Building More Effective COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A GUIDE TO KEY IDEAS, EFFECTIVE APPROACHES, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES AND SITE TEAMS

part of a series from the Technical Assistance/Resource Center of The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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A list of Technical Assistance/Resource Center Resource Guides appears on the inside back cover.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for vulnerable children and families in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother.

Headquartered in Baltimore, the Foundation is the largest private foundation in the nation dedicated solely to the needs of vulnerable children and families, with assets of more than $3 billion. The Foundation's grants are intended to help states, cities, and neighborhoods improve the life chances of the millions of American children at risk of poor educational, economic, social, and health outcomes. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at www.aecf.org.

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preface to family strengthening resource guides

Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods.

This simple premise underlies *Making Connections*, the centerpiece of a 10- to 15-year commitment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to improving the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation is working in 22 American cities to promote neighborhood-scale programs, policies, and activities that contribute to stable, capable families.

Making Connections seeks to help families raise healthy, confident, and successful children by tapping the skills, strengths, leadership, and resilience that exist in even the toughest neighborhoods. The initiative is founded on the belief that families and their children can succeed if the people who live, work, and hold positions of influence in distressed neighborhoods make family success a priority—and if there are deliberate and sustained efforts within the broader community and at the state level not only to connect isolated families to essential resources, opportunities, and supports, but also to improve the material conditions of the neighborhood.

The Foundation is dedicated to helping selected communities engage residents, civic groups, public and private sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in efforts to transform the toughest neighborhoods into family-supportive environments. *Making Connections* seeks to enable residents in these neighborhoods to live, work, play, earn decent wages, and interact with family, friends, neighbors, and social institutions in a safe, congenial, and enriching environment.

In order to improve the health, safety, educational success, and overall well-being of children, *Making Connections* is a long-term campaign aimed at helping selected cities build alliances and mobilize constituencies at the neighborhood level.

Making Connections has identified three kinds of connections essential to strengthening families:

- **Economic opportunities** that enable parents to secure adequate incomes and accumulate savings, thus assuring their families the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and health care. To meet this need, communities must address job development, employment training, wage supplements, and asset-building strategies—all of which help ensure predictable incomes, which in turn bolster healthy child development.
- **Social networks** in the community, including friends, neighbors, relatives, mentors, community organizations, and faith-based institutions that provide neighbor-to-neighbor support and help family members feel more confident and less isolated.
- **Services and supports**, both formal and informal, public and private, which provide preventive as

MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES

Atlanta	Milwaukee
Baltimore	New Orleans
Boston	Oakland
Camden	Philadelphia
Denver	Providence
Detroit	San Antonio
Des Moines	San Diego
Hartford	Savannah
Indianapolis	Seattle
Louisville	St. Louis
Miami	Washington, D.C.

well as ongoing assistance, and are accessible, affordable, neighborhood based, family centered, and culturally appropriate. These might include high-quality schools, health care, housing assistance, and affordable child care.

How will we know when Making Connections goals have been achieved?

Making Connections will have succeeded in a city when community leaders and residents have built a local movement on behalf of families that has the power and momentum to accomplish the following:

- Build on existing efforts and spur neighborhood-scale, family strengthening strategies that reduce family isolation by increasing their connections to critical economic opportunities, strong social networks, and accessible supports and services.
- Use these neighborhood-scale initiatives to rethink, revamp, and redirect policies, practices, and resources on a citywide scale to improve the odds that all families succeed.

As this movement grows, it will enable each city to know it is succeeding in a number of other ways:

- When parents have the means, confidence, and competence to provide for their families economically, physically, and emotionally;
- When residents have people to talk to and places to go for help, support, and camaraderie;
- When families feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods;
- When children are healthy, succeed in school, and go on to college or a job after high school;
- When communities offer the resources families need to pass on a legacy of literacy and opportunity to their children.

What do we mean by "family strengthening"?

Family strengthening policies, practices, and activities recognize the family as the fundamental influence in children's lives. These policies and practices both reinforce parental roles and messages and reflect, represent, and accommodate families' interests. Family strengthening means giving parents the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks, and supports to raise their children successfully, which includes involving parents as decision-makers in how their communities meet family needs.

A family's major responsibility is to provide an optimal environment for the care and healthy development of its members, particularly its children. Although basic physical needs—housing, food, clothing, safety, and health—are essential, children also need a warm emotional climate, a stimulating intellectual environment, and reliable adult relationships to thrive.

Threats to a family's ability to manage its responsibilities come from many sources: externally generated crises, such as a job or housing loss, or internal crises, such as child abuse or estrangement among family members. Unexpected events, such as the birth of a child with a disability or a teen's substance abuse problems, or more common events, like new jobs, marriages, deaths, and household moves, precipitate potentially destabilizing changes. The family's ongoing stability hinges on its ability to sustain itself through these disruptions. To help families cope effectively with crises and normal life events, communities need a variety of resources, including adequate and accessible services for children at all stages of their development, effective supportive services for families, and a critical mass of healthy families who can effectively support their neighbors.

Family strengthening policies and practices consider the whole family, not just individual family members. Often, agency protocols and programs

create tensions inadvertently when their focus excludes family needs. A striking example is a well-intentioned nutrition program arranged to ensure that homeless children were fed breakfast, lunch, and dinner at school. The children's parents and other siblings had no source of food, however, and the program participants had no opportunity to share meals with the rest of their families. Once the program leaders recognized the problem, parents and siblings were included in the school mealtimes, and the program designers learned to reconsider their strategies. Similarly, many welfare-to-work programs report difficulties in job retention because of family stresses—stresses often resulting from the jobs themselves. When a family member finds work, family rituals, logistical patterns, roles, and responsibilities change. More successful programs consider these disruptions ahead of time and develop ways to help the family cope.

What do we mean by "strengthening neighborhoods"?

Families must be helped to thrive within the context of their neighborhoods and broader communities. Job development, for example, should be coordinated with specific local or regional businesses, and community economic development should build on the resources of each unique neighborhood. Connecting families to economic opportunities can have a ripple effect: Just living in a neighborhood where a substantial number of families work can reinforce positive expectations for the children in the neighborhood.

Making Connections recognizes that the informal social networks that are most important to people (their friends, neighbors, faith communities, and clubs) almost always exist at the neighborhood level. Time and time again, these natural helping networks prove most important to families' abilities to raise their children successfully. One component of strengthening neighborhoods is thus to invest in the social capital provided by neighborhood-based networks. At the same time, *Making Connections* seeks to widen the networks that families have at their disposal, thereby broadening their aspirations, attitudes, and opportunities. Linking families to broader networks both within and outside their own neighborhoods promises to open up new possibilities for children and parents alike.

Finally, strengthening neighborhoods means placing formal public services in neighborhoods, and making them comfortable rather than intimidating for families. This requires redefining the jobs of public workers so that professionals from several separate mainline systems — as well as natural helpers or informal caregivers—work together in teams and are deployed to specific neighborhoods to take the necessary steps to help families succeed.

The Technical Assistance/Resource Center

The Foundation's Technical Assistance/Resource Center (TARC) seeks to connect people in the 22 cities to powerful ideas, skillful people and organizations, examples of what works in other communities, and opportunities to develop leadership skills in their own neighborhoods. It provides assistance to the 22 *Making Connections* cities on a range of topics, from building alliances that lead to stronger families in healthier, more stable communities, to diverse strategies that community leaders may pursue in terms of jobs, housing, safety, schools, and health care. TARC responds to the sites' priorities through a "help desk" approach, which seeks to meet sites' requests for assistance, and "peer consultation," where colleagues who have successfully addressed a particular problem help their peers in other communities to frame and solve a similar issue. In this way, *Making Connections* cities can capitalize on the practical knowledge that emerges from on-the-ground innovators.

One component of the Foundation's technical assistance strategy is a set of Resource Guides, including this one. The Resource Guides articulate the Foundation's perspective about issues pertaining to *Making Connections* sites, as well as summarize trends in the field, highlight effective examples, and point to people, organizations, and materials that can provide additional help. The Resource Guides are intended first for Foundation staff, in order to create a common fund of knowledge across a broad range of issues. Second, the guides are intended for residents and other leaders in *Making Connections* cities who may want to learn more about specific subjects.

The precise number of Resource Guides will fluctuate as demand changes, but approximately 12-15 guides will be produced during the year 2000 (see the inside back cover for a list). All guides will address topics aimed at both supporting individual families and strengthening neighborhoods. The guides fall into four categories: (1) Economic Opportunities for Families, (2) Enhancing Social Networks, (3) Building High-Quality Services and Supports, and (4) Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods.

The guides in the first three categories address substantive areas in which activities can directly lead to better outcomes for children and families as well as strengthen neighborhoods. The first Economic Opportunity Resource Guide, on jobs, for example, provides information about how to connect low-income residents to regional and local labor markets, allowing families to provide for their basic necessities and contributing to family stability. Simultaneously, successful jobs initiatives fortify the neighborhoods in which they operate, making them more attractive places to live and providing strong incentives for younger residents to participate in the labor force.

Likewise, the Resource Guides in the second and third categories were chosen because they affect both individual families and their neighborhoods. For instance, the guide on housing is intended to help communities provide affordable housing to low-income families, which in turn leads to enhanced housing stock and more desirable neighborhoods. The guide on child care seeks to help communities develop plans for increasing the supply of affordable, quality child care—especially the notoriously hard-to-find care for infants and school-age children, and care during nontraditional work hours. Achieving this goal not only would improve the developmental preparation of young children, but it also would help stabilize parental employment, enhance the viability of neighborhood enterprises, and promote safer, better-connected communities.

The guides in the last category address techniques for advancing neighborhood-based family strengthening work, such as how to develop a communications strategy and how to use data and maintain accountability for specific outcomes.

Additional guides may be developed as new requests for assistance surface from the sites. This guide is a working draft that may be updated periodically as we receive particular information requests from Foundation staff and *Making Connections* sites. We view these guides not as an end in themselves, but as a first step in posing and answering some of the most difficult questions we face about how to help families in the toughest neighborhoods. Toward this end, we welcome readers' comments and thoughts on any of the subjects included in these guides.

Douglas W. Nelson
President
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

executive summary

Making sure strong schools exist in *Making Connections* neighborhoods won't be easy, but it may be one of the best opportunities to leverage public and private sector resources to promote a family strengthening agenda. Contrary to popular belief, there are examples of excellent schools that serve children and families in tough neighborhoods—schools that improve the life chances of individuals, support families, and help build strong communities. There just aren't enough of them.

The **Introduction** gives an overview of the key ideas that provide the direction and energy for the most promising approaches to school improvement. The aim is to equip *Making Connections* cities and site teams with information, models of promising practice, and a sense of where they can get more information and assistance as education-related issues begin to surface in *Making Connections* neighborhoods.

Potential Requests, Opportunities, and Challenges describes some of the initial concerns and questions about school-related issues that are likely to be raised in all *Making Connections* cities and neighborhoods. Local leaders and neighborhood residents will probably want to improve the quality of education available for the neighborhood's young people, make better use of school facilities and resources to meet other community needs, and help families and neighborhood residents be more involved in ensuring a good education for their children.

Opportunities for making progress will exist in all of the sites. In addition to scanning what assets already exist—people, organizations, initiatives under way—it will be helpful to be familiar with some trends in education reform that present opportunities for strengthening neighborhood schools. These range from a focus on high standards, to increased accountability, to the emerging efforts at creating alternatives to poorly performing schools. Other opportunities include interest in school-community partnerships and new ways to involve families.

Improving schools requires overcoming a number of obstacles. Historically low achievement, inequitable distribution of resources (human, physical, and financial), and poorly functioning, politicized urban school districts will all cause their share of frustration. Substantial barriers to creating new schools, transforming existing schools, involving families, and building partnerships exist as well.

Promising Approaches and Resources provides a more detailed (but still brief) look at different strategies for building strong, community-responsive schools. The good news is that there are strategies that work. When *Making Connections* sites focus on improving educational outcomes, they'll want to consider a range of strategies, from creating or strengthening individual schools in a neighborhood to broader school system reform, with many possible combinations in between. These include:

A. Accelerating the improvement of strong publicly funded schools highlights two strategies: (1) Transforming existing public schools through school improvement offers a quick rundown on efforts to help public schools succeed in tough neighborhoods—standards, assessment, professional development, whole school reform, and other important trends in the school reform field—and (2) creating new schools in the neighborhood discusses the promise and problems associated with starting new charter schools, smaller community-based public schools, and for-profit school management.

B. Strengthening linkages among school-family-community partners focuses on two areas: (1) Involving families in school transformation and creation provides a look at various approaches to engage families in school reform efforts and (2) fostering school-community partnerships that

strengthen families and neighborhoods discusses strategies that some communities are using to create better conditions for learning and to utilize their school's resources and access to young people in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

C. Increasing choice discusses some of the least traditional and most controversial school reform strategies, including school choice, vouchers, and private scholarships.

D. Supporting systemic reforms presents examples of how some states and school districts are changing policy and practice in a number of key areas (e.g., accountability, curriculum, governance, finance), with the hope of improving schools on a systemwide scale.

The final **Resources** section lists organizations that can provide additional information, advice, and direct assistance. The appendix identifies additional potentially helpful organizations located in or near each *Making Connections* site.

Every family wants the best education possible for their children. The promise of a good education is a crucial part of the American dream of opportunity and advancement. Unfortunately, this promise goes largely unfulfilled for children and youth living in communities with high concentrations of poverty. But it doesn't have to be that way. There are examples of excellent schools that serve children and families in tough neighborhoods—schools that improve the life chances of individuals, support families, and help build strong communities.

Creating strong schools in *Making Connections* neighborhoods may be one of the best opportunities to leverage public and private sector resources to promote a family strengthening agenda. School is often the first significant outside-of-the-home influence on children. Good schools support and reinforce good parenting and help families ensure that their children acquire the skills, knowledge, and habits they need to succeed. *(See Figure One on the next page.)* In many tough neighborhoods, schools are the only public institutional resource with facilities for convening members of the community. As such, schools are a natural entry point for mobilizing families to get involved in improving the opportunities, services, and supports available for their children.

Why is this issue of particular interest to *Making Connections*? In essence, strong community schools can provide families in participating sites with access to the three kinds of resources and assistance we believe are necessary to strengthen families: economic opportunities, social networks, and services and supports of various kinds. For example:

- Good schooling is critical to individual and family economic success and to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. School completion and academic success increase the likelihood that young people will escape poverty, form strong

GOOD SCHOOLS are family STRENGTHENING institutions

FIGURE ONE

There is no one model for a good community school, but there are some requirements that any school should meet. First and foremost, it must be a place of learning. In addition, a good school has a unifying vision of how teachers and parents will work together to help children learn the ideas, facts, and habits needed for adult life. Schools with the potential to act as family strengthening organizations are:

SMALL, to allow all teachers to know one another, and every teacher to know all students;

PERSONAL, so that adults pay attention to the needs and development of every student and prevent emotional crises and learning "plateaus" from becoming serious problems;

SIMPLE, to draw all students toward learning a common core of challenging subjects;

SERENE, to signal the school's commitment to learning and to protect students from disruption;

CLOSE TO FAMILIES, so that parents will trust the teachers and reinforce the school's demands on student time and attention;

RELENTLESS ABOUT LEARNING, so that teachers regard a student's learning difficulties as a problem to be solved, not evidence of a permanent incapacity; and

COLLABORATIVE, to ensure that teachers coordinate what they teach and students steadily accumulate knowledge and understanding.

families, and raise successful children of their own.

+ The presence of good schools makes neighborhoods more desirable places to live. Most families prefer that their children attend neighborhood schools. And, schools to which parents feel connected, and that involve parents in multiple roles, stimulate the development of informal, supportive social networks.

+ School-community partnerships—which meet not only academic needs, but provide other supports—can contribute to family strengthening. Obviously schools cannot be responsible for all the needs of children and their families. However, neighborhoods that use the schools as a venue for connecting families with opportunities, supports, and services promote child and youth development and can often prevent small problems from becoming serious.

One final note on community schools and their relationship to neighborhoods, families, and children. The *Making Connections* initiative is a place-based strategy for supporting families and providing brighter futures for young people. Improving neighborhood schools and using school facilities to support families and create opportunities for children

and youth are natural avenues to pursue in achieving the initiative's goals. However, it is naive to assume that a single "community school" can always serve the interests and needs of a diverse community. In some cases it will be necessary to create new educational options in the neighborhood or help students find choices outside the neighborhood that meet their specific needs.

Community is a powerful, but complex idea. Families live in neighborhoods, but many look elsewhere for work, family relationships, religious fulfillment, and cultural expression. In fact, most people find themselves to be members of many communities in addition to the one where they reside. Against this background, a "community" school can be defined as a school that serves a community, whether that community is defined by a neighborhood, a group's history of deliberating together, or by an affinity in values that attracts individuals to join together.

In big-city neighborhoods, as throughout America, there are people who share some beliefs and not others. Differences can include beliefs about the best way for a child to learn to read, how hard a child should be expected to work in school, how much authority a school should exert over a child's behavior, and even about religious preferences and moral standards. The diversity and intensity of beliefs about education in any neighborhood determine what kind of community school is possible. Broad agreement on the nature of what constitutes a good school will be easy to come by in some neighborhoods, but nearly impossible in others. In many situations, enabling families to send their children to different schools helps build strong communities.

To accommodate the needs of families, a neighborhood's community school strategy should be flexible. Neighborhoods will probably pursue a variety of arrangements, including supporting one or more schools that reflect a universal consensus about schooling and also developing multiple schools that meet the diversity of family needs and desires. And it is important to remember that schools need not always be physically located in the neighborhood to contribute to family strengthening. In many areas, the opportunity to attend charter or magnet schools, parental choice to send their children to private or parochial school, or desegregation orders dictate that students attend school outside their neighborhood. Although distance and lack of transportation can pose barriers to involving families regardless of their location, good schools go the extra mile to create communities encompassing students, families, staff, and other affiliated institutions.

potential requests, opportunities, and challenges

A. WHAT ISSUES MIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND LEADERS RAISE ABOUT SCHOOLS?

Good schools are almost always a top priority for parents. Yet, schools in many *Making Connections* sites are likely to be struggling. Thus, site teams can anticipate that local leaders and neighborhood residents will want to improve the quality of education available for the neighborhood's young people, make better use of school facilities and resources to meet other community needs, and help families and neighborhood residents be more involved in ensuring a good education for their children.

Questions that are likely to surface early in community discussions include:

- **"What can we do to make our schools better?"** Some parents will be alienated from their neighborhood schools, but many more will want the schools to improve at their core mission: ensuring that children learn. The good news is that strong neighborhood schools can be created. The equal reality is that this is tough work, usually requiring steady change over a number of years. But the essential message is one of hope. Schools do get better when an entire community gets involved to improve them.

- **"What can we do to make our schools more responsive to OUR neighborhood's needs?"** This question might manifest itself as concern about school and neighborhood safety, or about relationships between families and school staff. Residents might wonder what schools can do to provide early childhood programs or day care, offer after-school programs, and meet the neighborhood's needs for adult education or family support services.

The news here is very good. Many communities across the country have built partnerships among schools, parents, and community agencies so that schools become hubs of activities and services highly valued by residents. In fact, this may be an area where success can be achieved in the short run, while longer-range efforts move forward.

In addition to these concerns about specific schools in specific neighborhoods, site teams may be asked to advise about whether anything can be done in conjunction with the public school system as a whole. Some neighborhoods may be intensely disillusioned with the quality of their schools and/or the perceived unwillingness or inability of the school system to change. Issues raised in this vein might include:

- **"If the school system isn't changing fast enough, can we create alternatives?"** This question can lead to a discussion of charter schools (if state law allows these), as well as other ways that parents can have a greater range of educational opportunities for their children.

- **"Can the school system ever really change? Is it worth our time and effort to involve ourselves in more systemic reforms?"** The answer to these questions will depend entirely on the state and the community in which they are asked. The truth is that truly systemic reforms occur over many years, and most school systems attempting them are still in mid-course. And, for every district like Houston, Chicago, or Philadelphia that is showing improvement, many other large urban districts are still floundering, or worse.

What is clear is that in the first stage of *Making Connections*, both systemwide changes and school- and neighborhood-specific strategies should be encouraged. It is much too early to conclude in any site that a school system cannot improve.

B. WHAT ARE THE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ON WHICH SITES CAN BUILD?

Efforts to improve the quality of education and strengthen community schools almost certainly exist in all *Making Connections* sites. Thus, there are probably a number of neighborhood and community assets on which to build. Assets might include schools that have their community's trust, neighborhood schools with motivated school staff, and/or a districtwide focus on instruction and standards. There may also be community-based organizations with an interest in improving and expanding education options in the neighborhood, or an informed, activist group of parents who are willing to work for educational improvements. There may be school-community partnerships in place that provide services and supports for students and their families. Some neighborhoods might be helped by philanthropists interested in starting new charter or private schools or in supporting the education of individual students. An "informed scan" of the school-reform landscape in a site can identify people, organizations, and potential champions who could be pivotal in advancing the goals of family strengthening in the context of the education system. *(See Figure Two on the following pages.)*

In addition to specific people and organizations in the site, the following trends in education reform present opportunities on which to build. Site teams will want to determine the extent to which these opportunities exist in the neighborhoods. These are the key ideas that are providing the direction and energy for the most promising changes in the field:

- **Commitment to high standards**. Virtually all public schools espouse high standards for all students, not a different set of expectations for children and youth in low-income families.
- **Better data to assess progress**. Many states and districts now provide school-by-school reports, showing student performance in achieving standards and other key information. Parents and advocates can compare how well students are doing, how safe schools are, and whether or not schools have the resources they need to get their job done. (Check with the local school district to obtain school-by-school information.)
- **Increased accountability**. Public schools are under increasing pressure to improve performance. With the advent of better data about school performance and a growing commitment to holding schools accountable for student achievement, the public is demanding better performance from poorly performing schools. In many areas, extensive assistance is available and if that doesn't work, consequences as serious as district takeover or school dissolution can result from failure to improve. Potential crises stemming from dismal performance (e.g., state takeovers of school districts or reconstitution of failing schools) may be turned into opportunities to create more effective and responsive neighborhood schools.
- **Strategies to improve the quality of teaching**. Because too many low-performing schools have the least well-prepared teachers, efforts are under way to dramatically improve teacher quality. School systems are working with colleges and universities to improve preservice education and better align programs with the challenges of helping students meet higher standards. Some states are also creating alternate routes to teacher certification to expand the supply of qualified,

SCANNING THE FIELD: what to ASK, who to TALK to, what kind of information to COLLECT

FIGURE TWO

To identify the people, organizations, and other stakeholders who are already championing effective schooling and who could be valued partners in advancing the ideas of *Making Connections*, here are some of the questions that site teams may want to ask during their initial work in a community:

WHAT POSITIONS do neighborhood leaders and other influential groups take on education-reform issues; e.g., do they support neighborhood schools, school-community partnerships, district and state takeovers of poorly performing schools, charters, vouchers, etc.?

WHAT PROMINENT GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS are natural allies in promoting a family strengthening approach in the context of education reform? Who is promoting a child- and family-centered agenda?

WHAT LOCAL GROUPS (parent, neighborhood, social service, religious, or philanthropic) are already working to improve the neighborhood's schools?

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOURCES exist to help neighborhood schools? How effectively are they being used?

WHAT OTHER SCHOOL-REFORM EFFORTS currently affect the neighborhood and larger community; e.g., Annenberg challenge, charter school networks, New American Schools Design Teams, university partnerships or other groups working or investing in the city or neighborhood?

SITE TEAMS may also want to check themselves to ensure that the following stakeholders have been involved in discussions:

- parents and other neighborhood residents
- youth
- teachers, administrators, and other school staff
- neighborhood- and community-based youth and family development organizations
- school district officials
- nonprofit schools assistance groups
- faith community
- local business leaders
- representatives from the city office of neighborhood planning
- education advocates, e.g., representatives from the local Public Education Fund
- local grantmakers with an interest in education
- community organizing groups
- local elected officials/policymakers
- community development corporations
- neighborhood planning groups

(continued)

FIGURE TWO CONTINUED

Working with neighborhoods to determine how best to pursue family strengthening in the context of education will be easier when site teams are well-armed with information. Some of this information will be available from school districts and/or individual public and private schools. Many public schools are mandated to produce report cards with demographic and performance data. Good sources for this information are local education reporters, county or city demographers, policy experts in local schools of education, staff in county or city economic development agencies, and the mayor's education adviser. Information to be gathered includes:

DATA ABOUT SCHOOLS:

PERFORMANCE DATA—How well are students performing? Are performance data disaggregated by race and income? What are attendance and graduation rates?

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT—Where do neighborhood children and youth attend school? How many attend neighborhood public schools, nonpublic schools in the neighborhood, and public and private schools outside the neighborhood?

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA—How many students attend those different schools? What is the race/ethnicity and economic status of the student body? What is the mobility rate?

STAFFING AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS—What is the student/staff ratio? What is the average class size? What is the average tenure of teachers and principals? Are teachers qualified to teach the subjects they are teaching?

BUDGET INFORMATION—How much is spent per student? How much of the school budget is spent on staff (teachers, paraprofessionals, administrative staff)? How much goes to student services? How much is allocated for professional development? Do schools have any control over their budgets? What outside sources of funds are available and how are they used?

INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK THAT AFFECTS OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION:

+ How is the school system governed? Is the local board of education elected or appointed?
+ Does the neighborhood have a single board member representing its interests?
+ Is there a districtwide school improvement effort that affects neighborhood schools?
+ Have other reform initiatives been tried and failed? What explains why previous efforts may have failed?
+ Are there charter laws? Who besides the local school district can grant a charter?
+ What are the rules affecting use of public school buildings for charter schools?
+ Are there publicly funded voucher plans or private scholarship funds?
+ Does the state have school or district takeover authority, and is there a chance it might be used?
+ What is the status of desegregation court orders? What schools may neighborhood students attend?
+ Are there other lawsuits and civil rights enforcement actions that influence how the district operates?

committed teachers. In addition, schools and districts that invest in high quality, ongoing professional development that is linked to a challenging curriculum are seeing real improvements in both teaching and learning.

- **Decentralized decision-making**. In many cities, opportunities are emerging for school staff and, in some cases, families, to make decisions about how schools operate. When this flexibility is accompanied by support, adequate resources, and strong accountability, schools can be more responsive to neighborhood concerns and more effectively meet students' learning needs.

- **Alternatives to low-performing public schools**. In a growing number of communities, parents who are dissatisfied with their child's public school have some recourse. Smaller alternative schools are being developed and charter schools (public schools that are run by entities other than school districts and have freedom from many rules and regulations in return for greater accountability) are proliferating in states that have strong charter laws. Some states and districts allow parents to choose to enroll their children in public schools outside of their neighborhood. Philanthropists are providing low-income families with scholarships allowing students to enroll in private schools, and a few communities are experimenting with publicly funded vouchers that families can use for public or private education.

- **Federal initiatives focusing on comprehensive reforms for poorly performing schools and extended learning opportunities in high-poverty schools**. Title I, the largest federal education program, allows schools with 50 percent poverty or greater to use their federal funds for schoolwide change, not just to help those students having the greatest difficulty. The Comprehensive School Reform program provides grants to schools to implement research-based approaches to improving student achievement, and the 21st Century Learning Centers program provides grants for after-school learning and development opportunities.

- **School-linked efforts to provide services and supports for families**. A growing interest in school-community partnerships makes it likely that schools will be working to develop closer ties with community-based organizations and public agencies. In the best of these relationships, young people benefit from increased educational opportunities, families gain better access to resources and supports, and schools become more connected with the neighborhood.

- **Family involvement efforts**. We have more models of effective family involvement than ever, ranging from community organizing to support and sustain school reform, to initiatives that encourage parents in their role as children's first teachers, to parent participation in school decision-making.

- **School-reform networks and intermediary organizations**. A number of outside organizations have developed the capacity to help schools improve their performance. These organizations often provide research-based curricula and materials, professional development, coaching, and connections to other schools.

C. WHAT CHALLENGES MIGHT SITES FACE?

In an ideal world there are no challenges, only opportunities. However, even in the best of circumstances, school improvement is complex and takes time. Many factors over time have contributed to the dismal condition of poor performing schools, and turning them around is hard work. In spite of the potential assets, opportunities, and powerful

ideas discussed previously, good schools are rare in high-poverty neighborhoods. Following are some of the challenges and cold realities that site teams and *Making Connections* sites will face as they begin the work of improving educational outcomes:

- **Poor achievement and low graduation rates**. On the whole, students attending school in tough neighborhoods are achieving poorly. Despite the rhetoric about all kids achieving at high levels, in reality many schools have low expectations. Students consistently score lower than their more advantaged peers on proficiency tests. Students earning A's in high-poverty schools generally achieve at the same level of students receiving C's and D's elsewhere.

- **Lack of support**. High standards aren't enough. Raising the bar without providing additional support to make sure that schools have the knowledge and resources to help all students achieve, not only doesn't help, but virtually condemns kids to failure. All too often, when standards are not met there are consequences for students, but not for adults or institutions.

- **Inequitable distribution of resources**. Most high-poverty schools have fewer fiscal, physical, and human resources at their disposal and the resources they have are not always used well. Wealthy districts surrounding urban areas usually spend more per pupil, have better facilities, and attract better prepared staff. In addition, high-poverty schools usually get less money per pupil than other schools in the same district because teacher seniority allows highly paid teachers to choose assignments in more advantaged neighborhoods.

- **Dysfunctional bureaucracies**. Many urban school districts are dysfunctional. Hardened bureaucracies are resistant to change. Relationships between school districts and communities are often troubled. Districts may not have a clear idea of how to improve failing schools and lack the capacity to provide useful assistance. They may be prevented from making needed changes by school board politics, powerful interest groups, job protections, collective bargaining constraints, or external constraints on how money is spent. Districts often feel besieged and could very likely resent foundation initiatives that imply they are not doing a good job.

- **Lack of capacity**. Decentralizing decision-making without building capacity is simply "passing the buck." Poorly performing school districts may be sending decision-making authority and accountability to schools and neighborhoods that are no better equipped than the system is to improve education outcomes.

- **Difficulties in expanding choices**. Developing new education options is difficult and expensive. Powerful interest groups fear change and often oppose any options that they see as competing with the status quo. Sufficient resources and assistance are not always available to groups starting charter schools, for instance.

- **Barriers to engaging families**. Promoting meaningful family involvement is tough. Schools may be very poorly connected to neighborhoods. Developing an organized, informed constituency of parents is time consuming. Without such a constituency, neighborhoods sometimes don't know what to look for in terms of good schools. Many parents don't have the time or inclination to be involved in school decision-making.

- **Good community relations, but poor education results**. Working to improve neighborhood conditions by providing school-linked services is sometimes easier than dealing with education problems. In the worst case scenario, good school-community partnerships that meet a

neighborhood's noneducational needs may mask serious problems inside the school.

- **Court rulings**. Students may not be attending neighborhood schools at all. The status of desegregation orders may dictate which public schools young people can attend.
- **Systemic problems**. Fixing things school by school is a viable strategy for neighborhoods, but begs the question of problems with the public education system and won't help kids in highly mobile families.
- **High turnover**. The transient nature of some neighborhoods can limit local ownership and concern for neighborhood schools.

A SCHOOL that WORKS

For over 100 years, the Francis Scott Key School has served a diverse population in its south Philadelphia neighborhood. Today the school works with students and families who have recently entered the country, as well as third and fourth generations of earlier immigrants. Although over 90 percent of the families served have incomes below the poverty level, Key School is a shining example of how a school with high expectations can achieve impressive results. Key focuses strongly on literacy and language arts skills, using the research-based *Success for All* program developed at Johns Hopkins University. Staff are organized flexibly to keep class size small during reading instruction and to free up teachers for tutoring students who need extra help. Students are assessed regularly by teachers to identify their strengths and needs. An intensive and ongoing staff development program allows the staff to sharpen their skills and work and plan collaboratively. Providing literacy workshops and other adult education programs for parents is one of the many ways that Key works in tandem with families to promote learning and healthy development for all of its students. A school counselor, assisted by bilingual assistants, communicates regularly with families. The counselor also works with an on-site school-community coordinator to provide family support services, career and educational guidance, and referrals and assistance with obtaining other services. A nurse practitioner works half-time at the school and information about health is infused throughout the curriculum. Key's ability to focus on academics in a family supportive environment is paying off in a number of ways—improved attendance, better school climate, and steadily increasing test scores.

promising approaches and resources

Making schools work for all students is a complex undertaking—there's no magic bullet or single strategy that will work. But it can be done. Research and practice suggest that success requires a combination of *investments* in school and teacher capacity, *incentives* for schools to perform well, and *opportunities* and *freedom* for school staff to meet the learning needs of students. The core principles for fostering educational success are shown in Figure Three.

Regardless of whether the focus is on improving existing schools or creating new options, schools that serve *Making Connections* neighborhoods need to have high expectations, provide learning opportunities for all who seek them, and be accountable to the public for positive results.

When *Making Connections* sites focus on improving educational outcomes, they may want to consider any or all of the following strategies. These range from strengthening individual schools in a neighborhood to broader school system reform, with many possible combinations in between. Careful attention to neighborhood, school, and school district conditions can help in developing the best options for different neighborhoods. *(See Figure Four on page 19.)*

PRINCIPLES for fostering educational SUCCESS

FIGURE THREE

SET clear, high standards for all students.

ALIGN curriculum, instruction, and assessment with standards.

SET high standards for teachers as well as students, provide high-quality professional development, and assign strong teachers to those schools that need them most.

PROVIDE greater flexibility in return for increased accountability.

MAKE sure schools have the resources and support they need.

PUT in place accountability systems that demand progress with different student groups.

PROMOTE meaningful family participation.

MAKE efforts to improve education results part of a larger commitment to support families and strengthen neighborhoods.

A. ACCELERATING THE IMPROVEMENT OF STRONG PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOLS

1. Transforming Existing Public Schools Through School Improvement

The Idea

Although few and far between, there are examples of great public schools in low-income neighborhoods. The existence of these schools suggests that we do know how to get the job done, but lack the will to do it in most places. High-poverty schools that are successful have a number of qualities in common. They focus relentlessly on results by adopting high standards that clearly spell out what students should know and be able to do as a result of their schooling. They provide rigorous instruction that is linked to those standards, and use tests that measure the extent to which kids are mastering skills, concepts, and information. These schools use instructional approaches and up-to-date materials that are linked to standards and are effective in raising student achievement.

High-performing schools have access to good data and the capacity to analyze them and use them to make decisions. These schools organize staff and resources in innovative ways that support their instructional approaches and allow for staff and students to form relationships over time. For the most part they are small and personal enough to engage all students, recognize different learning styles, and provide individualized instruction when needed. High-quality professional development involves the entire school staff and whenever possible takes place on-site and is integrated into the school day. Schools are involved in partnerships with families that encourage learning and development both in and out of school. Finally, these schools are supported in what they do. Some receive assistance that is sponsored by state or local education agencies. Others are connected to networks and receive help in implementing a particular approach from an intermediary organization.

monitoring student PERFORMANCE

Over the past several years, the state of Texas has instituted a results-based accountability system that has prompted several school districts to alter the way they organize resources and provide educational services to students. The accountability system looks primarily at student performance on state tests and dropout rates. To receive a good accountability rating, schools are required to show that specified student subgroups (e.g., African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged) are succeeding, which has prompted an increased focus on boosting scores for all students. The Houston school district (the largest district in Texas and sixth largest in the nation) has dramatically improved student performance by providing support, resources, and assistance to troubled schools. Targeted schools receive help from a team of practitioners and specialists. Together they look at data and current practice and devise a plan for improving teaching and learning, for which the district provides extra funding and support. The district is also focusing resources on making sure all students read well by third grade, improving math teachers' skills, and insisting that all high school students take challenging, high-level courses.

What to Look Out For

- Schools that are performing well often are dependent on charismatic leadership and are working against the inertia of a poorly functioning public system.
- Poorly designed, high stakes accountability systems may have unintended effects. For instance, they can discourage skilled administrators and staff from working in low-performing schools. Systems that only look at aggregate student test score achievement may encourage school staff to exempt students from testing or provide perverse incentives to let low-performing students drift away from school.
- Schools may not have the freedom to adopt promising instructional reforms or to obtain the professional development needed to implement them. Many will have no control of budgets, and district rules or union contracts may prevent them from trying innovative strategies. Individual schools may have little or no control over who their staff are and how long they stay.
- Undertaking "whole school" reform (concentrating on all of these elements at once) is hard work. Many schools taking a comprehensive

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

FIGURE FOUR

Policies Defining Schools' Freedom of Action	Conditions Indicating Strategy Is Appropriate	Conditions Indicating Strategy Is Inappropriate
School Enhancement	Existing schools have strong staff, definite focus on instruction, and community trust. They only lack equipment or materials.	Existing schools have divided staffs, are unable to focus on instructional improvements, or lack community trust.
Intensive Professional Development	Existing schools have strong focus on instruction, community trust, motivated but poorly prepared teachers, no better teachers to hire.	Existing schools have weak focus on instruction, divided staff, unmotivated teachers, better teachers available.
Recruitment of New Teachers	Teachers in existing schools lack mastery of basic skills and few are trained to teach English, mathematics, and science.	Teachers in existing schools have mastery of basic skills, and those who teach math, science, and English are trained in their fields.
School Reconstitution	Divided staff, weak focus on instruction, record of failing to implement reforms, lack of overwhelming community support.	United and focused staff, willingness to take advice and implement reforms, overwhelming community support.
New Public Schools	Criteria for reconstitution met, but politics precludes it. Neighborhood group(s) willing to found schools, find qualified providers.	Lethal resistance from school district, absence of channels to make public funds available for new schools, absence of school sponsors trusted by parents.
Chartering	Criteria for reconstitution met, existence of chartering authority, neighborhood group(s) willing to seek charters and find qualified providers.	Absence of a chartering authority. Absence of charter sponsor credible with parents.
Vouchers	Excellent trusted options outside the neighborhood; strong private school commitment to neighborhood children.	Absolute legal barrier to use of public funds for nonpublic schooling. Absence of private schools dedicated to serving neighborhood children.
Tutoring, Weekend, Summer Schooling	Existing schools are strong, well-staffed, focused on instruction, improving. Children simply need more time.	Existing schools meet criteria for any of the remedies above. Absence of competent special program providers.

approach are implementing a model developed elsewhere and rely on outside organizations for curricula and materials, professional development, and other help. Research shows that some comprehensive approaches produce significant achievement gains, but implementation varies widely and teachers must be deeply committed to making the change.

creating a
CHARTER SCHOOL

Started by the Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation (OARC) in 1998, West Oak Lane Charter School in Philadelphia provides a good illustration of what it takes to start a new publicly funded community school. Over the course of a year, OARC successfully navigated a sometimes treacherous course to find and rehabilitate a facility, develop an instructional program, solicit a student body, and find a staff for their new charter school. Difficulties they overcame included raising capital to lease and remodel an old shopping center, ending their relationship with a for-profit management firm, and implementing a turnover in their school leadership midway through the first year. The school obtained help with a range of management and instructional issues from foundations, and a technical assistance center located at Drexel University *(see page 30)*. They have used their flexibility to institute a longer school day and school year, reduce class size, and put in place a research-based curriculum that emphasizes science and technology. A family support team works to make linkages to other community resources and a low-cost after-school program is available for students with working parents.

2. Creating New Schools in the Neighborhood

The Idea

Another strategy for building stronger neighborhood schools is creating educational alternatives by starting charter schools, new smaller schools, and/or schools operated through contracts with for-profit groups or nonprofit organizations. The theory behind this is that in some neighborhoods effective practice and good results might be easier to achieve when "starting from scratch." For the most part, these schools have greater flexibility in what they do, but are still accountable to the public. In addition, these schools provide choices within the public school system for families and students and thus should put pressure on existing public schools to perform better. Because they are public schools, they accept students regardless of achievement level and background.

Charter schools. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia have laws enabling the formation of charter schools. Charter schools are publicly funded, independent schools of choice. The schools operate under a "charter" or performance agreement with an entity that is authorized to sponsor them (e.g., a state or local board of education). They are freed from most state and local regulations, but must achieve specific results incorporated in their charters. The schools may be operated by parents, teachers, community-based organizations, or some combination thereof. Start-up is a complicated, often difficult undertaking. Operators must find and obtain a suitable facility, equipment, and materials. They are responsible for both the business and programmatic sides of running a school and for getting the kind of assistance school districts usually provide to individual schools. Many promising charter schools have received help with start-up and ongoing operations from intermediary organizations and philanthropists.

Smaller, community-oriented schools. In some parts of the country, school districts have partnered with community-based organizations and other "non-traditional" educators to start small schools. The result has been opportunities for students to learn in more diverse, intimate, and community-responsive settings. Students have more options for finding schools that engage them. Small schools often have the flexibility to select faculty whose skills and interests match those of the schools.

Contract schools. Another way of creating new schools is by contracting the operation and management of neighborhood schools to nonprofit organizations or private companies. These partnerships can be a way for a trusted neighborhood institution to get public funding and the authority to run a school. Privatization with for-profit organizations is more controversial. Advocates of this type of privatization believe businesses can achieve better results more efficiently and be accountable and responsive to their customers. Others fear that companies will focus on profit at the expense of students.

What to Look Out For

- Creating new schools is costly and takes a tremendous amount of time, energy, skills, and resources.
- Charter schools in particular need facilities, materials, and a wide variety of expertise to thrive. Creating new schools does not necessarily guarantee that there will be qualified staff and administrators to run them. Even when they can be found, burnout can be a problem.
- Charter schools vary in just how free of rules and regulations they are. They may be subject to "regulation creep"—having new constraints put on them over time.
- There is often great resistance to new schools from the education establishment.
- Although in theory charter schools are more accountable than regular public schools (they must produce results or lose their charter), the technology for holding them accountable is underdeveloped. Careful scrutiny of how charter schools will demonstrate that they are achieving results is warranted.
- Information is just starting to emerge about how and when these approaches are effective.

B. STRENGTHENING LINKAGES AMONG SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Regardless of a neighborhood's approach to improving the quality of education, going the extra mile to build strong school-family-community partnerships is critical. Simply put, family involvement in schools improves education results and often helps strengthen families and neighborhoods as well. Schools need all the help they can get in creating optimal conditions for both teaching and learning. And neighborhoods need strong schools. The school's resources and access to young people can be important assets to neighborhood revitalization efforts.

1. Involving Families in School Transformation and Creation

The Idea

Research shows that students whose families are involved in their education do better in school, stay in school longer, and are more likely to go on to jobs and higher education. Parents and schools benefit as well. Parents often gain new skills and greater confidence and many go back to school themselves.

Getting families involved in their children's education can encompass the full spectrum of families served by a school. Some of these families may be the most isolated, including those who are new to this country, who do not speak English, who may

involving PARENTS

Since 1992, community organizers from the El Paso Interreligious Service Organization (EPISO) have worked with parents and school staff at Ysleta Elementary School. EPISO is affiliated with the Interfaith Education Fund *(see page 32)*, a group that helps neighborhood residents build the capacity to be equal partners in improving the quality of their schools. At Ysleta, a leadership team of parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders has focused on what and how students learn, and has tackled issues such as traffic safety, the design of a new school, and lack of medical care. Most important, both decision-making and the hard work of bringing good ideas to life are shared responsibilities. When the team designed a portfolio assessment system, for example, teachers held parent training sessions that explained the system and gave parents an opportunity to comment on it. Teachers and parents participate in family math nights and tutoring workshops. Ysleta staff, teachers, and parents designed an after-school enrichment program, which parents now run. The school also boasts a Parent Resource Center, where parents come to attend adult classes, check out books and tapes for their children, and help teachers prepare materials for the classroom. The hard work has paid off where it counts most: improved student performance. Attendance rates have climbed each year and now are above average for the district and the state. Since 1992, the number of students passing all portions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test has increased 38 percentage points.

have mental health or substance abuse problems, who do not want to come to school or even talk to school staff, and those families who are working several jobs and have no time to get involved in their child's schooling. Reaching these families will take a concerted effort, but these are the families who can most benefit from becoming connected to other families, their school community, and, eventually, a wider network of services and supports. School involvement can be a natural first step to connect them to community life.

On the other end of the continuum are families who are already involved in their child's education. These are the parents who come to PTA meetings, volunteer to bring cookies to their child's class for special parties, and so on. These families can be encouraged to take on greater decision-making roles, and they are easier to reach and communicate with. The task for *Making Connections* neighborhoods is to reach all families along this continuum.

Each of these groups of parents can be involved in their child's education in some or all of the following four ways: as teachers, as school supporters, as advocates, and as decision-makers. An initial goal for involving the most isolated parents in their child's education could be to help them work with their children at home, perhaps just reading to them or checking their homework. Later, isolated parents might be encouraged to come to a social event and then a PTA meeting at their child's school. The goal for more active parents might be to serve on a school council or represent their school on a districtwide council. These four ways parents can be involved are described briefly below:

- As *teachers*—parents teach their toddlers the skills they will need to start school prepared to learn; parents read to their young children, and help their children with homework, with science fair projects, and with special reports. Some

schools help parents become good teachers at home through special parenting classes, skill-building sessions, and informal events that build their confidence.

- As *school supporters*—parents attend parent-teacher conferences, watch their children perform in school events, join the PTA or PTO, work in the classroom, tutor students, and/or help supervise field trips. They get involved in what is happening at their child's school, sending a signal to their children that school is important and their child is important. This raises children's confidence and inspires them to work hard in school. Some schools ask parents to sign a contract at the beginning of the school year where they agree, for example, to attend at least two parent-teacher conferences and volunteer at least 18 hours in the school during the year.

- As *advocates*—parents speak for and act on behalf of their children. Parents may act as advocates for their own children or they may act for all children in their school community, as when they insist that students not be split into high and low tracks. A number of communities are trying to help parents become more effective advocates through workshops and parent-mentoring programs. The Right Question Project, for example, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, trains parents to ask teachers and other school officials about their child's progress in school and to take specific action steps if they don't get good answers. Another example is found in New York City where ACORN (the Association for Community Reform Now) helped parents press community school districts to open smaller schools, end student tracking, make needed repairs, and divide funds fairly among students. As a result, two new elementary schools were opened, and committees of parents and teachers now make the hiring decisions for school directors and teaching staff.

- The final level of parent involvement is as *decision-makers*. Beyond just making recommendations, or influencing a program, or managing a small school fund, some schools give parents real decision-making authority. Some schools, for instance, allow parents to decide what program is best for their child and help develop their child's personal learning plan annually. In Chicago, elected local school councils—made up of at least 50 percent parents—at every public school in the city pick the principal and set the overall policies for the school. In these cases, decisions are made jointly, and parents feel a sense of ownership in what they have created for their children's education.[1]

While there are many examples of communities helping parents act as teachers and supporters, fewer help parents become effective advocates and decision-makers. To fully utilize parents' potential, school staff need to view parents as experts about their own children with valuable knowledge and skills. Families need to be made to feel entirely welcome at their child's school at any time and they need to be involved in everything from the school's vision and design to its procedures and relationships with the wider community.

These examples show that parents can be involved in their child's education in a variety of ways; when they are, everyone gains: children, the schools, parents, the neighborhood, the broader community, and even the wider taxpaying public.

What to Look Out For

- Schools are not always welcoming to families.

- Race and class differences may make school staff uncomfortable with parents. Many families may have had bad school experiences themselves and feel intimidated by educators and their own level of education.

[1]Bamber, Chrissie, Nancy Berla, and Anne T. Henderson. *Learning from Others: Good Programs and Successful Campaigns.* Washington D.C.: Center for Law and Education, 1996, pp. I-25 to I-32.

- Many families don't have time to be deeply involved in school improvement efforts and polls show that few are interested in participating in school governance. Not all family consultation will be representative.
- Special challenges exist in promoting meaningful family involvement when students attend schools outside their neighborhoods.
- Confrontational or conflict strategies may backfire, causing schools to go into "fortress mentality" and slow down school improvement efforts considerably.

2. Fostering School-Community Partnerships That Strengthen Families and Neighborhoods

The Idea

School is an institution that can contribute to strong families and communities, and schools need partners to make sure that all kids are learning. These partnerships can focus on ensuring school readiness, reducing barriers to learning, and helping kids develop the skills and competencies they need to succeed and become prepared for the world of work. In many cases, partnerships try to create opportunities for all neighborhood residents, not just students. For instance, many "second chance" programs for out-of-school youth address the needs of disengaged young people. Schools can also work with public agencies and community groups to improve the nature and quality of services and make supports and services available in more convenient times and places. Partnerships can help repair damaged school-community relationships and forge stronger family-school connections by involving the school in meeting needs identified by families. School-community partnerships that are family-focused and employ staff and volunteers from the neighborhood can bring parents and other adults into schools, creating good role models for children.

a school-based
COMMUNITY CENTER

Countee Cullen Community Center, a Beacon program operated by the Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families, offers positive alternatives for young people who are growing up in one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York City. Located at Public School 194, the Center is open from 9 a.m. to sometimes well past midnight, and operates on weekends and in the summer as well. During the regular school day, the Beacon's presence is felt through a host of on-site social services, including attendance improvement, child welfare, and dropout prevention interventions. But it is after classes officially end that the Center's ability to engage and support the community becomes apparent. A range of different activities attracts residents of all ages. The Center helps parents stay connected with their children through support groups, parenting workshops, and family recreational activities. For teens, the Center offers a homework help program as well as a version of Upward Bound, drug awareness programs, late-night basketball, and a movie series. A teen council promotes activities that encourage youngsters to take a proprietary interest in their neighborhood. The Center's teens produce public service videos, organize street cleanups, publish a newspaper, and operate a nighttime teen lounge. Community identification with the Center is encouraged through high-visibility activities that include voter registration booths, Center t-shirts, and a neighborhood tree-planting project. In addition to focusing on youth and family development, the Countee Cullen Beacon is able to offer more intensive supports to families in need, including family preservation services, emergency help, clinical services, home visits, counseling, and practical help in finding housing, jobs, or child care.

a school-community

PARTNERSHIP

A partnership between New York City's District 6 and the Children's Aid Society, Intermediate School 218 is equally committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to providing a variety of family support and youth development activities. Students come from the Washington Heights neighborhood in Manhattan. Half are limited-English proficient and virtually all qualify for the federal free lunch program. Because the school is large, the 1600 students are divided into four theme-based academies. Each academy is further divided into two self-contained units so that staff and students are well known to each other. Supportive services are available during the school day, so if a student gets sick or has personal problems, help is just down the hall, not across town. More than half the students attend a voluntary extended day program consisting of before- and after-school sessions that are coordinated with what is being taught during the regular school day. In addition to these extended learning opportunities, young people and parents alike find lots of other reasons to come to IS 218 after hours. A range of activities gives students a chance to play, pursue hobbies, build athletic skills, and participate in arts. The school has a "Family Room" furnished with sofas, a television, and a constant flow of coffee, where parents can deepen their understanding and involvement not only in their children's education but also in community issues. An on-site health clinic offers medical exams, immunizations, and dental services for a nominal fee. A full-time social worker makes sure community members get other services they need. The enthusiasm with which residents participate makes it clear that IS 218 is meeting a real community need. The school has become far more than a "school-linked services center" and is considered to be a hub of neighborhood life.

When the activities of community partners are well coordinated with the educational program, schooling becomes more relevant to young people and they begin to connect what they learn in school to what they do in the neighborhood.

What to Look Out For

- There are many barriers to building successful partnerships, including competition for resources, differing organizational cultures and accountability systems, and historic mistrust between schools and community-based organizations.
- It is very difficult to find stable funding sources to manage and coordinate school-linked services. While school districts have been able to access federal funds (like Medicaid and WIC) to provide an array of services in schools, these strategies require detailed planning, close coordination between partners, and, in many cases, modifications to state plans and financing mechanisms.
- Schools that try to be all things to a community without the benefit of strong partners can be distracted from their mission of teaching and learning.
- Neighborhood residents can be very satisfied with schools that are good community partners, even when student achievement doesn't improve.
- Human-service systems may not be willing (or able) to locate services in or near schools.
- Space in or near schools may be a problem, and school district and union regulations may need to be addressed to more fully use school buildings.

C. INCREASING CHOICE

Citizens who are extremely frustrated with the quality of neighborhood schools and their school districts' response are likely to want information

and assistance about initiatives that will give them increased choice. This may be especially true in neighborhoods where starting a new smaller school or charter school is not an option.

The Idea

In some places it may not be possible to find the resolve and resources to improve existing schools or start new ones quickly enough or in ways that meet the needs of families in the neighborhood. A handful of approaches are being used to provide options for families who are dissatisfied with their public schools. *Public school choice* allows parents to select among schools either within their own school district, or, in some cases, in other school districts within the state. *Private scholarships*, funded by philanthropy, are being employed in many cities across the country. They enable young people from low-income families to attend private schools. *Voucher programs* are similar, but give families public education dollars to apply to private school tuition. Proponents of increasing choice believe that applying market forces will increase the responsiveness and quality of low-performing schools forced to compete with more successful public and private schools.

vouchers
MILWAUKEE

A voucher program in Milwaukee that was started as an experiment by the Wisconsin legislature in 1990 has grown to serve more than 6000 students. Participants qualify for vouchers worth up to approximately $5000 if their family income is below 175 percent of the poverty level. Schools accepting vouchers must hold lotteries if they have more voucher applicants than open seats. The Wisconsin Supreme Court recently approved the use of vouchers at parochial schools, and although the ruling was appealed, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the case. In Cleveland, vouchers cover 75-90 percent of private school tuition, depending on family income, up to $2250. Just over 3600 students were served last year. Participants are chosen through a lottery designed to serve the lowest income students first. Schools are not required to admit voucher students. The Ohio Supreme Court recently ruled that the program did not violate separation of church and state provisions, but that it was improperly authorized by the legislature. New legislation was passed allowing the program to continue. Florida recently passed legislation that will give vouchers to students whose schools fail to meet state standards of achievement.

What to Look Out For

- Voucher programs are extremely controversial. Opponents argue that vouchers weaken public education without providing better options for the majority of children in low-income neighborhoods. Those who support vouchers believe these arguments are politically motivated and that the real question is whether vouchers result in better education for students.
- Providing vouchers doesn't automatically increase the supply of good schools willing to accept new students.
- Low-cost transportation needs to be arranged to get students from neighborhoods to schools.
- It isn't always clear how private schools receiving public dollars will be held accountable for student performance.

D. SUPPORTING SYSTEMIC REFORMS

Efforts to improve or create neighborhood schools and build partnerships with families and neighborhoods will not occur in a vacuum. Both school districts and states will most likely be investing resources and creating programs and policies to support some version of school reform. Neighborhoods that can both mobilize local resources and leverage system resources to meet their full range of needs are most likely to succeed in creating high-performing community schools.

The Idea

By changing policy and practice in a number of key areas (accountability, curriculum, governance, finance), states and/or school districts work to improve schools on a systemwide scale. The best of these reforms set challenging goals for what students should know and be able to do; help schools align curriculum, teaching, and testing to those goals; use data to monitor progress; provide assistance and support to schools to help make sure students meet standards; and hold schools accountable for results. They also encourage family involvement and community connections to change conditions that might impede learning in and out of school.

There are other elements of system reform that could support *Making Connections* efforts as well, including how easy states and districts make it to locate charter or smaller, community-oriented schools in low-income neighborhoods. Additional things to look for include equity of resource allocation (financial, human, and material) and real consequences for schools, and options for students when low-performing schools fail to improve. States and districts may also be trying to build capacity for decentralized decision-making and providing incentives for the effective use of professional development funds.

What to Look Out For

- Individual schools differ greatly in their capacity to implement systemic reforms.
- In addition, because these reforms are most often implemented from the top-down, resistance to change and the inertia of the system can prevent the best conceptualized efforts from ever being implemented.
- Reforms can also be marginalized or watered down if too many compromises are made. If elements of the reform (accountability provisions, ability to provide assistance and support, efforts to align teaching with new standards) are undermined, education improvement is unlikely. When systemic reforms become captive to politics, not only do education results not improve, but administrators, teachers, and parents can become demoralized and cynical about the possibility of improvement.
- Some well-meaning reforms may have unintended consequences. For instance, state and federal class-size reduction efforts have created a greater demand for well-prepared teachers, causing severe shortages of experienced teachers in low-income urban schools.

resources

The following organizations provide assistance on a range of school reform activities.

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University concerns itself with all the elements of schooling—from understanding the needs of students and their families, to changing the way teachers teach and students learn. The institute brings together teachers, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and other representatives of school reform initiatives to share ideas and to make the best practices of reform more accessible to school communities. Current institute projects include rethinking accountability; building leadership capacity, particularly with principals; and developing a national task force for the redesign of school districts. Also under development are projects related to comprehensive reform designs at the secondary level and school-community partnerships.

The Annenberg Foundation funds both the institute and the Annenberg Challenge, an intensive effort in 14 cities to improve public education. The cities receiving challenge grants include the Bay Area (San Francisco), Boston, Chattanooga, Chelsea (Mass.), Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami/Dade County, New York City, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, and West Baltimore (Md.). Other funded projects include a rural initiative in 38 states and three arts projects, one national in scope and two others concentrating on New York City and Minneapolis.

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www.aisr.brown.edu/
warren_simmons@brown.edu

The New York City **Beacons Initiative** seeks to rebuild communities of support for children and youth by increasing supports and opportunities for youth, and by assisting them in becoming self-sufficient successful adults and active members of their communities. Beacons assert that positive outcomes for youth result from individual developmental opportunities combined with community-wide support, and that youth programs should build on young people's strengths and foster their resiliency —viewing them as resources in their own development rather than as "problems to be solved." Core program elements in Beacons include academic enrichment, school-community collaboration, youth participation and leadership, parental involvement, and community building. Beacons are managed by nonprofit community-based organizations, are located in public school buildings, and are open after-school, evenings, and weekends. They are supported by Community Advisory Councils comprised of Community School Board members, principals, parents, police, teachers, youth, clergy, community business leaders, and private and public service providers. The Beacons receive $450,000 annually in core support from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, which launched the initiative in 1991 and monitors its administration. The Youth Development Institute (YDI) of the Fund for the City of New York has provided ongoing support and technical assistance to the Beacons. The Youth Development Institute has developed programming and management resources for Beacons, which would be helpful for any community-based program focusing on youth and family development. In addition, YDI provides assistance to communities in several cities that are adapting the Beacons model, including Denver, Oakland, Minneapolis, and Savannah.

Contact:
Sabrina Evans, Director
Beacons Technical Assistance Project
Youth Development Institute
Fund for the City of New York
121 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10013
212-925-6675
212-925-5675 (fax)
sevans@fcny.org

The **Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University** includes the National Network of Partnership Schools. That group brings together schools, districts, and state departments of education that are committed to developing and maintaining strong programs of school-family-community partnerships. Each Partnership School strengthens its program by addressing six types of involvement and by using an Action Team approach. Districts, states, and university/organization partners support schools' efforts to build excellent partnership programs. Researchers, in collaboration with educators, study the effects of partnership on student learning and development.

Contact:
Joyce L. Epstein, Director
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
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Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8800
410-516-8890 (fax)
www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000
nnps@csos.jhu.edu

Charter Friends National Network's mission is to promote the charter opportunity by connecting and supporting resource centers and other state-level charter support activities. The network pursues its mission through publications, conferences, online communications, a grant program, and multistate initiatives on high priority issues, including charter school accountability, facilities financing, special education, and federal policy development. The website has a state-by-state directory of charter school support organizations and contacts.

Contact:
Jon Schroeder, Director
Charter Friends National Network
1745 University Avenue, Suite 110
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-649-5479
651-649-5472 (fax)
www.charterfriends.org
info@charterfriends.org

The **Children's Aid Society of Community Schools** combines a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning with providing a variety of family support and youth development activities, health care, and social services. A partnership of the Children's Aid Society, NYC Community School District 6, and others, these four schools emphasize family involvement and structure their programming to be responsive to community-identified needs. Sites are open 15 hours a day, year-round. A site coordinator works closely with each principal to integrate efforts to serve the community with education improvement strategies. A technical assistance center is helping 49 schools in 12 cities (including Boston and Washington, D.C.) to replicate and adapt the approach.

Contact:
Richard Negron, Director
Children's Aid Society of Community Schools Technical Assistance Center
3600 Broadway
New York, NY 10040
212-569-2866
212-544-7609 (fax)

The **Core Knowledge Foundation** promotes greater excellence and fairness in elementary education through a core curriculum for grades K through eight that ensures that children establish strong, early foundations of knowledge. The foundation publishes the Core Knowledge Sequence, a detailed and specific 200-page outline of what children will learn in language arts, history and geography, science, math, the visual arts, and music in each grade. The foundation also conducts research on curricula and publishes materials that support the curriculum and its general emphasis on cultural literacy, including the books in the Core Knowledge Series. It works with a growing network of schools (now more than 1000 across the U.S.), offering training and model lesson plans related to the Sequence, guides to resources, and networking opportunities, including an annual national conference. The soundness and success of its knowledge-builds-on-knowledge approach are borne out by independent university studies of Core Knowledge schools.

Contact:
Connie Jones, President
Core Knowledge Foundation
801 E. High Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
804-977-7550
804-977-0021 (fax)
www.coreknowledge.org
mmarshal@coreknowledge.org

The **Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform** is a strategic and active network that enables urban school reform leaders from inside and outside school systems to share information, mount collective efforts, and create a national voice for urban schools. Currently, they support the work of school reform leaders in Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle, and work with colleagues in other cities as well. They work in four program areas: teaching and learning (standards and small schools), school-based management and budgeting, accountability, and schools and community.

Relevant strengths include:

- Supporting the development of local school reform leaders
- Engaging activists in school-community collaborations
- Promoting small, neighborhood-based schools
- Promoting school-based management and budget authority and supporting its implementation
- Documenting and supporting rigorous and reciprocal accountability practices
- Creating practical action tools for local use
- Publishing and supporting action on policy documents
- Advocating that schools have the resources and authority so that they can teach all students to master high academic standards

Contact:
Anne Hallett, Executive Director
Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
407 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60605
312-322-4880
312-322-4885 (fax)
www.crosscity.org
info@crosscity.org

The **Drexel University/FOUNDATIONS Charter Schools Help Center** provides hands-on technical assistance to individuals, organizations, schools, and school systems at all phases of the charter school development and improvement process. The Help Center focuses on quality schooling in the design of planning grant and charter applications, in

the preparations for new schools for opening, and in strategies for assessing and improving schools during ongoing operations. Assistance is available on a wide range of topics, including:

- Assessment
- Business
- Curriculum and professional development
- Facilities and real estate
- Governance
- Human resources
- Parent and community engagement
- Policies and procedures
- Revenue enhancement
- Security, health, and safety
- Special education
- Technology support

The Help Center also sponsors annual conferences, training opportunities, and research on charter schools, in addition to disseminating best practices and advocating for policies that support quality public education for underserved children and families. The Help Center, also known as the TAC, is especially active in eastern Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the mid-Atlantic region, with other clients in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Washington, D.C.

Contacts:
Phil Esbrandt, Executive Director
Gail Meister, Associate Director
Charter Schools Help Center
133 Q Gaither Drive
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
888-693-6675, 215-248-2366, or 609-642-6330
609-642-6335 (fax)
www.cstac.org
phil@cstac.org
gail@cstac.org

The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement for all young people from pre-K to college, with a particular focus on low-income and minority students. Staff work with education professionals, parents, policymakers, and community and business leaders in cities across the country where there is a commitment to improving the performance of all students. The trust helps local leaders develop and sustain school-reform efforts and mount parallel efforts in higher education. Efforts include helping communities to:

- Develop and implement high, clear standards
- Eliminate low-level, watered down instruction, so that all students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum
- Improve teacher quality in high-poverty schools
- Develop school-level capacity for decision-making
- Link the achievement of standards to a system of support and accountability
- Share honest data with educators and the public about how different groups of students are faring

Contacts:
Paul Ruiz or Stephanie Robinson, Principal Partners
The Education Trust
1725 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
202-293-1217
202-293-2605 (fax)
www.edtrust.org
pruiz@edtrust.org
srobinson@edtrust.org

New York University's **Institute for Education and Social Policy** works to strengthen public education in New York City and other urban areas (Washington, D.C.; Baltimore; Philadelphia; Boston; and Detroit), particularly in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Through their policy studies, research, technical assistance, and evaluations, they seek to build capacity for school improvement and reform among policymakers, educators, parents, and community groups. The institute coordinates New York City's participation in the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform *(see page 30)*. Relevant expertise includes:

- Evaluating innovative reforms
- Collecting and using data
- School-based budgeting
- Supporting community involvement in education reform
- Public engagement

Contact:
Norm Fruchter
Institute for Education and Social Policy
New York University
726 Broadway, 510A
New York, NY 10003
212-998-5874
212-995-4564 (fax)
www.nyu.edu/iesp
fruchter@is2.nyu.edu

The **Institute for the Transformation of Learning** is a forum for research, discussion, advocacy, and modeling creative learning environments. The institute is involved in the national discourse about educational reform while at the same time working hard to have an impact in Milwaukee. The institute supports educational reform by providing technical assistance to emerging and innovative schools by developing action agendas to change the way communities approach teaching and learning. The primary manner in which the institute provides technical assistance is the Professional Development Center, which supports the development of learning communities in choice, charter, and alternative schools in Milwaukee.

Contacts:
Howard Fuller or Robert Pavlik
Marquette University
1434 W. State Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233
414-288-5775
414-288-6199 (fax)
www.mu.edu/education/itl.html
fullerh@execpc.com

The **Interfaith Education Fund** conducts research and trains local leaders about issues affecting residents of the Southwest, ranging from education to housing to employment. It reflects the vision of the Industrial Areas Foundation, a network of multiethnic, interfaith organizations that help neighborhood residents build the capacity to restructure the allocation of power and resources in their community. A major component of the fund's effort is the Alliance Schools project. This innovative program is helping to restructure Texas public schools by focusing on developing parent leadership, making student achievement the focus of school restructuring, and building community relationships around the issue of education reform. The Alliance Schools project was launched in 1992 to increase parent and community involvement in schools and to give schools more flexibility and support from the state in how they educate children. The state is providing schools with some additional resources for professional development and leadership training, including a summer training institute conducted by the Interfaith Education Fund for Alliance Schools' teachers, parents, and principals. School-community

teams have made substantive changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, after-school enrichment, and school organization.

Contact:
Ernesto Cortes
Interfaith Education Fund
1106 Clayton Lane, Suite 120W
Austin, TX 78723
512-459-6551
512-459-6558 (fax)

Established in 1997, the **National Urban League's Campaign for African-American Achievement** seeks to raise achievement levels and strengthen the social skills of African-American and children of color, through advocacy, hands-on programming, and targeted publicity efforts.

The Campaign for African-American Achievement is an aggressive collaboration with the Congress of National Black Churches (65,000 churches nationwide), and more than 30 African-American organizations including faith-based, social and civic, and professional groups. Twenty affiliates were competitively selected to receive funding from a $25 million grant the league received from the Lilly Endowment in 1998.

The basic elements of the campaign are:

- Spread the gospel that "Achievement Matters," so that parents, students, and community leaders fully understand the imperative that children achieve at high levels
- Transform parents into sophisticated consumers of public education so that they adequately support the academic and social development of their youngsters at home, in school, and in the community
- Create a consumer demand for quality education, so that educators and policymakers fulfill their obligations to children

Contact:
Velma Cobb
National Urban League
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
212-558-5300
212-344-5332 (fax)
www.nul.org
vcobb@nul.org

New American Schools (NAS) is a coalition of teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers, community and business leaders, and experts from around the country committed to improving academic achievement for all students. NAS works to change American classrooms, schools, and school systems using "designs"—blueprints for reorganizing an entire school rather than a single program or grade level within it—and by providing assistance to help schools implement these designs successfully. All NAS designs have been validated through extensive research and testing. The designs comprise a wide range of comprehensive approaches, including:

- America's Choice
- ATLAS Communities
- Co-NECT
- Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound
- Modern Red Schoolhouse
- Roots & Wings
- Urban Learning Centers

Currently, nearly 2000 schools in all 50 states throughout the country are using NAS designs. Increasingly, NAS has worked with school districts to build the infrastructure to support comprehensive school reform. NAS helps districts create the environment in which schools using comprehensive designs can flourish. Based on experience with partner jurisdictions and extensive research by RAND

during the beginning of the scale-up effort, NAS has identified five critical areas of activity that are best led by districts.

They are:

- Leading and managing a focused, comprehensive, and coordinated plan for improvement at all levels
- Identifying and reallocating the resources needed to support the implementation of comprehensive school improvement strategies
- Enhancing professional development systems to help build teacher capacity
- Developing a process for summative and formative evaluation of school improvement strategies
- Engaging parents and the community to build broad-based support

In these areas, the district is better positioned than individual schools to manage, monitor, and maintain a comprehensive, systemic school improvement effort with resources inside the central office as well as from outside, such as Design Teams.

Numerous states, including Illinois, Kansas, and New Jersey, have sought partnerships with New American Schools to provide technical assistance and support to a set of school districts that commit to introducing comprehensive school reform models at a significant percentage of their campuses.

Contact:
Jen Kovar
New American Schools
1560 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 901
Arlington, VA 22209
703-908-9500
703-908-0622 (fax)
www.naschools.org
info@nasdc.org

New Visions for Public Schools is a nonprofit organization that works with the New York City school system and the private sector to mobilize resources and develop programs. Since 1993, a partnership between New York City public schools and New Visions has supported the formation of 40 small, community-based schools. They were developed by parents, teachers, unions, and community groups that submitted proposals for new ideas in education. Most of the schools are theme oriented and instruction tends toward personal approaches that include student-developed projects. Parents and families are welcome, and they are expected to play a major role. Several of the schools are committed to community development, believing that schools can play a fundamental role in promoting social change. New Visions schools keep populations small, draw students citywide, and welcome children of all achievement levels and backgrounds. The Board of Education and the teachers' union allow the schools greater flexibility in selecting faculty with skills and interests that match those of each school.

Contact:
Beth Lief, President and CEO
New Visions for Public Schools
96 Morton Street
New York, NY 10014
212-645-5110
212-645-7409 (fax)
www.newvisions.org
blief@newvisions.org

The **Northwest Schools Incubator** is a new organization that invests in the development of new schools before they open by giving groups of school administrators and teachers time and a place to work together to receive expert help and advice long before they have to open a new school. Groups slated to open a new school or take over an existing one can tryout and choose instructional materials and approaches, plan how they will select and

prepare teachers, develop materials to explain the school to parents and students, choose sources of ongoing advice and assistance, find and adapt facilities to fit the instructional program, decide how they will assess and demonstrate performance, and learn how to manage their financial and legal responsibilities.

Contact:
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Center on Reinventing Public Education
Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs
University of Washington
Box 363060
Seattle, WA 98195
206-616-1797
206-685-2214 (fax)
www.crpe.org
crpe@u.washington.edu

The Right Question Project, Inc. (RQP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making democracy work better for all people on a fundamental level. RQP offers an innovative and simple-to-use educational strategy that helps develop personal and political advocacy skills and promote greater participation on many different levels in a democratic society.

The RQP educational strategy can be applied in many ways. It has, for example, been used by low and moderate income parents to better support, monitor, and advocate for their children's education; by workers to create their own economic development plans; by low-income people to advocate for better housing and health care; by public institutions to make themselves more accountable and democratic, and, internationally, by activists in South Africa and Eastern Europe, to strengthen democracy in their countries.

RQP has learned a great deal in the past decade. To make it easier to gain access to this educational strategy, RQP is now offering new products, creating an interactive website, and building a network of people who can teach and learn from each other. RQP also provides customized technical assistance to groups and communities with more experience using the RQP educational strategy.

Contact:
The Right Question Project, Inc.
2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-492-1900
617-492-1950 (fax)
www.rightquestion.org
info@rightquestion.org

The **Success for All Foundation** supports schools across the country in adopting two research-based comprehensive school restructuring programs for students in pre-K through sixth grade. Success for All organizes resources to ensure that virtually every student reads well by grade three and that no student will be allowed to "fall through the cracks." Roots and Wings takes a similar approach to helping students achieve high standards in all subjects. Both approaches integrate health and social services and family support. Components include one-to-one tutoring for students who are failing to keep up with their classmates; research-based instruction; pre-school and kindergarten programs; school facilitators; extensive professional development; and assessment aimed at improving instruction and documenting results.

Contact:
The Awareness Department
Success for All Foundation
200 W. Towsontown Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21204
800-548-4998 or 410-616-2300
410-324-4444 (fax)
www.successforall.net
sfa@successforall.net

StandardsWork, Inc. is a nonprofit educational consultancy that provides technical assistance to states, districts, schools, and communities that want to implement standards-driven reform in grades K-12. StandardsWork principals are sought after to critique and improve existing standards documents; they are committed to helping schools use data to make decisions and to create fair and effective teacher evaluation programs as part of their accountability efforts. In addition, StandardsWork is dedicated to engaging the larger community in helping schools raise student achievement and to mobilizing leaders and activists to stay the course in raising student achievement, even when faced with public resistance. StandardsWork's principals have worked hand-in-hand with California, Arizona, and Maryland to develop standards, and with communities throughout the country to implement standards at the district and school level. They published a best-selling book and CD-ROM called: "Raising the Standard: An eight step action guide for schools and communities." The second edition, with a new section on charter schools, was released in the Fall of 1999.

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202-659-4494 (fax)
www.goalline.org
connect@goalline.org

The **School Development Program** (SDP), developed by James Comer and colleagues at the Yale Child Development Center, has a dual focus on improving the quality of instruction and rebuilding bonds between school and community. SDP stresses aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that all three support high-level learning. In addition, schools are organizing around Six Developmental Pathways (physical, language, psychological, ethical, social, and cognitive) to promote the overall development of students. School staff and community members who make the commitment to adopt the SDP approach receive support and professional development from trained facilitators. A student and staff support team helps improve the social climate of the school and a parent team promotes parent involvement in all areas. A school planning and management team, made up of parents, teachers, and a representative from the student and staff support team, is led by the principal.

Contact:
Joanne Corbin, Director of Operations
School Development Program
53 College Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-737-1020
203-737-1023 (fax)
info.med.yale.edu/comer/
joanne.corbin@yale.edu

The **West Philadelphia Improvement Corps** (WEPIC) develops university-assisted community schools that provide education, recreation, health, and social services to neighborhood residents. All 13 of the participating public schools work in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and other community partners to provide experiential, hands-on learning opportunities during and after school that focus on community improvement. The approach is being replicated by nine universities (University of Kentucky, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Clark Atlanta University, University of New Mexico-Albuquerque, Community College of Aurora-Colorado, University of Denver, Bates College, University of Dayton, and University of Rhode Island) working with schools in their

neighborhoods, with support from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and the Corporation for National Service.

Contact:
Joann Weeks, Director
WEPIC Replication Project
Penn Program for Public Service
University of Pennsylvania
3440 Market Street, Suite 440
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215-898-0240
215-573-2799 (fax)
www.upenn.edu/ccp
weeks@pobox.upenn.edu

appendix

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS LOCATED IN OR NEAR MAKING CONNECTIONS SITES

(The technical assistance and program development activities of these organizations are limited primarily to the designated city or state.)

CALIFORNIA

The primary focus of the **California Network of Educational Charters** (CANEC) is to build a supportive network of California charter schools, and to act as an information center about charter schools. Through CANEC, charter school organizers, developers, and supporters can gather information via a variety of communication platforms such as a newsletter, website, conferences and workshops, and regional networking meetings. Legislators, media, charter school parents, and the general public also use CANEC as a resource center about charter schools.

Contact:
Sue Bragato, Executive Director
California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC)
1139 San Carlos Avenue, #304
San Carlos, CA 94070
650-654-6003
650-654-4267 (fax)
www.canec.org
gocanec@aol.com

The **California Department of Education Charter Schools Loan Pool** provides start-up loans to charter schools that are not converting from existing schools to help meet initial start-up and operating costs. These expenses may include, but are not limited to, leasing facilities, making necessary improvements to facilities, and purchasing instructional materials.

Contact:
Ging Tucker
California Department of Education Charter Schools Loan Pool
California Department of Education
721 Capitol Mall
PO Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94241
916-324-4536
gtucker@cde.ca.gov

OAKLAND

Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) provides grants and coaching to schools for clearly focused reform efforts and helps funded schools to evaluate and learn from these efforts. BASRC also helps members work together as a self-governed "learning community" to: focus, with families and communities, on a shared vision of how best to meet their students' needs; build on existing strengths, creating a regional network of member schools, districts, and school support organizations as well as funded leadership schools; benefit from BASRC's many professional development opportunities and other member services; develop effective solutions to challenges facing all Bay Area schools; and collaborate with other schools, districts, universities, families, community organizations, and businesses to establish good schools for all Bay Area children.

Contact:
Merrill Vargo
Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC)
c/o West Ed Laboratory
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-565-3084
415-565-3012 (fax)
www.wested.org/basrc
mvargo@wested.org

The **Coalition of Essential Schools** is a network of schools, K-12, working to redesign their overall structure, curriculum, and assessment procedures to improve student learning.

Contact:
Amy Gerstein, Executive Director
Coalition of Essential Schools
1814 Franklin Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94612
510-433-1451
510-433-1455 (fax)
www.essentialschools.org

SAN DIEGO

The **Business Roundtable for Education** is now in its seventh year as a division of the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce. The Business Roundtable for Education is the 55-member group that pushes advocacy areas forward for the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce. Its mission is to advocate improvements for educational excellence in San Diego County schools to ensure a highly skilled, literate, and productive workforce that is globally competitive.

Contact:
Ginger Hovenic
Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce's
Business Roundtable for Education
402 W. Broadway, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101
619-544-1327
619-234-0571 (fax)
www.sdchamber.org/public/educat.html
ghovenic@sdchamber.org

San Diego Urban League (SDUL) works in several areas all centered around student achievement including family advocacy, cultural competence, and race relations, and has instituted a three-tier mentoring system in which adults mentor middle school students who in turn mentor elementary school students. SDUL also opened a charter school in 1997, but it closed just a year later due to political strife. They are currently in the process of opening another school which they hope will be ready by the 2000-2001 school year.

Contact:
Les Pierres Streater
San Diego Urban League
5160 Federal Boulevard, Suite C
San Diego, CA 92105
619-266-6200
619-266-6229 (fax)
www.sdul.org/league.html

In his former position as superintendent in a New York City school district, Chancellor of Instruction Anthony Alvarado successfully implemented a singular focus on training principals and teachers to work differently so that students can learn more effectively. He is involved in similar work at **San Diego City Schools**.

Contact:
Anthony Alvarado
Chancellor of Instruction
San Diego City Schools
4100 Normal Street, Room 2232
San Diego, CA 92103
619-293-8220
619-686-6644 (fax)

DENVER

The Piton Foundation develops, manages, and incubates programs for carrying out its mission to help children and their families move from poverty and dependence to self-reliance. It has recently revamped its program areas to include improving public education, strengthening neighborhoods, creating economic opportunities for families, and supporting youth development. Piton's work on

improving public education aims at helping low-income communities develop schools that best meet their needs. The foundation provides technical assistance, works with one high school community to assist in its transition from bussing to serving neighborhood children, strengthens and supports family resource schools that provide before- and after-school programs, and increases school choice for parents in low-income neighborhoods by assisting in the start-up of innovative charter schools.

Contact:
Mary Gittings Cronin, Executive Director
The Piton Foundation
370 17th Street, Suite 5300
Denver, CO 80202
303-825-6246
303-628-3839 (fax)
www.piton.org

Rose Community Foundation seeks to enhance the quality of life by promoting the development of a healthy community. The foundation believes that a healthy community includes: an atmosphere of mutual concern and responsibility; safety within neighborhoods and within families; a healthy environment; civic discourse; access to quality health care, services, and education; access to basic needs (food, shelter, work); respect for diversity; strong leaders and associations; a strong and vital economy; a rich cultural life; and self-empowerment. Recent gains have included school-specific grants aimed at supporting quality teaching, and curriculum programs and systemic change in public education. Rose Community Foundation currently has assets in excess of $250 million and anticipates granting approximately $10.3 million in 1999. The foundation focuses its funding in five program areas: Aging, Child and Family Development, Education, Health, and Jewish Life. The foundation will grant approximately $2 million toward the education program area in 1999.

Contact:
Phillip Gonring, Program Officer
Rose Community Foundation
600 S. Cherry Street, Suite 1200
Denver, CO 80246
303-398-7415
303-398-7430 (fax)
www.rcfdenver.org
pgonring@rcfdenver.org

The Gates Family Foundation has an ongoing interest in the growth and development of independent schools and private colleges and is interested in making efforts to find ways to address the underlying causes of the many problems being faced by public education.

Contact:
Thomas Kaesemeyer
The Gates Family Foundation
3200 Cherry Creek South Drive, Suite 630
Denver, CO 80209
303-722-1881
303-698-9031 (fax)
ctk@gatesfamilyfnd.org

The Denver Foundation has a **Strengthening Neighborhoods** program which funds projects in select Denver-area neighborhoods that build on a neighborhood's assets, that identify and support local leadership, that encourage relationships between individuals and between groups, that are resident-initiated and resident-led, and that will improve the neighborhood in a way that benefits its residents. They hope to build long-term partnerships with neighborhoods that will result in revitalized neighborhoods whose residents are involved, creative problem-solvers with the power to direct their futures.

Contact:
Christine Soto, Director of Programs
The Denver Foundation
455 Sherman, Suite 550
Denver, CO 80203
303-778-7587
303-778-0124 (fax)
www.denverfoundation.org
csoto@denverfoundation.org

In 1998, the **Colorado League of Charter Schools** developed an At-Risk Initiative to bring underserved populations into the charter school movement in Colorado, including those who are low income, high risk, poor performing, students of color, non-native-English speakers, or who have special needs. The initiative addresses public awareness, new charter school development, and networking of charters in underserved communities with at-risk students.

Contact:
Tenley Stillwell, At-Risk Project Director
Colorado League of Charter Schools
7700 W. Woodard Drive
Lakewood, CO 80227
303-989-5356
303-985-7721 (fax)
clcs@rmi.net

HARTFORD

The **Urban League of Greater Hartford** is one of seven Urban League affiliates that implement community-wide strategies for academic achievement. *See National Urban League description on page 33 for more information on this initiative.*

Contact:
Beverly LeConche
Urban League of Greater Hartford
1229 Albany Avenue, 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06112
860-527-0147
860-249-1563 (fax)

The **Cooperative Fund of New England** is a community development loan fund that is a bridge between socially responsible investors and cooperatives, community-oriented nonprofits, and worker-owned businesses in the Northeast.

Contact:
Rebecca Dunn, Executive Director
Cooperative Fund of New England
PO Box 412
Hartford, CT 06141
910-395-6008 or 800-818-7833
910-397-2857 (fax)
www.cooperativefund.org
rebcfne@wilmington.net

The **Trinity Center for Neighborhoods** (TCN) is a project of Trinity College in Hartford devoted to neighborhood revitalization. Trinity College faculty, students, and administration work in partnership with United Connecticut Action for Neighborhoods (UCAN), community organizations, and other local educational and research institutions to provide support for neighborhood initiatives. TCN specializes in offering the following services: applied research on topics chosen by the community, training for community organizers, and training for future directors of nonprofit community organizations.

Contact:
Alta Lash, Director
Trinity Center for Neighborhoods
Trinity College
300 Summit Street
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860-297-5275
860-297-5190 (fax)
www.trincoll.edu/depts/tcn
tcn-info@trincoll.edu

In January 1996, **Trinity College** announced a comprehensive $175 million neighborhood revitalization initiative for the community surrounding its campus

in the heart of Hartford. Through an extraordinary partnership among major health and educational institutions; the public and private sectors; city, state and federal government; and community and neighborhood groups, they are creating the Learning Corridor, a 16-acre site that represents the central hub of the initiative and a source of its vitality. The Learning Corridor will involve nearly 1500 students from Hartford and the region. It will house an interdistrict Montessori-style public elementary school; a city of Hartford public middle school; a science, mathematics, and technology high school resource center; and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. In addition, the initiative will increase owner occupancy, and weave housing rehabilitation, neighborhood retail businesses, streetscape improvements, job training, recreation, and family services into the fabric of the reinvigorated residential community throughout the targeted neighborhood.

Contact:
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860-297-5325
860-297-5103 (fax)
kevin.sullivan@mail.trincoll.edu

Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority (CHEFA) is a quasi-public agency created by the state legislature to provide access to tax-exempt financing for qualified educational, health care, and other nonprofit institutions. CHEFA also makes direct loans to state charter schools and provides loan guarantees to nonprofit and for-profit child care providers.

Contact:
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10 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06106
860-520-4700 or 800-750-1862
860-520-4706 (fax)
www.chefa.com
rgray@chefa.com

WASHINGTON, DC

AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation directs the campaign to Rebuild Education in Washington. The campaign was the catalyst for two conversions of schools to charter schools and one new charter school. AppleTree seeks to introduce comprehensive school designs. AppleTree helps charter schools build capacity for self-sufficiency by working with community-based groups, business and academic leaders, parents, and school-based leadership teams. It provides management and leadership development programs to prepare trustees and school leaders for responsibilities of governance; arranges financing for acquisitions, renovations, or new construction; and organizes a consortium of banks, lenders, foundations, individuals, and corporations to provide cash and credit to chartered schools for working capital needs. The institute created and manages a charter school "incubator" in Washington, D.C. AppleTree also has a Leadership Institute that conducts workshops and provides technical assistance.

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jackmacapp@aol.com

The **Resource Center** responds to the need for improving the quality and effectiveness of all public schools in the District of Columbia by providing technical assistance services to both proposed and operating public charter schools in D.C. Services include conferences and workshops, access to national charter school experts, leveraging of financial resources, pro bono legal and business support, a knowledge base of best practices, and information on charter schools in D.C. and the nation. Current initiatives include the Special Education Initiative and Accountability Assistance Project. Ongoing core programs consist of three topic areas: Charter Planning Workshops; Charter Start-up Workshops, and the Charter Operator Series. The Resource Center also has a library containing a wealth of information about local and national charter school issues.

Contact:
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DC Public Charter School Resource Center
1155 15th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
202-835-9011
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www.dcchartercenter.org
smonastra@dcchartercenter.org

MIAMI

United Teachers of Dade (UTD) and **Miami-Dade County Public Schools** (MDCPS) have initiated a districtwide consensus management program to take all schools to shared decision-making and site-based management. Decisions are made by Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils made up of teachers, parents, and administrators. UTD and Miami-Dade County Public Schools also implemented a new model for planning and staffing all new MDCPS schools. Under the Saturn model, MDCPS and UTD issue a Request for Proposals to people interested in designing the schools of the future. The applicant team prepares specific proposals on how they would create, develop, and refine a totally unique educational program for the students scheduled to attend the new school. A joint MDCPS/UTD team, together with parents, selects the best proposal. In addition, they have created Satellite Learning Centers (SLCs), which are established as joint ventures involving MDCPS, UTD, and businesses throughout Dade County. An SLC is a MDCPS school in a facility provided by a host corporation for the children of their employees. It offers working parents the unique opportunity to fully participate in their child's education. Lead teachers assume primary responsibility for the daily operation of the school.

Contact:
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pat@utofd.com

ATLANTA

The **Southern Regional Council** (SRC) works to promote racial justice, protect democratic rights, and broaden civic participation in the southern United States. While the SRC is perhaps best known for its influential background reports on conditions in the South—a tradition of committed research which moved public officials to action—SRC has always used multiple strategies. It has combined its research and communications capacity with a role as regional convener, offering effective demonstration projects and leadership training. SRC

offers experience and strong capacity in many programmatic areas, including voting rights and education reform, especially in the middle grades.

SRC has inspired and published some of the most important southern analysis and journalism related to racial justice. That tradition is present today in SRC's premier publication, *Southern Changes*, and the Peabody Award-winning civil rights audio series "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"

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espears@southerncouncil.org
info@southerncouncil.org

SAVANNAH

The **Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority** has been in operation since July 1988. The project's purpose is to build a community collaborative with policies, procedures, and funding that will facilitate the development of youth into productive and economically self-sufficient adults. The partnership consists of the City of Savannah, Chatham County, Savannah-Chatham Public Schools, businesses, and over 20 United Way and other human service agencies that also serve children, youth, and families. Project sites include a Neighborhood Family Resource Center, middle and high schools, company work sites, and local churches. The authority provides case management, preschool programs, adolescent health and mental health services, after-school programs, school-to-work transition assistance, neighborhood outreach, and family support.

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316 E. Bay
PO Box 10212
Savannah, GA 31412
912-651-6815
912-651-4263 (fax)
www.youthfutures.com

INDIANAPOLIS

An Indiana-based not-for-profit organization, the **Indiana Education Information Center** (IEIC) provides information on education issues, including school performance, standards, and innovative programs.

Contact:
Derek Redelman, Director
Indiana Education Information Center
7002 Broadway Street
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317-253-2501
317-253-2701 (fax)
www.ieic.org
redelman@indy.net

LOUISVILLE

The **Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence** provides a public voice advocating for improved education for all Kentuckians. Through town forums, Prichard brought 20,000 people together in 1984 to talk about public schools and their problems. Prichard was instrumental in the passage of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act. It continues to support the implementation of the reform act in individual communities through parent and community education and awareness programs like Community Committees for Education and Parents and Teachers Talking Together.

Prichard recently launched the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership to help engage more parents in schools.

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Lexington, KY 40588
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rsexton@prichardcommittee.org

NEW ORLEANS

The **Louisiana Alliance for Education Reform** is a nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to develop the ability of local citizens (educators and noneducators together) to lead the complex process of education reform in their own communities. The alliance provides leadership training, resources, and coaching in schools and in the community. Teachers are trained to facilitate workshops with parents and community members around their collective vision for their school.

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BOSTON

The **Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools—Boston Annenberg Challenge,** founded in 1984 and endowed by the city's corporate community, awarded multiyear grants to 27 schools (20 percent of the city's public schools) in 1996 to raise student achievement. These grants, originally called "21st Century Schools" grants, will total as much as $300,000 per school over four years.

An Annenberg Foundation grant in 1997 enabled the district to extend the work of whole-school change to all schools, and 21st Century Schools were renamed "Cohort I" schools. Beginning with Cohort I in September 1996, a new cohort has taken on the work of whole-school change each September, with the fourth and final cohort starting up in September 1999. All 132 public schools in Boston are now implementing the same plan for whole-school change. To date, the Boston Annenberg Challenge has raised a total of $28 million in private funds to support the district's model for whole-school change.

The activities that all public schools must now undertake, known as the six "Essentials," were derived from the Boston Plan's design for whole-school change:

- Identify and use a schoolwide instructional focus to meet students' needs and end "projectitis."
- Look at student work and data in relation to the standards—to identify student's needs, to improve assignments and instruction, to assess progress, and to inform professional development.
- Create a targeted professional development plan that gives teachers and principals what they need to improve instruction in core subjects.
- Learn and use best teaching practices.
- Look at resources—human, time, money—and align them with the instructional focus.
- Involve parents and the community in understanding standards and assessments and introduce ways parents can support their children through literacy activities.

Each school's success is being measured by student performance on a school-selected classroom performance indicator and on a standardized test.

The Plan's work with Cohort I Schools made clear the need to remove systemwide obstacles that slow or prevent reform. At the Plan's urging, the superintendent convened a working group of his top staff to examine systemic obstacles that prevent schools from using their resources differently. Staffed by the Boston Plan, the Resource Action Team (REACT) is using a case-study approach, which allows the team to consider problems and propose solutions across traditional department lines and to work directly from issues that have arisen in the schools.

In August 1999, in a reorganization designed to strengthen the coordination of the work with the district, the Boston Plan accepted responsibility for managing the Boston Annenberg Challenge. With that reorganization, the Boston Plan-Boston Annenberg Challenge will directly manage the work in 61 of the city's 132 public schools and will collaborate closely with the district on ensuring the work in all schools is aligned, focused, and coordinated. For the Boston Plan-Boston Annenberg Challenge and the district, as well as the schools, the single goal is improved student performance.

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eguiney@bpe.org

The **Institute for Responsive Education** is a research-based assistance and advocacy agency promoting the partnership of schools, families, and communities with the ultimate goal of success for all children. This kind of collaboration requires a dramatic restructuring of the relationships of all three of these partners. This restructuring should be the responsibility of families, schools, and communities and should build partnerships where all three constituencies are players of equal standing.

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kmapp@lynx.dac.neu.edu

The **Francis W. Parker Regional Teachers Center,** under the guidance of Ted Sizer, offers a series of workshops and discussion groups for educators and interested citizens wanting to learn about innovative educational practices, the process of starting new schools, and the Coalition of Essential Schools. A six-year public secondary school of choice, the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School is open by lottery admissions to all residents of Massachusetts in grades seven through twelve. One of Massachusetts' first charter schools, Parker was started in 1995 by area parents and teachers committed to the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Ted Sizer is a faculty member at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Professor Emeritus at Brown University, and for the last dozen years has been chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Contacts:
Theodore Sizer, Trustee
Nancy Faust Sizer, Trustee
Parker Charter School
PO Box 2129
Devens, MA 01432
978-772-2687
978-772-3295 (fax)
www.parker.org

Since 1993, **Pioneer's Charter School Resource Center** has identified, recruited, and assisted potential charter school founders, briefed legislators and regulators on policy issues, and introduced interested businesses and charitable foundations to this new model of public education. Over the past two years, the center has expanded its leadership development program, directed a national project in standards-based management, launched a development initiative in eight urban charter schools, published research on facilities financing, and conducted the first opinion surveys of charter school parents and teachers. Current initiatives include establishing a set of best practices and systems in the areas of leadership and governance, internal accountability, and resource development.

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617-723-1880 (fax)
www.pioneerinstitute.org
lbrown@pioneerinstitute.org.

BALTIMORE

The **Citizens Planning and Housing Association** (CPHA) is a community-based organization that uses citizen action to achieve the best possible quality of life for all residents of Baltimore. CPHA advocates and provides technical assistance to public schools, which are a part of the New Schools Initiative. The Initiative involves public schools that are operated by nonprofit organizations to implement creative and innovative reform for student achievement. CPHA is also a co-sponsor of the Baltimore Education Network (BEN), a group of education leaders inside and outside of schools committed to ensuring that parents and community members are informed and active in the reform process.

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christyc@cphabaltimore.org

DETROIT

edtec consulting provides technical assistance and educational consulting expertise to groups interested in establishing a charter school or learning about education reform opportunities in Michigan and other states.

Contact:
Anna M. Amato
edtec consulting
25301 Five Mile Road, #208
Redford, MI 48239
313-581-3588
313-581-3589 (fax)
edtec@mail.org

ST. LOUIS, MO

The **Missouri Charter Schools Information Center** assists in the development of charter schools throughout the state.

Contact:
Laura Friedman
Missouri Charter Schools Information Center
35 N. Central, Suite 335
St. Louis, MO 63105
314-726-6474 or 888-MOCSIC3
314-721-4729 (fax)
www.mocsic.org
mocsic@aol.com

CAMDEN

The **Charter School Resource Center** (CSRC) supports educational reform and innovation by helping charter school organizers work through the challenges of design and operation. At every stage of development—planning, proposal, approval, and operation—CSRC provides information, resources, and technical assistance. Through workshops, statewide conferences, and site visits, CSRC assists charter school planners and operators, introduces regional participants to experienced educational leaders, and highlights exemplary schools.

Contact:
James DeLaney
Charter School Resource Center of New Jersey
New Jersey Institute for School Innovation
303-309 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
973-621-6631
973-621-6651 (fax)
www.njisi.org
csrc@njisi.org

Education Law Center (ELC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the aggressive pursuit of equal educational opportunity on behalf of poor, minority, and disabled students, especially those attending public schools in New Jersey's poorer urban communities. ELC promotes systemic school reform and enforces and expands the rights of individual students to a thorough, efficient, and appropriate education under the New Jersey Constitution and state and federal law. Strategies used include: research, parent and community education and training, school and district capacity-building, advocacy, coalition building, and, where necessary, litigation. ELC is responsible for the landmark *Abbott v. Burke* litigation that requires state government to assure equitable and adequate funding for poorer urban students, supplemental programs to "wipe out disadvantages as much as a school district can," and full state payment of comprehensive facilities improvements in the 30 *Abbott* districts.

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School Reform Initiatives
Education Law Center
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973-624-7339 (fax)
www.edlawcenter.org
sgblock@aol.com

PHILADELPHIA

Education Law Center-PA provides free legal representation to parents and students regarding preschool, primary, and secondary public education issues in Pennsylvania. Areas of focus include education rights of youngsters with disabilities, youngsters in foster and adoptive homes, and children with serious emotional problems.

Contacts:
Janet Stotland or Leonard Rieser, Co-Directors
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215-625-9589 (fax)
www.afj.org/mem/edlc.html
elc@elc_pa.org

***Drexel University/FOUNDATIONS**—
see page 30

PROVIDENCE

The mission of the **Public Education Fund** is to be a leading advocate for students in need and to stimulate collaborative change in education in the State of Rhode Island and primarily in the Providence Public Schools. Programming and advocacy are focused in the following areas:

- Engaging business
- Engaging parents
- School health issues
- Teacher support
- Getting to college and career awareness

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Public Education Fund
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401-454-1050
401-454-1059 (fax)
medwards@ride.ri.net

SAN ANTONIO

***Interfaith Education Fund**—*see page 32*

Project GRAD combines reading, math, classroom discipline, and social services programs for an entire feeder pattern and promises college scholarships to all graduates. It is now running in three feeder patterns.

Contact:
Sharon Jacobson, Executive Director
Project GRAD
1100 Louisiana, Suite 450
Houston, TX 77002
713-757-3563
713-757-3144 (fax)

The **Intercultural Development and Research Association** (IDRA) is an independent, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to improving education opportunity. IDRA conducts research and development activities; creates, implements, and administers innovative education programs; and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.

Contact:
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Intercultural Development and Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228
210-444-1710
210-444-1714 (fax)
www.idra.org
contact@idra.org

The **Charter School Resource Center of Texas** supports the formation and successful operation of Texas open enrollment charter schools. The Center serves as an information resource, offers access to professional expertise, and lends direct technical support through all stages of the charter school.

Contact:
Patsy O'Neill, Executive Director
The Charter School Resource Center of Texas
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210-348-7899 (fax)
www.charterstexas.org
oneillp@texas.net

SEATTLE

***Northwest Schools Incubator**—*see page 34*

The University of Washington's **Business and Economic Development Program** (BEDP) brings together students, faculty, alumni, and corporate mentors to assist small, inner-city businesses. A wide range of consulting services to more than 60 companies in its first four years has strengthened client businesses and created 150 new jobs for Seattle's inner-city community. The BEDP has achieved these results because it has built strong partnerships between community organizations, small business owners, corporate and civic leaders, and the Business School. Business incubator programs such as this can be useful sources of information for new, nontraditionally governed schools.

Contact:
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206-685-9392 (fax)
depts.washington.edu/busdev
mverchot@u.washington.edu

Powerful Schools is a coalition of four elementary schools in Seattle that is partnered with two community organizations. Its mission is to improve student performance for all children, strengthen the community by establishing schools that serve as community hubs, and create an effective and cost-efficient model for school reform that is replicated elsewhere. A parent-incentive program has hired about 30 low-income parents to work in schools and classrooms as tutors and aides or in other positions.

Contact:
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Powerful Schools
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www.expandhorizons.net/powerfulschools
gtuke@is.ssd.k12.wa.us

The **Alliance for Education** works in partnership with the Seattle Public Schools to ensure that the district has the essential resources and leadership to prepare Seattle students for success in postsecondary education and the world of work.

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500 Union Street, Suite 320
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206-343-0449
206-343-0455 (fax)
www.alliance4ed.org

***Institute for the Transformation of Learning**—*see page 32*

Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) is a private, not-for-profit organization operating in Milwaukee, whose mission is to make educational opportunities possible for all families in Milwaukee. PAVE is the largest privately-funded school choice program in the United States and serves as a model for 45 similar programs nationwide. PAVE provides scholarships equivalent to half-tuition at any K-12 private or parochial school in Milwaukee, and low-income parents simply choose the school best suited for their children's needs. In the 1997-98 school year, PAVE awarded $4.2 million to 4300 students who attend 112 private and parochial schools in Milwaukee.

PAVE's new goal is to expand educational opportunities for low-income families in Milwaukee by increasing the supply of available spaces in independent and religious schools so that all 15,000 available vouchers in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program are utilized by eligible children.

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414-342-1513 (fax)
www.pave.org
paveorg@yahoo.com

American Education Reform Foundation (AERF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding publicly financed school choice programs. The organization selects states where school choice has the best prospect of enactment and works with supporters to provide strategic assistance and financial resources. Based in Milwaukee, AERF works closely with other national organizations. Its sister organization, the American Education Reform Council, provides information to those interested in school choice, helps groups from other states, and hosts visits from other states who want to learn more about Milwaukee's program.

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2025 N. Summit Avenue
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414-319-9160
414-765-0220 (fax)
mitchell@parentchoice.org

Contact:
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The Charter School Resource Center of Texas
40 NE Loop 410, Suite 408
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210-348-7899 (fax)
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SEATTLE, WA

***Northwest Schools Incubator**—*see page 35*

The University of Washington's **Business and Economic Development Program** (BEDP) brings together students, faculty, alumni, and corporate mentors to assist small, inner-city businesses. A wide range of consulting services to more than 60 companies in its first four years has strengthened client businesses and created 150 new jobs for Seattle's inner-city community. The BEDP has achieved these results because it has built strong partnerships between community organizations, small business owners, corporate and civic leaders, and the Business School. Business incubator programs such as this can be useful sources of information for new, nontraditionally governed schools.

Contact:
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depts.washington.edu/busdev
mverchot@u.washington.edu

Powerful Schools is a coalition of four elementary schools in Seattle that is partnered with two community organizations. Its mission is to improve student performance for all children, strengthen the community by establishing schools that serve as community hubs, and create an effective and cost-efficient model for school reform that is replicated elsewhere. A parent-incentive program has hired about 30 low-income parents to work in schools and classrooms as tutors and aides or in other positions.

Contact:
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206-722-5543
206-760-4651 (fax)
www.expandhorizons.net/powerfulschools
gtuke@is.ssd.k12.wa.us

The **Alliance for Education** works in partnership with the Seattle Public Schools to ensure that the district has the essential resources and leadership to prepare Seattle students for success in postsecondary education and the world of work.

Contact:
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www.alliance4ed.org

MILWAUKEE

***Institute for the Transformation of Learning**—*see page 32*

resource GUIDES

As part of the *Making Connections* Technical Assistance/ Resource Center, the following Resource Guides are scheduled to be produced during 2000:

Economic Opportunities for Families

- Connecting Families to Jobs
- Building Family Assets
- Creating Economic Opportunities in Neighborhoods

Enhancing Social Networks

- Family Support
- Engaging Residents in an Agenda to Strengthen Families

Building High-Quality Services and Supports

- Building More Effective Community Schools
- Community Safety and Justice
- Child Care for Communities
- Meeting the Housing Needs of Families
- Community Partnerships to Support Families
- Improving Health Care for Children and Families

Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods

- Using Communications to Support Families and Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Data Utilization and Technology
- Outcomes-Based Accountability

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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