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# Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship

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# COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship

**Atelia Melaville**  
**Amy C. Berg**  
**Martin J. Blank**

Coalition for Community Schools

with Generous Support from  
The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation



Coalition  
for  
Community  
Schools

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Coalition's mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families, and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families, and communities to improve student learning.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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## PREFACE

*I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.*

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

**E**ducation is the foundation of democracy. As such it must work for all young people. Yet far too often young people disengage from learning and do not reach their full, human potential. Community schools—places where partners come together to offer a range of supports and opportunities for children, youth, families, and communities before, during, and after school—address this need by using community-based learning to reengage students in education and to create the conditions for their success.

Community schools foster a learning environment that extends far beyond the classroom walls. Students learn and problem solve in the context of their lives and communities. Community schools nurture this natural engagement. Because of the deep and purposeful connections between schools and communities, the curriculum is influenced and enhanced, removing the artificial separation between the classroom and the real world. Our vision for community schools is that they are places where *all* students engage in learning, achieve to the best of their ability, and become productive citizens and participants in our democracy.

*Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship* underscores the need for a concerted and intentional effort to engage all students in learning. Numerous approaches to community-based learning are already in use; this paper highlights six models with a particular emphasis on community problem solving: academically based community service, civic education, environment-based education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning. If all students are to succeed, we must pay much more attention to community-based learning as a strategy for engaging and motivating students and for strengthening the relationship between schools and communities.

The Coalition for Community Schools is grateful to the support of An-me Chung at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for her continuing encouragement and assistance with this work. The Coalition would also like to thank the many organizations that have contributed to this report. Representatives of the following organizations contributed to the ideas expressed in this document (see Appendix C for more information).

- American Youth Policy Forum
- Antioch New England Institute
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Blueprint Research & Design, Inc.
- Campaign for the Civic Mission, Council for Excellence in Government
- Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania
- The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
- Chicago High School Redesign Initiative at the Chicago Community Trust
- Citizen Schools
- Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve America
- Earth Force
- Education Alliance at Brown University
- Forum for Youth Investment
- Funders Forum on Education and the Environment
- Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University
- Institute for Research and Reform in Education
- Lewis and Clark College, Graduate School of Education
- National Academy Foundation
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Center for Learning and Citizenship, Education Commission of the States
- National Education Association
- National Environment Education and Training Foundation
- National Service Learning Partnership
- National Youth Leadership Council
- RMC Research Corporation
- Rural School and Community Trust
- State Education and Environmental Roundtable

We look forward to working with these groups—and others—to advance our community-based learning agenda.



Ira Harkavy  
*Chair*  
Coalition for  
Community Schools



Lisa Villarreal  
*Vice Chair*  
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## CHAPTER 1

### THE RATIONALE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

*There are two types of education: One should teach us how to make a living and the other should teach us how to live.*

—JOHN ADAMS

In recent years, national tragedies—both manmade and natural—have forced Americans to see how much we rely on strong neighborhoods, communities, and democratic institutions. We’ve seen how lack of attention to their well being affects us all. These events lay bare the moral imperative that underlies the mission of public education—to develop active, engaged citizens who are able to participate in and contribute fully to a democratic society.

In order to learn *how* to be citizens, students must *act* as citizens. Therefore, education must connect subject matter with the places where students live and the issues that affect us all. Schools are ideally situated to connect learning with real life; but typically, they do not. To a large extent, public education—following the lead of higher education—has failed to recognize the benefits of student engagement with their communities in acquiring knowledge.

Not surprisingly, by the time they are in high school, as many as 40 to 60 percent of all students—urban, suburban, and rural—are chronically disengaged from school.<sup>1</sup> That disturbing number does not include the young people who have already dropped out. Moreover, 65 percent say they are unexcited about their classes.<sup>2</sup>

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a group of major business and education organizations, believes that making the connection between learning and the real world is imperative for student success. According to the Partnership, “the education system faces irrelevance unless we bridge the gap between how students live and how they learn.” The Partnership defines literacy to mean not just reading, writing, and computing skills, but “knowing how to use knowledge and skills in the context of modern life.”<sup>3</sup>

A large majority of respondents to several national surveys agreed that involving students in more real-world learning experiences would greatly improve student outcomes.



- ◆ **Ninety-five percent** of students (ages thirteen to nineteen) said opportunities for more real world learning would improve their school. **Seventy-one percent** said that it would improve their school a great deal.<sup>4</sup> —*Horatio Alger Association*
- ◆ **Ninety-two percent** of adults (including teachers) favored emphasizing real world learning in schools including work study, community service, and vocational courses. **Sixty-four percent** of adults strongly advocated emphasizing real world learning.<sup>5</sup> —*Educational Testing Service*
- ◆ **Seventy percent** of teachers strongly advocated emphasizing real world learning.<sup>6</sup> —*Educational Testing Service*

Despite these facts, public schools have not pursued large scale efforts to bridge the gap between living and learning. While many schools reach out to community partners for resources, services, and support, far fewer take advantage of opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom walls—through participation in community life.

The Coalition for Community Schools believes that the vision set forth in No Child Left Behind—to educate all students to high standards—can only be fully realized if students are engaged in learning that connects them to the larger world.

### **A Common Sense Solution: Community-Based Learning**

Community schools offer a common sense approach for linking living and learning. A growing number of schools and community partners are adapting courses—both during the regular school day and after school—that allow students to learn *in* their communities. This link between schools and community partners is a critical element of community schools, offering students ways to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for success in adulthood. The aim of these courses is to more fully engage young people, by harnessing their natural interest in where and how they live and by using their own community as a source of learning and action.

To create both learners and citizens, the Coalition for Community Schools advocates strategies that engage students in learning through community-based problem solving. Collectively referred to as *community-based learning*, these strategies include academically based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning. It draws from research on peer-assisted learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning.

As an intentional dimension of the curriculum, community-based learning helps students acquire, practice, and apply subject matter knowledge and skills. At the same time, students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes of effective citizenship by identifying and acting on issues and concerns that affect their own communities. When implemented thoughtfully, these strategies create a pedagogy of engagement. Students invest time and attention and expend real effort because their learning has meaning and purpose.

Community-based learning helps students build a sense of connection to their communities. At the same time, it challenges them to develop a range of intellectual and academic skills in order to understand and take action on the issues they encounter in everyday life. By intentionally linking academic standards to the real world of their communities, community schools are narrowing the gap between knowledge and action and between what students must learn and what they can contribute.

### **Successful Implementation: Common Sense Drivers**

While no single approach guarantees success, community-based learning offers an important avenue for achieving multiple goals by developing knowledge and skills in many more students, increasing school resources and support, and improving communities. While community-based learning may look different depending on the school and community involved, the Coalition for Community Schools identified several basic assumptions that drive successful implementation and promote public support.

- ◆ **We're all in this together.** Society as a whole—families, community members, the private and not-for-profit sectors, government, faith communities, and students themselves, along with schools—shares responsibility in preparing young people for future success. Success includes living productive lives, engaging in lifelong learning, finding gainful employment, and contributing to civic life. To close the gap between living and learning, schools need to seek out teaching and learning opportunities from within their communities. At the same time, advocates and practitioners of individual, community-based learning strategies need to work together in bringing these real world approaches to the classroom.
- ◆ **Prepare for the future today.** America's school age children and youth will be tomorrow's parents, workers, and citizens. Their energy, curiosity, and—too often—their unmet needs already shape their neighborhoods and communities. Schools implementing community-based

learning understand that preparing students for the future means helping them become involved in positive community opportunities, today.

- ◆ **Community-based learning happens everywhere.** Community-based learning must be integrated within the regular school-based curriculum. Before and after school programs and a host of community-based organizations currently offer an important venue for shrinking the gap between living and learning. Successful implementation of community-based learning opportunities in these settings may introduce the benefits of community-based learning to school staff, families, and decision makers, thus easing its way into the regular curriculum.
- ◆ **Make better use of what we know.** Much is known about how young people learn and what motivates their interest. A considerable gap exists between this research, however, and the approach to teaching and learning employed by a majority of schools and educators.<sup>7</sup> Community-based learning strategies are founded on well researched theoretical frameworks and have been used in many settings. Implementation is most effective when educators understand the broad theoretical principles that underlie these strategies and use this information to shape and evaluate their practice.

Academically based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning are increasingly evident in classrooms and after school programs. School staff, administrators, parents, community members, and students themselves see the benefits of these strategies and want them to take root and grow in their schools and communities. Until now, however, the glue needed to join these separate efforts has been missing. By uniting these strategies under the banner of community-based learning, the Coalition for Community Schools intends to call attention to their shared purposes and greatly increase their visibility.

## Overview of the Report

In the following pages we present information that will help educators, community partners, policy makers, and funders consider the potential benefit to be gained from implementing community-based learning within their schools, districts, and states.

- ◆ **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the community-based learning model and its underlying theoretical basis. It describes the shared characteristics of community-based learning and connects theory to

practice by exploring how these characteristics build on what we know about how young people learn.

- ◆ **Chapter 3** summarizes the outcomes—academic, civic and moral, personal and social, and work related—of various community-based learning strategies.
- ◆ **Chapter 4** is a call to action aimed at policy makers, advocates, and practitioners.

Throughout the report, examples briefly illustrate how community-based learning engages young people—by helping them meet academic, social, and work goals—and how it improves their communities. These examples from urban, rural, and suburban communities focus on a diversity of issues, including a lack of community newspapers, obesity, a declining economy, and a burdened school system.

The appendices offer more information.

- ◆ **Appendix A** reviews the theoretical foundations underlying the community-based learning model.
- ◆ **Appendix B** provides an overview of the six major community-based learning approaches chosen for their emphasis on community problem solving.
- ◆ **Appendix C** lists information about relevant organizations and resources available.

### An Urban Nutrition Initiative

Since the 1980s, the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships has used academically based community service, both to enrich university and public school curricula and to contribute to the surrounding community. Over 100 Penn courses have been designed—or redesigned—with a focus on community revitalization in the development and application of course content.

The Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI) grew out of an undergraduate anthropology course in which students and teachers at a local middle school worked with Penn students to research and take action on nutrition related health disparities, especially obesity. Today UNI involves Penn students and public school students through high school age in improving community health—and their own academic, social, and work skills—by growing, cooking, and selling food and by sharing their knowledge and skills with others. Learning is based on active problem solving and draws on skills and content from multiple disciplines.

With initial consultation from business students at Penn's Wharton School and permanent Penn staff support, middle school students run an after school fruit and vegetable stand, offering healthy alternatives to high fat snacks. Older students grow produce for the stand as well as for area businesses in a paid, after school program. They participate in UNI's job training and entrepreneurship program and many are linked to another Penn partnership, the EcoTech Academy, a school within a school located at University City High School. Its curriculum is organized around food and its production. UNI students also run a community fitness program; plans for a food co-op are on the drawing board.



## CHAPTER 2

### OVERVIEW AND CORE CHARACTERISTICS

*The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.*

—ANATOLE FRANCE

Community-based learning represents a convergence of multiple theoretical frameworks and supporting research, all of which suggest that young people are more likely to be engaged in learning—to invest attention and expend energy—when the content has personal meaning and builds on what they already know. Moreover, students are more likely to retain and transfer knowledge when given opportunities to apply what they are learning to real world issues and to assess their performance in ways that suit their personal learning styles.<sup>8</sup>

If we follow this line of reasoning, the value of community-based learning is clear. Nevertheless, for too many students—particularly as they advance through school—learning behavior is characterized by a reduction in intrinsic interest, an increase in negative feelings about school, lower achievement, and negative reactions to failure. This decline is not developmentally inevitable. Instead, it is the result of personal and environmental factors, organizational features of schools, instructional methods, and the curriculum.<sup>9</sup> Community-based learning offers educators tools with which to reverse this negative trend.

#### Community-Based Learning Strategies

Community-based learning unites sets of strategies designed to engage students in learning at high standards, including academically based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning. Each of these strategies has its own advocates and practitioners, history, and accomplishments. Separately, each brings a unique perspective and valuable resources to teaching and learning.

## Theoretical Foundation of Community-Based Learning

- ◆ Knowledge is constructed and influenced by social interaction.
- ◆ Memory—the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information—is influenced by experience, prior learning, and practice.
- ◆ The motivation to learn is affected by personal judgments about one’s abilities and the perceived importance and attainability of the learning goal.
- ◆ Individuals learn in different ways.
- ◆ Barriers to learning can be mitigated by protective factors.
- ◆ Effective learning environments intentionally connect all of the systems that affect young people’s lives—home, school and community.

Appendix A offers a more in depth look at this research.

- ◆ **Academically Based Community Service** connects the academic mission of colleges and universities with the aspirations of the communities that surround them. At both the higher education institution and the public school, courses are designed—or redesigned—to focus on revitalizing the community. University faculty work with their public school colleagues to devise joint learning; university students enter schools as co-learners and role models for younger students; and university and school students share resources with each other.
- ◆ **Civic Education** aims to prepare competent and responsible citizens. It advocates civic and political engagement and provides active learning experiences that connect students’ academic learning with civic involvement. The ideas and concepts emphasized are essential to constitutional democracy and highlight democratic concepts of relevance to students and their experiences.
- ◆ **Environmental Education** capitalizes on children’s native curiosity—about the natural world and the social relationships they find there—by using the school’s surroundings and the community as a framework within which students construct their own learning.”<sup>10</sup> This strategy “is not primarily focused on learning about the environment...it uses the environment...to give voice to students’ natural interests and prior knowledge.”<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ **Place-Based Learning** uses the unique history, environment, culture, and economy of a particular place to provide a context for learning.

Student work is directed toward community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning.

- ◆ **Service Learning** integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.<sup>12</sup> The service activity meets a community need identified by students. The activity is tied to academic goals and provides an opportunity for student reflection and celebration.
- ◆ **Work-Based Learning** is a strategy that allows young people to spend time with adults—whether in a mentoring relationship, role model situation, or informational interaction—to learn about careers. Its aim is to make learning relevant by incorporating industry valued standards to inform curricula, by providing opportunities for contextual and applied learning, and by promoting program continuity from K–12 to post secondary education and training.

### Filling the Gaps in Local Democracy

The Program for Rural Services and Research (PRSR) at the University of Alabama works collaboratively with rural communities and schools to identify and address local concerns. When it became clear that local and regional print media no longer served many areas in the state, PRSR began working with teachers, students, and schools to find resources for producing community newspapers. They figured it was a win-win proposition. Access to information is vital to the health of a democratic community, and journalism is a hands on way to teach and learn writing plus a host of academic, social, and civic skills.

The collaboration has resulted in some twenty schools where students produce, publish, and distribute the only local newspaper. In the process, they develop professional level skills in writing, research, editing, layout design, advertising, and circulation. Teachers make sure that curriculum content permeates the whole endeavor. As a result, the public benefits while students meet and exceed their curriculum requirements and gain valuable entrepreneurial skills.

### Unifying Core Characteristics

What unites these strategies is a set of common characteristics. In turn, these core characteristics form the basic framework of the community-based learning model. Dialogue among leaders in these fields resulted in agreement that all of these strategies share the following:

- ◆ **Meaningful Content.** Learning occurs in places and focuses on issues that have meaning for students.
- ◆ **Voice and Choice.** Learning tasks are active and allow students to take an active role in decision making.
- ◆ **Personal and Public Purpose.** Learning goals connect personal achievement to public purpose.
- ◆ **Assessment and Feedback.** Conducting ongoing assessment gives students the opportunity to learn from their successes and failures.



◆ **Resources and Relationships.** Community partnerships increase the resources and relationships available for student learning and action.

In the following pages we discuss each core characteristic, highlight the underlying research, and illustrate how community-based learning puts that research into practice.

### Caring for the Land

In Beaver, Oregon, elements of service learning, environmental education, and work-based learning brought meaning and fostered academic and civic excellence among seventh and eighth graders at Nestucca Valley Middle School. When students in a Natural Resources class were given the chance to manage a quarter mile strip of land owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), they enthusiastically set to work. They developed a comprehensive plan for adaptive forest management using math, science, and language skills. They also researched how the history and geography of the region contributed to the forest's deterioration. Structured opportunities for reflection connected their project to classroom lessons. As a culminating event, the students made a videotape presentation of their work to educate the public about the importance of careful land management.

**CHARACTERISTIC 1:**  
**Learning occurs in places and focuses on issues that have meaning for students.**

*The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in.*

—JAMES BALDWIN

***Meaningful Content: What We Know***

One of the most important lessons that community schools have extrapolated from learning theory, neuroscience, and developmental theory is that *students' own communities, whether rich or poor, provide a natural context for learning that matters to children.*<sup>13</sup> Young people bring a vast store of prior knowledge to school every day. It is both meaningful and emotionally compelling to young people because it is based on their personal experiences, needs, and aspirations—at home and in their neighborhoods and communities.

According to a National Research Council report, schools successfully engage students when they “make the curriculum and instruction relevant to adolescents’ experience, cultures, and long term goals, so that students see some value in the high school curriculum.”<sup>14</sup> Other research confirms that students at all grade levels are more likely to pay attention to material over a sustained period of time when the content and reason for learning is compelling.<sup>15</sup>

We also know that linking learning acquired in the classroom to community settings requires that students distill information and use abstract thinking skills. This kind of application of knowledge is similar to rehearsal in that it enables young people to consolidate information and appears to increase their ability to respond to novel situations—a hallmark of higher level learning.<sup>16</sup>

***Meaningful Content: What Community-Based Learning Strategies Do***

Community-based learning engages students by using their own communities as the source and focus of learning. The community provides a place to learn by drawing on young people’s prior knowledge and exposing them to a vast array of issues for study and action. Community-based learning gives young people structured opportunities and the tools for physically exploring their communities and interacting with many kinds of local experts—residents, business owners, members of government, artists, and architects, among others. It gives them opportunities to apply new skills and practice them in novel settings. Through community-based observation, discussion, and problem solving, students acquire both facts and

## CHARACTERISTIC 1: Meaningful Content—From Research to Practice



multiple perspectives against which to refine their existing knowledge and skills. Teachers assist in this learning by paying attention to what concerns students and by helping them develop coherent investigations that use and refine standards-based academic skills. Teachers also connect school day learning with learning in before and after school, community-based, and work study programs and value these venues as important opportunities for students to apply skills from across the curriculum.

### Learning Where They Live

At the Lakeview Community Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, students in an after school program decided to learn about their community—its buildings, residences, and history. Working in pairs, older students took disposable cameras on expeditions through the neighborhood. They took photos of what they expected to find—like parks, schools, homes, apartments, businesses—and other things they had never noticed before, like too much traffic, ugly roadsides, junk cars, and graffiti. Younger students also set out on their own tour equipped with compasses they made themselves. They used the compasses to find important landmarks, and then drew detailed maps showing their locations. Afterward, both groups shared their research and used it to design a 3-D model of their community built out of Legos, cardboard boxes, Play Doh, Lincoln Logs, and strawberry crates. Local architects, builders, and business people served as additional resources, bringing in blueprints and models of other neighborhood buildings and sharing stories about local history. As they worked, the students wanted to do something about some of the problems they had seen. They decided to focus on several nearby streets with the goal being to set an example for other residents by picking up garbage and cleaning up graffiti. As an add-on project during the winter, they planted seeds and grew them indoors. When spring came, they planted flowers where everyone could see them.

## **CHARACTERISTIC 2:** **Learning tasks are active and allow students voice and choice.**

### *Voice and Choice: What We Know*

Feelings of control, choice, competence, and belonging are linked to learning.<sup>17</sup>

Young people's judgments about their capacity to learn—their sense of self-efficacy—is based on their perceived ability as well as the value they attach to what must be learned.<sup>18</sup>

By the time students move from elementary to middle school, most report wanting a much greater voice in classroom decisions.<sup>19</sup> Their teachers are more likely than elementary-level teachers to exercise tighter control, however, giving them fewer choices.<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly, students who feel less control over their learning are more anxious, experience reduced motivation and creativity, and perform at lower levels.

Not all learners are word and number savvy—the kind of intelligence most recognized and rewarded in academic settings. Traditional schools provide little opportunity for students to use other aspects of their natural intelligence, including spatial, interpersonal, and physical skills, among others. In recent years, subjects that do recognize these kinds of intelligence—for example, the arts and physical education—received even fewer resources and less class time.<sup>21</sup>

### *Voice and Choice: What Community-Based Learning Strategies Do*

Community-based learning makes young people active agents of their own learning and gives them a voice in determining what and how they learn. Students act as co-creators, rather than just consumers of knowledge. Teachers act as guides or coaches, ensuring that student explorations build in opportunities to acquire, practice, and apply content and skills required by the curriculum. Community-based learning often employs inquiry methods—like asking questions, making predictions, and using summaries—to provide learning frameworks. However, students are not only required to read, write, and listen; they are encouraged to design their own approaches for collecting, analyzing, and acting on information. Community-based strategies have the potential to draw on the skills of every student. Students use physical activity, music, dance, as well as interpersonal skills, sense of space, and love of the natural world to explore their communities and to organize and present to others what they have learned.

*“Real education should consist of drawing the goodness and the best out of our own students. What better books can there be than the book of humanity?”*

—CÉSAR CHÁVEZ

## CHARACTERISTIC 2: Voice and Choice—From Research to Practice



### Student Voices: Energizing and Sustaining Change

Community-based learning occurs throughout the community. In a variety of Mississippi communities, a regional community organizing initiative called Southern Echo is helping residents develop the information, skills, and organization they need for effective citizen participation. Focusing on the issues facing local school districts, the group consciously uses an intergenerational model. Echo believes that when young people and adults work together, more energy is created and more progress is sustained. Unlike many organizations where youth groups operate apart from adult led work, Echo integrates the voices of young people within their main efforts. Young people are welcomed and actively involved in monitoring the content and flow of debate during meetings. They have a say in what they want their community to look like and their input is valued in planning sessions. As one Echo organizer puts it, "How can we sustain [our movement] unless we stop treating youth as the future and not part of the present?"

### **CHARACTERISTIC 3: Learning goals connect personal achievement to public purpose**

*Serve—and hate will die unborn.*

—LANGSTON HUGHES

#### ***Connecting Personal and Public Purpose: What We Know***

In 2005, the Knight Foundation conducted a survey of nearly 100,000 high school students in more than 500 public and private high schools. After reading students the exact text of the First Amendment, researchers found that one in three students said its protection of religion, speech, press, and assembly went “too far.” Half of all students thought that newspapers should have government approval before publishing stories.<sup>22</sup>

These findings suggest that even when young people are aware of the principles of democratic government they may not understand their meaning well enough to choose or defend them. Across income groups, many young people feel powerless to solve the problems found in their communities or to have an effect on larger issues involving politics or government.<sup>23</sup> Subject matter learning—even exemplary achievement—takes young people only part of the way toward developing a truly democratic self. According to the Education Commission of the States, schools must help students “discover the personal and collective means—the perspectives, strength of character, and values—they will need to sustain our civilization.”<sup>24</sup>

Other research shows that young people are motivated by challenging, community-based problem solving. Participation in the issues and success of their own communities helps young people develop a greater “can-do” attitude, connects them to community norms and values, and contributes to community cohesion. More positive attitudes occur when they interact with others, develop skills, and perceive rewards as a result.<sup>25</sup> When young people realize that their actions can improve the lives of others, they gain confidence in managing their own lives, avoid high risk behaviors, and become more engaged in school.<sup>26</sup>

#### ***Connecting Personal and Public Purpose: What Community-Based Learning Strategies Do***

In a difficult world, community-based learning encourages young people to take hopeful action. Through action they recognize their ability to control their own lives—as students, workers, family members, and citizens. This view reflects Benjamin Franklin’s conviction that “an inclination joined with an ability to serve...should be the great aim and end of

### CHARACTERISTIC 3: Personal and Public Purpose—From Research to Practice



all learning.” Civic learning explicitly provides instruction and promotes participation in the principles and ideas essential to constitutional democracy. These same intellectual capacities and dispositions of good citizenship are implicitly conveyed in every community-based learning strategy.

Using community-based learning strategies, students identify and respond to actual community needs. Community cleanup efforts or visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and homeless shelters allow students to assist others. The intellectual context in which these actions take place helps students reflect on broader social issues such as the environment, health and wellness, aging, or housing. Students are expected to consider multiple, explanatory frameworks for understanding community needs; to respect diverse viewpoints; and to problem solve broadly. An emphasis on the public good challenges young people to identify needs and strengths—both in themselves and their community—and to find creative ways for improving community conditions.

#### First Amendment Schools: Educating for Freedom and Responsibility

The First Amendment Schools: Educating for Freedom and Responsibility® is sponsored by the First Amendment Center and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Currently, ninety schools from across the country comprise the First Amendment Schools Network. Twenty have received grant funding that will support efforts to create laboratories for democratic freedom by integrating civic education and community engagement through service learning, civic problem solving, and shared decision making. Two examples of member schools’ activities and accomplishments are described below.

Every year students from Nursery Road Elementary School (Columbia, South Carolina), a three year veteran of the network, conduct a voter registration drive at the local high school with the goal of enrolling over 300 eighteen-year-olds annually.

Quest High School (Humble, Texas), another First Amendment School and a National Service Learning Leader School, implemented a comprehensive service learning program over a decade ago. Each week, all students spend three hours at a community-based site working toward personal goals developed for the year. These experiences culminate in a senior year internship, which includes the design and implementation of a sustainable social action plan that benefits the community.

#### **CHARACTERISTIC 4: Assessments provide ongoing feedback**

##### ***Assessment and Feedback: What We Know***

Assessment, through standardized testing, is now a major element of school reform efforts in every state. The intention of this focus is to measure knowledge in core subjects, specifically math and reading. This information provides feedback concerning academic performance for several audiences, including students and parents, teachers, and schools.

Research on resiliency certainly points to the importance of clear, consistent, and high expectations for helping young people overcome difficulties and develop a stronger sense of personal autonomy.<sup>27</sup> Other research argues for a much broader and more immediate approach to assessment. Current assessment methods are far too narrow to capture the diverse ways in which students acquire and demonstrate learning and provide too little feedback to students when they need it. This is important because we know that students develop a sense of self-efficacy, a key element in motivation, based, in part, on a variety of feedback factors, including whether or not they think they will have the opportunity to improve their performance enough to meet expected standards.<sup>28</sup>

According to Milbrey McLaughlin,<sup>29</sup> a Stanford researcher, young people want and need continuous, candid, and supportive feedback about their performance—including concrete suggestions on how to improve. Her work on the effectiveness of community-based youth organizations also points to the importance of using culminating events to recognize young people's accomplishments. A formal presentation of what was learned sharpens the learning experience. It requires students to synthesize and distill what they learned and to make strategic decisions about how best to convey their findings to specific audiences. They must take risks and face the results. In the end, young people and adults learn to see each other in new, more positive ways.

##### ***Assessment and Feedback: What Community-Based Learning Strategies Do***

Community-based learning strategies incorporate on-going assessment so that young people can evaluate their own progress and the impact of their work. A major principle of place-based education, for example, states that:

*Educating the mind without  
educating the heart is no  
education at all.*

—ARISTOTLE



## CHARACTERISTIC 4: Assessment as Feedback—From Research to Practice



“All participants—teachers, students, and community members—expect excellent effort from each other and review their joint progress regularly and thoughtfully. Multiple measures and public input enlarge assessments of student performance.”<sup>30</sup>

Community-based learning assessments occur both formally and informally in interactions between young people, their peers, and adults. Multiple sources of information paint a comprehensive picture of student abilities. Feedback comes in casual comments as students work side-by-side with peers and adults and in more structured settings as students share their work and learn to invite suggestions for improvement. Honest reactions that build on students' strengths are expected. Equally important are opportunities for reflection, when students thoughtfully analyze their own observations and experiences, for example, by keeping a journal in which they write about what they learn.

Portfolios are often used to organize this feedback and to provide a vehicle for demonstrating learning. The Rural School and Community Trust, for example, developed a Portfolio-Based Assessment System that uses examples of student work to chart student progress against specific indicators. In addition to many different kinds of written expression, portfolios may also include photographs, audio tapes, videos, student made materials, and other evidence of standards-based learning.

Culminating events at the end of a particular unit of study (e.g., the semester or an even longer period) often serve as a capstone for learning. These events can include public performances that showcase students' creative work, publications that distill student research and share impor-

tant findings with the community, or presentations to local government or civic groups. All of these events require students to organize, distill, and effectively package all that they have learned. They offer appropriate challenges that not only strengthen student work but celebrate individual and group accomplishments.

### Promoting Assessment-Based Learning

In 2001, the Rural School and Community Trust, working with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and nine design teams from around the country, created a portfolio-based assessment process. The design defined the essential ingredients needed for a comprehensive assessment and incorporated them with methods and tools for implementation. Besides strengthening place-based work, the purpose of this in depth process was to create an alternative to the current, narrow, and limiting assessment practices typically seen in public education.

For example, a matrix system helps teachers evaluate the depth of student learning and encourages the progression of student ownership and control from a project's beginning through advanced levels. It also focuses on specific assessment practices. Using guided questions, each learning project can be evaluated in ways that involve multiple assessment efforts across all participants and that address how well assessment results facilitate learning.

*If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.*

—RACHEL CARSON

**CHARACTERISTIC 5:  
Community partnerships  
increase the resources and  
relationships available for  
student learning and action.**

**Resources and Relationships:  
What We Know**

Young people want to do well in life.

But many students don't know how to achieve their ambitious career and lifestyle goals.<sup>31</sup> Students from families with professional and personal connections in the community often find that many doors are open to them, easing their transition to higher education and careers. Those who live in socially and economically marginalized communities have limited access to such advantages. Limited access to the benefits of the larger society may even cause some to react negatively, seeing school success and upward mobility as tantamount to group betrayal.<sup>32</sup>

Every young person, regardless of income or developmental level, needs at least one caring adult in their life, someone who recognizes their strengths and who communicates high expectations for future achievement. Young people also need access to “social capital”—the network of social supports connecting them to shared values, information, guidance, and contacts. Social connections provide assistance and feedback in terms of setting goals, planning for the future, and making wise decisions. Each individual needs to belong to a “community of practice” where beliefs are shared, skills are learned, and collective resources and interactions hold them together.

Finally, young people need opportunities to develop the “intellectual muscle” needed to succeed in the world. According to a 2004 report of the interdisciplinary National Study Group for the Affirmative Development of Academic Ability, “students must not only acquire knowledge, they must develop the ability to use knowledge, skills, and dispositions to evaluate and efficiently solve novel problems if they are to become what society needs—compassionate and independently critical thinking members of humane communities.”<sup>33</sup>

## CHARACTERISTIC 5: Resources and Relationships—From Research to Practice



### *Resources and Relationships: What Community-Based Learning Strategies Do*

Community-based learning communicates to young people the importance of their place in the community. It does this by reaching out to community partners who, in turn, nurture young people’s desire to contribute. Adults and young people learn to work together on tasks that they find mutually rewarding. These purposeful activities help young people acquire the skills, attitudes, and beliefs that more fully engage them in community life and help them move from the periphery of their community to its center.

Mentoring and other supportive relationships also help increase the number of “go-to” people a young person can count on for guidance and a helping hand. Responsible community work through service or internships gives students insight into specific occupations and career pathways. With experience and through relationships, they begin to see the connection between input and output, the consequences of compromised quality, and the meaning of deadlines. They acquire a new appreciation for teamwork, personal responsibility, and their own emerging skills.<sup>34</sup>

When offered as an integral part of the curriculum, and in the context of supportive relationships, community-based learning allows students to apply academic knowledge in multiple community settings. The recognition and sense of mastery students experience helps them push forward their personal and civic goals. At the same time, these relationships significantly influence the public’s understanding of the challenges that schools face. This experience, in turn, creates a willingness on the part of the community to share responsibility for young people’s success.

### Making the Case for Community Safety

A service learning program in Waupin, Wisconsin, encouraged students to explore their communities and gave them the tools to make their voices heard. In addition, young people were introduced to the working lives of public officials and industry leaders. When teachers asked thirty sixth-graders to make a list of community needs, students pointed out the absence of warning lights at a nearby railroad crossing. While the adults privately doubted that authorities would take any action, they supported the students' efforts. After collecting evidence and consulting with a city council member, the students presented their case in writing to the railroad commissioner. He vetoed putting up crossing lights, but he okayed a traffic study. A year later, things began to happen: a series of warning signs was installed and physical obstructions around the crossing were removed.

## OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

*Intelligence plus character—that is the goal  
of true education.*

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

A growing body of evidence suggests that community-based learning strategies add up to much more than another laundry list of “good ideas.” While research on community-based learning is not yet abundant, findings show that these strategies help students and schools achieve academic, civic and moral, social and personal, and work-related goals. Here are just a few examples:

#### Academic Outcomes

- ◆ A comprehensive evaluation conducted of nine school sites in three New England states, which were participating in the Community-Based School Environmental Education Project, a place-based strategy, provides strong evidence of intended outcomes. The most immediate results showed growth in teacher enthusiasm and skill and observed increases in student engagement in learning, academic achievement, and knowledge about the social and natural environment.<sup>35</sup>
- ◆ Data collected in forty-eight schools since 1996, using the “environment as an integrating context for learning” (referred to as the EIC model), show that EIC students in 92 percent of schools academically outperformed their peers in traditional programs as measured by standardized tests. Classroom behavior problems were reduced by as much as 95 percent in some cases and overall attendance increased.<sup>36</sup>
- ◆ Several studies show that inclusion of work-based learning strategies promotes selection of challenging classes, improves attendance, and reduces dropout rates. High risk students who enrolled in work-based learning in career academies were less likely to be chronically absent from school than students in a randomly assigned control group.<sup>37</sup> Among African American and Hispanic youth, participation in a work-based learning program was linked to increases in future selec-

tion of science and math courses.<sup>38</sup> Other results show that work-based learning participants are more likely to attend school and earn grade point averages at least as high, if not higher, than comparable other students.<sup>39</sup> They are also more likely to graduate on time.<sup>40</sup>

### Civic and Moral Outcomes

- ◆ A study of the Colorado Learn and Serve program evaluated 761 students in thirty-five classrooms, approximately half of whom participated in service learning; the other half did not. Compared to non-participants, students who engaged in service learning showed statistically significant increases in measures of connection to community, connection to school, and civic responsibility.<sup>41</sup>
- ◆ Kids Voting, USA, is a school-based program that integrates lessons about the history of voting and its connection to democratic government with mock voting experiences. Rigorous evaluation showed positive impacts for all students, and low income students in particular, on measures describing awareness of the news, discussion of current events with parents and family members, and content knowledge.<sup>42</sup>
- ◆ Another study looked at mostly African American eleventh-graders who were required to serve at least twenty hours in a homeless shelter as part of a social justice course. The evaluation looked for evidence of student engagement in political–moral topics, namely, stereotypes, black identity, moral responsibility, and political agency. In focus groups, student essays, and follow up interviews these topics came up repeatedly. These students were able to take account of several different perspectives—their personal experience, the opinions of others, and classroom and media information—to thoughtfully address the complexity of these topics.<sup>43</sup>

### Personal and Social Outcomes

- ◆ In an analysis of over 250 primary prevention program evaluations, with a sample size of at least 100 in combined treatment and control groups, participation in service learning appeared to have the strongest influence in reducing teen pregnancy rates compared to other interventions. Development of a positive personal relationship and a sense of increased autonomy, competence, and empowerment while involved in these programs were suggested as possible factors that helped young people avoid risky behavior.<sup>44</sup>

- ◆ Research suggests that participation in work-based learning contributes positively to general youth development by increasing students' confidence as skill levels improve in a variety of areas.<sup>45</sup> Time spent with caring adults also boosts achievement. Students who spent more time with adult mentors at the workplace had higher grade point averages and better attendance than those who spent less time with adult mentors.<sup>46</sup>
- ◆ Persuasive findings from major national studies show that service learning is associated with significant increases on pre- and post-test comparisons for several self-report measures, including competence and self-esteem, acceptance of diversity, and protection against risky behavior.<sup>47</sup>

## Work Outcomes

- ◆ Participation in work-based learning helps students learn job readiness and job specific skills. Some evidence also suggests a positive effect of such participation on future hiring and wages.<sup>48</sup> For example, a study of participants in a Maryland Career and Technology Education program one year after graduation found that participants reported higher wages, more hours of work, and greater connection between their high school courses and their current work and studies than did non-participants.<sup>49</sup> Employers who hire students involved in work-based learning say that they require less training, work better in teams, and have better work ethics than other new hires.<sup>50</sup>
- ◆ Evidence also shows that service learning has a positive effect on job and career related skills and aspirations, including planning ability, interviewing skills, and a greater desire for continued education.<sup>51</sup> Students who participate in service learning are more likely statistically to pursue personally satisfying careers and/or careers of benefit to others.<sup>52</sup>

### Weathering the Storm

At King Middle School in Portland, Maine, environment-based education was introduced to better meet the learning needs of a school struggling with academic achievement. A school wide curriculum was designed around units of study called learning expeditions. Each one was designed to pursue environmental themes that engaged students while focusing on standards-based content. One such unit called "Rock the House Geology," used skills in science, technology, social studies, and language arts to explore how physical geography shapes and affects the local community. Another called "Weathering the Storm" called on the same skills to study climate. It culminated in a public exhibit on the effects and history of storms on the New England coast. This venture into community-based learning helped the school and its students weather their own academic storms—70 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Since implementing community-based learning in 1993, the school has seen discipline problems cut in half and attendance increase. Students are more motivated and show marked improvement in academic performance. State standardized tests scores improved in all areas, including reading, writing, math, science, health, social studies, and arts and humanities.





### MOVING THE AGENDA FORWARD

*Learning is not attained by chance;  
it must be sought for with ardor  
and attended to with diligence.*

—ABIGAIL ADAMS

**O**ur communities are rich in the resources and expertise needed to implement community-based learning strategies. Advocates and practitioners of community-based learning are already hard at work engaging students by reconnecting living and learning. At community centers, in before and after school programs, work-study programs, and during the regular school day, their efforts help schools and students achieve academic, social, work, and civic goals and improve their communities.

By talking about these different models as a single approach under the rubric of community-based learning, the Coalition believes that the combined benefits can be communicated more broadly and implemented more systemically in the curriculum, both during and after school.

To really light this fire, the Coalition for Community Schools believes that advocates and practitioners of these various models must work collaboratively and take more intentional and overt steps together. Students and parents, practitioners and advocates, school districts, teacher education and professional development programs, policy makers, higher education, community-based organizations, and institutions must take joint action. Below we suggest next steps for making the connection between living and learning a necessary component of contemporary education.

#### **Magnify Student Voice**

◆ **Students: Make Your Voice Heard.** Community-based learning is about students having a voice in their own education. Building on this principle, and in cooperation with teachers and community mentors, young people should bring their voice into the education policy arena. In this way they become advocates for policy and curricular changes in ways that can put community-based learning at the heart of school reform.

◆ **Policy Makers: Listen to Students.** Listen to students and teachers engaged in community-based learning. There is no substitute. Policy makers who take the time to listen—governors and their aides, state legislators, local elected officials, state education agency officials, and leaders from state and local agencies involved with health, environment, natural resources, and community development—get the big picture. They come away with a firsthand understanding of just how community-based learning helps student learn and how it can help their organization achieve its goals.

## Build Strategic Alliances and Partnerships

◆ **Community-Based Learning Advocates and Practitioners.** People and organizations from different community-based learning areas must continue to promote this learning approach in school districts, communities, states, and at the federal level. If partners build and pursue a common agenda, their broad-based advocacy can change policy and practice.

◆ **Community-Based Providers and Schools.** Public and private community organizations with expertise in community-based learning need to build partnerships with schools, and schools must reach out into the community. To have the greatest possible impact on curriculum and instruction, community-based providers of learning-rich content need to describe what they do in standards-based language and to show clearly how it supports student learning. They also should demonstrate its positive impact on the community and on the community's support for public education. Schools must seek mutually beneficial relationships with community partners who have expertise to share and publicly recognize the assets they bring to student learning and civic development.

◆ **State Level Leaders.** In too many states, various strategies comprising a community-based learning approach are viewed as separate and discrete activities; they operate at the margins of state efforts to promote student learning. People managing environmental education, service learning, work-based learning, and other related approaches have little interaction with one another. Thus, the opportunity for people to see the common dimensions of these pedagogies and their potential impact on student learning is diminished significantly. State Departments of Education should bring together staff who work in different community-based learning areas to learn about each other's work and to develop a coordinated plan for implementing these strategies. Local practitioners should also be brought into these conversations.

## Strengthen Professional Development

- ◆ **District Leaders.** Districts can facilitate innovation in community-based learning through professional development for principals and teachers, including peer-to-peer conversations and interaction with experts in the community. Professional development can help principals appreciate the value of community-based learning strategies, not only in terms of student performance but also as a vehicle for engaging the community with the school. It also will give teachers the ability to implement these approaches and enable teachers already skilled in this work to mentor and support their peers.
- ◆ **Higher Education.** Most teacher preparation programs overlook the role of community in educating our children. Community-based learning strategies offer a concrete mechanism for helping teachers learn how to make those connections. Professional preparation programs must expand their focus to give teachers the know how to do community-based learning. Preparation programs for principals should ensure that school leaders understand, value, and know how to work within the community and integrate community-based learning within the curriculum.
- ◆ **State Level Leaders.** States should examine their existing professional development activities and find ways to emphasize community-based learning in state supported programs.

## Expand the Use of Community-Based Learning in the Curriculum

- ◆ **School District Leaders.** In school districts, community-based learning is often implemented as a special course, and is not fully integrated into the school curriculum. Community-based learning has the most substantive impact on student learning when fully integrated across the curriculum. School districts should review what community-based learning programs are already happening, during and after school. The review should involve listening to students and teachers and looking at the impact of these approaches in terms of student motivation and engagement, student performance, and student civic development. Districts can use that experience, and the growing number of standards driven community-based learning curricula, to expand the use of these pedagogies as part of their effort to help all students succeed.
- ◆ **Curriculum Development Organizations.** Curriculum development organizations must begin to make more intentional efforts to widely disseminate information about community-based learning to curricu-

lum and instructional leaders in local school districts and state education agencies.

- ◆ **After School Leaders and Practitioners.** Community-based learning represents almost all of the characteristics found in effective youth development programs. It offers enriching learning and development experiences that help young people academically, civically, and socially. As such, it is an ideal strategy for community-based organizations seeking to address the challenge of responding to the academic concerns of schools while maintaining an enriching youth development thrust. Community-based organizations should aggressively incorporate community-based learning into after school time and link that work to the school day.

### Strengthen Policy

- ◆ **School Board Members.** School boards should establish policy that encourages community-based learning across the curriculum as a strategy for improving student learning, both throughout the school day and in after school programs.
- ◆ **State Level Leaders.** States should have policies in place that encourage the integration of community-based learning to address the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Policies should promote multiple assessments of student performance, enhance teacher and principal preparation, and develop standards that coordinate the use of state funds for these purposes.

### The Unique Role of Higher Education

- ◆ **Tap Faculty and Student Capacity.** More institutions of higher education need to implement academically based community service courses—credit courses that have tenured faculty teaching undergraduate and graduate students who then work with teachers and students in schools on real community problems. The thrust toward volunteerism and service has grown significantly on college campuses in the past decade; academically based community service deepens those efforts, mobilizing the assets of higher education to both improve student learning and strengthen the communities where the institutions reside.

## Expand Support for Research

- ◆ **Government and Foundation Leaders: Invest in Research.** Federal and state government and private foundations should support more funding of research on community-based learning approaches.
- ◆ **Researchers and Practitioners: Share Findings and Experience.** By sharing research findings, survey results, and evaluation tools, those researchers and practitioners who work in academically based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning can add ammunition to their argument for community-based learning. They can also add credibility to their findings through replication of other studies.

## Conclusion

When students engage in learning, they are more likely to care deeply, work harder, and achieve their goals. Drawing on the assets of a community—its history, culture, resources, and challenges—can help schools build citizens while infusing academic course work with meaning and relevance. Rather than diluting the school curriculum, community-based learning strategies increase the intensity of learning and the likelihood that young people will transfer knowledge and skills to new situations. By fostering student interest in their own communities, these strategies sow the seeds of lifelong learning. When students see themselves as citizens, they take responsibility for what happens to their neighborhoods, communities, and country. The end result? “Learning that lasts” well beyond the last test and a commitment to service that lasts a lifetime.



## APPENDIX A

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

*Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.*

—W.B. YEATS

**E**ngagement is “a psychological process, specifically the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning.” Signals of student engagement include staying on task, intensity of concentration, as well as school attendance. Emotionally engaged learners show curiosity, enthusiasm, and optimism about their potential performance. Intellectually engaged learners understand the importance of what they are learning. Students who are engaged are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores. They are less likely to be disruptive, have poor attendance, or dropout of school.<sup>53</sup>

If engagement refers to the effort that students expend in learning, what exactly do we know about the process of learning and the factors that cause young people to invest their best efforts? In this section we explore insights from learning theory, neuroscience, and developmental research.

#### **Knowledge is constructed and influenced by social interaction.**

The name of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget is familiar to most educators. His seminal work introduced the idea that learning is an active process. Most educators and learning theorists accept the fact that learning is constructed; more recent work has focused on how this happens.

According to Piaget,<sup>54</sup> the child constructs learning through a combination of biological development and experience. The child’s ability to process information is dependent on his or her level of biological maturity; it qualitatively changes as the child moves through distinct developmental stages. In early childhood, the child responds to the world in concrete, literal terms; during the middle school years, the child becomes capable of understanding and manipulating more abstract information.



Within each stage, and without conscious thought, the developing child creates increasingly sophisticated conceptual schemas or “mental maps” in order to understand and respond to sensory information. When new information does not fit easily into existing structures, the mental landscape is altered as the child creates a new structure or makes existing structures more complex. Learning is facilitated by situations that require children to both assimilate and accommodate new information.

Social cognition theory<sup>55</sup> emphasizes the primary role of culture in knowledge construction. It argues that culture provides the child with both the content of thought and the tools for thinking about it. In other words, cognitive development occurs as children acquire information from the surrounding culture, typically processing it, directly or indirectly, through interactions with a teacher, parent or friends who transfer knowledge from that culture. As a result of this interaction, knowledge is shaped as children increase their understanding of the world.

Situated learning theorists<sup>56</sup> also hold that social interaction plays a major role in constructing knowledge. Learning arises out of a specific activity, context, and culture. It occurs in a “community of practice” organized around certain beliefs, behaviors, and knowledge. Beginning learners remain at the periphery of such groups until they begin to learn through interaction and collaboration with others and acquire the group’s core knowledge. Eventually, their growing expertise brings them to the group’s center. Learning is situated in the places where young people spend time and in the relationships they have with those around them.

### **Memory—the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information—is influenced by experience, prior learning, and practice.**

Research in the neurosciences has focused attention on brain function. Memory in particular plays a key role and suggests a more precise way to think about learning. Memory is the cognitive process that allows us to acquire, store, and retrieve useful information. As the families of Alzheimer patients painfully discover, without memory, we cease to know—and be—who we were.

Researchers concur that memory is an enormously complex process that simultaneously involves many parts of the brain.<sup>57</sup> Brain cells called neurons have the ability to communicate with each other and form networks by means of electric and chemical signals. Most scientists agree that experience creates and changes the way these connections are made and, therefore, affects how and what we learn.

At every moment, sensory stimuli of all kinds constantly bombard the human brain. Several factors affect how the brain decides what information it pays attention to and remembers. Novelty, intensity, and movement often cause initial interest but, alone, they are usually not enough to sustain interest.

Two other factors are much more important: meaning and emotion. When incoming stimuli are familiar in some way, that is, when the brain determines it can link them to what it already knows, attention is sustained. Meaningless information is dropped. Information that has strong emotional content is also likely to be perceived and retained. The brain is highly responsive to information that signals danger and to social cues that can promote wellbeing; it also releases neurochemicals in response to emotionally charged content that makes this content easier to remember.

Perceptions, shaped by prior knowledge, are translated into working memory and can be consciously thought about, acted on, and combined with other knowledge. This kind of active rehearsal, or practice, over time, appears to strengthen the neural connections needed to consolidate information in long term memory. Based on these insights, learning is most likely to be facilitated by activities that have meaning, emotional content, and offer opportunities for students to think, talk about, and actively practice what they are learning.<sup>58</sup>

### **The motivation to learn is affected by personal judgments about one's abilities and the perceived importance and attainability of the learning goal.**

Research on motivation investigates the processes that instigate, direct, and sustain human action.<sup>59</sup> Engagement refers to the quality of attention and effort that young people invest in learning. Motivation focuses on what “turns on” that intensity of engagement. One type of motivational process is self-efficacy. Considerable attention has been given to self-concept—perceptions of self-worth that arise from an individual's experiences in the world and evaluations received from people that an individual cares about. In contrast, self-efficacy refers to an individual's reasoned judgments about his or her capacity to learn at specific levels. It is based on what the individual perceives as his or her personal ability to be, the comparisons he or she makes with others in his or her group, and the importance the individual attaches to what he or she is to learn.

Self-efficacy is a changeable construct affected by interactions with family, peers, and school. Stimulating home environments, headed by adults who encourage persistence and effort, allow children to develop strong

self-efficacy beliefs. Peer group interactions provide models of reasonable standards and measures against which young people can evaluate their own abilities—comparisons that either increase or decrease positive self-efficacy.

As children progress through the grades, their sense of self-efficacy tends to decline.<sup>60</sup> Various school practices seem to contribute to this fact, including an emphasis on ability goals rather than task goals, norm-referenced grading, and less teacher attention in middle and high school. A variety of research shows that a task-goal orientation is correlated with more positive motivation and performance outcomes, including greater confidence, persistence, cognitive processing, and achievement.<sup>61</sup> Students who are task-goal-oriented see the purpose of learning as something they are doing for themselves, to increase their own understanding and sense of mastery. Ability-goal-oriented students define themselves in reference to others and are motivated in the same manner—high grades demonstrate aptitude. Learning can promote positive student self-efficacy when activities and assessments encourage problem solving, provide opportunities to improve performance through practice and feedback, and involve collaborative rather than competitive work.

### **Individuals learn in different ways**

Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences counters the view of intelligence as a single trait or set of traits that some people have more of or less than compared to others.<sup>62</sup> He argues that individuals have a number of ways in which they comprehend, understand, and benefit from experience. Learners produce knowledge by using words, logical reasoning, physical movement, spatial awareness, interpersonal skills, personal reflection, and responding to the natural world. Everyone has a personal blend of learning styles with some pathways more “turned on” than others. All these pathways can be developed under the right circumstances. Learning can be facilitated by activities that allow children to learn in harmony with their own unique minds.<sup>63</sup>

### **Barriers to learning can be mitigated by protective factors**

Large numbers of children are at risk of school failure because of serious problems, including poverty, learning disabilities, and disengagement from learning, among others. Many such children, however, do *not* fail in school or in life. Resiliency research focused attention on the combination of temperament and circumstance that helps children surmount difficult obstacles. Resilient children appear to be socially competent and able to sustain relationships; they know how to solve problems in their

daily lives; and they have a sense of personal autonomy, purpose, and hope for the future. While some children seem more disposed to these characteristics than others, resiliency research suggests that the presence of protective factors in family, school, and community can foster resilient behavior in all children. Over time, these protective factors can reverse the trend toward negative outcomes. Learning is facilitated when children have:

- A caring and supportive relationship with at least one person
- Consistent, clear, and high expectations communicated to them
- Ample opportunities for participation and meaningful contribution.<sup>64</sup>

### **Effective learning environments intentionally connect home, school, and community.**

Positive youth development theory has re-evaluated how adults view young people and the challenges they face. At its center is awareness of young people's strengths. Positive growth is most likely to occur in an environment that recognizes and builds on young peoples' abilities rather than simply working to prevent weaknesses. In Karen Pittman's words, "problem-free is not fully prepared."<sup>65</sup>

Positive youth development refers to an ongoing process in which meaningful content, practice, and opportunities for active participation allow young people build the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences that equip them for life. It is also a deliberate approach for working with young people that can be implemented in various settings.

Its practices are grounded in the tenants of developmental theory—beginning with the notion that young people develop at various rates along several dimensions—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.<sup>66</sup> It recognizes that supportive environments promote growth in all these areas. Following psychologist Abraham Maslow's<sup>67</sup> well known hierarchy, it calls for learning environments that address young people's basic needs so they can successfully meet higher order challenges. It acknowledges Urie Bronfenbrenner's<sup>68</sup> understanding that young people experience the world in concentric, expanding circles of family, school, community, and the larger society. Effective learning environments find ways to intentionally connect all of the systems that affect young people's lives—home, school, and community.



## APPENDIX B

### COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING APPROACHES

#### **Academically Based Community Service**

##### *Overview*

Academically based community service (ABCS) is designed to bring about structural community improvement that is rooted in, and intrinsically linked, to university teaching and research. ABCS connects local public schools, communities of faith, and community organizations with university faculty and students to help solve critical community issues in a variety of areas, such as the environment, health, nutrition, arts, and education. Its primary goal is to contribute to community well being through effective public schools, strong community organizations, and community economic development.

At the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships, over 160 courses from diverse schools and disciplines within the University have engaged faculty and both graduate and undergraduate students in joint service, learning, and research projects with public schools in West Philadelphia. During the 2004–2005 academic year more than 2,000 university students learned about and helped find ways to strengthen the community surrounding their school. Along with Arts and Science faculty and students, ABCS also brings faculty and students from the professional schools—Medicine, Nursing, Dental Medicine, and Social Work—to develop health promotion programs as well as to provide direct services for the schools' students and their families.

##### *Key Principles*

ABCS courses use hands on, real world problem solving to help students develop as participating citizens in a democratic society. Building on the insights of twentieth-century educational philosopher, John Dewey, ABCS students learn by doing and learn from service as they contribute to their communities. The community school is where the integrated, K–16, real world, problem solving approach of ABCS begins to address community needs. Learning, research, and action continue past the regular school day through well integrated, after school programs.

The impact of ABCS is sustained because university-wide resources are strategically aggregated and deployed in collaboration with community institutions that create and sustain long term change, such as the public schools and other community partners. Coordination between university and partner schools creates an integrated K–16 curricula with a problem solving approach to learning in which young people both contribute to their communities and benefit from a broad set of opportunities, services, and supports. The result is a sustained, collaborative, and democratic mode of learning that spans university and community.

## Civic Learning

### Overview

Civic learning refers to a variety of teaching and learning methods that enable young people to participate in and sustain democracy. A primary impetus for establishing public schools in the first place, civic learning may be approached as a “field of practice” or as an interlinking set of strategies across many subfields. It aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective civic engagement.

*Civic knowledge* includes age-appropriate understanding of key principles, facts, events, and issues surrounding our democracy and government. *Civic skills* build the intellectual capacity to understand and critique various points of view as well as the participatory skills necessary to take part in the civic process. *Civic dispositions* foster, among other things, students’ tolerance and respect for others, sense of social responsibility, personal efficacy, and sense of connection to others.

### Key Principles

Civic learning stresses approaches that are engaging, relevant to students’ personal lives, and interactive. The programs, policies, and practices of civic learning should:

- Explicitly advocate for students’ civic and political engagement
- Reflect a deliberate and intentional focus on civic outcomes
- Provide active learning experiences so that students make connections between academic learning and civic involvement
- Emphasize ideas and concepts that are essential to constitutional democracy
- Enable students to see connections between democratic concepts and their own lives.

## Environmental Education

### Overview

Environmental education (EE) is a multidisciplinary subject and a process for teaching and learning environmental science principles and social impacts, skills for investigating environmental local and regional issues and problems, and how to apply acquired knowledge to resolve those issues. Environment for some EE educators includes not only the natural world but the “built” world as well, including its history, culture, and concerns.

EE supports both academic learning and student development and occurs in 60 percent of all K–12 schools and in more than 15,000 community settings. As a primary engaged learning strategy, EE offers the following benefits:

- Conveys core knowledge of the natural environment and supplements many science, social studies, and language arts courses.
- Provides structure to community service and service learning programming through projects like stream restoration, tree planting, recycling, and water conservation.
- Offers schools and individuals an abundance of stimulating learning settings and connection to a network of tens of thousands of informal educators who offer useful additions to classroom learning.
- Strengthens after school programming because EE has developed so many high quality, easy-to-use, standards-aligned curricula and teacher training programs.

### Key Principles

- Teach environmentally significant ecological concepts and their environmental interrelationships
- Promote in depth knowledge of environmental issues
- Provide opportunities for learners to achieve enough environmental awareness to encourage positive changes in personal behavior
- Teach issue analysis and investigation skills and provide the time to practice them
- Teach the citizenship skills needed to participate in issue remediation and build in the time to use them
- Provide instructional settings that increase students’ sense of personal responsibility and internal locus of control



## Place-Based Education

### Overview

In place-based education, the community provides the context for learning, student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning. Following in the tradition of progressive education and a pedagogical approach commonly called “experiential learning,” this multidisciplinary learning strategy is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, and economy of a particular place. By pairing real world relevance with intellectual rigor, this local focus has the power to engage students academically while promoting genuine citizenship and preparing people to live well wherever they choose.

### Key Principles

Place-based learning, as defined by the Rural School and Community Trust, is based on the following principles:

- The school and community actively collaborate to make the local place a good one in which to learn, work, and live.
- Students do sustained academic work that draws upon and contributes to the place in which they live. They practice new skills and responsibilities, serving as scholars, workers, and citizens in their community.
- The community supports students and their adult mentors in these new roles. Enthusiasm for place-based education spreads as the learning deepens, steadily involving more students, teachers, administrators, and community participants.
- Schools mirror the democratic values they seek to instill, arranging their resources so that every child is known well and every child’s participation is needed and wanted, regardless of ability.
- Decisions about the education of the community’s children are shared, informed by expertise both in and outside school.
- All participants, including teachers, students, and community members, expect excellent effort from each other and review their joint progress regularly and thoughtfully. Multiple measures and public input enlarge assessments of student performance.

## Service Learning

### Overview

Service learning is a curriculum-based teaching method that engages students by connecting community service to academic studies. It is now practiced in about a third of the nation's public schools. Service learning brings learning to life and engages students in education. High quality, service learning experiences prepare students for college, career, community stewardship, and civic responsibility.

### Key Principles

The essential elements of high quality service learning, according to Youth Service California, include the following:

#### *Integrated Learning*

- The service learning project has clearly articulated knowledge, skill, or value goals that arise from broader classroom or school goals.
- The service informs the academic learning content, and the academic learning content informs the service.
- Life skills learned outside the classroom are integrated back into classroom learning.

#### *High Quality Service*

- The service responds to an actual community need that is recognized by the community.
- The service is age appropriate and well organized.
- The service is designed to achieve significant benefits for students and community.

#### *Collaboration*

- The service learning project is a collaboration among as many partners as is feasible: students, parents, community-based organization staff, school administrators, teachers, and recipients of service.
- All partners benefit from the project and contribute to its planning.

#### *Student Voice*

- Students participate actively in choosing and planning the service project.
- Students participate actively in planning and implementing the reflection sessions, evaluation, and celebration.
- Students participate actively in taking on roles and tasks that are appropriate to their age.

### *Civic Responsibility*

- The service learning project promotes students' responsibility to care for others and to contribute to the community.
- By participating in the service learning project, students understand how they can impact their community.

### *Reflection*

- Reflection establishes connections between students' service experiences and the academic curriculum.
- Reflection occurs before, during, and after the service learning project.

### *Evaluation*

- All the partners, especially students, are involved in evaluating the service learning project.
- The evaluation seeks to measure progress toward the learning and service goals of the project.

## **Work-Based Learning**

### *Overview*

Work-based learning, also referred to as “school-to-work” (STW), is a teaching and learning strategy that helps young people gain important academic and employability skills; spend time with adults in a mentoring, role model situation; and have substantive exposure to careers. The most recent iteration of work-based learning began in the late 1980s in response to increased international competition. Policy makers and educators in the United States sought to both help high school students better understand the high skilled, high-tech, and competitive world of work and careers and to increase the rigor and relevance of academic work.

Recent educational reform efforts have worked to define standards across the curriculum and new attention is being given to the importance of rigor, relevance, and relationships. In today's conversations about high schools, work-based learning is viewed as an important strategy for engaging young people and connecting them to important networks of support and information. Career Academies, Talent Development with Career Academies, High Schools that Work, Tech Prep, and career clusters are all models that include some form of work-based learning. Apprenticeship is another example, primarily seen at the post-secondary level.

### *Key Principles*

Work-based learning promotes high standards of learning and performance for all young people by:

- Incorporating industry valued standards that help inform curricula
- Providing opportunities for contextual and applied learning
- Expanding opportunities for all young people and exposing them to a broad array of career opportunities
- Directly tying lessons to classroom learning
- Connecting young people with supportive adults, mentors, and other role models
- Providing program continuity between K–12 and post-secondary education and training.



## APPENDIX C

### RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS AND PEOPLE

#### **American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)**

*Betsy Brand, Director*

*Sarah Pearson, Senior Program Associate*

American Youth Policy Forum actively seeks to create opportunities for communication, learning, understanding, and trust among professionals, at all levels, working on issues affecting youth. Through these endeavors, more services and life opportunities can be provided to youth.

<http://www.aypf.org/>

#### **Antioch New England Institute (ANEI)**

*David Sobel, Director*

*Teacher Certification Program*

Antioch New England Institute is the nonprofit consulting and community outreach arm of Antioch New England Graduate School. ANEI provides training programs and resources (U.S. and international) in leadership development, place-based education, nonprofit management, environmental education and policy, smart growth, and public administration.

<http://www.anei.org/>

#### **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)**

*Diane Berreth, Deputy Executive Director*

ASCD is a community of educators that aims to improve learning and teaching for all students by advocating for sound policies and sharing best practices. ASCD addresses a broad range of learning and teaching issues such as professional development, educational leadership, and capacity building.

<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/index.jsp/>

#### **Blueprint Research & Design, Inc.**

*Jack Chin, Senior Analyst*

Blueprint Research & Design, Inc. is a consulting firm that helps philanthropic institutions strategically think about ways to

coordinate, compile, and utilize information to strengthen and enlarge the intended impact of their activities. Their work typically involves program design and strategic planning, evaluation, and philanthropic industry analysis.

<http://blueprintrd.com/>

#### **Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools Council for Excellence in Government**

*David Skaggs, Executive Director*

*Kenneth Holdsmann, Deputy Director*

The Council for Excellence in Government works to improve the performance of government at all levels, to increase citizen confidence in the government, and to encourage broader civic participation.

<http://excelgov.org/>

#### **Center for Community School Partnerships**

*Ira Harkavy, Director*

*Cory Bowman, Associate Director*

*Joann Weeks, Associate Director*

The Center for Community Partnerships fully utilizes the University of Pennsylvania's assets to benefit the city of Philadelphia, the university, and the community. This is achieved through programs that directly connect the university to the community, such as academically based community service.

<http://www.upenn.edu/ogcpa/ccp.html>

#### **Chicago High School Redesign Initiative at the Chicago Community Trust**

*Judith Murphy, Deputy Director*

The Chicago Community Trust is a community foundation focused on making the Chicago metropolitan area a great place to live, work, and raise a family. The Chicago Trust partners with organizations ranging from neighborhood socialservice agencies to nationally acclaimed

museums and educational institutions to promote the wellbeing of the community.  
<http://cct.org/index.html>

### **Citizen Schools**

*Adrian Haugabrook, Executive Director of Public Policy, Alliances, and Innovation*

The organization connects middle school students with adult volunteers to provide them with skills they will need to be effective leaders in the twenty-first century. This national network, which exposes students to experiential learning, promotes student acquisition of leadership skills that will help them be successful academically and become leaders in their professional lives as well as in their communities.  
<http://citizenschools.org/index.cfm>

### **Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve America**

*Amy Cohen, Director  
Robert Davidson, Senior Advisor to the Chief Operating Officer*

The Corporation for National Service sees its role as engendering the culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America. They are agents of change and believe that every American possesses the talent and capacity to give.  
<http://www.nationalservice.org/about/programs/learnandservice.asp>

### **Earth Force**

*Charles Tampio, President*

Earth Force encourages students to take an active role in improving the environment and their communities, now and in the years to come. This is achieved by providing the necessary supports and training to educators in programs that provide students with leadership roles in community action projects.  
<http://www.earthforce.org/>

### **Education Alliance at Brown University**

*Patti Smith, Assistant Director*

The Education Alliance promotes educational change with the aim of ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to succeed.

This involves advocating for people whose access to excellent education has been impeded or denied.  
<http://www.lab.brown.edu/>

### **Forum for Youth Investment**

*Merita Irby, Deputy Director  
Nicole Yohalem, Program Director*

The mission of the Forum for Youth Investment is to make sure that all young Americans are ready to meet the challenges of post-secondary education, life, and work. To achieve this goal, a set of supports, opportunities, and services must be made available so that they are able to prosper from and contribute to the community.  
<http://forumforyouthinvestment.org/>

### **Funders Forum on Education and the Environment**

*Jack Chin, Consultant*

The Funders' Forum on Environment and Education (F2E2) is an informal network of grant makers interested in environment and place-based approaches to education that contribute to positive student outcomes, academic achievement, personal development, as well as environmental literacy at the K–12 and post-secondary levels. The underlying assumption is that young people, duly educated and inspired, will become active participants in the life of their communities, working to solve social and environmental problems.  
<http://www.charityadvantage.com/f2e2/AboutUs.asp>

### **Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities**

*Milbrey McLaughlin, Director*

The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities focuses on youth development and learning. All community members need to work together to create communities that provide growth opportunities for youth so that eventually young people grow up and become community leaders.  
<http://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/>

### **Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE)**

*Adena Klem, Research Manager*

IRRE works with districts and schools to come up with alternative ways to ensure that, as a result of their education, every student is able to succeed in their post-secondary education as well as in their career. IRRE also provides consulting services for state education officials, foundations, and other education professionals.

<http://www.irre.org/about/>

### **Lewis and Clark College Graduate School of Education**

*Greg Smith, Professor*

The Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling affords students the opportunity to apply what they have learned to actual classroom and workplace situations through practica and internships.

<http://www.lclark.edu>

### **National Academy Foundation**

*John Ferrandino, President*

The National Academy Foundation is a partnership of businesses and schools that focus on developing the skills, knowledge, and experiences young people need in order to ensure success, not only in their personal and academic lives, but also in their careers.

<http://www.naf.org>

### **National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)**

*Josephine Franklin, Associate Director*

NASSP is an organization representing the perspectives of middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from the United States as well as worldwide. The mission of NASSP is to promote excellence in school leadership.

[http://www.nassp.org/ls\\_nassp/index.asp](http://www.nassp.org/ls_nassp/index.asp)

### **National Center for Learning and Citizenship Education Commission of the States**

*Terry Pickeral, Executive Director*

The Education Commission of the States is a non-profit organization that seeks to improve

public education by creating opportunities for state policy makers and educators to share and exchange information, ideas, and experiences.

<http://ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issuesK12.asp>

### **National Education Association (NEA)**

*Faye Northcutt, Senior Program Coordinator*

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization and believes that every child in America, regardless of family income or place of residence, deserves a quality education. In pursuing its mission, the NEA focuses the energy and resources of its 2.7 million members on improving the quality of teaching, increasing student achievement, and making schools safer and better places to learn.

<http://www.nea.org/index.html>

### **National Environment Education and Training Foundation (NEETF)**

*Diane Wood, President*

*Samantha Blodgett, Director for Education*

NEETF is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a stronger future through environmental education in its many forms. NEETF sees environmental education as directly related to larger societal goals such as better health, improved education, environmentally sound and profitable business, and volunteerism in local communities.

<http://www.neetf.org/>

### **National Service Learning Partnership**

*Nelda Brown, Director*

The National Service Learning Partnership is a nationwide network of members that actively promotes service learning as an integral part of every student's education. This initiative seeks to support a diverse group of young people who are creating lasting change in their communities.

<http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/site/PageServer>

### **National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)**

*Jim Kielsmeier, President / CEO*

NYLC connects students, educators, and communities in order to re-examine the traditional



roles and responsibilities of young people within American society. This empowers youth to view themselves not just as recipients of information and resources, but also as important and valued contributors.

<http://nylc.org/>

### **RMC Research Corporation**

*Shelley Billig, Vice President*

RMC Research Corporation provides a wide range of consulting services that include research, evaluation, professional development, consulting, technical assistance, and product development services. These services are designed to help communities, schools, universities, and districts meet the needs of every student at every stage of their education.

<http://www.rmcdenver.com/>

### **Rural School and Community Trust**

*Rachel Tompkins, President*

*Doris Williams, Director of Capacity Building*

*James Lewicki, Rural Faculty Member*

The Rural School and Community Trust believes that there is an inextricable link between good schools and thriving communities. Their mission is help rural schools and communities “get better together.”

<http://ruraledu.org/>

### **State Education and Environmental Roundtable (SEER)**

*Gerald Lieberman, Director*

SEER is a collaborative effort of sixteen state departments of education working to improve student achievements and teaching practices while providing support to schools in their efforts to meet their improvement goals by using the Environment as an Integrating Context model.

<http://www.seer.org/>

### **University of California Davis School of Education**

*Paul Heckman, Professor*

Professor Heckman specializes in school, curriculum and community change with a focus on the educational ecology of communities.

<http://education.ucdavis.edu/directory/person.lasso?PersonID=0675>

### **The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)**

*Peter Levine, Deputy Director*

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement conducts and funds research on the civic and political engagement of young Americans between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship.

<http://www.civicyouth.org/>

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# COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## VISION, MISSION, AND PARTNERS

The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations in education, K–16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as the vehicle for strengthening schools, families, and communities so that together they can improve student learning.

Our mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families, and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families, and communities so that together they are better able to improve student learning.

The Coalition for Community Schools partners include the following organizations:

### **Community Development/Community Building**

Asset-Based Community Development Institute  
Center for Community Change  
Development Training Institute  
National Community Building Network  
National Congress for Community Economic Development  
National Council of La Raza  
National Neighborhood Coalition  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Urban League  
Police Executive Research Forum  
The Harwood Institute

### **Education**

American Association for Higher Education  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Federation of Teachers  
American School Counselor Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Council of the Great City Schools  
Developmental Studies Center  
Learning First Alliance  
National Association for Bilingual Education  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Center for Community Education  
National Education Association  
National PTA  
National School Boards Association  
National Service Learning Partnership  
Pacific Oaks College, CA

### **Family Support / Human Services**

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Public Human Services Association  
Child Welfare League of America  
Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Family Support America  
National Center for Family Literacy  
The Educational Alliance  
United Way of America

### **Local And State Government**

National Association of Counties  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
National Governors' Association  
National League of Cities  
US Conference of Mayors

### **Federal Government**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Learn and Serve America Twenty-First Century Learning Centers

### **Health And Mental Health**

American Public Health Association  
American School Health Association  
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Mental Health Association  
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education National and Recreation  
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools

### **Local Community School Networks**

Achievement Plus Community Learning Centers, St. Paul, MN  
Alliance for Families & Children, Hennepin County, MN  
Baltimore Coalition for Community Schools, MD  
Bates College/ Lewiston Public Schools, ME

Birmingham Public Schools, AL  
 Boston Excels, MA  
 Boston Full Service Schools Roundtable, MA  
 Bridges to Success, United Way of Central Indiana, Indianapolis, IN  
 Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater Greensboro, NC  
 Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater High Point, NC  
 Bridges to the Future, United Way of Genesee County, MI  
 Chatham—Savannah Youth Futures Authority, GA  
 Chelsea Community Schools, MA  
 Chicago Coalition for Community Schools, IL  
 Chicago Public Schools, The Campaign to Expand Community Schools in Chicago  
 Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey  
 Community College of Aurora/Aurora Public Schools, CO  
 Community—School Connections, NY  
 Community Schools Rhode Island, RI  
 Evansville—Vanderburgh Corporation School Community Council, IN  
 Jacksonville Children’s Commission, FLKidsCAN!  
 Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative, NE  
 Linkages to Learning, Montgomery County, MD  
 Local Investment Commission, Kansas City, MO  
 Mesa United Way, Mesa, AZ  
 Minneapolis Beacons Project, MN  
 New Paradigm Partners, Turtle Lake, WI  
 New Vision for Public Schools, NY  
 Project Success, IL  
 Rockland Twenty-First Century Collaborative for Children and Youth, NY  
 School Linked Services, Inc., Kansas City, KS  
 SCOPE, Central Falls, RI  
 St. Louis Park Schools, MN  
 St. Louis Public Schools, Office of Community Education, MO  
 Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), Portland, OR  
 United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania/  
 First Doors to the Future, Philadelphia, PA  
 University of Alabama—Birmingham/Birmingham Public Schools, AL  
 University of Dayton/Dayton Public Schools, OH  
 University of Denver/Denver Public Schools, CO  
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
 University of New Mexico/United South Broadway Corp/  
 Albuquerque Public Schools, NM  
 University of Rhode Island/Pawtucket Public Schools  
 West Philadelphia Improvement Corps, PA

**National Community School Networks**

Beacon Schools Youth Development  
 Institute at the Fund for the City of New York  
 Children’s Aid Society  
 Collaborative for Integrated School Services,  
 Harvard Graduate School of Education  
 Communities in Schools  
 Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania  
 National Community Education Association  
 School of the Twenty-First Century, Bush Center-Yale University

**Policy, Training, And Advocacy**

American Youth Policy Forum  
 Children’s Defense Fund  
 Cross Cities Campaign for Urban School Reform  
 Education Development Center  
 Eureka Communities  
 Family Friendly Schools, VA  
 Foundations, Inc.  
 Institute for Responsive Education  
 Institute for Social and Education Policy, New York University  
 National Center for Community Education  
 National Center for Schools and Communities, Fordham University  
 John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University

Joy Dryfoos, Independent Researcher  
 National Child Labor Committee  
 National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education  
 National Youth Employment Coalition  
 Parents United for Child Care, Boston, MA  
 Public Education Network  
 The Finance Project  
 RMC Research  
 The Rural School and Community Trust

**Philanthropy**

Carnegie Corporation  
 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
 Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation  
 KnowledgeWorks Foundation  
 Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation  
 Polk Bros. Foundation  
 Rose Community Foundation  
 The After School Corporation  
 Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds

**School Facilities Planning**

Concordia, LLC  
 Council of Education Facilities Planners International  
 National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities  
 New Schools/Better Neighborhoods  
 Smart Growth America  
 Twenty-First Century School Fund

**State Entities**

California Department of Education  
 California Center for Community—School Partnerships  
 California Healthy Start Field Office  
 Child and Family Policy Center, IA  
 Children First, OH  
 Community Schools, Rhode Island  
 Colorado Foundation for Families and Children  
 University of Kentucky/Lexington Public Schools  
 Illinois Community School Partnership  
 Education Leadership Beyond Excellence  
 Foundation Consortium, CA  
 Nebraska Children and Families Foundation  
 New Jersey School-Based Youth Services/Department of Human Services  
 Office of Family Resource and Youth Services Center, KY  
 Ohio Department of Education  
 State Education and Environment Roundtable  
 Tennessee Consortium for Full-Service Schools  
 Washington State Readiness-to-Learn Initiative  
 Voices for Illinois Children

**Youth Development**

Academy for Educational Development  
 AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research  
 America’s Promise  
 Association of New York State Youth Bureaus  
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America  
 Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
 California After School Partnership/Center for Collaborative Solutions  
 Camp Fire USA  
 Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth  
 Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund  
 Forum on Youth Investment  
 National Collaboration for Youth  
 National Institute for Out-of-School Time  
 National School-Age Care Alliance  
 After School Resource Network  
 Partnership for After School Education  
 YMCA of the USA

# INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## ABOUT IEL

The Coalition for Community Schools is staffed by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people and organizations from many walks of life who share a passionate conviction that excellent education is critical to nurturing healthy individuals, families, and communities. Our mission is to help build the capacity of people and organizations in education and related fields to work together across policies, programs, and sectors to achieve better futures for all children and youth. To that end, we work to:

- Build the capacity to lead
- Share promising practices
- Translate our own and others' research into suggestions for improvement
- Share results in print and in person.

IEL believes that all children and youth have a birth right: the opportunity and the support to grow, learn, and become contributing members of our democratic society. Through our work, we enable stakeholders to learn from one another and to collaborate closely—across boundaries of race and culture, discipline, economic interest, political stance, unit of government, or any other area of difference—to achieve better results for every youngster from pre-K through high school and on into postsecondary education. IEL sparks, then helps to build and nurture, networks that pursue dialogue and take action on educational problems.

We provide services in three program areas:

- Developing and Supporting Leaders
- Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections
- Connecting and Improving Policies and Systems that Serve Children and Youth.

Please visit our Web site at [www.iel.org](http://www.iel.org) to learn more about IEL and its work.



