



Charter Schools and Community Development: Schools as Community Centers and the Potential of Co-tenancy

In this paper we explore how new charter schools, by creating a shared neighborhood resource, can contribute to a community's health and well being. In particular, we are interested in ways in which new facilities can accommodate both the charter schools themselves *and* complementary service providers. Although there are clear economic benefits to a "one-stop-shop" facility, we do not attempt to quantify or catalogue the returns of co-tenancy. Rather, we discuss the various advantages of community schools and examine three possible space sharing opportunities for new charter schools and their neighborhood partners.

What is a Community School?

Schools have long played a community building role in the United States. Although there may be no one definition of a "community school," the Coalition for Community Schools provides a unifying description: "using public schools as a hub," the posit, "community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities – before, during and after school, seven days a week."¹ Today, community schools comprise both traditional public schools and innovative experiments in public schooling, including charter schools.

History of Community Schools

In some ways, our contemporary urban community centers have their origins in the settlement houses of the late 19th century. Founded by Progressive activists in major industrial centers, the settlement houses aimed to assist immigrants, mostly poor and newly arrived from Europe, with their assimilation to life in the United States. Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, for example, offered educational, health and recreational services to neighborhood residents. Settlement houses throughout the major cities of the northern United States provided similar activities and programs for families, often serving as hubs of neighborhood activity. By the turn of the 20th century, John Dewey's concept of the "school as a social center" encouraged advocates to bring these opportunities into public schools.²

In the first half of the 20th century, a number of efforts to make schools the social, educational and recreational loci of their communities gained national momentum. During this period, public schools themselves played a vital role in the "democratic process:" for poor children raised in urban centers,

¹ Martin Blank, Atelia Melaville and Bela Shah, "Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools," Coalition for Community Schools May 2003.

² Ibid, p. 3.

public schools were often the first step toward opportunity and social mobility. However, the economic, social and demographic forces that began to shape urban life – deindustrialization and middle class exodus, for starters – altered the nature of inner city schools. By the 1960s, as poverty grew increasingly concentrated and the causes and consequences of poverty more complex, reformers again turned to the concept of community schools as a way to revitalize struggling communities.

The so-called “community schools movement” of the 1960s took root organically in a number of different urban centers. In New Haven, Connecticut, for example, the founders of Community Progress aimed to create a kind of “omnibus community center” out of the Winchester Community School, contending that the neighborhood school should “serve as a center, a kind of magnet for other work – in redevelopment, human services, employment – going on in the same community.” And indeed the Community Progress activities eventually included “education and housing, youth development, family and children’s services, primary healthcare, employment, planning and other basic community organizing functions for the neighborhood, with activities running at practically all hours.”³ Chronicling the rise and fall of the community development and school reform nexus, writer Tony Proscio observes that although alliances like the Winchester Community School and Community Progress were “conceived as an antidote to the physically and socially destructive effects of urban renewal,” the fields became distinct and their practitioners began to work in isolation. By the 1970s educators focused primarily on classrooms and school systems and community developers concentrated on construction, housing, and urban infrastructure.⁴

In recent years the tides have turned again, and the relationship between improved schools and healthy communities has received greater attention. In part, research into the economic benefits of a high performing school – increased spending in a community, attraction of mixed income families, real estate appreciation – has brought the discussion of school improvement to the forefront of neighborhood revitalization strategies.⁵ However, beyond the strict economics, community developers have begun to recognize that “social capital” holds tremendous value; ownership and participation can breathe life back into a deteriorating community, and neighborhood schools can provide the focus and momentum for this kind of communal activity. Many of the new community school models aim to address “barriers to learning” and include “innovations such as family support centers, early childhood and after school programming, health and mental health services, partnerships with business and civic groups, and initiatives to use school facilities as community centers,” harkening back to the early settlement house approach. The federal government’s commitment to community schools – in the form of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program – supports after school programming nationwide. Nearly one billion dollars was appropriated for this initiative in 2005.⁶

Benefits of Community Schools

The best available data on community schools – those that, in addition to their primary educational role also provide services for the larger community – are extremely positive. According to the Coalition for Community Schools, there are a growing number of community schools – between 3,000 and 4,000 nationwide. Recent research examining twenty community schools across the United States found that these schools improved student learning, promoted family engagement with students and schools, helped the schools themselves function more effectively, and added “vitality” to their communities.⁷

³ As quoted in Tony Proscio, “Schools, Community and Development: Erasing the Boundaries,” *The Enterprise Foundation* 2004, p. 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ These issues are discussed in detail in “Charter Schools and Community Development: The Economic Impact of New Charter Schools,” *Civic Builders Policy Brief No. 8*, 2006.

⁶ See <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>

⁷ Blank et al.

The particular advantages of neighborhood schools – those serving children, their families, and the broader community – are numerous and mutually reinforcing. As described, many of the services provided are designed to remove the barriers to learning – conditions that often result from the stresses of poverty and weakened familial and social networks.

Benefits for Children

Research across a number of disciplines shows that children benefit from the types of programming offered by community schools, including:

- **Learning opportunities from a very young age**

The advantages of early learning opportunities for all children – and particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds – are well documented. Preschool attendance can dramatically increase IQ and achievement scores in the short term; over the longer term children who have attended Head Start or other early childhood enrichment programs have better grades, attendance and graduation rates, academic motivation, aspirations, and postsecondary education, employment and earning rates, and are at lower risk for negative and antisocial behavior (e.g. drug abuse, delinquency, and illegitimate pregnancy).⁸

- **Small classroom size**

Small class size has consistently been shown to play an important role in improving student attendance rates, grades and test scores, and reducing negative influences such as violence and alcohol abuse.⁹

- **Constructive, structured activities during non-school hours**

FBI statistics show that juvenile crime rises significantly between the hours of 3:00 and 7:00 pm; fifty percent of juvenile crimes take place on weekdays during after school hours. Numerous studies have shown that consistent, personal connections with family members, neighbors, teachers, and other stable adults living in the neighborhood can help to fortify young people against destructive influences. Additional research shows that economically disadvantaged students engaged in constructive learning activities during these non-school hours receive better grades than their non-engaged peers. In general, high quality after school programs have been shown to improve grades, work habits, emotional adjustment, peer relations and higher education and career aspirations.¹⁰

⁸ For a useful synthesis of the early childhood education literature, see the Northwest Regional Educational Library School Improvement Research Series (SIRS) on Early Childhood Education: <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/topsyn3.html>.

⁹ In her 1999 meta analysis of school size studies, Mary Anne Raywid concludes that the relationship between size and positive educational outcomes has been "confirmed with a clarity and at a level of confidence rare in the annals of education research." Mary Anne Raywid, "Current Literature on Small Schools," *ERIC Digest* 1999.

¹⁰ See, for example, Delton Young, *Wayward Kids: Understanding and Treating Antisocial Youth* (Jason Aronson, 1999); Jenna Davis, "Out of Schools and Out of Trouble," *State Legislatures Magazine*, May 2001, p. 29; J. Eccles, "The Development of Children Ages 6 to 14," in *The Future of Children: When School is Out* Volume 9, Number 2, Fall 1999, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, pp. 30-44; R.M. Clark, *Critical Factors in Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed or Fail in School* (New York: Academy for Educational Development, 1988); D.L. Vandell and L. Shumrow, as cited in "After School Child Care Programs," *The Future of Children: When School is Out* Volume 9, Number 2, Fall 1999, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, pp. 64-80; M.W. McLaughlin, *Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development* (Washington, DC: Public Education Network) 2000.

- **Ready access to health and other social services**

In her meta-analysis of resilience in children and adolescence, Joy Dryfoos concludes that the “single most effective intervention was the development and implementation of schools that integrate the delivery of quality education with needed health and social services.”¹¹

- **Local facility proximate to home**

Data show that neighborhood schools – those that are located within walking distance of students’ homes – have a number of positive attributes. They improve parental involvement and participation in school life. They can also contribute to neighborhood safety; the expansion of “safe routes to school” can increase foot traffic, positive street activity and neighborhood safety.¹² Finally, public health advocates contend that the increased physical activity from walking or biking to school can play an important role in reducing child and adolescent obesity rates and can contribute more generally to their well being. In the 1960s, half of American’s students still walked to school. Today, it is only 10 percent.¹³ Local community schools can help reverse this trend.

- **High degree of parental involvement in academic and school life**

Numerous studies have documented the significance of parental involvement in children’s education as a critical factor in promoting academic achievement.¹⁴

- **Synergies from home, school and community resources**

A 13-year study in 10 communities found that child and adolescent outcomes were enhanced in communities where key developmental influences – home, school, community resources – combined to provide consistent messages, opportunities and supports for young people.¹⁵

Benefits for Families

Families also benefit from the supports of a community school. For parents, the services offered can support their employment opportunities, parenting skills, and general health and well-being, and can include:

- Job training and counseling
- Childcare
- Parenting classes
- ESL, literacy and technology classes
- Health and welfare programs
- Assistance with emergency food, legal and housing needs

¹¹ Joy Dryfoos, Full Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth and Families (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994).

¹² Ann Lauth, “New Schools for Older Neighborhoods,” Local Government Commission and the National Association of Realtors, January 2003, p.3.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See, for example, A.T. Henderson and N. Berla, A New Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1995).

¹⁵ F.A.J. Ianni, The Search for Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1990). As cited in, “Research Base for Community Schools,” <http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/file/researchbase.pdf>

Benefits for Communities

For communities, the presence of an inclusive school-cum-community center can strengthen the social fabric of a neighborhood.

- The presence of a neighborhood school – in walking or biking distance – enhances family participation in school activity and improves foot traffic and neighborhood safety.
- Family engagement and participation in school activities can improve “social capital” in a community.¹⁶
- The co-location of a school and community services offers a cost-effective approach to construction and service delivery.

Community School Models

National Models

Almost by definition community schools are founded in response to very local needs. However, research, evaluation and development of best practice “models” have offered examples that are being employed in communities across the country. Two of the more renowned national models are described below:

School of the 21st Century (21C):

The School of the 21st Century is a community school model that incorporates childcare and family support services into schools, aiming to promote “optimal growth and development of children beginning at birth.”¹⁷ 21C was devised by Head Start founder and Yale Professor Edward Zigler. Launched in 1988, the program is in many ways a response to the need for universal affordable and high quality childcare for working parents and educational opportunities for young children. 21C is comprised of six program components, including Guidance and Support for Parents, Early Care and Education, before-School, After School and Vacation Programs for School-Age Children, Health Education and Services, Networks and Training for Childcare Providers, and Information and Referral Services. Since its 1988 inception, 21C has been implemented in more than 1300 schools around the country.

Communities in Schools:

Communities in Schools (CIS) helps children succeed in school and “prepare for life.”¹⁸ For more than twenty-five years, CIS has ensured that families are matched with resources that support five basic tenets for children: a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult (mentors, tutors, parental involvement programs), a safe place to learn and grow (including after school and extended hours programming), a healthy start and a healthy future (various health and well being programs), a marketable skill to use upon graduation (technology and other career training and counseling), and a chance to give back to peers and community (community service opportunities). CIS services include case management to bring resources and services to students at the schools. There are 200 local CIS affiliates in twenty-eight states, serving approximately two million children at 2,500 schools and other education sites.

¹⁶ See, for example, Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

¹⁷ <http://www.yale.edu/21c>

¹⁸ <http://www.cisnet.org>

City Models

A number of initiatives that have received significant attention nationwide have been piloted at the city level. In some cases, the model has been replicated in its entirety or in part by schools and community development organizations in other cities. In New York City, for example, these programs include:

Children's Aid Society Community Schools:

In 1992, the Children's Aid Society (CAS) partnered with the New York City Board of Education, the city's Community School District Six and others to open its first community school. According to CAS, "a community school is a public school that combines the best quality educational practices with a wide range of vital in-house health and social services to ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn."¹⁹ CAS schools, which now number ten, provide full day, full week and full year offerings, among them "youth development programs, including academic enrichment, sports, arts, and community service; summer camps; medical, dental and mental health services; social services; adult education; emergency food assistance and legal aid; immigration assistance; child health insurance enrollment; early childhood programs and community development, including employment of neighborhood residents and sponsorship of community events."²⁰ Each CAS Community School also houses a Family Resource Center. In addition to the CAS schools in New York City, the model has been adapted to approximately 100 sites nationally and internationally.

New York City Beacons:

Beacons are community centers located in public school buildings, offering students and families a range of programs – recreational, social and health services, educational enrichment and vocational activities for youth and adults – before and after school, in the evenings, and on weekends. Launched in 1991 by a partnership between New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development and the Fund for the City of New York's Youth Development Institute, the Beacons are intended to provide "safe, structured and stimulating" activities for children and families, and emphasize five core programming areas: "(1) youth development including educational enrichment, cultural arts, sports and recreation, youth leadership, community service and career education; (2) parent involvement and family support; (3) school-community linkages to increase academic achievement; (4) building of safe and supportive neighborhoods for child and youth development; and (5) employment."²¹ Each beacon is managed by a local community organization that works closely with the host schools, community councils, and other neighborhood organizations. The initiative is funded at thirty six million dollars a year and serves nearly 200,000 youth and family members at eighty sites.²²

¹⁹ http://www.childrengsidsociety.org/locations_services/communityschools

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ <http://www.fcny.org/portal.php/syd/beacons/>

²² Fund for the City of New York Youth Development Institute, "Beacon Profiles: An Overview of the New York City Beacons Initiative," May 2002.

Charter Schools as Community Schools

Beyond these established models, many community school initiatives occur at the state, school district, and very local levels.²³ Typically, neighborhood efforts respond to a particular set of community needs. At times this may mean the creation of an entirely new school. In these instances charter schools are particularly well suited to provide the flexibility and autonomy that other community organizations require to create comprehensive community-serving organizations. Robin Halsband writes in the *Journal of Housing and Community Development* that “evidence is growing that an increased number of community based organizations (CBOs) are starting charter schools. CBOs view charter schools as a means to expand their current services and provide one-stop shopping for their target population.”²⁴ Similarly, many independently launched charter schools recognize the role they play as a neighborhood resource, explicitly positioning themselves as hubs of community activity and services.

The potential synergies of co-tenancy (multiple services under one roof) are particularly exciting for charter schools, since often the launch of a new charter also means the construction or rehabilitation of a new facility. Therefore, from their inception charter schools can think strategically about how their new homes can also function as centers of other community programs and incorporate appropriate design, financing and partnership considerations in the planning process. Whether charter schools are launched autonomously or as part of a larger neighborhood initiative, they can explore facility options that can support student achievement and community development goals simultaneously.

Three Joint Use Options for Charter Schools

Below we examine the relative merits (and challenges) of three different joint use strategies for charter schools:

- the “omnibus community center,”
- the “single service collaboration”; and
- the “opportunistic space sharing arrangement”

In the first, schools are, in effect, one agency in a comprehensive community center that involves a broad range of service providers and offers a full suite of programs for all community members. In the second, schools typically form partnerships with individual service providers to add one kind of complementary service for their student population. In the third, schools share space with other organizations – perhaps another school or commercial entity – explicitly to meet their organization's financial needs.

The Omnibus Community Center

- **Community Need Served:**
Schools can play a central role in anchoring large, comprehensive community development strategies for neighborhood revitalization. In these instances, community based organizations work

²³ Notable state programs include those in Missouri (Caring Communities), California (Healthy Start), New Jersey (School-Based Youth Program), Kentucky (Family Resource and Youth Services Program), Washington (Readiness to Learn), Iowa (School-Based Youth Program), Ohio (Urban School Initiative: School Age Care Project), North Dakota, Tennessee (Consortium on Development of Full Service Schools), Texas (Alliance Schools), Illinois (Project Success), and Vermont. For a list of state efforts, see Blank et al.

²⁴ Robin Halsband, “Charter Schools Benefit Community Economic Development,” *Journal of Housing and Community Development* Nov./Dec. 2003, 34.

with numerous public and private organizations to secure funding for a broad range of initiatives that typically include educational programming, health services, youth and early childhood development programs and employment and housing services, among others. In some cases, these programs take root in a number of sites within the community. In others, they are housed in one facility that also serves as home to the school; in these instances, the school itself becomes the hub of community activity.

- **Potential Partner(s):**
Community Development Organizations, YMCA
- **Case Study(s):**

The John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School

The John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School, a state-of-the-art community school, is situated on the East Side of Saint Paul, a neighborhood with high unemployment and child poverty rates. Renovating an old, unused school facility and transforming it into a full serve community center was central to the neighborhood's revitalization effort, a \$30 million collaboration between the city, the county, the local school district, the East Side Family Center, the Wilder Foundation, and the YMCA. In 2000, the new 75,000 square foot school opened to serve 320 k-6th grade children and 100 early childhood students. In addition, the school adjoins a new 63,000 square foot YMCA that serves 3000 students and community members. The YMCA acts as the school's gymnasium and after school programming space, as well as housing a day care center, teen center, preschool, and gym and fitness center for the public. The school's many partnerships allow it to provide on-site health (physical, mental, dental) services, early childhood and adult education, family support, tutoring and related services to the school's children, their families, and the larger Eastside community. The school also houses a revolving community "housing investment fund" which works to increase affordable housing near the school. The facility itself is open seven days a week, 5:30-9pm. From 2003-2004, students scoring "satisfactory" or higher on standardized tests increased by 20%.

Chippewa Middle School

In 1995 community members in Lansing, Michigan joined together as "Partners in Transition" to plan the renovation of the old high school into a new school and community center serving all members of the 22,000 person town. The new 200,000 square foot facility, the Chippewa Middle School, has an intergenerational focus: the building includes 560-student middle school for grades 6-8 and houses an infant and early childhood center and a space for teaching community college classes. In addition, the facility includes the Meridian Senior Center, which serves nearly 1,000 senior citizens and has its own library and computer center. According to one profile, "toddlers and middle-school students are frequently in senior citizen sing-a-longs, talent shows, and other events. Seniors regularly walk the halls of the school to get their exercise while the students are in class. The Okemos School District provides the salary and benefits for the Senior Activities leader. Chippewa Middle School is used around the clock, and the custodial staff is available seven days a week and paid for by the Okemos School District. Child-care programs begin at 7 a.m. and end at 6 p.m, the senior citizens center opens at 7:30 and close at 3 p.m. while community college classes start at 8 a.m. and end fourteen

hours later. An after-school program 'Club Mid' for Chippewa students and students from another middle school meets daily from 2:50 p.m. to 6 p.m."²⁵

YMCA Young Leaders Academy

Opened in 2002, the YMCA Young Leaders Academy charter school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin is the first charter school to be launched and operated by a YMCA. Located on the city's north side, an area plagued by high crime, poverty and unemployment rates, the school's physical and programmatic design was founded largely on community input, including a comprehensive needs assessment survey. In response, the YMCA built a \$15 million, 114,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility that houses the charter school, a full-service YMCA, a child-care center, and the YMCA's Community Development Center (CDC).

The combination of programs for children and families has made the building into a community hub which serves more than 1,000 people daily. In addition to the before and after school programming for youth, the building is regularly used for community meetings and events. The YMCA CDC offers a variety of programs and services for the community at the facility, as part of its efforts to revitalize the residential and commercial life of the neighborhood. Programs include home buying workshops and other housing and community organizing activities.

DC Bilingual Charter School

In 2004, CentroNia, a community based service organization in Washington, DC, opened its DC Bilingual Public Charter School (DCBPCS) to 122 3-5 year old children. By 2009, the school will serve 544 students in grades pre-K-5, with educational programming and a "wide-variety of wrap-around services" for the children, their families, and community.²⁶ The 73,000 square foot facility is located in the ethnically and economically diverse Columbia Heights neighborhood, where it was created out of an obsolete Bell Atlantic switching station. In the school building, CentroNia also offers a number of supports for children families in the immediate community, including Washington Child Development (child care services), Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative, Sister to Sister/Hermana a Hermana (mentoring and support for teenage girls) and SPARK DC (a neighborhood hub for a city-wide school readiness initiative). Employment support focuses on hiring teachers and staff from the community, and providing job training and certification through a Professional Development Academy. According to one school profile, "hiring from the community allows the school and center to break down the barriers between service providers and participants to be truly responsive to community needs. Nearly 60 percent of the staff have enrolled their children in one of the building's programs."²⁷

- **Additional Observations:**

The creation of a comprehensive community center serving the various needs of all community members is a massive undertaking, requiring collaboration between multiple public and private partners for planning, operating and financing needs. *Planning:* In the case of the DC Bilingual Charter School, the planning and design team included CentroNia (and future school) staff,

²⁵ KnowledgeWorks Foundation profile of Chippewa Middle School:

http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/past_winners/school.asp?intSchoolID=2

²⁶ Knowledgeworks Foundation school profile, <http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/honors/school.asp?intSchoolID=21>

²⁷ Ibid.

community members, and parents. The school's ultimate design incorporated, for example, the community's safety concerns (namely about gang activity and violence), and moved playground space to the roof and a basketball court to the basement. *Operations:* In the case of the John A. Johnson Elementary School and the YMCA Young Leaders Academy, the schools partnered with an organization, the YMCA, with a strong track record in the provision of youth services. Nevertheless, other players were still vital to operate these facilities. In the Johnson case, for example, the broad array of services offered are provided by seventeen different partners. *Financing:* Creating and running these large community structures also requires significant and creative financing. In the Johnson School example, funding sources included a state grant, a YMCA capital campaign and a bond levy and funds from the county. The school district itself also played an important financing role, contributing funds from its operating capital, and leasing space to the Y for long term use (the district owns the YMCA facility). The district also took advantage of federal QZABS program to sell interest free bonds. In the case of Chippewa, the school relies on the school district, the Okemos Education Foundation and hundreds of volunteers to staff its full roster of community programming.

The Single Service Collaboration

Outdoor Facilities

- **Community Need Served:**
Children of all ages need play space for physical education and recreation. In urban areas, often neighborhood safety concerns or lack of appropriate space limit school options.
- **Potential Partner(s):**
YMCA, City Parks Department
- **Case Study(s):**
In Massachusetts, community development corporations have participated in the Boston Schoolyards Initiative. Sponsors of the initiative rehabilitate the city's public schoolyards, benefiting the school's students and providing assets to the surrounding neighborhoods for a community recreational space.²⁸ In Chicago, a city wide initiative builds community schools adjacent to parks "to share space with parks and use parks after school and ... during the school day."²⁹
- **Additional Observations:**
Parks offer opportunities for a school and community to jointly rehabilitate public spaces. For the school, there are typically cost savings from this arrangement, since the recreational facility is not actually housed within the school and therefore its initial construction and on-going maintenance is not a significant cost.

School and Public Library

- **Community Need Served:**
In some neighborhoods, the local school is the only public facility; these communities lack the resources – books, magazines, newspapers, computer and web technology, early

²⁸ see www.schoolyards.org.

²⁹ Interview with Arne Duncan, Chicago's Public School CEO *Metro Investment Report* April 2005:
http://www.metroinvestmentreport.com/mir/?module=displaystory&story_id=272&edition_id=45&format=html

childhood, language and employment classes – that state of the art municipal libraries can provide.

- **Potential Partner(s):**
Local government
- **Case Study(s):**
The Edison School/Pacific Park Project in the City of Glendale, California represents a community effort to maximize limited land and public financial resources. Following a comprehensive programming effort that involved community members, city and school district staff, and elected officials to identify components of the school facility that could be shared between the elementary school and the city, the final plan included a multi-purpose cafeteria and gymnasium, art, science and computer classrooms, playing fields, and a library that would function as both the school library and a branch of the city public library. During the school day, the library is accessible to the school only; after hours and weekends the library is available to the larger community.
- **Additional Observations:**
Like most shared facilities that are open to the public, design considerations for joint use included ample public parking, multiple entrances to the library – both for the school and for the public – and appropriate security measures for the safety of school children, the library resources and the facility itself. Facility planners estimate that the fiscal benefits of joint use – which included reduced land, construction, and operational costs – was on the order of \$5 million for the entire facility (of which the library was part).

Extended Day/After School Activities

- **Community Need Served:**
Constructive programming, enrichment and supervision for children in a safe environment during non-school hours and childcare that allows parents to work full-time schedules.
- **Potential Partner(s):**
YMCA, Big Brother/Big Sister, Non-Profit tutoring, mentoring, arts sports programs
- **Case Study(s):**
In Chicago, the CEO of the Public Schools reports, “the Boys and Girls clubs have actually closed three of their sites. They’ve gotten out of the real estate business, stopped paying rent and all of those overhead costs, and are simply running programs out of our schools... [W]e run the schools from 9am – 3pm, and they run the school from 3pm – 9pm. It has dramatically cut their overhead and their funders love it because all of their money is now going to kids through tutoring, mentoring, and academic programs. This is the type of facilities planning that we want to continue to do much more of in the district.”³⁰

In other instances, small, community based organizations can complement the school day curriculum with after hours programming. In the case of the Bronx Charter School for the Arts, for example, the school rents classroom space in the afternoon to Dreamyard, a local arts organization, to provide after school and weekend enrichment art activities to students. In Washington, DC the extended day offerings at the Maya Angelou Public Charter School which include elective classes, dinner, and study hour, are staffed in part by a cadre of community volunteers who tutor students during the evening hours.

³⁰ Interview with Arne Duncan, Chicago’s Public School CEO.

- **Additional Observations:**
Extended day and after school programming requires limited additional space or modification of facility design. The programming often directly supports the work of school and can involve/employ school staff. Service providers may or may not contribute below rental income; in the case of Chicago, the Boys and Girls Club's funders underwrite cost of after-school programming. In the case of Bronx Arts, the rental income covers only additional costs of keeping facility open.

Childcare/Early Childhood Education

- **Community Need Served:**
Children's academic success and life chances are greatly improved with high quality early childhood education. In addition, safe, nurturing and dependable childcare is critical for the success of working parents. In the case of schools, early childhood programs can also serve the needs of teen parents attending the school, teachers and school staff, or other families in the community.
- **Potential Partner(s):**
Local government program (e.g. Head Start), Non-profit early childcare provider
- **Case Study(s):**
The number of public elementary and high schools with early childhood programs on-site is large. In the case of charter schools, many of the preschool partners are private, non-profit providers, although the charter is itself a public school. Casa Esperanza Montessori School in Raleigh, North Carolina, for example, is a charter elementary school serving bilingual students. In addition to the charter, the school operates a private daycare in its facility.³¹ The same is true of the Acorn Montessori charter school in Prescott Valley, Arizona.³² Other, non-Montessori charter elementary schools employ a similar arrangement.³³
- **Additional Observations:**
Childcare centers are complex and expensive to operate. Licensing requires particular design specifications very different from those of the elementary and high school space. Staffing, health, safety and insurance requirements are typically substantial and costly: operating margins on a preschool program are very slim and often negative. This suggests that, unlike their public charter school facility hosts, early childhood programs must either be privately run (with fees to cover services) or operated by existing government programs such as Head Start. Planning for early childhood space is more efficient at the initial facilities planning process, rather than trying to retrofit space to accommodate an early childhood partner. The costs of operating such a program must be weighed carefully against the benefits.

³¹ www.cemcs.org

³² www.acornmontessori.com

³³ See, for example, Indianapolis Lighthouse Academy:

http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Parents/Schools/ILCS_05_06.htm

Health Care Clinic

- **Community Need Served:**
Children's healthcare needs are many. Left unattended, these needs can interfere with a child's academic performance and regular attendance. Sick children also place additional demands on working family members who must miss work to care for them. On-site physical, dental and mental health clinics can ensure that children receive the medical attention they require and minimize the amount of time they spend sick at home or traveling to doctors, thereby reducing both the hours of classroom time they miss and the time parents must take off from work. On-site clinics can also serve entire families, and may be available to other community members.
- **Potential Partner(s):**
Local hospitals, local clinics, HMOs
- **Case Study(s):**
In New York City, there are 124 school-based health clinics funded by the state of New York and operated by a diverse network of hospitals and treatment centers. In Harlem, for example, P.S. 13 houses a public middle school (750 students) a charter elementary school (150 students), and hosts a health clinic staffed by two nurse practitioners, a physician assistant and an off-site medical director. The advantages of the clinic over a more traditional school nurse program are multiple: clinic staff can write prescriptions, administer drugs, immunize students, give physical examinations, provide acute care and, generally, *treat* illness rather than simply manage documentation.
- **Additional Observations:**
According to its operators, the P.S. 13 clinic's success in large measure results from the breadth and depth of the services it offers. It is worth noting, however, that although the clinic once served the local neighborhood, New York State limited its funding to focus on serving only the school population in order to avoid the complicated safety, security, management and health problems related to serving the larger community. The clinic's success may also therefore be linked to its focus on a narrower target population. In addition, funding remains a persistent challenge for the clinic. In this case, supporting resources are largely public and tenuous; providers must reapply annually and renewals are uncertain. The clinic is operated under the auspices of the New York State Department of Health and over time has been supported by a mix of funding sources including a grant from the New York State Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (for maternal and childcare) tobacco settlement monies and local funds. Philanthropic support could provide greater long term security to the clinic's operations and ability to serve children on their pre-k through 12 continuum.

Opportunistic Arrangements for Sharing Space

- **Community Need Served:**
In some cases, schools can jointly occupy an educational facility with a tenant whose use of the space is entirely distinct from that of the school. In these instances, the two partners might not share complementary programmatic offerings; instead, they share space because no other suitable facility is available or affordable, or because they need to maximize rental income. In the case of charter schools, this type of arrangement typically occurs when the school shares a facility with another school (public or private) or when it leases a portion of the facility to a commercial entity.

- **Potential Partner(s):**
School, Commercial Entity
- **Case Study(s):**

Schools Sharing Space

In New York City, the rapid growth of charter schools has meant that some charters have found homes in existing public school facilities. Often these space sharing arrangements are temporary, and serve the charter schools well in their early years before they have expanded to full capacity or secured their own permanent home. In Brooklyn, for example, one of the Uncommon Schools charter schools has operated along side two other traditional public schools in one public school building. The charter has a long-term lease and its own discrete, well-defined space including a separate entrance. The space is essentially a “gift,” from the NYC DOE, for which the charter school pays \$1 annually in rent. In Newark, New Jersey, Uncommon School’s North Star Academy Charter School operates in unused space in a Catholic school facility. Unlike the Brooklyn school, however, North Star Academy has only a one-year lease, and its rent is more expensive than the Brooklyn arrangement.

Commercial Tenants

Schools can often maximize rental income by leasing space to commercial tenants. In these cases, for-profit entities can pay market rents and lease rooms, floors, or even rooftops or building air rights. In New Jersey, one of the Uncommon charter schools leases space to two commercial tenants who previously occupied part of the building before the school took over the space. The first is a pediatrician, the second is a cell tower located on the roof and occupying additional space in the basement. Both tenants pay market rent, and contribute approximate 50% of the total rental expense. In Washington, DC, the DC Bilingual Public Charter School receives some income (below market rent) from the community organizations housed in its facility; however, it also derives substantial revenue from commercial tenants: Verizon rents 10,000 square feet in the facility to run a long distance switching station and pays market rate on a 20-year lease. The building’s rooftop cellular tower is also rented to a number of phone companies.

In Harlem, the facility for the Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change, a school launched by the Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC), was financed in part by leasing the first floor of the building to a large restaurant chain. The guaranteed rental income from a stable commercial enterprise helped the developer secure additional project financing; the restaurant (IHOP) is also a regular and ongoing source of revenue for the six story facility which includes the school, community outreach, conference and computer rooms, a community wellness center and the Jackie Robinson Youth Center of the Harlem YMCA.

- **Additional Observations:**
Schools that are housed by another school facility have an important financial need met – they typically occupy the space for free or at below market rent. As these two charter school examples illustrate, however, school co-tenancy can raise important issues of autonomy. In both the Brooklyn and the New Jersey examples, the charter schools are not fully in control of all their operations. They must seek permission from the host schools for facility use: whether, for example, they can serve their students in the building in the evenings and weekends. In either case, charter schools would be better served if they were the “host” partner and leased, rented or simply donated space to another educational entity. In the case of space leased to commercial tenants, the control issues are largely obviated when the business entities require little foot traffic or regular personnel (e.g. the phone company exchanges and cell towers). In the case of a tenant like the IHOP restaurant, the school is well served when the tenant supports its financial position without disrupting programmatic operations. In this case, the IHOP is one of ADC’s development projects – the restaurant is owned by entrepreneurs who worked through the

ADC's Neighborhood Franchise Project. The restaurant's presence, therefore, serves some of ADC's larger community development objectives and, according to ADC, is a source of community pride.

In Summary

The intersection of two concurrent trends – the return to community schools as a vehicle for neighborhood revitalization and the advent of charter schools as educational innovators – holds exciting promise for the future of neighborhood school facilities. Many charter schools envision themselves as quintessential community schools, aiming to serve the needs of their school age students as well as those of the community at large. Often, because the stock of existing educational buildings is inadequate for charter use, these schools also engage in the development or rehabilitation of new educational space. Therefore from their inception, charters can consider ways in which their new homes can also accommodate a broad range of other community service providers, and plan, design, finance and operate their facilities accordingly. Whether they are working with community development organizations to create full serve community centers, partnering bilaterally with smaller service providers to offer single add-on services, or simply leasing space for rental income, charter schools have much to gain from the synergies of co-tenancy.