

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS CATALYSTS FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

by

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**Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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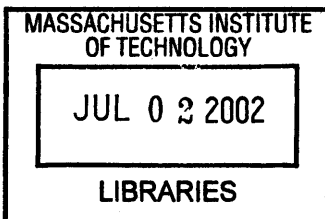
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ABSTRACT

A profile of urban public schools in the United States reveals under-utilized, outdated buildings set in a neighborhood with little or no ties to the surrounding community. A rising trend in urban school reform models is the community school concept where schools serve as centers of communities. These schools are open throughout the year and include a diverse set of programs to enrich the learning experience. They can also provide adult learning opportunities in the evenings and health services for students and their families. The key to providing programs such as these is through the creation of partnerships with surrounding institutions. This thesis discusses three case studies of community schools in Paterson, New Jersey, Brooklyn, New York, and New York City and applies the lessons learned from these schools to the redevelopment of a former Catholic school into a public school in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The school district, Lawrence Public Schools, and a grassroots community development corporation, Lawrence Community Works, are identified as the two key partners in this project. This partnership forms the core of a leadership team responsible for creating a community school in the North Common neighborhood in Lawrence. Recommendations are made for other potential partnerships and key challenges for the two main partners are identified.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Imagine a place situated on a large plot of land near a bustling urban core. A place full of meeting spaces, performing arts space, the latest in computer technology, a cafeteria, a gym, and perhaps even a baseball or soccer field. Now imagine this public place is only open from 8 AM to 3 PM, Monday through Friday, from September to June. In a year, this calculates to a place being open about 16% of the entire year, which is further reduced given that most people in this country are at work between the hours of 8 AM to 3 PM. In addition, only a select sample of the population is able to take advantage of these amenities. With such a light intensity of use, one may imagine these places are carefully preserved and maintained public amenities. In contrast, many of these places were built over 50 years ago and are in a deplorable state of decay full of dangerous substances like lead paint, carcinogenic asbestos, and mold.

Now imagine a similar place open for 15 hours a day, 6 to 7 days a week, all 12 months of the year. This place not only makes use of the aforementioned amenities, but also includes a health clinic for people of all ages, childcare facilities, and a diverse set of programs ranging from English language and GED classes to dance, theater, and arts programs for adults and children alike. Through partnerships with non-profit, public, private, community, and cultural institutions, this place is bright, clean, and full of the latest in computer and building technology. Students, teachers, parents, and community members work and volunteer inside and outside the walls of this place. This

space, created for and by the community, instills a sense of ownership and pride that contribute to its function as a true community center.

Unfortunately, the first place describes the current state of many public schools in urban areas in the United States. The second describes a concept of community schools dating back to the days of Jane Addams¹ but only recently gaining momentum on the agenda of school reform advocates and proponents of community development and revitalization.

Background

The city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, like many former industrial towns in the United States, is attempting to recover from years of disinvestment in the community and its poor performing school district. Only 30 miles north of Boston, Lawrence is seen as a third tier city not included in the Boston Metropolitan area and therefore does not benefit from Boston area initiatives. In 1998, the Lawrence Public School District (LPS) was targeted as an at-risk district in a report by the Massachusetts Department of Education for its continued poor performance and ineffective leadership.² This report stated that the school district would go under receivership and control of the State if actions were not taken by LPS officials to improve their district.

¹ The Children's Aid Society. *Building A Community School*. Third Edition. [online book], September 2001; page 17. URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comm_school_form/

² Massachusetts Department of Education, Report of the Fact Finding Team on Under-Performance By the Lawrence Public Schools, January 12, 1998.

The school district did not go into receivership but Lawrence High School did lose its accreditation. Since then, the school district has taken proactive measures to improve its schools, including the hiring of a new superintendent with a strong commitment to educate Lawrence's youth. In addition, Lawrence High School is on track to renew its accreditation this fall.

LPS has also embarked on a plan to rebuild some of its schools and construct new ones. It is crucial that these public school capital improvements be perceived as a significant community development opportunity. These new developments are a chance for LPS to approach school redevelopment with a comprehensive community development approach.

The story of LPS is a common story of public school facilities in the United States. In 2000, the US Department of Education reported that the average school building in the United States was built 42 years ago and that close to one-third of all public schools were built prior to 1970 and not renovated since 1980.³ At the same time, the United States will spend over \$200 billion in public school capital projects in the next decade.⁴ School districts are faced with an excellent opportunity to not only improve the quality of their educational facilities, but also to contribute to the development of the communities in which they reside and become stronger, more active members of these communities.

³ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2000*, NCES 2000-602, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000.

⁴ Strickland, Roy, ed. Designing a City of Learning: Paterson, NJ. New Bedford Massachusetts, Reynolds-Dewalt Printing Inc., 2001, p. 1.

Professor Roy Strickland, formerly in the Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and now Chair of the Urban Design Program at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, has been a leader in redefining the urban school in the past decade. Under the New American School Design Project (NASDP), Professor Strickland and his colleagues have formulated guidelines for urban school curriculum and facilities redevelopment called the City of Learning (COL) principles. Inherent in the name is that the city – including its people, places, and institutions – provides learning opportunities. This connection between school and community is facilitated through partnerships. The following is a list of the ten main COL principles:⁵

1. Integrate COL stakeholders – teachers, students, school administrators, parents, community members, and civic and business leaders – into planning, design, and building process.
2. Break out of the traditional school “box.” There is no single facility model for effective schools. Treat each school as an individual design opportunity.
3. Coordinate school projects as part of a strategic plan. Schools can represent a locality’s largest capital investment. Coordination can maximize educational and community benefits.
4. Inventory learning opportunities in neighborhoods and towns and construct a “lesson plan” derived from local resources. This process can enrich learning without additional burden and cost to the school facility itself.
5. Inventory neighborhood and town sites and buildings as opportunities for various kinds of learning and recreation facilities. Take the lead of private and charter schools in the inventive use of available space.
6. Where possible, mix uses at school sites. Mixtures of compatible uses can help support learning with internships, mentoring, and work-study.
7. Coordinate agencies, programs, and funding sources that can contribute to school projects and their environs. Leverage school dollars by integrating projects with housing, community development, and other initiatives.

⁵ Ibid, p. 20-21

8. Consider the private sector in delivering learning facilities and services. Help stimulate local economic development through school projects.
9. Include learning space in buildings of all types. Make learning visible and accessible to all.
10. Use technology to support COL. As it has done in the workplace, technology can restructure the space, organization, and programming of learning places.

These principles have been applied to schools across the country from Berkeley, California to Washington, D.C. Currently, Professor Strickland is working in New Jersey with the City of Paterson Public Schools (PPS) to help plan, program, and design the renaissance of the school district. Paterson, New Jersey is one of several New Jersey cities recently awarded funds to improve their schools in a state supreme court case. PPS is in the middle of its five-year plan to spend over \$700 million in capital improvements.

Research Question

In Lawrence, Massachusetts, a local partnership between the Lawrence Public School (LPS) District and ally organizations aims to apply the COL principles in a plan to revitalize the Holy Rosary School, an abandoned school near the urban core. The Holy Rosary School is a former Catholic School in the neighborhood that has been vacant for 11 years. A community process has begun to redevelop this school into a public school. Since this project is currently in the predevelopment phase, my thesis will be a hypothetical yet helpful exercise in determining the programming of the school with an emphasis on the community partnerships necessary to make this a community school and sustain its existence over time. The question then becomes: How can a public school district create a community school by forming partnerships with non-profit, public,

private, civic, and cultural institutions in a manner that will make the school a center of the community, a benefit to the community, and a catalyst for community development. This study will compare three such projects and identify lessons to assist LPS in its efforts to redevelop the Holy Rosary School.

Community schools: history, literature, and benefits

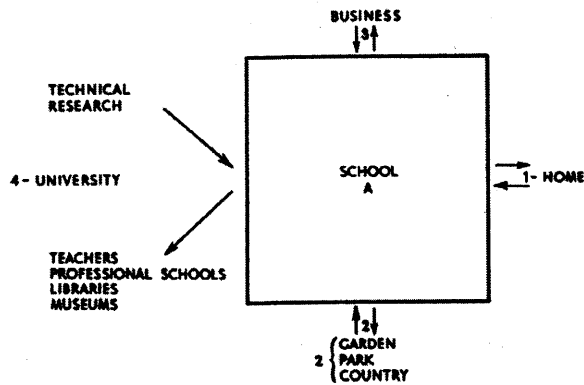
According to Decker and Boo, the modern community school movement has been championed for nearly six decades.⁶ In the same report, they offer the following three reasons to justify the need for community schools:

- schools cannot succeed nowadays (or, to put it more strongly, schools will fail) without the collaboration of parents and communities
- families need unprecedented strong support to become and remain functional; and
- communities must take charge of all the developmental needs of their children.⁷

Education reform literature reinforces the community school concept. John Dewey saw school as a part of a larger whole of social life. In the diagram below Dewey shows the exchange between schools and their communities. He believed that schools that do not

⁶ Decker, Larry E. and Boo, Mary Richardson. "Community Schools: Linking home, school, and community." National Community Education Association, 1996, Introduction. [online report] URL: eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/community/community_schools/intro.html.

⁷ Ibid, foreword, paragraph 6.



Dewey, Relationship of school and community⁸

provide links to real life can be perceived by students as lacking relevance. Through partnerships, a school can achieve a strong link to real life by showing students how their classroom learning can be applied to real world problems.

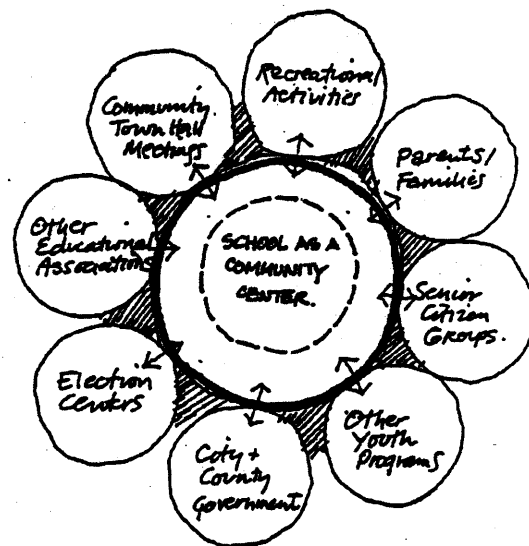
Theodore Sizer focuses on the school setting as the principal challenge in school reform. He asks, “[W]hat sort of political, administrative, and community context is required for schools that graduate such admirable young people?”⁹ Without the political support, school reform efforts will not be adopted by those in power. Administrative support is needed to carry out these reforms on a day to day basis. Finally, community buy-in is required as a fundamental of community development. Lessons linger from urban renewal strategies when a top down approach was used to address urban issues. A successful community school campaign will include a top down and bottom up approach.

⁸ Dewey, John. The School and Society. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp 72-73

⁹ Sizer, Theodore. Horace’s School: Redesigning the American High School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992, p. 12.

Deborah Meier adds to the discussion by commenting on the physical attributes of a community school. She suggests less hierarchical spaces to aid in recognizing all school users as members of a common community.¹⁰ James Comer takes this a step further and suggests including banks and stores in schools to increase parental presence and draw them into the operations of the school.¹¹ Once inside the school, parents and community members may be drawn to become involved through curiosity or more direct recruitment tools.

Community schools not only succeed by bringing the community into the school, but also by taking the school out into the community. The diagram below shows a two-way exchange between the school as a community center and surrounding institutions.



School as a community center¹²

¹⁰ Meier, Deborah. The Power of Their Ideas : Lessons for America from a small school in Harlem. Boston : Beacon Press, 1995, pp. 108-113.

¹¹ Comer, James P. School Power. New York: The Free Press, 1995, pp. 193-206.

¹² Moore, Gary T. and Lackney, Jeffrey A. Educational Facilities for the Twenty-First Century: Research Analysis and Design Patterns. University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Publications in Architecture and Urban Planning Research, Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research, 1994, p. 41

This concept implies what Ernest Boyer calls a “Neighborhood for Learning.”¹³ Boyer sees these neighborhoods as networks of institutions that spark the mind and imagination including museums, libraries, zoos, and parks. Within the school, Boyer advocates adding community facilities to schools in the form of health services to support the network of learning.

NASDP identifies key benefits to students, schools, and the community when a COL model is followed. Below is the list of benefits for each group.¹⁴

Students:

- Exposure to real problems
- Enhanced understanding about their surroundings
- Exposure to people in many careers
- Exposure to a number of higher learning opportunities
- Increased understanding and application of core learning
- Sense of empowerment
- Appreciation for community involvement
- Desire to give back to the community

Schools

- Improved image
- Increased motivational learning
- Increase in teacher morale
- Increase in teacher learning
- Increased student-to-student learning

¹³ Boyer, Ernest. Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation. Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, 1991), pp 91-97.

¹⁴ Strickland, Roy, ed. Designing a City of Learning: Paterson, NJ. New Bedford, Massachusetts, Reynolds-Dewalt Printing Inc., 2001, pp. 86-89.

Community

- Positive image of the community
- Increased volunteerism
- Expanded vision
- Better and more informed citizens
- Improved economic opportunities
- Knowledge gained through students' work and inquisitiveness

Research Design

This study will examine the efforts to create a community school in three urban settings similar to Lawrence. Case studies will be developed for the community school efforts in Paterson, New Jersey, Brooklyn, New York, and Washington Heights in New York City. Sources of information for the case studies and the proposed school in Lawrence come from published literature, online books, pamphlets, and reports, interviews, and from first hand experience. The three case studies will allow learning to occur across three areas of emphasis:

Area of Emphasis	School
1. Community Building and Institutional Partnerships	MPACT, Paterson Innovative Academies Paterson, New Jersey
2. Community and grassroots partnerships	El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice Brooklyn, New York
3. Extended day partnerships, school as multi-service community center	Salomé Ureña Middle Academies, Intermediate School 218M, Washington Heights, New York City

This paper is in no way a replacement for the community process currently underway. Instead, this document should be used as a supplement to the planning work and shall be helpful when the community reaches the programming stage for the New Holy Rosary School. Ultimately, the decision on what kind of community school will be

developed shall rest on the North Common community through a democratic process. It is important that all parties recognize the importance of a community-driven process, especially the school district, since it will be the agency accountable for fulfilling the recommendations of the community.

Summary of Chapters

The first chapter is an introduction to the concept of a community school. The concept is introduced in a historical context and in the current and ongoing work of NASDP. This chapter also includes background on Lawrence and the Holy Rosary School to set the context for the case studies. The next three chapters will be a review of three case studies of learning institutions, each with its own strengths and potential contributions to the New Holy Rosary School. Chapter 2 will look at the creation of the Metro-Paterson Academy for Communication and Technology (MPACT) in Paterson, New Jersey. This academy recognizes the importance of public, non-profit, and especially private partnerships with the school. Chapter 3 will highlight the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. El Puente is a public high school created by a grassroots arts and culture organization in Brooklyn, New York. The school is deeply grounded in its mission to produce responsible citizens committed to social, economic, and environmental justice. It provides an example of a school with strong partnerships with other grassroots community groups in New York City. Chapter 4 will discuss Intermediate School 218 (IS 218), a public school in the Washington Heights area of northern Manhattan. This school in New York City excels as a community center through an innovative curriculum, diverse after-school programming, and on-site community health services.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the potential partnerships and programs for the New Holy Rosary School based on the concepts and lessons from the three case studies.

Chapter 6 will conclude the paper with a vision of the New Holy Rosary School. It also provides recommendations for the two key partners in this project, LPS and LCW, and what they must work towards to create this community school.

Background of Lawrence and the Holy Rosary School

The City of Lawrence and LPS are at a pivotal point in their respective histories. In recent history, the city has been neglected as more affluent, surrounding suburbs have thrived in healthy economic times. Today, Lawrence is experiencing a renaissance as public and private resources focus their attention on the tremendous potential of this city. The public school system is also in a time of transition and restructuring. Two years ago, Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy was hired by LPS and given an opportunity to lead the district out of troubled times. One of his main goals has been to ensure that LPS takes the responsibility and is accountable for educating the youth of the City of Lawrence.¹⁵ To achieve this goal, he is calling for equity in the learning facilities through school upgrades and new construction, motivated teachers with high standards for teaching, and the concept of neighborhood schools to strengthen ties between school and community.

The Holy Rosary School is an example of all three approaches to school improvement. Yet, this school redevelopment project is unique because it will be one of the first of its

¹⁵ Interview with Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy, 16 April, 2002, Lawrence, Massachusetts.

kind in Lawrence to incorporate the idea of a community school grounded in the neighborhood where it is located. The fact that the school will be for grades 6-8 is an opportunity in itself that must not be overlooked. By immersing students in a community school environment at a younger age, the school might have a stronger impact on the global outlook of these children and their responsibility to themselves, their community, and the world at large.

Built in 1917, the school was formerly a Catholic elementary school run by the Archdiocese serving grades kindergarten to eight.¹⁶ The school is centrally located in the North Common neighborhood on Summer Street, just east of the Common. Coinciding with the downsizing of the Archdiocese, the school began its decline in the late 1980's. The last graduating class was the class of 1991, leaving this beautiful example of brick and stone architecture exposed to the elements and subject to a rapid decay. In 1997, the Archdiocese grew weary of paying property taxes on a vacant building and sold the school to the City of Lawrence for one dollar. Proposals were submitted to redevelop this school but the seed money to begin such a project was difficult to acquire. A proposal was brought forth to convert the school into housing but that also proved to be too expensive. The City, like the Archdiocese before them, also began losing money paying property taxes on a vacant building and considered returning it to the Archdiocese.

¹⁶ Holy Rosary Planning Day, Introduction by Father Neilson, 23 February, 2002, Lawrence, Massachusetts. Note: Additional facts in this paragraph from same source.

The city retained ownership of the school and although several plans to redevelop the school emerged, none of them were realized due to high costs of rehabilitation and other dilemmas. In May of 2000, North Common residents identified the Holy Rosary building as an emerging priority in the Reviviendo Planning process organized by LCW. In the beginning of 2002 LCW started a community planning process to identify the best use for the school building. One idea involved LCW purchasing the school from the city and redeveloping it as a charter school to serve the North Common community.¹⁷ In the midst of the community planning process LCW learned that LPS was interested in redeveloping the building into a public school. The school committee was ready to transform the Holy Rosary School into a relatively small school of 300 students serving grades 6-8.¹⁸

The redevelopment of the Holy Rosary School will help mitigate the problem of overcrowding at the nearby Oliver School and Leonard School. These two schools will remain open. The recent change in LPS policy to make all schools into neighborhood schools means that the New Holy Rosary School will serve the North Common neighborhood. This is important because when it comes time to do an analysis of the student body to address their individual needs, it will be easier to narrow down the focus to a specific geographic area. It will also be easier to hold meetings in the North

¹⁷ Meeting with Liz Gutierrez of Lawrence Community Works, September 28, 2001, Lawrence, Massachusetts.

¹⁸ Interview with Pedro Arce, School Committee District B Representative, April 11, 2002, Lawrence, Massachusetts. In Lawrence, the public school system is divided into six districts with an elected school committee member representing each district. According to the city charter, the school committee is responsible for general management and control of the public schools of the city. The mayor occupies the seventh seat on this committee and also acts as chair of the committee.

Common neighborhood and have a strong attendance rate because students and their families will not have to travel far to attend.

Chapter 2

Metro-Paterson Academy for Communication and Technology Paterson, New Jersey

Introduction

In September of 1999, a select group of high school freshman began their first day of classes at the Metro-Paterson Academy for Communications and Technology (MPACT), one of Paterson, New Jersey's newest Innovative Academies. This academy was heavily grounded in the City of Learning (COL) principles created by the New American School Design Project (NASDP) in both its facility and curriculum. It is housed in an under-utilized commercial mall in the center of downtown Paterson. Its unique curriculum blends concentrations in technology, urban planning, and design.¹⁹ The school was a result of two very important events. The first was the vision of the newly appointed District Superintendent Dr. Edwin Duroy and Paterson public school teacher Stephen Cohen. In 1997, after being appointed District Superintendent, Dr. Duroy championed a link between the schools, community, and investment dollars. He created a plan that included the following three goals:

- "Develop learning communities at each school level that will help students improve their academic achievement, achieve excellence, and become life-long learners.
- Improve the communication between home and school.
- Provide training to staff and parents on effective communication between home and school."²⁰

¹⁹ Strickland, Roy, ed. Designing a City of Learning: Paterson, NJ. New Bedford, Massachusetts, Reynolds-Dewalt Printing Inc., 2001, p. 46

²⁰ Edwin Duroy, Ed.D, State District Superintendent of Schools. Paterson Public Schools Annual Report 1997-1998; July 10, 1998.

The second factor, and arguably the most important, was the New Jersey State Supreme Court case of *Abbott v. Burke*. The case argued that great disparities existed in public school funding in the state between the wealthier suburbs and the impoverished cities. In 1995, after a 14-year long case, the Supreme Court of New Jersey ruled that the state funding practices for public schools was unconstitutional and that they needed to be revised immediately. The ruling also stated that urban students have a right to an education based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and that these urban districts should be on an equal spending level to their suburban counterparts. This landmark case identified 28 Abbott Districts in New Jersey, including Paterson. What this meant for Paterson Public Schools was that it would be receiving \$700 million over a five-year period to construct, rebuild, and reform its schools.

When these funds were combined with the visionary leadership of Dr. Duroy and his ability to build relationships among various stakeholders, PPS began an ambitious plan of school reform. Initially, funds were used for long-overdue repairs and upgrades to the existing school stock. Although, the leaders at PPS had more ambitious plans. The abundant funds allowed for a rare type of innovation and creativity that is possible when budgetary constraints are minimalized.

Soon after, in 1998 Dr. Duroy met Professor Roy Strickland and found a partner to help him execute his innovative plan for the Paterson Public Schools. One of these plans was creating MPACT. In the summer of 1998, Professor Strickland and a team of graduate students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) worked with Stephen Cohen to design the space and curriculum for MPACT. That fall, the ideas

were presented to the PPS Board of Education and the Paterson community and were very well received. Dr. Duroy made a commitment to build MPACT and hired Professor Strickland and the NASDP/MIT team to help him continue his plan of revitalizing the Paterson schools and building academies like MPACT.

As noted earlier, MPACT was envisioned by Stephen Cohen, the Technology Coordinator for PPS and a 30-year veteran educator. He believed success in the new, electronic economy called for a curriculum rich in technology and communication.²¹ Mr. Cohen pictured MPACT's graduates as Paterson's future leaders. As the curriculum planning evolved, a focus on architecture, planning, and community development was added. Currently, a typical school day at MPACT is divided into two parts. From 9 AM until lunch time, the students spend their time in academic courses. After lunch until 4 PM is the studio portion of the curriculum where Paterson is the focus.²² These areas of emphasis followed the COL principles and were intended to make the students the change agents of the ailing city.

The siting of MPACT reinforced its connection to the community and was a reflection of its curriculum. Rather than occupying space in its overcrowded parent school, John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson's westside, the NASDP team identified an under-utilized shopping mall in the center of the lively downtown area. MPACT occupied part of the second floor of the mall, overlooking Main Street, Paterson's busiest street. The HARP Innovative Academy (Health And Related Professions) moved in the same year

²¹ Strickland, Roy, ed. Designing a City of Learning: Paterson, NJ. New Bedford, Massachusetts, Reynolds-Dewalt Printing Inc., 2001, p. 49

and occupied adjacent space on the second floor. The two academies share a dining hall on the same floor of the mall. Initially some parents, educators, and community members opposed having high school students in the downtown. They feared for the student's safety coming to and from school and the vulnerability of the school in a public place such as this mall. Although once this school opened, these fears quickly dissipated.

The central location proved to be an economic development engine for the downtown area. More people, both youth and adults, meant more business as the students shopped in the plethora of retail outlets and restaurants and the teachers and staff used the nearby services such as dry cleaning, beauty salons, and banks. MPACT also created partnerships with some of the nearby restaurants to provide lunches for its students to escape the monotony of the school cafeteria. The success of this academy has influenced development plans for a new transportation-based academy and a new high school in the city's historic district, a new K-8 school within walking distance of downtown, and several new academies based on the COL principles. PPS has now created a total of 24 Innovative Academies.²³

Impact of MPACT

The creation of this downtown school is serving as a catalyst for the revitalization of downtown Paterson and the city as a whole. Although, I would argue that the biggest impact has been felt by the MPACT students themselves. In my experience with these

²² Ibid, page 49.

²³ Paterson Public Schools, Academies. URL: <http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/~demo1/class/>

young adults, it is amazing to see how 2 years of the specialized curriculum has influenced the way they think, act, and see their community and the world at large. I was fortunate to work closely with two MPACT students in the summer of 2001 and had numerous interactions with all of the students in the fall of 2000. I witnessed a number of oral presentations and group discussions by the students and was impressed when I realized that the students sounded like many of my colleagues at MIT. The students have developed the language of community development. Like most high school students, they spend their time arguing about music and fashion trends. But, more importantly, they also spend a lot of their time arguing about how to improve their communities and the built form around them. The students have developed into a culture of learning.

This culture of learning is one of the goals of NASDP. It can be described as the fusion between bottom up and top down planning for higher education. From the bottom, MPACT can impress the idea of higher education into the minds of its entering freshman class. Through its connection with MIT and now the University of Michigan, MPACT can engage in a top down college strategy through the eyes of the admissions committees of these respective institutions. Professor Strickland and his colleagues can add useful knowledge about what colleges look for when they choose their incoming undergraduate class. To best prepare students to be competitive college applicants, NASDP has identified nine areas of concentration to enrich this culture of learning and increase the number of admitted students from MPACT and similar schools. They are:

- Recognize the 11th grade as critical to the admissions process
- Create as many opportunities as possible for advanced-placement courses and make them available the 11th grade.
- Give extensive homework.
- Make reading whole chapters, articles, and books part of homework.
- Work with parents to provide a time and place for homework and reading.
- Offer sustained SAT preparation.
- Develop a full complement of extra-curricular activities.
- College advising.
- Address the needs of the whole student.²⁴

Partnerships

In four short years, MPACT has established important partnerships with various institutions that are helping to ground it in its community while at the same time building community. The following is a list of some of these partnerships and their effects.

- *Higher education* – Through the connection with Professor Strickland and NASDP, a two-way benefit has resulted. MPACT students benefit from the expertise of the NASDP teams. They are also exposed to positive role models that they can relate to and feel comfortable asking questions that they may not feel comfortable asking other adults. This connection also allows for field trips to visit universities such as the field trip MPACT made to MIT in the spring of 2000. Many students from communities such as Paterson have very little exposure to colleges. Visits to

²⁴ Strickland, Roy, ed. Designing a City of Learning: Paterson, NJ. New Bedford, Massachusetts, Reynolds-Dewalt Printing Inc., 2001, pp. 54-56.

schools can influence plans to attend college as students are able to visualize themselves in a real college environment. On the other hand students from the university, like myself, also benefit from working with MPACT. Listening to the students talk about Paterson and their experiences provides great insight to students who will soon be working in similar communities. It can also lead to a career in working in education or youth development after graduation.

- *Business sector* – As noted earlier, MPACT has had a positive effect on the businesses located in its vicinity. A logical next step is for the school to begin a pre-professional internship program with local businesses to help students discover potential careers and increase the desire to pursue higher education.
- *PPS* – Since MPACT was one of the first academies, it has naturally formed a strong partnership with PPS. The lessons learned from MPACT have then been used by PPS in forming additional innovative academies. Dr. Duroy and other PPS staff are regular visitors to MPACT. This shows the students that PPS is genuinely interested in the quality of their education.
- *Surrounding institutions* – MPACT has also established partnerships with local institutions. For example, the location of MPACT did not allow for playground space. Instead, the students use the local YMCA during their physical education period. By not having to build a gym, MPACT is able to share the community's assets and build

community as well. It also eliminates redundancy and provides a more sustainable approach to school development.

Lessons for Lawrence

MPACT teaches the importance of three key ingredients. The success of the academy is the result of a combination of strong institutional leadership by PPS, a trusting relationship with NASDP, and the tremendous financial support from the Abbott case. In the case of Lawrence and the New Holy Rosary School, a similar partnership can be established with an institution of higher education in the vicinity. LPS can also learn from the leadership of PPS Superintendent Dr. Duroy. He has been effective in rebuilding the public schools in Paterson because he is a good leader and follower. As a follower, he has been able to recruit and trust the ideas of leaders in school reform such as NASDP. As a leader his vision and community networks have enabled him to carry out these innovative ideas by earning the support of his colleagues. LPS and newly appointed Superintendent Laboy must recognize that the renaissance of LPS will only be possible with strong leadership, trusting relationships with leaders in school and community revitalization, and the support of the community.

Summary

MPACT is unique because it has been the result of a strong partnership between a university-based institution and a public school. It is interesting to note that this partner was located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is attributable to the fact that Professor Strickland was teaching at MIT. While it would have been preferable to have a local

school be a partner to MPACT, it shows that long-distance partnerships are possible. This relationship has allowed for an exchange of information and ideas based on theoretical principles found in academia to practical applications found at the school and the surrounding community.

MPACT students and the community have also benefited from hands-on, practical problem solving. Following the principles set forth by the diagrams of John Dewey, students are working on real solutions to real problems in their communities. Students conduct site research and analysis outside of the classroom and often make public presentations of their work. This gives them exposure in the community and showcases their work to the city. This showcase can serve to recruit community members to be involved with the school. The central location of this downtown school adds to this exposure. It also demonstrates the feasibility of a downtown campus and the sustainability of an adaptive reuse of vacant urban properties.

Chapter 3

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York

"Nobody wants to be called 'at risk.' We need to serve kids not on the basis of their potential as criminals and pregnant teens but on who they are as people."²⁵

Luis Garden Acosta

Founder

El Puente Arts and Cultural Center and Academy for Peace and Justice

Introduction

The El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice in Brooklyn, New York provides an excellent example of a school strong in its mission and community partnerships. The academy was founded in 1993 and is an offspring of the El Puente Arts and Cultural Center founded in 1982 by Luis Garden Acosta and a group of community activists in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn.²⁶ The Center was founded in response to a surge of violence in the Williamsburg neighborhood the previous year that resulted in 48 youth deaths.²⁷ It is difficult to describe the impact of El Puente without including the relationships between the Center and the Academy in this analysis.²⁸ El Puente, which means bridge in Spanish, aims to bridge differences among races, cultures, economic classes, and communities to promote community development, voter participation, racial healing and human rights. In addition, El Puente operates a community health

²⁵ Former website of the White House under President Clinton; One America – El Puente.
URL: http://clinton4.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/Practices/pp_19980930.6001.html

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to El Puente Arts and Cultural Center as The Center and to the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice as The Academy. When referring to both organizations, I will address them as El Puente.

center that offers vaccinations for children and focuses on family health and AIDS-related issues.²⁹

The Academy was the first of its kind focusing on human rights. Above and beyond the basic essentials that most public high schools offer to their ninth to twelfth grade students, the Academy has customized its curriculum to produce community-minded graduates who are accountable to their communities. Currently, the New York City Public Schools 2000-2001 Annual School Report shows that 146 students are enrolled in the Academy.³⁰ The same report shows that the school is 87% Hispanic and 12% Black. The demographics of this school are similar to those of the Lawrence Public Schools. This affinity is one of the main reasons I chose to include this school as a case study.

El Puente is also unique in that it is housed in a former Catholic Church that once served as an opera house.³¹ The staff shares in the commitment to producing community-minded citizens from the student body. New students work with a staff member to create an individualized plan for the length of their career at the Academy. Daily after-school programs in arts, media, graphic design, and dance enrich the classroom learning experience. These programs involve the students not only in their school but more importantly in their community.

²⁹ Former website of the White House under President Clinton; One America – El Puente. URL: http://clinton4.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/Practices/pp_19980930.6001.html

³⁰ New York City Public Schools, 2000-2001 Annual School Report, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, [online report] page 2. URL: <http://www.nycenet.edu/daa/01asr/376685.pdf?>

The Academy also strives to involve parents. One method of parent involvement is through School Leadership Teams. These are mandated by the New York City Board of Education and act as democratic and representative bodies that work together to plan and effect change on the schools they are associated with.³² These teams are required to have at least 50% representation from parents and can also consist of elected student and community representatives. The remainder of the team consists of teachers, the school principal, staff, United Federation of Teachers chapter leader, and the Parent Association president. This unique leadership and governance structure allows the schools to have a degree of autonomy from the Board of Education.

Mission and connection to community

The mission of this innovative academy is the following:

“El Puente Academy strives to achieve mastery in learning while nurturing leadership for peace and justice. Our integrated curriculum is project-based, academically rigorous and community focused. We provide internships, a comprehensive extended day program, college/vocational preparatory support and a comprehensive arts-in-education program.”³³

The strength of El Puente Academy lies in its connection to its community with innovative programs and relationship building. It is this connection that increases the effectiveness of this institution. Situated in Brooklyn, a diversity of support is necessary in order for The Center and The Academy to carry out their missions. Partnerships

³¹ 1999 Coming Up Taller Awards Winners, El Puente Arts and Cultural Center.

URL: <http://www.cominguptaller.org/awards-1999/program8.html>

³² NYC School Leadership Teams, About NYCSLT. URL: <http://www.nycslt.org/aboutslt.html#top>

³³ The New York City Board of Education, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. URL: http://www.nycenet.edu/hs_directory/brooklyn/El%20Puente_Academy_for_Peace_and_Justice.htm

have been made in key areas such as environmental justice, the arts, public health, open space, and education. These areas of focus are also then reflected in their curriculum.

Community Partnerships

- *CAFÉ (Community Alliance for the Environment)*

This organization was the result of a successful organizing campaign that stopped the Brooklyn Navy Yard from being redeveloped as a solid waste incinerator.³⁴ The success of this coalition went beyond stopping another pollution-creating industry from infecting the Williamsburg neighborhood. This coalition was an unprecedented alliance between the historically feuding Hispanic and Hasidic communities in the Williamsburg neighborhood. It also included the Polish, Italian and black communities. Luis Garden Acosta, the founder of El Puente, described the day Rabbi David Niederman agreed to attend a meeting at El Puente as “an historic moment” given the history of the neighborhood.³⁵ The result was an alliance of 1,200 Hassidic, Latino, Black and White ethnic Americans committed to environmental justice.

³⁴ Community University Consortium for Regional Environmental Justice. Case Study: El Puente & the Struggle Against the Navy Yard Incinerator in Brooklyn, NYC. URL: http://newarkwww.rutgers.edu/~gelobter/cucrej/html/epcase_story.html

³⁵ United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 2. History: EPA and the Environment – 1970 – 1995. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/region02/epd/history.htm#acosta>

- *New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA)*

NYCEJA links grassroots organizations in low-income and communities of color in their fight against environmental racism.³⁶ The Academy is a member of this 14-member, citywide alliance.

- *Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods (OWN)*

OWN is another citywide coalition of community-based organizations although it focuses on the threat to public health posed by solid waste transfer stations.³⁷ El Puente is a member of this 22-member coalition.

- *NYC Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP)³⁸*

El Puente is a member of this political advocacy alliance that is fighting to eliminate child and labor lead poisoning hazards in New York City.

- *CIET (Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies)*

CIET is an international group of organizations devoted to bringing the community voice to planning and effective governance. They accomplish this mission by equipping communities with data gathering tools necessary to make informed decisions about policies of concern to their communities. El Puente has collaborated on numerous projects with CIET including asthma and child nutrition studies in Williamsburg.

³⁶ NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, Membership. URL: <http://www.nyceja.org/membership.html>

³⁷ Consumer's Union, Nonprofit Publisher of Consumer Reports.
URL: <http://www.consumersunion.org/other/trash/about.htm>

- *651 Arts*

651 Arts is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing programs of African and African American artistic expression to American audiences. It was founded in 1988 and has since grown to not only support performances throughout Brooklyn, but also provide support for promising artists and build relationships with local community-based arts programs. Since 1995, 651 Arts has supported the Neighborhood Arts Network that is a coalition of community-based cultural institutions in the Brooklyn area, of which El Puente is a member. In 1998, the El Puente Academy presented a theatrical performance called *Garments* which was a look at the fashion world and its relationship to sweatshops.³⁹ In addition, the Academy partnered with 651 Arts in the 1994-1995 season to produce *Celebración*, a celebration of salsa music with legendary performers which also included workshops and seminars for children.⁴⁰

- *Center for Children and Technology (CCT)*

CCT is a non-profit organization created by the Bank Street College of Education in 1980 to address the issue of technology and learning and the impacts it has on children, families, and communities.⁴¹ El Puente was one of several community organizations involved in CCT's Access By Design Project. One of the goals of the project was to "craft a national agenda to increase equity and diversity in the

³⁸ Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning. URL: <http://www.nmic.org/nycceip/news/news.htm>

³⁹ 651 Arts, Neighborhood Arts Network. URL: http://www.651arts.org/inside/neighborhood_network.shtml

⁴⁰ 651 Arts, Our History, Timeline, 1994-1995 Season. URL: http://www.651arts.org/inside/our_history.shtml

⁴¹ Education Development Center, CCT, About CCT. URL: <http://www2.edc.org/CCT/cctweb/about.html>

deployment and design of technology.”⁴² The same report shows that students at El Puente were engaged in a critique of technology and the way it is designed to visualize what technology might be if it is not designed by technology professionals.

- *The Parks Council*

El Puente is a member of The Parks Council that is a coalition of civic, open space, and economic development organizations that advocate for a high standard of parks and recreation services in the City of New York.⁴³

- *Consensus Organizing Institute (COI)*

COI is an organization dedicated to bringing together leaders representing diverse constituencies to organize together and effect change. When El Puente was involved with the Brooklyn Navy Yard campaign, COI helped organize the leaders from the various stakeholder groups.⁴⁴

- *Musica Against Drugs (MAD)*

MAD is a Brooklyn-based program created to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS rooted in Latino culture and heritage.⁴⁵ Together with El Puente, the organizations educate the school and community about HIV/AIDS-related issues and provide referrals to services.

⁴² Education Development Center, CCT, Projects, Access By Design, paragraph 1. URL: <http://www2.edc.org/CCT/cctweb/project/descrip.asp?21>

⁴³ The Parks Council Homepage. URL: <http://www.parkscouncil.org>

⁴⁴ The Consensus Organizing Model. URL: http://www.cpn.org/cpn/COI/coi_model.html

⁴⁵ Hispanic Federation, Latinos Unidos Contra El SIDA Member Agencies, Musica Against Drugs. URL: <http://www.hispanicfederation.org/luces.htm>

- *New Visions for Public Schools (NVPS)*

NVPS is an educational reform organization working to improve the quality of education in New York City public schools.⁴⁶ NVPS is the organization that helped create the Academy in 1993. The agency works with the stakeholders involved in improving educational opportunities for students including parents, community groups, educators, and public and private leaders.

Together, these partnerships contribute to the betterment of the community through the power of coalitions. When it comes time to organize the community in support of a program or cause, coalitions such as these can add tremendous power and strength to affect change.

Academic Advancement

One of the goals of the Academy is to equip students with the skills necessary to attend post-secondary institutions and return as professionals to help improve the Williamsburg community. The Academy achieves this through the following:

- Tutoring: PSAT/SAT Prep
- College and Vocational Counseling and Placement
- Internships and College Programs

Non-academic activities help round out individuals and also contribute to excellence in college. The Academy gives students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular

⁴⁶ New Visions for Public Schools, About NVPS. URL: <http://www.newvisions.org/about/>

activities including pre-professional training in dance, music, chorus, fine arts, media, and music production; sports; paid/volunteer internships; men's/women's groups; and community development projects.⁴⁷

Lessons for Lawrence

El Puente demonstrates how a school with a mission of social justice can form partnerships with community organizations that share in their mission to work towards this goal. The power of these partnerships is in the diversity of interests including arts, culture, environmental justice, HIV/AIDS issues, technology, and open space advocacy. If the New Holy Rosary School builds a broad support coalition like El Puente, it can help promote student involvement in their school and community. These partnerships can help students think about the roles they play in the various communities they are a part of including their school, neighborhood, and ethnic community. The relationship between El Puente Arts and Cultural Center and the Academy provides another learning point. LCW can benefit from a strong connection to the New Holy Rosary School. The school community can be used to better organize the community and inform them about issues that affect their neighborhood.

Summary

The El Puente Academy for Peace and Social Justice builds strength by being grounded in its community and being an active member in its development. The

⁴⁷ New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn High Schools, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. URL: http://www.nycenet.edu/hs_directory/brooklyn/El%20Puente_Academy_for_Peace_and_Justice.htm

success of the Academy can be measured in concrete and abstract benefits to the students and the surrounding community. From the class of 2001, 80% graduated and even more impressive, 90% of these graduates have plans to attend a 4-year (46.7%) or a 2-year (43.3%) college.⁴⁸ The same report shows that citywide, there was a 51% graduation rate with 67.7% of these graduates with 2- or 4-year college plans. At the same time, the Academy succeeds in blurring the line between community and school. Many public schools act as islands in the communities they are a part of but El Puente becomes engaged with its community and works to improve it. Through community partnerships, El Puente eliminates redundancy and works with organizations that are good at what they do. It is impossible and absurd for one institution or organization to be effective at everything. It is better to partner with organizations that excel in a diverse set of skills where the sum of these organizations makes each one stronger.

⁴⁸ New York City Public Schools, 2000-2001 Annual School Report, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, [online report] page 12. URL: <http://www.nycenet.edu/daa/01asr/376685.pdf?>

Chapter 4

Salomé Ureña Middle Academies, Intermediate School 218 Washington Heights, New York City

Introduction

The Salomé Ureña Middle Academies, Intermediate School 218M (IS 218) was established in 1991 through a partnership between the New York City Board of Education, Community School District 6, and the Children's Aid Society. The school serves grades 5-8, has a student body population of 1,684, and a staff of 92.⁴⁹ The school's name is in recognition of Salomé Ureña de Henríquez, a feminist poet, educator, and founder of the first school for girls in the Dominican Republic in 1881.⁵⁰ The school excels in providing on-site services to youth through innovative curricular and extracurricular programs. IS 218 is an excellent example of a learning institution that houses educational, social, and health services for families. It is able to provide such a diversity of services by integrating school-day activities with extended-day programs and staying open until 10 PM.⁵¹ Parental involvement and inclusion is achieved through the Family Resource Center (described below) and through parent volunteers in the school and the clinic where parents are trained to give hearing and vision tests.⁵² The two greatest strengths of this school are the extended-day programs and the on-site health services for the community.

⁴⁹ Board of Education, City of New York. Salomé Ureña Middle Academies, Intermediate School 218M. <http://www.cognivision.com/district6/is218.htm>

⁵⁰ Community School Fact Sheet, Intermediate School 218, page 1; www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/general/cas-IS_218.pdf

⁵¹ North Central Regional Educational Laboratory; URL: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le3newyk.htm>

One of the main successes of this school is the strong commitment and partnership between the school and the Children's Aid Society (CAS). These two stakeholders share responsibility and physical space in a long-term commitment to improve the educational opportunities for the students who attend IS 218. A healthy relationship is maintained by splitting the responsibilities of a typical day. The school system assumes most of the responsibility for the classroom learning while CAS leads the extended-day learning programs.⁵³ The experience and lessons CAS has gained in creating these community schools has been compiled into a useful manual for agencies interested in creating a community school. The CAS manual adds that the two partners work closely together so that the extended day programs will reinforce what is being learned in the classroom. In my experience with working with young people, this overlap is an important method of maintaining interest in the subjects being taught in school. When students are able to apply classroom learning to concepts or ideas outside of the classroom, they are more prone to learning the concept and applying it to more parts of their lives.

In addition to the strong bond with CAS, the school has established key partnerships with other prominent New York institutions such as Mount Sinai Hospital, New York University, Columbia University, Mercy College, New York City Opera, the Broadway Theater Institute, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company, and the American Ballet

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ The Children's Aid Society. *Building A Community School*. Third Edition. [online book], September 2001; page 36-37. URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comm_school_form/

Theatre.⁵⁴ Some of the programs created through these partnerships will be described later in this chapter. Together, these partnerships allow the school to provide a wide array of programs and services to its students, their families, and the surrounding community.

Mission

The mission of IS 218 is the following:

- “Prepare our students to meet the highest standards and challenges of life through an academically challenging curriculum;
- Bring all students to their full potential through the cooperative efforts of family and faculty, and;
- Engage our students in activities which prepare them to become productive individuals of their school and community.”⁵⁵

Curriculum

IS 218 is divided into four academies which include Expressive Arts; Math, Science, and Technology; Community Service; and Business Studies and offer multiple courses to meet the interests and needs of the students.⁵⁶ As a whole, the academy champions small communities of learning, student advisory programs, a challenging core

⁵⁴ The Children’s Aid Society. *Building A Community School*. Third Edition. [online book], September 2001; page 36. URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comm_school_form/

⁵⁵ Board of Education, City of New York. Salomé Ureña Middle Academies, Intermediate School 218M. <http://www.cognivision.com/district6/is218.htm>

⁵⁶ Community School Fact Sheet, Intermediate School 218, page 2; www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/general/cas-IS_218.pdf

curriculum, cooperative learning, and team teaching techniques.⁵⁷ The school, as a public school in New York City, must still adhere to the regulations of the New York City Board of Education, which include being a neighborhood-based school open to the students in the surrounding Washington Heights community.

Innovative Programs

- **Children's Aid Society (CAS) Community School**

CAS, as one of the principal partners investing in IS 218, administers a number of programs that serve the youth community of IS 218. The following is a list of these programs with a short description of each.

- *Project FUNDS (Fun Understanding Nickel and Dime Savings)*. Through a series of workshops with IS 218's Business Club, CAS teaches students about the history of money, personal budgeting, and investing skills.⁵⁸
- *National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools (NTACCS)*
Created in 1994 and housed within IS 218, this center provides highly demanded technical assistance to schools and community organizations interested in creating community schools.⁵⁹ The center also advocates the community school movement on a local and national scale to bring attention to this approach and impact the larger educational reform agenda.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The Children's Aid Society, Economic Empowerment Initiative;
http://www.childrengroups.org/locations_services/servicesindex/educationandcommunity/

⁵⁹ The Children's Aid Society, National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools;
http://www.childrengroups.org/locations_services/servicesindex/educationandcommunity/techassistance/

- *Family Resource Center.* Caplan states the importance of a physical space for parents to have within community schools.⁶⁰ IS 218 with the help of CAS achieves this through the Family Resource Center. The center is described as a “comfortable, cozy first [point] of access for parents who need to wait for their children, socialize with their neighbors, look into adult education opportunities or get assistance with a specific problem.”⁶¹ The center also provides needed services such as help with immigration and naturalization forms and applications, English as a second language and GED classes, job counseling, emergency food aid, legal aid, and housing advocacy. It also provides fun and leisure activities including aerobics, drama, weight training, and computer training.

Further academic enrichment is achieved through other innovative programs such as the Laptop Computer Program, Dual Language & Inclusion Programs, Student Authors Program, Connected Math Program, Reading/Writing Workshop, and the Service Learning Program.

Extended-day Programs And Extracurricular Activities

The extended-day programs at IS 218 focus on enrichment and application of the school-day curriculum but they also enhance the students’ experience through programs in the arts, sports, and youth development. Through the Recycle-A-Bicycle Program, children learn how to repair donated or discarded bikes and then either donate the renovated bikes to charity or earn them for themselves.⁶² The Recycle-A-

⁶⁰ Caplan, Judith G. *Critical Issue: Constructing School Partnerships with Families and Community Groups.* [online article] North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998. URL: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envmmnt/famncomm/pa400.htm>

⁶¹ The Children’s Aid Society, Education and Community Schools; URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/locations_services/servicesindex/educationandcommunity/?#community?

⁶² The Children’s Aid Society. *Building A Community School.* Third Edition. [online book], September 2001; page 42. URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comm_school_form/

Computer program is similar where children recondition used computers for personal home use.⁶³ These two programs afford children the opportunity to apply their classroom learning in a hands-on format. Hard skills in math, finance, and science are strengthened while soft skills in personal responsibility, civic and community accountability, and sustainability are gained. The CAS book adds that other academic support programs include a debate club, chess club, community service projects and mentoring programs.

Arts and cultural programs at IS 218 provide students with opportunities for creative expression. The children can choose from theater projects, a dance class in conjunction with the American Ballet Theatre, cultural dance, hip hop classes, choral music, a string ensemble, a jazz band, art classes, crafts, culinary classes, and an African drumming class.⁶⁴ Programs such as these are important because youth often do not have outlets for creative expression at their schools. This can lead to unhealthy expressions through vandalism. In addition, in my experience, I have come across students who are very artistic and find a lack of stimulation in the daily routine of school. This lack of engagement can result in the students feeling that school isn't for them. If a school is not willing to provide outlets for a variety of interests – academic, artistic, athletic, etc. – then its students might lose respect for the school and interest in the curriculum.

⁶³ Ibid, page 42

⁶⁴ Ibid, page 43

In summer, the extended-day program at IS 218 includes a number of camp activities for the children. The school hosts a day camp, a teen day-trip program, a summer dance camp with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, and trips to the Children's Aid Society's country camps.⁶⁵

On-Site Health Services

The existence of on-site health services at IS 218 helps remove a barrier to care. One of the immediate goals of the clinic is to provide full medical and dental care for each child. In the long-term, the goal is "to address the relationship between health, academic, and emotional problems, and to meet the needs of the 'total child' at a location that is central to child and family life."⁶⁶ Before the clinic existed, Washington Heights had no public hospitals and one private hospital. Coupled with language barriers and the fact that many Washington Heights residents, many of them children, did not have health coverage further decreased access to care.⁶⁷ Today, IS 218 is one of five, of a total of nine, CAS community schools that provides health services to the community including medical, dental, and mental health. The doctors, nurse practitioners, and dentists come from the aforementioned New York institutions – Mount Sinai and Columbia University. In addition, IS 218 is home to an eye clinic that provides eye exams, CAS pays for glasses, and the State University of New York College of Optometry provides them.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid, page 43

⁶⁶ Ibid, page 45.

⁶⁷ Ibid, page 44.

⁶⁸ Ibid, page 44.

The Health Care Access Program is another method used by CAS to increase access to healthcare for the IS 218 community and the city as a whole. It is an effort to enroll children who are eligible for publicly funded health insurance but are not enrolled for reasons such as a lack of information, time, language barriers, and bureaucratic barriers.⁶⁹ A proactive recruitment strategy for this program is carried out through tactics such as reaching out to parents who visit the Family Resource Centers and at community events. By working towards healthy students, IS 218 is able to focus on giving educators the time to teach and healthy students the opportunity to learn.

Lessons for Lawrence

Intermediate School 218 has some key learning points that can be applied to the development of a community in Lawrence. It has taken many years to build up its capacity and LPS can benefit from its well-documented history. While it may not be possible to quickly find a resourceful partner such as CAS, LPS should begin looking for such an organization that can serve as a support center for the city's community schools. It should also send a representative to the National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools to learn in more detail how to frame and implement the community school concept in Lawrence. The New Holy Rosary School can be the pilot school for the district.

LPS can also benefit from providing health services to its constituents. While the New Holy Rosary School may not have the space to house a health center as large as IS

218, it may be able to find an adjacent or nearby property to lease and use as a community health center.

Summary

IS 218 is an example of a partnership with an organization dedicated to urban school reform and how this relationship supports creative practices. IS 218 succeeds in being a public school that doubles as a community center. It does this by challenging existing notions of public schools. Academically, students are challenged with a rigorous curriculum based on time-tested standards as well as innovative approaches to hands-on learning. Outside of regular school hours students have the opportunity to enrich their academic learning or participate in arts and cultural activities that allow students to explore their other talents. Parents and other community members also benefit from adult learning opportunities and counseling in the evenings. By housing NTACCS, IS 218 is able to expose students to the latest ideas in community school learning environments. On-site health services provide one-stop convenience for students and their families to receive health care. More importantly, these health services improve access to care and promote learning opportunities by maintaining healthy students and families. One final important detail to note is that IS 218 is one of nine CAS-supported community schools in New York City's School District 6. This helps provide a continuum of care from the elementary schools, through the intermediate schools, and up to the high schools.

⁶⁹ Ibid, page 51.

Chapter 5

Holy Rosary School Lawrence, Massachusetts

Planning Process as an Opportunity

The redevelopment of the Holy Rosary School is a tremendous opportunity for LPS, the city, and the residents of the North Common neighborhood. This would be the first public school in Lawrence to be called a community school. Using the lessons learned from the redevelopment process of this school, LPS can begin following a similar participatory and partnership-rich strategy of school and community building.

The North Common neighborhood is the service area for LCW. Over the years LCW has established a trusting relationship with the residents of the North Common by organizing the community and working towards its revitalization. LCW has been involved in most, if not all, of the recent redevelopment in this neighborhood. This makes LCW an essential partner in the redevelopment of the Holy Rosary school. LPS should not rehabilitate this school without the input and expertise of LCW. LCW through its Reviviendo Planning Group initiated a community-based planning process and is trying to build a relationship with LPS. This relationship should be developed into a strong partnership so that it will be common practice for LPS to consult with not only LCW, but other community organizations as well, when it goes about planning and designing learning facilities in neighborhoods throughout Lawrence.

LCW, through its Reviviendo Planning Group, held its first community vision meeting in February of 2002. It was structured as a forum to introduce the idea of redeveloping the building into a community resource to the North Common residents, many of them former students of the Holy Rosary School. It began with a short introduction of the project and then turned into a group discussion where people provided their visions for the best use of this community asset. The participants quickly agreed it should be redeveloped as a community school and then brainstormed a long list of the characteristics and services it could provide. Two more meetings are planned, one in June and another later this year. Now that the use has been agreed upon by the community, the goal of the future meetings will be to have the community decide what the school will look like, what kinds of programs it will include, and what kinds of partnerships will be established to maintain a connection to the surrounding community. The key to the success of this process will be active participation and collaboration by LCW and LPS together.

Background of Lawrence Public Schools

Lawrence is a city very similar to industrial and immigrant-rich Paterson, New Jersey. It is nicknamed The Immigrant City due to its history of being a port of entry from the Irish during the Industrial Revolution to the recent arrival of Dominican, Puerto Rican, and most recently Vietnamese people. The public schools are a reflection of this diversity. Out of a total of 22 schools and a population of 12,807 students in 2001, the ethnic breakdown is as follows.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Lawrence Public Schools, *District Comprehensive Educational Plan 2001-2002*. Page 2

LPS Proportional Student Population by Race/Ethnicity N=12,807

Race/ Ethnicity	2001
Black	2.8%
Hispanic	82.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.2%
White	11.3%

Since 1998, the same report shows that the Hispanic population has increased by 4.3% and the White population has decreased by 4.1%. Like Paterson, many students are being lost to private institutions of learning or are dropping out of the system altogether. The Massachusetts Department of Education (MassDOE) reports the adjusted dropout rate for 2000 in the Lawrence School District was 12.2% compared to 3.5% statewide.⁷¹ The same report shows adjacent towns to Lawrence with significantly lower rates. The rate in Andover is 0.7%, Methuen is 1.1%, Haverhill is 3.9%, and North Andover is 2.3%. MassDOE also sorts the dropout rate in Lawrence by race/ethnicity. The following table shows these figures:

LPS Adjusted Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2000⁷²

Race/ Ethnicity	Enrolled	Adjusted Dropout Rate
African American	55	7.3%
Asian American	110	4.5%
Latino	1816	12.7%
Native American	3	not reported
White	144	13.2%

⁷¹ Massachusetts Department of Education, Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools, 1999-2000. URL: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ata/dropout/9900/ds/ds_hm.html#L Adjusted dropout rate is calculated by taking the total number of dropouts in a given year and subtracting the number of students who return to school and enroll by October 1 of the next year, dividing this number by the total enrollment in October of this year and then multiplying by 100.

⁷² Massachusetts Department of Education, Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools: 1999-2000, Annual Dropout Rates by District and Race/Ethnicity URL: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ata/dropout/9900/dre/dre_hn.html#L

These alarming figures show that the number of Latino dropouts (230) exceeded the sum of enrolled African American and White students (199). In November 2000, MassDOE released a District Performance Evaluation Report of LPS and reported that in 1999, nearly 20% of Lawrence High School Students dropped out.⁷³ The same report also found that one in three students missed 20% or more of the days they were enrolled which equates to at least one school day per week. The overall findings of this report found inconsistent standards of achievement for students, teachers, and administrators. For instance, the evaluation team found that the “district had not provided ESL, bilingual, and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) with written guidance and suggestions on ways to modify teaching methods to support higher levels of academic attainment by the District's many English language learners.”⁷⁴ This points to the high dropout rate for Latino students in the district. The above figures affirm that LPS continues to be a poor performing district and needs to do a better job of serving its constituents. LPS needs to carefully assess the specific needs of its students. The community school effort is an excellent opportunity to do this.

Building upon the three case studies presented in the previous chapters will be an important first step in establishing the New Holy Rosary School as a community school. Although, as CAS states, each school has its own set of unique strengths, resources, and services it needs.⁷⁵ Therefore, it is important that we apply a similar framework

⁷³ Massachusetts Department of Education, District Performance Evaluation Report - November 2000. Lawrence Public Schools, Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations. URL: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ata/news01/208sumkey.html>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The Children's Aid Society. *Building A Community School*. Third Edition. [online book], September 2001; page 17. URL: http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comm_school_form/

and philosophy to the New Holy Rosary School without utilizing a cookie-cutter approach.

Community School Partnerships

The first step in the development of the New Holy Rosary School as a community school is to create and approve a mission statement. This should be accomplished early in the community planning process through a democratic process by the leadership team responsible for planning and programming the school. A clear mission statement will help direct the community planning efforts and guide the creation of partnerships. Currently the planning process is informal and has yet to be recognized by LPS. The short time frame of the project requires LPS to legitimize the process and commit to creating a community school that is the result of this process.

Family Involvement

In order for the New Holy Rosary School to truly be a community school, relationships must be built between the school, the parents of the students, and the surrounding North Common community. Schools often make the mistake of leaving it up to the parents to organize themselves and become involved in their child's school and education. Yet, a true partnership would be the result of the school taking the initiative to involve parents.⁷⁶ LPS can use LCW's experience to organize the parents in the North Common neighborhood. These residents may already trust LCW and would be more willing to become involved in the community school if they saw that it was a

collaboration between LCW and LPS. If the school makes parents feel welcome, then parents will feel like they have a voice in their child's education. As a result, parents may participate more in programs at the school and recognize that their child's learning occurs in at least two places: at school and at home. Caplan then discuss how this partnership affects the students by letting them see the connection between what they learn in the classroom and the real world. In my experience with the youth from Paterson, New Jersey and Lawrence, Massachusetts, this moment of realization is key in instilling community pride and forging civic responsibility into the minds of these young adults. Often times students complain that what they learn in the classroom is not applicable to real life. But, a strong partnership between the school and the home can help students see how they fit into multiple communities including the community of their school, their family, the city in which they live, and at times the world at large.

As mentioned above, schools should initiate these important partnerships. Caplan describes how school-family-community partnerships can be initiated and maintained through action teams. Action teams may consist of parents, teachers, administrators, staff, community members, etc. The National Network of Partnership Schools suggests action teams consist of the following⁷⁷:

- two or three teachers from different grade levels
- two or three parents with children in different grade levels and/or a representative of parents
- one administrator

⁷⁶ Caplan, Judith G. *Critical Issue: Constructing School Partnerships with Families and Community Groups*. [online article] North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998. Page 1. URL: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa400.htm>

⁷⁷ National Network of Partnership Schools: Action Teams, <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/action.htm>

- one member from the community at large (in the case of the Holy Rosary School in Lawrence, this position could be filled by an alumnus of the Holy Rosary School. This will help by involving a more senior member of the community in the new Holy Rosary School
- two students from different grade levels
- other people central to the school's work including: cafeteria worker, school social worker, guidance counselor, or nurse. Since the Holy Rosary School is located in the North Common neighborhood and LCW's service area is also in this neighborhood, then perhaps a representative from LCW could be part of the action team. It would be additionally beneficial if this person also lived in the North Common neighborhood.

Once this partnership has been established, the parents and community members must feel like valuable members of the team. Caplan describes one method where parents and community members introduce the neighborhood to the teachers by taking them on walking tours to help them understand the lives of their students outside the classroom.⁷⁸ In my experience working with youth in urban schools, a common complaint is that teachers do not engage themselves with the community surrounding their school. Many teachers do not live in these communities and tend to drive into the school parking lot in the morning and drive out in the evening thus having little interaction with the community. Such tours would help bridge this gap.

Other activities that can strengthen the partnership include having parents commit to helping children at home, volunteering in the classroom, participating in decision-making

⁷⁸ Caplan, Judith G. *Critical Issue: Constructing School Partnerships with Families and Community Groups*. [online article] North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998. Page 3. URL: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa400.htm>

bodies at the school, and promoting school bond issues in the community.⁷⁹ Since each school community is different, it is important for the action team to first perform research to assess the specific needs of the community. These can take the form of questionnaires, focus groups, or regular meetings that garner community input. In the North Common neighborhood and Lawrence as a whole, it will be important for the action team to develop bilingual literature and conduct their meetings in English and Spanish so that parents feel welcome and included in the team. Once again, LPS can benefit from the extensive groundwork, data, and trust that LCW has accumulated over the years working with the North Common.

Community Involvement

Forming partnerships with community institutions will be as important as forging family partnerships in the New Holy Rosary School. The City of Lawrence has a broad range of community, civic, cultural, business, and religious organizations that have the potential to play a role in the New Holy Rosary School as well as other public schools. The following is a list of organizations that could be part of this partnership with the new elementary school:

Lawrence CommunityWorks (LCW)

LCW is a non-profit community development corporation whose principal service area is the North Common neighborhood. Their mission and commitment to the North Common neighborhood make them essential partners in the formation and sustainability of the New Holy Rosary School. In addition to their award-winning community

⁷⁹ Ibid, page 4.

development work, they also have a strong commitment to the economic development of their constituents through programs in family asset building. This includes programs for first-time homebuyers, Individual Development Accounts for both adults and youth as well as after school programs for Lawrence youth in diverse areas such as architecture, finance, fashion design, dance, and web design. The youth in these programs are in high school and they could serve as mentors to the New Holy Rosary School children. In addition, LCW could extend its youth programs to include younger children and even house some of the after school programs as described below. The North Common neighborhood is the main service area of LCW. The following is a list of some of the projects currently underway in the neighborhood. Their proximity to the New Holy Rosary School create potential linkages.

Our House / Nuestra Casa – This project plans to build a family learning center at the northern gateway to the North Common neighborhood. LPS could partner with LCW in providing after-school programs at this site as well as support services to the parents of the New Holy Rosary School students.

Brook St. Park – After a community design process by LCW and Groundwork Lawrence, a former brownfield site along the Spicket River in the North Common neighborhood is currently being redeveloped into a public park. Since the existing Holy Rosary School does not include a very large playground, a partnership could be established with the park to use it as a play area. In

exchange the school could provide maintenance by the students to teach them landscaping and recycling skills as well as organizational skills.

Fleet Bank

In 2000 FleetBoston Financial Foundation announced the Fleet Community Renaissance Initiative. LCW is one of six recipients included in this program of community revitalization. Although this money has already been allocated to support the above programs, LCW and LPS should pursue a strong relationship with Fleet. In addition, the FleetBoston Financial Foundation funds programs in public education, youth development, and economic opportunity.⁸⁰ The New Holy Rosary School could greatly benefit from these funding sources.

Lawrence General Hospital

Located at the southern corner of the North Common neighborhood, Lawrence General is the largest employer in Lawrence. If health services are included in the New Holy Rosary School, the hospital could provide staff and establish a stronger connection with its surrounding community.

Northern Essex Community College (NECC)

NECC has two campuses in Lawrence and offers associate degree and adult education programs. With concentrations in early childhood education, healthcare practice, computing, childcare, graphic design, and liberal arts,⁸¹ NECC could provide the New

⁸⁰ Fleet, About Fleet, Fleet in the Community, FleetBoston Financial Foundation
URL:http://www.fleet.com/about_inthecommunity_fleetbostonfinancialfoundation.asp#PE

⁸¹ Northern Essex Community College. URL: <http://www.necc.mass.edu>

Holy Rosary School with valuable interns to benefit the learning experience for the elementary and post-secondary students.

The Eagle Tribune

This newspaper is one of the oldest dailies in the Merrimack Valley with its origins being traced back to 1868.⁸² With its large circulation reaching over 60,000 the tribune could be an excellent way to promote programs or attract volunteers for the New Holy Rosary School.

*New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.*⁸³

New Balance is a 96 year-old Massachusetts based company specializing in athletic shoes and apparel for women, men, and children. Lawrence is home to its World Design Center which employs 616 associates in the Ayer Mill Building along the Merrimack River. In addition, New Balance has a strong commitment to its community especially in the cities where its offices or production facilities are located. It gives to the community in three ways: The New Balance Foundation provides charitable monetary support, the Corporate Contributions Program makes both promotional and charitable monetary contributions, and the Charitable Product Donation Program provides footwear and apparel to organizations that assist persons in need. As a partner in the New Holy Rosary School, New Balance could help provide shoes to students in need and develop an after-school sports program with the help of volunteers from its Lawrence facility. Currently, New Balance contributes money to the Merrimack

⁸² Eagle Tribune Website. URL: <http://www.eagletribune.com/framesets/comphistory.htm>

⁸³ New Balance Website. URL: <http://www.newbalance.com>

Valley Foundation to help maintain the Ayer Mill Clock Tower. They also contribute to the Lawrence Young Entrepreneur Alliance which helps develop business skills for adolescent boys.

Essex Art Center (EAC)

EAC is a non-profit organization dedicated to children and art located adjacent to LCW in the Mill District. Their mission is “to inspire and nurture the diverse artistic potential of the Greater Lawrence Community through classroom exploration and gallery exhibitions making the creation and enjoyment of art accessible to ALL.”⁸⁴ Located within walking distance from the New Holy Rosary School, the students can take advantage of the numerous after-school arts programs offered by EAC. In addition, if there is a shortage of art space at the New Holy Rosary School, they could make use of EAC’s facilities similar to the way MPACT uses the local YMCA.

Rotary Club

In Looking at Lawrence, Dresser describes how the Rotary Club adopted the Hennessy School for a read-aloud and science program.⁸⁵ Perhaps this can happen with the Holy Rosary alumni as an after school program that doubles as a child care program. In addition, the school district is committed to the literacy of its young adult population. This commitment could turn into financial resources to carry out such a program. This multi-generational interaction will give children a historical connection to the Holy Rosary school and the North Common neighborhood.

⁸⁴ Essex Art Center, About Us. URL: <http://www.essexartcenter.com/aboutus.html>

Malden Mills⁸⁶

The Malden Mills manufactures Polartec fleece clothing. They have a unique place in the history of Lawrence because it is one of the few companies that has avoided moving its production facilities overseas and has been committed to its local work force. The greatest example of this commitment came in 1995 when a fire destroyed the Lawrence plant. The owner, Aaron Feuerstein, immediately decided to rebuild the factory in the same place and pay his employees their wages during the rebuilding stage.

Unfortunately, the company recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy but is slowly trying to recover. The Malden Mills could provide support to the New Holy Rosary School through donations of clothing and a volunteer workforce.

The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council Inc.

GLCAC, Inc. is a private non-profit agency combating poverty in the Greater Lawrence area. The GLCAC, Inc sponsors many programs covering a multitude of areas including childcare, healthcare access, teen advocacy, family support services, and home energy assistance programs for low-income persons. Together with Lawrence Community Works, these two agencies can provide the New Holy Rosary School with a strong partnership with community organizations working to fight poverty through innovative programs.

⁸⁵ Dresser, Thomas. Looking at Lawrence. Action Press and KR Graphics, Lawrence and Andover, MA, April 1997, page 4.

⁸⁶ Polartec Home Page. URL: <http://www.polartec.com>

Holy Rosary Church Parish

Religious organizations can be effective partners because of the potential for large numbers of volunteers dedicated to strengthening communities. In the North Common neighborhood, this is enriched by the fact that many of the parishioners may also be alumni from the Holy Rosary School. These community members can help with after-school programs. They can also take advantage of the New Holy Rosary School and its amenities when the school is not using it at night and on the weekends.

Lawrence Police Department

Elected officials often feel an increase in the number of police officers in a neighborhood will contribute to its revitalization and safety. Yet, numbers alone will not help improve these areas. Police officers need to become engaged and active members of communities so that residents will trust them and work with them towards community revitalization. One method for building this trust is by increasing the number of police officers that reside in the neighborhood. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a program called the Officer Next Door Program that aims to increase the number of local neighborhood police officers by giving them priority in purchasing HUD-designated affordable homes in low-income communities. Another method is by initiating youth programs in the neighborhood. In Paterson, New Jersey, the local police department organizes an after school and midnight basketball league for youth. This would be an excellent way for the Lawrence Police Department to build relationships with the North Common children. A partnership with New Balance Athletic Shoes could also provide support and equipment for this program.

Lawrence Office of Planning and Department (OPD)

Professor Strickland finds it absurd when he learns of the lack of communication between school districts and local planning or community development agencies. He feels it is imperative for the city planning department to meet with the board of education to create plans for the city.⁸⁷ Therefore, the Lawrence School Committee should take the opportunity presented by the New Holy Rosary School and invite the OPD to the community meetings. At the same time, the new planning director should meet with Superintendent Laboy to discuss a long-term strategy of community revitalization and the role of community schools.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD has two programs that can benefit the New Holy Rosary School and its partnerships.

Teacher Next Door Program – This program allows K-12 teachers or administrators to purchase HUD homes at 50 percent off of the list price in HUD-designated revitalization communities. The North Common neighborhood is identified as such by HUD. If a home is purchased with a FHA-insured mortgage, then the teacher only needs a \$100 down payment for the home. To qualify, teachers must purchase a home that is within their school district and they must live in it for at least 3 years.

⁸⁷ Professor Roy Strickland, Presentation at American Planning Association Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 14, 2002.

Office of University Partnerships (OUP)

OUP is a department within HUD dedicated to establishing university partnerships with community groups and institutions. It has three main goals:

- To recognize, reward, and build upon successful examples of universities' activities in local revitalization projects;
- To create the next generation of urban scholars and encourage them to focus their work on housing and community development policy; and
- To create partnerships with other Federal Agencies to support innovative teaching, research, and service partnerships.

LPS and the New Holy Rosary School could use this program to fund a partnership with one of the many universities in the vicinity. A relationship similar to MPACT with MIT and now Michigan could develop.

Lawrence School Committee

A natural partner should be the School Committee representative responsible for District B.⁸⁸ This representative should be involved in the planning process from beginning to end and continue being an active member of the leadership structure created by the New Holy Rosary School.

The overall goal of forming partnerships between the school, families, and organizations is to make the school more accountable to the community. Caplan notes that the agenda of school reform advocates will be best realized with the support of the entire

⁸⁸ Currently, Pedro Arce is the District B representative but his term will soon end. It would be beneficial for Mr. Arce to be actively involved in the process so that he can mentor the new representative and allow for a fluid transition.

community including the parents, citizens, and businesses. In addition, active involvement from community leaders will provide the students with positive role models who can help students establish personal goals.

Funding

As is inherent in the name, a community school such as the one being proposed for the New Holy Rosary School will only be possible through the support of the community. Success has been possible in the three case studies due to a dedicated team of people committed to improving educational opportunities for all youth. At the same time, many of their efforts would not be possible without the financial support they have received.

A diverse set of services including health care, social welfare, after school programming, childcare, fitness, and leisure activities demands a diverse portfolio of funding streams. Besides obvious support from the US Department of Education, the Lawrence Public School District should embark on a strategy of creative fundraising and short and long-term support mechanisms to sustain the New Holy Rosary School. Foundations, private corporation funds, and banks should be solicited for larger grants. The Community Reinvestment Act makes banks an excellent target as a source of funds. Another source of support can be from programs such as Medicaid. Success in the New Holy Rosary School will result from a public, private, non-profit, and community partnership with a strong understand of and a commitment to the mission statement created by the school.

Chapter 6

Vision and Recommendations

School Vision

The redevelopment of the Holy Rosary School is an excellent opportunity for LPS to be innovative and create a new method of school development in the city. In order for this school to be a broad-base leadership team comprised of the various constituents of the community, the leadership team could be built on a model similar to those mandated by the New York City Board of Education.

The beginning of this paper asked the reader to imagine life in a community school. Based on what we can learn from the stories in this paper we can begin imagining the New Holy Rosary School after it opens in the fall of 2003. A typical day may look like this:

In the morning a student would walk into the atrium of the school and be greeted by an abundance of natural light and options. The mission of the school would be embossed in the floor of this space, informing visitors that they have entered a special place. The ground floor would be like a commercial street in a town, full of services including a parent center, an eye doctor, and the student-run café and bookstore serving breakfasts. The community room would be adjacent to the administrative offices on the ground floor as well. This would be a room staffed by a person responsible for maintaining relationships with the community

partners. It would be a library of information including free phone and internet access, pamphlets for services, and referrals to local agencies sharing in the school's mission.

Upstairs would be classroom space demonstrating the latest in information technology and media. The hallways would be a showcase of student work demonstrating accomplishments inside and outside the brick walls of the school. The curriculum would be based on LPS and Massachusetts Board of Education requirements with an emphasis on team teaching, overlapping and interdisciplinary subjects, and hands-on practicums. These practicums would take place in the afternoons where students would begin applying their classroom learning to real world dilemmas including issues of social justice, the environment, community development, science, technology, or the arts. Physical education would take place at the nearby Lawrence Common or the new Brook Street Park.

At the end of the school day students would have the opportunity to be involved in various after-school programs. Programs in fashion design, architecture and planning, sports, art, dance, theater, community development, web and graphic design, computer science, reading, business, and music can be made available either at the school or with one of the many partner organizations involved in the school.

At night, the school can open its doors to programs in adult education including GED classes, computers, English classes, and job-related skill building. On weekends, the multimedia auditorium space and classroom space could host movie nights or video game competitions organized for the community and by the community.

On summer nights the Lawrence Police Department would host a youth athletic league giving youth a place to hang out with friends, get exercise, and develop leadership skills.

The list of potential activities seems limitless. The challenge for the New Holy Rosary School will be in finding financial and institutional support to maintain these partnerships. Naturally, partnerships may not be possible with all of the organizations named in the previous chapter, but an effort must be made to create a set of diverse partnerships that will support the school's mission.

Current Status and Recommendations

The New Holy Rosary School is scheduled to open in 16 months. Currently, the community planning process initiated by LCW is building momentum. While it is good that a community planning process has already begun, the process is flawed by the short amount of time and the lack of a commitment to this process by LPS. The New Holy Rosary School is a relatively small project and perhaps the 16-month time frame makes it appear like a short-term project. This project is also in the shadow of a new

high school that is approaching construction in Lawrence. Although LPS must not ignore this small project. Instead LPS should be a major partner in the planning stages and the life of the school since they will have the principal responsibility of operating this community school. Together with LCW, they should be core members of the leadership team.

The challenge then emerges in forming this leadership team under a small timeframe. With more time this team could include parents, students, teachers, LPS staff, the school committee representative, community members, architects, and representatives of potential partnerships. The team would be responsible for insuring that an inclusive community process is used to create the curriculum, structure, and partnerships of the school. Yet, the approaching deadline calls for decisions to be made on the inclusiveness of the leadership team. A core planning committee should be formed consisting of representatives from LCW, LPS, and some of the individuals named above. A smaller group may be more effective in making decisions and implementing them in a short amount of time. Regular meetings should occur between the core planning group and informational presentations should be made periodically to the community to update them on the progress of the school. The lessons from the three cases can be a starting point for the school planning team. As public schools these three case studies offer direct and relevant learning opportunities for the New Holy Rosary School. The team could benefit from visiting the three schools and seeing how a community school operates on a daily basis. These visits could help the team physically visualize the New Holy Rosary School as a community school and not an

abstract possibility. The redevelopment of this school can be an exciting process. The more involved the community feels, the more support the school will have in the neighborhood, and the more this school will be a community school.

Challenges for the two partners

As the main partners in the redevelopment of the Holy Rosary School, LCW and LPS must face important challenges to ensure the success of the new community school.

LPS

As a district, LPS should be closely involved with school redevelopment projects. With the New Holy Rosary School, the challenge lies in putting aside previously used top-down development practices and instead participating in a partnership-based, participative process. LPS must commit to being involved in this process and trust the experience of LCW and their work in the North Common neighborhood. LCW has already demonstrated their commitment to making this a school that is the result of a community process by initiating the process. It is time for LPS to recognize these efforts and join the team as an equal partner. It would be difficult to make the Holy Rosary School a community school without the support of LCW.

LCW

LCW is challenged with keeping this process together while not sacrificing the needs of its constituency. LCW was unaware of LPS plans to redevelop the Holy Rosary School. It had already initiated a community process to determine the best use for the building when it learned of the proposed rehabilitation by the

district. Fortunately, the residents of the North Common agreed on redeveloping the vacant building into a school. The main challenge for LCW now is condensing the timeframe of the project while maintaining the integrity of the community school concept and not deceiving the residents of its service area. LCW needs to feel confident that the input of the community and the end product of the planning process will be implemented by LPS. This would require an agreement between LCW and LPS as soon as possible before additional time is spent on organizing the community.

This agreement between LCW and LPS is the most important step in the planning process for this school. Afterwards, the leadership team should be firmly established with regular meetings continuing past the opening of the school. While the design of the new school has not been discussed in this document, it is an essential part of this planning process. The architects for the New Holy Rosary School should be determined soon to involve them in the team. Careful consideration should be made in choosing a firm with experience in community design and the collaborative process for educational facilities. Passion, consensus, and honesty will be necessary to carry this process forward with the end result being a community school grounded in its neighborhood and serving as a center of the community.

Reflections

I was first introduced to the concept of community schools when I enrolled in Professor Strickland's course at MIT entitled "The Paterson Workshop" in the fall of 2000. I

entered MIT thinking that housing was the solution to the problems plaguing urban cores in the United States. The more I read and listened to students, adults, and educators, the more I understood the importance of schools that serve the needs of their students. My idea of how to approach community development expanded to include education, housing, community, and economic development. At the end of the workshop, I produced a report on teacher housing opportunities in downtown Paterson to serve the existing and future academy schools.

I maintained close ties with Professor Strickland and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work on another project with him in Paterson in the summer of 2001. This project was a collaboration between three MIT students and two high school students from MPACT in an intensive 8-week project to program two new schools in Paterson. We submitted a final report to Superintendent Dr. Duroy that included programming alternatives for a new International High School in the historic district and a K-8 school in close proximity to downtown. Plans are currently underway to construct these two schools.

For the past eight months, I have had the opportunity to work with LCW as a co-instructor for the Young Architects after-school program. This experience has provided great insight into the issues that students face within the public school system in Lawrence. It has also given me an opportunity to become acquainted with the community and begin to understand its complexities. From this experience, it is evident that students in Lawrence need schools that embrace the community school concepts

and engage students in learning. These students are hungry for knowledge and challenging experiences that give value to education. A community school can help accomplish this.

Working with Professor Strickland and the NASDP team and in Lawrence has been an invaluable learning experience. It has not only led me to produce this thesis, but it has shaped the way I approach community development and relationship building. This approach is developing into a practice. This project with the Holy Rosary School in Lawrence is the beginning of practicing how to engage schools in their communities and vice-versa through community partnerships.

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