antiquated planning strategies, it's clear that transformational change is needed but that it won't be easy. For decades our failure to acknowledge the cause and effects of changing weather patterns have delayed critical action on issues of climate change. At the same time, an international monetary crisis was generated, at least in part, through our failure to monitor the growth of independent wealth and its impact on systemic prosperity. Some of our largest automakers have suffered critical setbacks – due in part to antiquated linear thinking, while other nations have more effectively embraced new paradigms of collaborative production practices to better advantage.

We need to think more creatively about how we plan and manage our community programs and infrastructure. We can no longer afford the costs associated with planning cities and neighborhoods through isolated and inefficient silo thinking. Urban designers, architects, educational facilities planners and engineers need to work together with educational, cultural, labor and social service providers to more effectively organize and deliver community programs and services. Through a more systemic approach to community and economic development, a more collaborative approach to management and governance and a more integrated strategy for developing and implementing public policy, significant progress can be realized in the quality and real world cost-effectiveness of environments for living and learning.

Implementation of these changes in community planning is critical. But many “silo” actors, which include school districts and municipalities, are still committed to maintaining the status quo. These are often the same public entities that define their mission as “the greater good”. So now is the time to make good on these commitments by working more collaboratively to leverage our limited resources towards higher outcomes and lower costs. The kind of systemic shift that it will take to achieve this transformation goes to the heart of everything NSBN envisions for California and beyond.

by Steven Bingle

FOR NEW SCHOOLS/BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS

acknowledgements

New Schools/Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) is a project of Community Partners in Los Angeles, California. NSBN and its sister organization, the Metropolitan Forum Project, are grateful to all who have contributed their time, resources and wisdom for more than 10 years to pursue and contribute to the growth and development of the ideas, programs and projects that support the New Schools/Better Neighborhoods initiative. Special thanks to the Stuart Foundation for its funding support of this NSBN monograph and to David Abel, Kathi Littmann, Fritz Edelstein, Jed Horne, Linda Usdin, Bobbie Hill and Jeff Vincent for their creative review and commentaries on the draft monograph document.

For more information and to follow the work of NSBN, check out our website at www.nsb.org



case studies

“Facts on the Ground”

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy

Los Angeles, California

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) was one of the early innovators previewed at the 1999 Getty conference. Chartered in August 2000, the K-12 academy stands out among other charter and public schools because of its deep roots in the community and its place-based approach to learning through the integration of its educational programs with a wide range of community partners, organizations and resources. Educational facilities include two K-8 campuses opened in 2000 and 2001, an Early Childhood Education Center and a College Preparatory High School campus opened in 2004. In one decade, the Camino Nuevo community has celebrated a number of important milestones that include the opening of the Camino Nuevo Family Clinic and Parent Center at Burlington (2003); a new state-of-the-art dance studio, created in partnership with the Gabriella Axelrad Education Foundation (2008); and a soccer field and basketball court. The field services both CNCA students and after-hours community recreation leagues.

Camino Nuevo also collaborates with several partners that provide programs and services to students during school time and within school facilities, including the Youth Policy Institute, Silverlake Conservatory of Music and the LA Child Development Center. The school also has several community partnerships that operate joint-use sites with programs and services for students during the school day as well as after school and Saturday for community and adults, such as health programs by the Baja Medical Clinic and dance programs by the Gabriella Axelrad Education Foundation.

The Camino Nuevo School is the recipient of the American Architectural Foundation’s coveted national School as Center of Community award.

San Pablo Center of Community

San Pablo, California

The San Pablo Community Resource Center project was completed in 1999. The project is the result of a public/private venture to provide city residents and the general public with a variety of services related to education, employment, and child-care services. The Resource Center is approximately 37,000 square feet and is home to East-Bay Works Career Center, Computer Education Center, San Pablo Branch Library, Street Tech Computer Education Services and the San Pablo Child Care Center, and will soon become home to more retail businesses.

Huerta Elementary School

Lennox, California

Lennox School District's Huerta Elementary School (formerly Whelan Elementary) is a community-centered joint-use site. Opened in 2006, the facility hosts services such as preschool, school readiness, healthy start and adult education. In addition to the Huerta (Whelan) Elementary project, Lennox School District and New Schools/Better Neighborhoods also collaborated on the development of preschool projects at Bufford, Felton and Moffett elementary schools in Lennox, California.

Early planning created opportunities to add outreach for: 1) a Healthy Start program; 2) a collaborative effort with El Camino College to provide adult education classes; 3) a partnership to provide internet education access for the Whelan community and 4) a sub-station for the Sheriff's and Parks Departments.

Schools in Lennox are also shared with the community year-round for soccer and baseball leagues.

Gratts in Westlake by A Community of Friends

Los Angeles, California

The combined Gratts Early Education and Primary Center and Housing Collaborative in Westlake was one of the earliest New Schools/Better Neighborhood's (NSBN) projects to embrace the neighborhood schools vision. Through a collaborative master planning process, begun at the request of a City Councilman, and a commitment from the project's partners (the school district and an affordable housing developer) multiple needs are being served in the Westlake community. When complete in 2010, the residents of Westlake will have a block-long, pedestrian-friendly, joint-use project with a new primary center, early childhood education center, affordable housing and playground space that doubles as a neighborhood park.

Paramount Project

Paramount, California

New Schools/Better Neighborhoods worked with the Paramount Unified School District (PUSD), the City of Paramount, Gateway Cities' PEP project, the District's early childhood education staff and community stakeholders to collaboratively master plan an expansion of the Pre-K facility and open space at Los Cerritos Elementary School. An eight-acre park is now being created and the classrooms are already in operation. New Schools/Better Neighborhoods invested in the development of a preschool master plan for the entire school district with a focus on new facilities at the Zamboni (formerly Orange Ave.) and Collins elementary schools located in Paramount and North Long Beach, respectively. Temporary facilities were installed as the first stage of a long-term planning, design, community outreach, and construction process.

Sun Valley - Yaroslavsky Champions

Los Angeles, California

In the spring of 2006, Los Angeles County and the Los Angeles Unified School District, in conjunction with supporting agencies, broke ground on a joint-use school and community health clinic on the campus of Sun Valley Middle School. By incorporating a full-service community health care center on a school campus, officials are now supporting neighborhood families by providing regular health services. The project has leveraged the use of scarce real estate to enhance a natural connection between education and health care services. Officials see the model as a prototype that could be replicated in many other places.

Redwood City 2020

Redwood City, California

Redwood City 2020 is a community partnership, designed to support the success of all youth and families. The collaboration is comprised of Redwood City, the Redwood City Elementary School District, the Sequoia Union High School District, San Mateo County, Stanford University / John W. Gardner Center, Wells Fargo Bank, the Sequoia Healthcare District, Kaiser Permanente and others. The project is coordinated to foster agency and provider communication between and among: the Human Services Agency, Fair Oaks Community Center, Family Centers, Redwood City Community Schools, After School Recreation and Academic Support, School Readiness, Preschool for All, Community Based Child Welfare Services and Teen Resource Center as well as other community-based service providers.

Chicago Public Schools Community Schools Initiative

Chicago, Illinois

In fall of 2007, 110 Chicago Public Schools opened their doors to the largest community schools initiative in the nation. In addition to traditional classes, families can access medical and dental care on site, parents can get job training courses and children are taking extracurricular music and art lessons. And schools have formed over 400 partnerships with nonprofit organizations across the city.

With the help of a full-time resource/site coordinator, each CPS Community School establishes an advisory committee of teachers, parents, the school principal, community members and other key school and community stakeholders and partners with at least one organization delivering after school programs designed to support the school's academic program. These community schools now operate with campuses that are open mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends and into the summer.

Emeryville Center of Community Life

Emeryville, California

In Emeryville, California, the school district, the city, community members, and local businesses are working jointly to craft a redevelopment plan that puts education at the heart of everything. Known as the Center of Community Life, the project will occupy a nearly 20-acre site along the main thoroughfare of San Pablo Avenue and will include:

- a Welcome Center where city and school staff will assist visitors,
- the Forum, offering community services and family support,
- an arts center, to serve as a home for visual and performing arts programs,
- The Academies, new state-of-the-art learning neighborhoods,
- a recreation center, offering both indoor and outdoor activities, and
- outdoor areas with playgrounds, fields, and gathering areas

The project will provide services and opportunities for children, families, and adults in the City of Emeryville, the Emery Unified School District (EUSD), and adjoining Oakland neighborhoods.

City Heights Initiative/Educational Collaborative

San Diego California

Price Charities' City Heights Initiative, of which the Educational Collaborative is a part, contributed to creating an integrated "urban village" by providing a strong urban core of facilities and services. The project area spans seven square blocks and covers nearly 30 acres. In addition to three schools, the urban village includes residential housing, a continuing education center, a Head Start facility, a state-of-the-art library, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a performance annex, a community service center, recreational fields and a police station. The complex also includes office space for a local organization, funded by the City Heights Initiative, to give residents a greater voice in the community revitalization process.

City Heights K-16 Educational Collaborative began in 1998 as a pilot project targeting improvements at existing San Diego schools. In this densely populated area, 72,000 residents speak more than 30 languages and scores of dialects. The goal of the educational collaborative is to enhance school programs and create better academic outcomes. One example is the "School in the Park", a program designed to use the unique educational opportunities of San Diego's cultural institutions in Balboa Park (Price Charities, 2003). Visits to museums and cultural institutions bring meaning to the students' reading studies while engaging them in real-world affairs and concerns. Students are reaping the rewards from the collaborative and posting 35-percent reading score increases, compared to a 12 percent increase for students outside the program.

Other accomplishments of the City Heights Educational Collaborative include attendance rates averaging 90 percent, 90-percent teacher retention; 30,000 hours of parent volunteerism through adult education classes, community service, and school governance meetings; \$5.5 million in grant funding for scholarships and curriculum development; and more than 25 journal publications, ten book chapters, and 17 conference presentations in the first three years.

Collaborative partners include Price Charities, San Diego State University, San Diego Education Association, San Diego Unified School District and the administrators, teachers, students and parents of the three City Heights schools.

New Orleans Recovery Planning

New Orleans, Louisiana

The City of New Orleans is implementing a far-reaching redevelopment plan for citywide infrastructure rebuilding and realignment. More than 9,000 citizens were engaged in creating a Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) for the city's recovery and a subsequent School Facilities Master Plan after hurricane Katrina. Both plans call for long-term development of community schools with increased consolidation of community programs and services at the neighborhood level.

The School Facilities Master Plan reduced the existing 127 school sites to 85. These remaining community school sites will be within a half-mile walk of every child and family in New Orleans - provided that students will be allowed to attend neighborhood schools. This means, for the latter 42 schools, that owning an automobile will no longer be a pre-requisite for access to school; and, that these schools will be a nexus of clustered community services, thereby creating a more environmentally sustainable and socially advanced model for equality of access to educational, cultural, social and other programs.

Both the UNOP and School Facilities Master Plan have been approved by all governing bodies and are currently in implementation. A total of \$ 400 million has been allocated in Community Development Block Grant funding for public projects identified in the UNOP plan and an additional \$700 million in FEMA funding is going to build 29 schools over the next four years. The City Planning Commission is currently developing legal statutes and a revised zoning ordinance to support the long- term implementation of these and other community-based planning strategies.^{XVIII}

Department for Children and Families (DCSF)

United Kingdom

In 2007, the British government created the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to address simultaneously all issues of child support, protection and education for citizens up to the age of nineteen. In response to a set of comprehensive goals set out in the department's Children's Plan, more than two thirds of schools in England now offer access to Extended Services.

According to Michael Mahoney, the former head teacher at St. Ives School: *“An extended school recognizes that it cannot work alone in helping children and young people to achieve their potential, and therefore decides to work in partnership with other agencies that have an interest in outcomes for children and young people, and with the local community. In doing so, consistent with workforce reform and remodeling, it aims to help meet not only the school's objectives, but also to share in helping to meet the wider needs of children, young people, families and their community.”*

An extended school works in partnership with its local authority and other local schools to partner with the voluntary, community and private sectors to lift children out of poverty and improve their chances of success in later life. Services and activities include a varied menu of activities, combined with childcare in primary schools; parenting support; community access to school facilities and swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services.

Success to date has exceeded planned benchmarks. Research provides evidence of direct as well as overall quality of life benefits. Comprehensive strategies of the Extended Schools Initiative are complementing nationwide education work and helping to develop schools while also implementing services to support infrastructure.

references

- I “What if: New Schools; Better Neighborhoods; More Livable Communities”, NSBN Monograph, September, 1999; www.nsbns.org/.
- II An Op-Ed by David Abel and Jonathan Fielding, If You Want to Build a Better Community, It Takes a School, Los Angeles Times; February 24,2005
- III Neal Halfon, M.D., M.P.H., UCLA Center for Healthier Children Families & UCLA Center for Healthier Children Families & Communities; Presentation: Building Early Childhood Systems to Support Optimal Development, Early Childhood Partners Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee; December 14, 2004
- IV Joint-Use: A Strategy for Green Schools, NSBN, 2006; www.nsbns.org/publications.
- V Los Angeles Almanac; General & Ethnic Population Projections Through 2050? State of California; <http://www.laalmanac.com/population/po40.htm>.
- VI “New Relationships With Schools - Organizations That Build Community By Connecting with Schools”, Collaborative Communications Group (funded by the Kettering Foundation) Vol. 2; November 2004.
- VII Clive Belfield and Henry Levin, eds., “The Price We Pay”, Brookings Institute Press; 2007
- VIII Harlem Children’s Zone; www.hcz.org
- IX David Brooks, “The Harlem Miracle”; Op Ed in the New York Times; May 7, 2009

- x San Diego Schools Employ Coordinated Strategy to Develop Joint-Use Parcels, NSBN Newsletter, Summer 2003; and, “City Height Initiative”, Price Charities; <http://www.pricecharities.com/City-Heights-Initiative/>.
- xi Andy Ellis, “Putting Learners First: Building Schools for the Future”, White Paper for Kent County Council, U.K.; Microsoft Ltd; November 2005.
- xii UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools: Turning Around, Transforming, and Continuously Improving Schools: Federal Proposals Are Still Based on a Two-Rather and a Three-Component Blueprint; April 2010.
- xiii Roundtable Proceedings Report; Center for Cities and Schools, University of California at Berkeley, 2005. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/fa/sf/whatsnew.asp/>.
- xiv Margery Turner and Alan Berube, “Vibrant Neighborhoods/Successful Schools”, Brookings Urban Institute; page 1; July 28, 2009.
- xv Wynton Marsalis and Geoffrey C. Ward, “Moving to Higher Ground”, pages 38-40, Random House; 2008.
- xvi Unified New Orleans Plan, Greater New Orleans Foundation; 2008.
- xvii Next New Orleans Report, Greater New Orleans Education Foundation, 2009.
- xviii Steven Binger; Linda Quinn; Kevin Sullivan; “Schools as Centers of Community”; National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, page 22; 2003.

what next

A Common Vision: New Schools. Better Neighborhoods. More Livable Communities is a commissioned report of the NSBN, and was underwritten by the Stuart Foundation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Steven Bingler, AIA, is the founder and President of Concordia LLC, a planning and architectural design firm based in New Orleans, Louisiana <sbingler@concordia.com>. He is the author of NSBN's "What if", published in 1999; as well as, "Schools As Centers of Community: A Citizen's Guide for Planning and Design," published by the U.S. Department of Education. Over the last decade, his call for a convergence of the Smart Growth and Education Reform movements is buttressed by his professional planning and architectural practice and his many educational papers which have been published in a wide range of books and journals in the fields of urban planning, architectural design, education, public health and smart growth.

New Schools. Better Neighborhoods

A Metropolitan Forum Project
811 West 7th Street, Suite 900
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: 213-629-9019
Facsimile: 213-623-9207
Website: [//www.nsbns.org](http://www.nsbns.org)

STUART FOUNDATION

The Stuart Foundation is a grantmaking foundation dedicated to the protection, education and development of children and youth. The foundation works toward ensuring that all children grow up in caring families, learn in vibrant and effective schools, and have opportunities to become productive members of their communities.

Stuart Foundation

500 Washington Street, 8th Floor
San Francisco, California 94111
Telephone: 415-393-1551
Facsimile: 415-393-1552
Website: [//www.stuartfoundation.org/](http://www.stuartfoundation.org/)



New Schools. Better Neighborhoods
A Metropolitan Forum Project

811 West 7th Street, Suite 900
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: 213-629-9019
Facsimile: 213-623-9207
Website: //www.nsbm.org

Stuart Foundation

500 Washington Street, 8th Floor
San Francisco, California 94111
Telephone: 415-393-1551
Facsimile: 415-393-1552
Website: //www.stuartfoundation.org/