Community Development and Schools

CONFLICT, POWER AND PROMISE

Edited by
MILDRED E. WARNER, JASON REECE
and XUE ZHANG

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ROUTLEDGE

“This research provides stakeholders with evidence for bridging the silos of community development and public schools. This book is a must-read for stakeholders who need a new vision, plans, policies and practices to address longstanding challenges like aged and deteriorated public school buildings and grounds, which are concentrated in this nation’s low-wealth neighborhoods and communities.”

Mary Filardo, *Executive Director of 21st Century School Fund*

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOLS

This book lays out the promise and potential of schools as community-building institutions. It explores the challenges faced in incorporating schools into broader community development policy and also recognizes the changing demographics of schools and their need to integrate with economic development policy in order to promote broader community development.

The book includes chapters on tax abatements and economic development policy impacts on schools, new approaches to school building renovation, the potential and reach of shared services between communities and schools, and the impact of school-based health centers. It also offers a theory to integrate schools into community development. Key elements include shared power between communities and schools, greater transparency in economic development policy, collaboration across the broad range of community actors, and engagement of diverse voices. These elements build a greater sense of belonging across generations and class and racial divides.

Creative democracy can broaden both school and community development agendas and build a culture of health. This book will help community development and school leaders recognize and pursue the promise of schools as critical community development actors.

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Conflict, Power and Promise

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This book is dedicated to all the school and community leaders trying to build a better world for us all.

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PREFACE

Schools are an important but often overlooked factor in community development. This book addresses that gap. The book chapters grew out of a series of conference sessions at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, the Rural Sociological Society and the Urban Affairs Association. Chapter authors shared their work on the role of schools in providing community and health services, concerns with tax abatement policy, and the potential to repurpose school buildings. Several of the chapters appeared in a special issue of *Community Development*, published in 2023. This book takes that work a step further to elaborate a theory to connect schools and community development.

Schools represent a tremendous resource in communities. They educate the future generation. They instill principles of democracy and teach children and youth how to engage across differences that divide our society. Public schools are the foundation of a democratic society. Schools also help promote equity. They are often the first to recognize students in need. They provide social supports (nutrition, health, recreation) for students and families. Schools have buildings that can be used to address broader community needs through shared services. Schools are a key community-building institution.

But schools also reflect fundamental societal inequities. Fewer than half of schools support shared services. In many communities, schools are silos onto themselves. That needs to change. Funding rests heavily on the property tax, so higher wealth districts enjoy better schools. This funding inadequacy has led most states to restructure their education funding. But inequities remain, and children experiencing poverty and children of color are overwhelmingly concentrated in poorer-performing schools. This needs to change.

Schools have a lot to contribute to economic development. They prepare the future workforce. Quality schools also attract workforce and employers to

communities. But schools are often left out of economic development policy. Tax abatements, the primary economic development tool, divert property tax dollars away from schools. Schools typically have no voice in these policy decisions. That should change.

In this book we lay out both the promise and potential of schools as community-building institutions and the challenges we face in incorporating schools into broader community development policy. We argue for shared power between communities and schools and greater transparency in economic development policy. Collaboration across the broad range of community actors and engagement of diverse voices can lead to a greater sense of belonging across generations and class and racial divides. This helps build a more creative democracy that can broaden both school and community development agendas. This is the promise. We hope this book helps community development and school leaders recognize and pursue this promise.

We would like to thank, first and foremost, the school and community development leaders who are showing the way. It is a privilege to profile your work. We also thank the editors of the journal *Community Development*, Craig Talmadge and Brien Ashdown, who invited us to assemble this work for the special issue, and the chapter authors for continuing with us in revisions for this book. We have appreciated working with Mark Brennan, editor of the Routledge Community Development Research and Practice Series, and Kathryn Schell and Selena Hostetler of the Routledge editorial team.

We also thank our funders. The US Dept of Agriculture funded many of these studies through the Hatch, Smith Lever and National Institute of Food and Agriculture grants. Most of us work at land grant universities (Cornell, Ohio State, Maryland, Texas A and M), and the support of the USDA for community development research and extension at land grant institutions makes much of this work possible. The National Institutes of Health has been another key funder, as it increasingly recognizes the role of schools and community development in addressing social determinants of health.

Last, we thank our families for supporting us in this endeavor and losing many nights and weekends as we completed our research. Human ecology theory reminds us that we are nested as individuals in family and community networks, and these, in turn, are nested in macro policy structures. We have agency. We can push outward from individual to community layers to promote community change and use this experience to seek policy change. We hope this book is one step in that process.

Mildred E. Warner, Jason Reece, and Xue Zhang
March 2024

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

21CSBP	Baltimore's 21st Century School Buildings Program
BCPSS	Baltimore City Public School System
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services
CCS	Columbus City Schools
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CEA	Columbus Education Association
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CRA	Community Reinvestment Areas
EZ	Enterprise Zones
FILOT	Fee-in-Lieu-of-Taxes
GASB77	Government Accounting Standards Board
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IAC	Maryland Interagency Committee on School Construction
IRBs	Industrial Revenue Bonds
IDA	Industrial Development Authority/Agency
MSA	Maryland Stadium Authority
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NIZ	Neighborhood Improvement Zone
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PILOT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
RWJF	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
SBHC	School-Based Health Center
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
WHO	World Health Organization

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PART I

Introduction

Schools and Community Development

In this section we outline our theory for linking schools and community development. Chapter 1 introduces our theoretical framework, which links social, physical, financial, and institutional aspects. We explore the particular challenges schools face post COVID-19 and the need to bring in a broader set of actors into the school/community debate.

Chapter 2 provides critical background on the demographic challenges that schools face, with increasing numbers of low-income and immigrant students and students of color. We also discuss implications of declining student enrollment. This demographic shift creates the opportunity to expand schools' role in broader community development activities.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOLS

Interrelationships, Conflict, and Power[1]

Mildred E. Warner, Jason Reece, and Xue Zhang

Introduction

Schools are a critical element of community infrastructure that historically have been understudied in the context of community development and city planning. As Howell Baum wrote two decades ago in his critique of smart growth policies, planning's avoidance of urban education undermines the field's ability to address planning issues such as urban development and urban sprawl (2004).

Schools can have a tremendous influence on community development. Schools are essential community infrastructure vitally important to child development, workforce development and community wellbeing. In addition to being spaces of formal learning, schools also act as a critical third place for community engagement, social support and social interaction (Nguyen et al., 2017). School facilities can act as important spaces of shared use for public services, as shown in Chapters 5–8 of this book, which build from a special issue of *Community Development* published in 2023 (Bierbaum et al., 2023; Warner & Zhang, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Tennyson et al., 2023).

Schools have a growing importance in supporting the social dimensions of public health. Schools can be sites for interventions and services addressing a variety of social determinants of health. Schools have acted as a physical point of intervention for supporting healthy eating, physical activity and provision of medical services to youth and families (Kim et al., 2021; Kriemler et al., 2011; Randolph et al., 2023; Richardson & Juszczak, 2008). For children in poverty, schools can have tremendous potential for supporting wellness, literacy and mental health and providing mental health services (Cappella et al., 2008; Vilches, 2023; Wells et al., 2003). The horizontal collaboration between schools and community institutions

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is a powerful tool to address the social determinants of health, such as access to healthcare (Tennyson et al., 2023) and services (Warner & Zhang, 2020, 2023).

Public finance and real estate markets are also deeply intertwined with public education systems. In much of the United States, schools are still heavily dependent on local property taxes; nationally more than one third of school funding is derived from local property taxes (Kenyon et al., 2022). The reliance on locally generated taxes creates a point of vulnerability and potential conflict for public school systems. Neoliberal policies in urban redevelopment have placed emphasis on various tax incentives to spur development (Lipman, 2013). These incentive programs have received substantial criticism for pulling resources away from public education systems (Wen et al., 2021). In some urban settings, the intersection of incentive programs, population loss and austerity measures have led to school closures and conflict (Farmer & Weber, 2022; Weber, 2003). Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in this book explore these issues of economic development and tax abatements and their implications on school services and closures in more detail. These chapters build from a special issue of *Community Development* published in 2023 (Wen & LeRoy, 2023; Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2023; Bierbaum et al., 2023).

Educational outcomes and neighborhood environmental conditions are directly interrelated (Levy, 2021). As Paul Tough recounts in *How Children Succeed*, educators and school administrators are held accountable for many external environmental factors they cannot control within the confines of the school building (2012). Housing and neighborhood environments deeply influence maternal and child health outcomes (Reece, 2021). Environmental stressors, chronic or toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences have profound impacts on brain development, impulse control and concentration (Reece, 2020).

Schools are critical community institutions. They can be involved in so much more than just their educational role. This has led to new forms of collaboration, from shared services to full service community schools, and we profile examples in this book. While programs such as the Move To Opportunity (MTO) housing mobility experiment emphasize moving children from high poverty neighborhoods and demonstrate significant positive adult educational and economic outcomes (Chetty et al., 2016), in this book we focus on the role schools can play as critical neighborhood institutions improving outcomes for children who remain in place. Communities do not disappear, even if their schools do. Our focus is on exploring the connections between communities and schools.

Towards a Theory Linking Community Development and Schools

This book explores how schools contribute to a broader community development agenda. Community development offers a comprehensive view of community problems and institutions, but little community development literature has directly addressed the role of schools. This book contributes to that lacunae in the literature.

We draw on the community capitals framework of Flora et al. (2016), which gives attention to political, economic, natural, built environment, social, cultural and financial capital. It is the combination of all these capitals that determines how community development plays out. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) have advocated an asset-based approach to community development, and schools are seen as a key community asset.

Good (2022) has articulated a framework linking community development and schools. He outlines four dimensions: social, institutional, economic and physical. He argues that schools provide critical social support and are a place for community-level social interaction. Institutionally schools have resources (professional staff, large budgets, buildings) that can be combined with other non-profit and governmental institutions to promote community development. In rural areas, schools may be the only public institution in town (Lyson, 2002), and in urban neighborhoods they play an important public community role. Physically, schools represent a critical building resource for the broader community. This is especially important in rural and urban communities that lack other community institutions.

Good (2022) emphasizes the economic connections between schools, real estate values and local businesses, and we give special attention to financial issues in this book. While schools have independent taxation authority, they are increasingly limited by tax abatements. Economic development practice often competes with broader school objectives, potentially to the detriment of children who need services most. This is a subject we explore in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Figure 1.1 shows how schools and community development are linked. Drawing from Good (2022), it shows how institutional, financial, social and physical aspects are linked and can help schools contribute to broader community development. The range of action is conditioned by financial aspects and by demographic change, as declining youth populations shift investment priorities and threaten school closures. Chapter 2 by Reece provides background on the demographic challenges, and Chapter 5 by Bierbaum et al. offers a different approach to school closures by exploring the 21st-Century School Buildings initiative in Baltimore.

This book gives primary attention to the institutional and financial aspects of the school–community development nexus. Institutionally schools can build relationships more broadly across the community or remain as silos unto themselves. Valli et al. (2016) offer a typology of school collaborations that follows a spectrum from service referral to full-service schools to a broader community development stance. What distinguishes these is the range of services offered, the relationships engendered and the level of shared power. Leadership, resources, relationships and evaluation are key, but what really moves schools along the spectrum toward community development is democracy and shared power (Valli et al., 2016).

Except for some of the schools in the Baltimore case described in Chapter 5 by Bierbaum et al., almost none of the examples in this book reach the level of full-service community schools. Collaboration and shared services are becoming

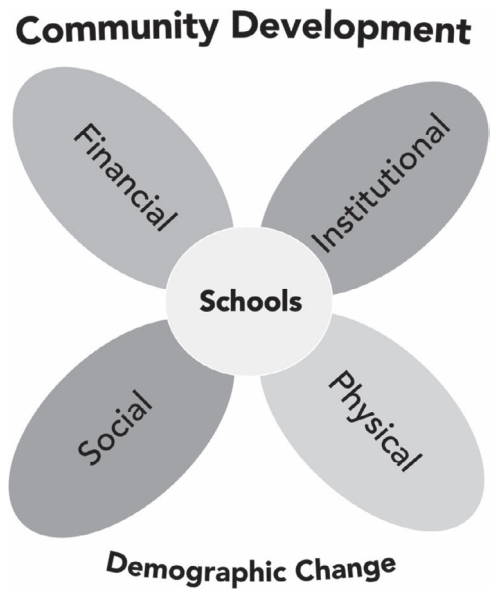

FIGURE 1.1 Theoretical framework for linking schools and community development

Source: Author, based on Good (2022).

more common but are still far from universal, as national surveys reported in Chapter 6 by Warner and Zhang find less than half of responding communities report shared service relationships with their schools.

What limits a greater degree of collaboration? Valli et al. (2016) point to leadership, resources, relationships and evaluation. Trust is key and can lead to shared understanding for more collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008), but sharing also benefits from an organizational structure to support collaboration (Walzer et al., 2016). This is a key element in collective impact theory, along with engagement, communication and common measurement (Kania & Kramer, 2011). But Warner and Zhang (2023) argue these elements are insufficient because they give insufficient attention to power. Community development theory recognizes the importance of power differentials, and identifying ways to promote shared power between schools and communities is key. Common vision helps (Biddle et al., 2018), as does participation of parents and children (Makarewicz, 2022) and some form of institutionalization (McKoy et al., 2011).

Schools are sources of both cooperation and conflict. As a social anchor, the type of power schools wield can impact the extent to which they cooperate with the community (Clopton & Finch, 2011). Warner and Zhang in Chapter 6 emphasize the importance of shared, horizontal power between communities and schools to promote more joint use. Westin (2022) calls for more research on the differences

between horizontal, shared power and hierarchical power. This is important not only in the institutional area but also in the financial area, as we will address next.

Economic Development and Finance Connection

Schools are powerful institutions for community development because they have local democratic governance and independent taxation authority. They also can be important anchors for economic development. Local economic development policy is heavily based on tax abatements (Zheng & Warner, 2010), and this book raises concern that schools are losing financial resources due in part to tax abatements. Economic development is practiced by industrial development agencies and local governments, and schools rarely have a voice in those debates. Few scholars have studied this problem, in part because there is almost no data transparency. But Wen and LeRoy in Chapter 3 show what the impact of tax abatements might be, as they assess data available for the first time as a result of the new governmental accounting standards (GASB-77). Reece and Abou-Ghalioum in Chapter 4 show the impact of tax abatements on the Columbus, Ohio, city schools.

Early growth coalition theorists argued that coalitions of business, government and real estate interests would overwhelm community voices with a focus on the exchange rather than the use value of local investments (Molotch, 1976). We see this in economic development and tax policy. Harvey (2005) has taken this a step further, arguing that this accumulation process by community elites is done through dispossession. The process of tax abatements to promote growth at the expense of investment in schools is a subtle form of accumulation by dispossession, as shown in Chapters 3 and 4 by Wen and LeRoy and Reece and Abou-Ghalioum. Critical race theory (CRT) helps us understand the structural or systemic policies and practices that marginalize racial and ethnic groups (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). Racial capitalism points specifically to the racial impacts and origins of economic development and planning policy and the need for reparations (Williams, 2024). This has generated new approaches to understanding history and economic development policy, but it has led to contention, especially within school curricula, as CRT is primarily focused on surfacing historically neglected (or censored) aspects of history that were grounded in racial discrimination (Dixson & Rousseau Anderson, 2018).

Physical

School facilities are critical to ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment. Poor-quality facilities, lack of consistent heating and cooling and indoor environmental risks can prove detrimental to learning outcomes. Schools are often considered neighborhood anchor institutions for their communities. Institutions "anchor" economic and social capital within neighborhoods and are embedded within the mental map of the community, helping to solidify a neighborhood's sense of place.

School facilities are not only critical spaces of learning but also spaces of organizing and social interaction. When school facilities bring together diverse populations, they can facilitate relationship building across racial, ethnic, class and generational lines. As Bierbaum et al. demonstrate in Chapter 5, even when school closures occur, school buildings can be creatively reused to serve various community needs.

Schools can experience a variety of challenges related to physical facilities due to student population growth or, conversely, population decline. Rapidly developing suburban or exurban areas can place tremendous short-term pressures on school facilities, resulting in overcrowding and in some cases requiring the use of modular classroom facilities to address overcrowding. Rural lower-income districts with limited development or tax bases may have dilapidated school facilities. Large urban districts, which have experienced student population decline due to sprawl or outward migration, may have a dual challenge of aging infrastructure and buildings under enrollment capacity. Currently, spending is not adequate to maintain our existing school building inventory. As noted by Filardo et al. (2019), half of all school buildings require some significant physical repair, and the American Society of Civil Engineers ranks our K12 school building infrastructure as a D+ in its national infrastructure scorecard (ASCE, 2021). The 21st Century School Fund estimates a gap of more than $80 billion annually in funds needed to maintain and support school physical facilities across the nation (Filardo, 2021).

Social

Schools are critical social actors. They are where we build our first relationships with others, and parents get to know other parents through their children. Frug (1999) argues that community development is first and foremost a process of community building—based on the ability to engage across difference. Schools are the key public institution that helps us build those engagement skills. This is why schools were considered key to democracy in the founding of the nation. Block (2018) emphasizes the importance of building a sense of belonging across differences and the critical role that institutions such as schools provide in that process. In this context, public schools are critical physical and social spaces to cultivate and support these interactions.

Schools provide social connections to services, as schools are one community-level institution that reaches into every neighborhood. As schools expand their remit to include health and other services, as shown in Chapters 5–8, they have the ability not only to address the broader challenges students face; they also can be key players in building a new more comprehensive conception of community development that reaches beyond housing and economic development to address broader social needs. But this requires two-way participation between community and schools and power sharing—in short, a more democratic approach to community development.

Schools also face many challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major societal disruption that directly impacted youth development and public education. The

pandemic was not only a period of educational disruption but also prefaced intense political activism and conflict within public schools. The growth in political action within schools by such groups as Moms for Liberty has shown the dangers of an incomplete democracy where the broader educational and community development agenda is captured by a minority view.

The experience of the pandemic also illustrated the limits of technology in supporting public education and the influence of economic, family and social vulnerability on youth outcomes during a time of disruption and crisis. The pandemic shifted perspectives on virtual vs in person learning experiences in public education. Although online K12 educational options had existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience of the pandemic illustrated both the benefits and limitations of virtual education. While virtual learning tools expanded access to education during the pandemic, recent data on pandemic-related learning loss illustrates the limits of virtual education as the primary mechanism to facilitate learning. Technology is mediated by factors of economic, family and social vulnerability for children. These demographic challenges are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. While all students experienced some learning loss during the pandemic, data indicate that youth most vulnerable to economic, social or family factors experienced the largest rates of learning loss (Kane & Reardon, 2023; Fahle et al., 2023).

The pandemic also illustrated the importance of schools as physical spaces of socialization, particularly for younger children (Hen et al., 2022). The pandemic demonstrated the importance of schools as a physical site of social interaction and learning. Crises can be moments of innovation or radical change. We saw this in the privatization of schools in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (Rooks, 2020). In the post-pandemic world, privatization is not the key issue on the agenda; rather social issues around LGTBQ and racial concerns dominate. Over 900 school districts have been targeted by campaigns to limit attention to race and gender issues (Williams, P., 2022). Whether collaborative community development approaches help bridge these divides remains to be seen. The hope and promise of this book is that a broader community development approach can build community and heal these divides.

This book will highlight the importance of data transparency and information, and the need for shared power between schools and economic development agencies and between schools and other community service providers. It will focus specifically on the mechanisms that enable change. Drawing from theories of collaboration and collective impact, it will explore the elements of institutional design that lead to more service sharing. It will also show the importance of a broader set of voices: teachers, parents, children, other community organizations and local government in working with schools as a partner for community development.

Chapter Introductions

This book has three parts. In Part One, we set the stage by addressing the theoretical and demographic context. In Part Two, we explore finance and the need to

incorporate schools in the analysis of tax abatement and economic development policy. We illustrate the implications through case studies on Columbus, Ohio, and Baltimore, Maryland. These sections give specific emphasis to the challenges faced in urban and poor districts. In Part Three, we explore the potential for schools to address critical community challenges in service delivery through joint use service collaboration. Our focus is at the national level but also gives attention to the unique challenges of rural school districts. This section also includes a case study on school-based health care, which moves beyond simple service sharing to a more in-depth partnership between health providers and schools. Part Four concludes with theory on how to engage schools as community development actors, especially in the context of political challenges to schools in the post–COVID-19 environment. This book builds in part on Good's (2022) framework of economic, institutional, physical and social elements.

Financial relationships. The financial relationships between schools and economic development planning and policy are understudied. This book is the first to focus on this important topic by examining the use of tax abatements as a policy tool for economic development and its impact on public school finance and education equity. In Chapter 3, Wen and LeRoy use a national database to investigate the effect of tax abatement on schools' revenue loss per pupil and find that needier school districts are most affected. Reece and Abou-Ghalioum's case study of Columbus, Ohio, in Chapter 4 reveals that tax abatements resulted in the most revenue loss for the city school district, which could have been used to improve educational services and school facilities for lower-income students. Both studies highlight the need to increase the engagement of public schools in economic development and call for greater collaboration between economic planning, community development and public schools to ensure greater equity in the distribution of government funding.

Physical—Bierbaum, Butler and O'Keefe in Chapter 5 present a case study on Baltimore's 21st Century School Buildings Program and find that investing in new physical forms for school buildings can benefit various domains of community development, including social, institutional and economic. More importantly, achieving this requires institutional collaboration through a lead agency, a clear vision and supportive structures for development (Bierbaum et al., 2023).

Institutional relationships. The institutional relationship between schools and communities can achieve both educational and broader community development goals. Schools can serve as a source of community capital to foster community development. Joint use services are important outcomes of the institutional relationship between schools and communities. In Chapter 6, Warner and Zhang examine the impact of power dynamics between local governments and schools on joint-use services, using a national-level survey and theories from collaborative governance and collective impact. Warner and Zhang's (2023) research demonstrates that horizontal shared power between schools and local government

is key to ensuring more joint use agreements between local governments and schools. In addition to shared power, their study shows that community engagement and common vision are critical for providing joint-use services for all age groups, not just children. In Chapter 7, Warner, Sipple and Wang present results on a survey of school districts in New York state and find that rural and small communities with more minority children have more joint-use services. The New York state case shows that motivations for inter-local cooperation play a more significant role than financial incentives in increasing joint use services.

Social. Schools play an important role in improving social determinants of health, especially in rural and minority-dominated communities. Schools can collaborate with other community organizations, service providers and families to enhance education and health access, promote community well-being and cultivate a culture of health. Using human-ecological approaches and the social determinants of health framework, Chapter 8 by Tennyson et al. examines the impact of school-based health centers (SBHCs) on improving healthcare access and building a culture of health for children in rural communities across a four-county region in New York state. They find that SBHCs, established by the partnerships between schools, healthcare providers and community, contribute to community development by providing comprehensive and affordable healthcare to children, building social networks, improving social determinants of health and supporting rural community well-being.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in the following chapters, public schools and community development are directly intertwined. Public schools are less effective when youth are vulnerable to environmental, economic, housing and other community-based challenges stemming from outside the classroom. Community development is undermined when public education systems are not adequate, creating economic and social challenges at the community scale. Schools are important spaces of community interaction and resource provision and in shaping social identity (Collins, 2008). Both fields can leverage each other's capabilities, recognizing community development is critical to addressing stressors for youth outside of the classroom and that public schools are critical community assets to anchor community development activities. Although community development and city planning have traditionally been disengaged and siloed from public schools, the aftermath of the pandemic creates an opportunity to engage both disciplines to support youth development and an educated democratic society.

Note

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2

YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Jason Reece

Introduction

Planning for K12 educational systems and community development necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the demographic and socio-economic conditions of today's youth population. In the United States, notable demographic shifts are significantly altering the diversity and size of the youth population, while legacies of structural racism contribute to contemporary inequities in relation to segregation and environmental conditions. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has directly impacted youth development, exacerbating challenges faced by students in educational settings.

The contemporary school-age population is characterized by increased diversity and a higher likelihood of bilingualism or English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency. Additionally, youth today have access to a broader array of educational options due to advancements in remote learning technology and the prevalence of school choice provisions nationwide. While the concept of the traditional "neighborhood school" remains important, its relevance is diminishing in a world where youth exhibit greater mobility in pursuing educational opportunities. However, these expanded choices are constrained by economic, housing, and transportation barriers.

This chapter provides an overview of the demographic, geographic, and economic factors shaping today's school-age population. Initially, I explore demographic shifts and the growing diversity within the US youth population. Subsequently, I delve into equity concerns focused on the enduring impacts of structural racism, segregation, and disparate environmental conditions. The third section offers an overview of literature highlighting the direct impacts of the pandemic on youth well-being.

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The shifting demographic, geographic, and socio-economic conditions outlined in this chapter will inevitably impact K12 educational systems and community development. In some instances, the societal and educational repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified these existing trends. The chapter concludes by discussing the significance of community development in addressing pandemic-related impacts and mitigating barriers to youth well-being beyond the confines of the classroom, particularly within the neighborhood environment.

The Shifting Demographics of Adolescents in the US

Similar to global trends, fertility and birth rates in the United States have experienced a decline, albeit not as steep as in certain European and East Asian nations (Vollset et al., 2020). This decline is contributing to a relative decrease in the adolescent population in the US, a phenomenon observed between 2000 and 2020 (Blakeslee et al., 2023a). In 2000, 25.7% of the US population was under the age of 18, accounting for 72.3 million youth. However, by 2020, only 22% of the population fell within this age group. The largest decline occurred between 2010 and 2020, witnessing a 1.4% decrease in the total number of youth, dropping from 74.2 million to 73.1 million (Blakeslee et al., 2023b). In contrast, the US population over the age of 65 has exhibited both absolute and relative growth, increasing from 12.4% to 16.8% of the total population between 2000 and 2020 (Blakeslee et al., 2023a). Demographers project that by 2034, older adults (over age 65) will outnumber children in the United States, and by 2060, they are estimated to constitute 23% of the population, with those under age 18 representing just 19% (Vespa, 2021).

Influenced by economic, medical, and social factors, birth rates have seen a faster decline among women under age 35 and among Hispanic women (National Center for Health Statistics, 2022). Between 2009 and 2019, the total number of live births per 1,000 women decreased from 13.5 to 11.4. Notably, the most substantial decline occurred among young adult women aged 20 to 25, with birth rates decreasing from 96.2 live births per 1,000 women in 2009 to 66.6 live births per 1,000 women in 2019. Similarly, the overall birth rate for Hispanic women dropped from 20.3 live births per 1,000 women in 2009 to 14.6 live births per 1,000 women in 2019. While the causes for the decline in birth rates are not entirely clear, scholars have pointed to increased child-rearing costs, economic repercussions of the 2008 Great Recession, and the rapid assimilation of immigrant populations as contributing factors (Kearney et al., 2022).

The implications of declining birth rates and a diminishing adolescent population for school districts, as well as state and local governments, remain uncertain. In the short term, some districts and cities may need to consider school closures and consolidations, potentially resulting in increased transportation challenges for adolescents, especially in rural districts (Grose, 2023). Long-term effects may manifest in tax revenue, fiscal risks, and labor force challenges for local and state governments (Chapman, 2022). Furthermore, housing needs, including considerations such as

bedroom composition, square footage, and the demand for accessory dwelling units, may undergo shifts due to smaller household sizes, an aging population, and the growth in single-person households.

Youth Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The demographics of the adolescent population in the United States serve as an early indicator of larger national shifts towards increased racial and ethnic diversity. While the United States is not projected to attain a multi-racial majority until 2045, the adolescent population already mirrors this diverse multi-racial future (Frey, 2020). In 2021, White non-Hispanic children constituted 49.4% of the adolescent population, while 50.6% identified as children of color (Children's Defense Fund, 2023). As illustrated in Table 2.1, while the total US population is growing more diverse, the growth in diversity has been more pronounced for those under age 18. The least diverse demographic segment (by age) is the senior population, which is currently only 24% non-White or Hispanic.

Race, ethnicity, and immigration status also play pivotal roles in characterizing the diverse youth population. Since 2002, the percent of youth living in immigrant households grew from 19% to 25% of the total youth population. According to the 2017–2021 American Community Survey, nearly a quarter (22%) of the population aged 14 to 24 were immigrants or resided in immigrant family households. Immigrant or immigrant household youth constituted three-quarters of the Asian population aged 18 to 24, half of the Hispanic population aged 18 to 24, and one-third of the multiracial population aged 18 to 24. The immigrant youth population is on the rise; in 2010, one-fourth of the population under age 18 was immigrants or born to immigrant parents, and by 2050, this figure is anticipated to represent one-third of the population under age 18 (Passel, 2011).

Implications of Changing Demographics

The nation's burgeoning racial and ethnic diversity among youth carries significant implications for planning school systems and community development. Ensuring

TABLE 2.1 Total, senior, and child population trends (1980 to 2020)

	1980	*1990*	*2000*	*2010*	*2020*
Total population: non-White or Hispanic	20%	24%	31%	36%	42%
Population under 18: non-White or Hispanic	26%	31%	39%	46%	50%
Population over age 65: non-White or Hispanic	12%	13%	16%	20%	24%

Source: Developed by author; data from the PolicyLink National Equity Atlas.

cultural and language competency among staff in youth-serving organizations or school districts will be crucial. Special attention and investment are needed to address socio-economic and environmental disparities facing youth of color (Children's Defense Fund, 2023). The growing population of youth who are immigrants or reside in immigrant households presents a tremendous opportunity to counteract the decline in overall adolescent population and will be critical for future labor force needs. Community development organizations will be essential to support immigrant families in accessing resources, services, and employment or educational opportunities. Immigrant children or the children of immigrants are also more vulnerable to trauma related to immigration policies and deportation (Children's Defense Fund, 2023). Between 2011 and 2013, half a million US citizen children experienced the deportation of a parent, resulting in a higher likelihood of PTSD, stress, anxiety-related behavioral changes, and indications of chronic stress (American Immigration Council, 2021).

Structural Racism in Housing Policy: Impacts on Adolescents and Schools

The legacy of racial and economic segregation in neighborhoods and schools directly impacts equity concerns facing youth today. A century of de jure and de facto racial discrimination in housing and development policies has left a legacy of segregation and disparate neighborhood conditions across US cities. Because residence determines school access, racial discrimination in housing has a direct impact on schools (Bhargava, 2018). The historian Carl Nightingale at the University of Buffalo has described the phenomena of residential segregation as requiring "institutionally organized human intentionality" (Nightingale, 2012, p. 7). Historians and scholars have documented a systemic arrangement of policies and practices throughout the 20th century, by both the private and public sector, that enforced segregation in housing markets, particularly in metropolitan areas (Reece, 2021). Public-sector policies, at both the local and federal level, enforced and encouraged segregation. As Richard Rothstein has documented in *The Color of Law*, the interwoven and reinforcing nature of private sector and public sector segregation is a manifestation of structural racism in our 20th-century housing markets and cities that has never truly been remedied (2017).

Driven by practices of racial zoning, restrictive covenants and exclusionary zoning, rates of residential racial segregation for the African American community nearly doubled between 1880 and 1940 (Logan & Parman, 2017). Increased residential segregation also occurred for certain immigrant populations and other racial and ethnic groups during this time. However, segregation among many "white ethnic" populations and other racial groups began to decline after 1920 (Eriksson & Ward, 2019), while segregation in the African American community continued to increase before peaking in 1970 (Logan, 2013). Since 1970, African American segregation has gradually declined as civil rights reforms enabled greater access in the housing market (Logan & Stults, 2011).

The decline in African American segregation demonstrates progress stemming from the civil rights movement toward an integrated housing market (Frey, 2018). Unfortunately, the slow pace of declining segregation will require decades to reach comparable rates of segregation for other racial and ethnic groups. Racial segregation is commonly measured using the dissimilarity index, a calculation representing what percentage of a racial or ethnic population would need to relocate to integrate neighborhoods across a metropolitan area.

The highest degree of racial segregation, measured via the dissimilarity index, is African American/White dissimilarity (dissimilarity index = 55). The dissimilarity index for African American/White segregation is declining at a rate of only 7% per decade, and segregation of African Americans is much higher than residential segregation of Hispanics and Asians (Logan & Stults, 2022). If African American/White segregation continues declining at its current pace, it would not reach the current degree of segregation (as measured by the dissimilarity index) experienced by the Hispanic community until 2030 and of the Asian community until after 2050.

Declining dissimilarity rates mask the persistent segregation facing lower-income racial and ethnic households. Racial and economic segregation are intertwined in the contemporary housing market. Measures of economic segregation, such as the number of Americans living in extremely high-poverty census tracts (those with at least a 40% poverty rate) has doubled between 2000 and 2014 (Kneebone & Holmes, 2016).

Declining dissimilarity rates do not necessarily indicate that racial and ethnic groups are living in better neighborhood environments (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2014). Mid–20th-century practices and policies, such as redlining and urban renewal, have exacerbated disparities in neighborhood conditions between racial and ethnic populations. Research by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition finds that formerly redlined neighborhoods are predominantly low income today. Their analysis found that 74% of formerly redlined neighborhoods were still low to moderate income in 2016 (Mitchell & Franco, 2018). Analysis by Aaronson et al. (2021) measured the long-run effects of the Depression-era Home Owners Loan Corporation's (HOLC) neighborhood assessments on contemporary socioeconomic outcomes. They found 1930s HOLC ratings had a large and statistically significant causal effect, particularly on children who grew up in formerly redlined areas in the 1980s and 1990s (Aaronson et al., 2021). Their analysis indicates that children who grew up in historically redlined areas had an 11% probability of reaching the top quintile of household incomes as adults. In comparison, the probability of children growing up in historically greenlined areas reaching the top quintile of household incomes was 23%.

Studies have demonstrated the long-term impacts of redlining on many contemporary housing and built environment conditions (An et al., 2019). Historic patterns of redlining have been associated with increased risk for predatory lending and foreclosure during the 2008 housing crisis (Hernandez, 2009). Redlining is identified as contributing to the growth of slum lords, predatory creditors, and crime in

historically redlined areas (Aalbers, 2006). Studies have documented the relationship between historic redlining, contemporary social vulnerability, and gun violence (Benns et al., 2020). Studies emerging from public health indicate historic redlining can be linked to contemporary health outcomes, elevated unhealthy heat events, and inequities in access to green space (McClure et al., 2019; Wilson, 2020; Nardone et al., 2021). Redlining has been empirically linked to contemporary poor health outcomes such as preterm birth and infant mortality (Krieger et al., 2020; Beck et al., 2020; Reece, 2021). Historic HOLC maps are also associated with contemporary disparities in schools. Analysis of historic redlining patterns correlate today with schools that are more likely to be predominantly non-White and high poverty, with lower test scores and lower local per-pupil funding (Monarrez & Chien, 2021; Lukes & Cleveland, 2021).

Neighborhood Environmental Conditions and Impact on Youth Development

Segregation and the legacy of structural racism have contributed to the isolation of lower-income racial and ethnic populations into neighborhoods that lack critical opportunity structures, such as strong schools, safe or healthy environments, and economic resources (Massey, 2001). Research by the Diversity Data Kids initiative at Brandeis University has found African American and Hispanic children are disproportionately isolated into "very low opportunity" neighborhoods (Acevedo-Garcia, 2020). Their analysis of the 100 largest metropolitan areas finds that when ranking neighborhoods based on 29 indicators of neighborhood wellbeing, the lowest-ranking neighborhoods (representing 20% of all neighborhoods) contain 46% of all African American children and 33% of all Hispanic children. African American (66%) and Hispanic (50%) children in poverty are even more likely to be isolated into the lowest-opportunity neighborhoods. In comparison, fewer than 10% of White children and 20% of White children in poverty are in "very low"–opportunity neighborhoods.

Segregation and isolation into resource-deprived communities is an ongoing challenge that is particularly harmful to children. The quality of resources within neighborhood environments is profoundly important for child development (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2020). A large number of case studies and longitudinal studies have explored the outcomes for adults and youth from housing mobility programs. Fair housing mobility programs impact children by improving conditions at the household and neighborhood scale simultaneously. Improved housing conditions reduce risks associated with vermin, allergens, mold, and other indoor health challenges while also reducing environmental stress factors (primarily associated with an improved sense of safety) (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2004).

These studies have primarily emerged from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) ten-year experimental demonstration project initiative by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development in five cities. Research by Raj Chetty has identified

the longitudinal effects of the MTO program on child health and future earnings. Chetty's research literature clearly indicates that moving to an opportunity-rich neighborhood produces a greater likelihood of increased lifetime earnings for youth as well as lowered rates of disease and better mental health. Lifetime earnings for children in the MTO experiment were 31% higher than their peers in higher-poverty neighborhoods Chetty et al., 2016).

Declining Residential Segregation but Increasing School Segregation

Despite the growing diversity of the K12 student population, racial and economic segregation for K12 schools has persisted as a national challenge. As measures of residential segregation have slowly declined, racial and economic segregation in schools has increased for Black students since the era of school desegregation, which peaked in the late 1980s. In 1988, more than one-third (37%) of Black students attended a school that was majority White; by 2018 this figure had declined to only 19% of Black students attending a majority-White school (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020). Black students remain the most isolated population based on race and income (Jang, 2022). Racial segregation is strongly associated with the size of educational achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups at 3rd grade and the growth of educational achievement gaps between 3rd and 8th grade (Reardon et al., 2022). The nexus of racial and economic segregation contributes directly to disparities in school educational quality and outcomes.

Research suggests the relationship between residential segregation and school segregation is driven by exclusionary housing policies at the jurisdictional level (Hagins, 2022). Jang (2022) estimated that 60 to 70% of the racial and economic segregation in the United States is driven by segregation between school districts and not between schools within districts. The nexus of historical and contemporary exclusionary housing policy is critical to understanding the disparities in educational conditions and outcomes facing youth today.

The intersection of racial and economic segregation and disparities in educational services is compounded by inequities in school funding. National studies have found that levels of segregation are associated with reduced school tax revenues (Sosina & Weathers, 2019; Weathers & Sosina, 2022). Economic development activities, such as tax abatements, can escalate these challenges. As discussed by Wen and Leroy (Chapter 3) and Reece and Abou-Ghalioum (Chapter 4) in this book, districts which face economic challenges and are more racially diverse are most vulnerable to school tax revenues lost to tax incentives.

Impacts of the Pandemic on Youth

School-age populations are one of the demographics most directly impacted by the pandemic and public policy responses. State governments across the nation initially responded with widespread school shutdowns in the immediate aftermath

of the pandemic. The embrace of remote learning during the pandemic, and a very uneven landscape of schools that returned early vs those who stayed remote longer, created sharp disparities in the pandemic experience of youth across the nation based on their school district and economic conditions.

Cities and Child Population Loss During the Pandemic

During the pandemic, large cities experienced substantial population loss. Census data indicates that of the 88 cities with populations larger than 250,000 in 2022, 51 cities experienced population loss during the pandemic (Frey, 2022). Collectively, the 88 largest cities in the nation lost 1% of their population. Population decline was most notable along the West Coast and Northeastern US, with New York; Washington, DC; and Boston losing between 3 and 3.5% of their population and San Francisco losing more than 6% of its population (Frey, 2022).

The nexus of declining birth rates and pandemic flight from large cities contributed to youth population decline in a similar trajectory, but unlike overall population growth, youth population decline was more pronounced and persistent in the nation's urban areas (O'Brien, 2023). Youth population loss was largest among the pre-school population. While overall population declined in the nation's largest urban counties at a rate of 1% between 2020 and 2023, the population under age 5 declined by more than 6% (O'Brien, 2023). These trends were more pronounced along the nation's coasts, with large urban counties in mid-Atlantic and Pacific losing 10% and 8% of their population under age 5 since the pandemic.

The Pandemic's Educational and Socioemotional Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted learning outcomes, mental health, and socialization of youth. Pandemic-related school closures, hybrid school schedules, and remote learning disrupted educational systems with direct impacts on youth (Donnelly & Patrino, 2021). Numerous studies documented the educational learning loss experienced by youth around the globe (Reimers, 2022; Aguaded et al., 2023). Remote learning was a poor substitute for traditional in-person instruction and resulted in reduced student engagement. Research indicates that the degree of student engagement in remote learning was corelated with and impacted by the availability of high-speed internet (Domina et al., 2021; Mac Domhnaill et al., 2021). However, even nations that were well suited to implement remote learning (with extensive high-speed broadband, less inequality, and more equitable school funding) also experienced learning loss (Engzell et al., 2021).

In the United States, research indicates that all students experienced some learning loss during the pandemic, but larger losses occurred in lower-resourced and higher-poverty school districts. Analysis from the Education Recovery Scorecard project assessed pandemic learning loss for 7,800 districts across the US (Kane & Reardon, 2023; Fahle et al., 2023). Among these 7,800 districts (representing 80% of all K12 students in the US), students were a half year behind in math and a third of a year

behind in reading when comparing outcomes between 2019 and 2022. In comparison to wealthy districts, students in the poorest districts experienced double the rate of learning loss in math and 50% more learning loss in reading (Kane & Reardon, 2023; Fahle et al., 2023). These national figures mask substantial disparities in learning outcomes based on the socioeconomic conditions within communities and school districts.

Surprisingly, family income was not related to variation in learning loss outcomes, but community and school district level economic conditions were. As described by Kane and Reardon (2023, p. 3): "it mattered a lot more which school district you lived in than how much money your parents earned." In addition to learning loss being positively associated with district economic conditions, other community-level factors were associated with learning loss. Measures of civic engagement and institutional trust (e.g. voting rates and census response rates) had a negative association with learning loss. Communities with longer and more intense disruption due to social restrictions and school closures were more likely to experience learning loss. Communities with larger increases in adults with depression and anxiety during the pandemic were also more likely to experience learning loss (Fahle et al., 2023).

The pandemic also exacerbated emotional health challenges and reduced socialization skills for youth. Although children were more likely to experience mild physiological impacts from the COVID-19 virus, youth were highly vulnerable to mental health challenges stemming from the pandemic (Courtney et al., 2020). Youth were directly impacted by fear associated with the family health risks and stress induced by COVID-19 mitigation measures and economic disruption (Hamilton & Gross, 2021).

Samji et al.'s 2023 systemic review of more than 110 peer-reviewed articles found increasing mental health conditions (particularly anxiety and depression) for youth around the globe. The pandemic has also reduced capacity for emotional regulation in youth, with male adolescents found to have the highest rates of difficulty with emotional regulation (Hen et al., 2022). The severity of pandemic control measures was associated with higher rates of mental health deterioration for youth. Older adolescents, female adolescents, and neurodivergent or disabled youth experienced the largest impacts on mental health. Protective factors for youth mental health included higher rates of physical exercise and high rates of social and familial support (Samji et al., 2022).

Similar to associations related to learning loss, the degree of socio-emotional impact from the pandemic on youth was influenced by the degree of vulnerability in youth and families. Youth who were already experiencing mental health challenges prior to the pandemic had more severe mental health impacts associated with the pandemic. Youth with better access to family, social, and community resources were less likely to experience mental health deterioration over the course of the pandemic (Branje & Morris, 2021).

Although adolescents were less likely to face the physical health risks associated with the pandemic, they were deeply impacted in the context of educational wellbeing, socialization, emotional regulation, and mental health. The depth of the

pandemic's impact at the community scale (e.g. mitigation measures, economic disruption, and degree of illness and death) deepened long-term impacts in learning and socioemotional health for youth. Adolescents who were already vulnerable to the educational and mental health impacts of the pandemic fared worse. These differential impacts of the pandemic are important in the context of community development, planning, and education. Youth and communities that were the most impacted by the pandemic's disruption will require more educational services to remediate learning loss and mental health supports. Challenges in socialization and emotional regulation directly impact the degree of community conflict and violence between adolescents. Investment in community, social, and family support will be critical to creating greater resiliency from the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

This makes the connections between community development and schools described in this book even more important. The possibility of joint use of school facilities presented by Warner and Zhang (Chapter 6) and Warner et al. (Chapter 7) can include new approaches to school buildings as community centers as described by Bierbaum (Chapter 5) and school-based health service centers by Tennyson et al. (Chapter 8). These chapters present positive examples of the potential for collaboration between community development and public schools.

Conclusion: The Essential Role of Community Development in Youth Development

Contemporary demographic trends, encompassing declining adolescent populations, decreasing birth rates, a growing senior population, and the rapid diversification of the youth population, will profoundly impact planning for youth by school systems and community developers. Expanding diversity among youth, coupled with growth of the immigrant youth population, presents an opportunity to counteract declining birth rates and the contraction of the adolescent population in the US. This will require additional resources and support to ensure cultural and language competency within youth-serving organizations. Immigrant youth and their families need special attention from school districts and community development organizations. While reformed immigration policies at the federal level are needed to prevent the trauma associated with caregiver or family deportation, trauma-informed practices in community development, education, and youth development are also important at the local level, especially in communities with large immigrant populations.

Addressing socio-economic and environmental disparities faced by youth of color will require focused efforts. Structural racism, particularly in housing and development policies, contributes directly to contemporary patterns of segregation and environmental disparities among youth of color. Despite more than seven decades since the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* US Supreme Court decision, school systems are witnessing growing rates of segregation, and this particularly

affects Black and Hispanic youth. Racial and economic segregation in schools, driven by exclusionary housing policies, significantly contributes to achievement gaps experienced by youth of color.

The seismic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth educational outcomes, socialization, and emotional well-being necessitates a nuanced understanding. Disparate impacts on youth populations emerged due to variations in pandemic remediation measures, community-level resources, and pre-existing vulnerabilities. These differences manifested in the persistent learning loss documented between 2019 and 2022. Addressing the long-term impacts of the pandemic will require more focused investment in communities which bore the greatest impact of pandemic related learning loss. The pandemic also demonstrated how community-level resources are critical to fostering greater resiliency in responding to future crises.

Community development policies and practices play a crucial role in serving youth populations and their families. Research underscores the strong association between external factors, beyond the classroom environment, on youth development. Socio-economic conditions of families and neighborhood environments significantly influence child development. Community development is ideally positioned to address these needs, beyond the traditional classroom and school building. City planning, affordable housing, and community development organizations must take a leading role in rectifying the longstanding legacy of structural racism in housing and development policies. This remediation will create an environment where more youth have their basic needs met, fostering an atmosphere in which they can thrive. Ultimately, addressing the racial and economic segregation facing youth today is essential to fulfilling the economic and societal needs of the future.

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PART II

Financial and Physical

Economic Development Policy and Schools

Economic development policy in the United States relies primarily on tax abatements as a tool to attract new industry. While the effectiveness of tax abatements has been questioned in the literature, tax abatements remain politically popular. Much scholarly and policy attention has been given to how to increase accountability of tax abatements.

Most recently, the Government Accountability Standards Board approved new accounting rules that require reporting tax expenditures (e.g. tax abatements). Now, for the first time, scholars can study the size, location and impact of tax abatements. Chapter 3 uses these data, in the states with the most robust reporting, to assess which school districts are most affected. They find that poor and minority districts are more affected. This is no surprise, as economic development incentives are targeted to areas lagging in economic development. The concern is that the lost revenue for public schools may affect children in these districts the most.

Tax abatement policy normally is handled by industrial development authorities. Rarely are school districts represented. But schools, as the largest component of the property tax, are the most affected by these abatements. Consultation with school districts would be an appropriate governance improvement for economic development policy.

The impacts are subtle. As shown in Chapter 4, the Columbus, Ohio, city school district, and other smaller, poor districts are affected the most by these tax abatements. Older school buildings fail to receive needed upgrading and repair. Special educational services can also be limited due to limited budgets. This is why teachers' unions also oppose the tax abatements. Reece and Abou-Ghalioum ask in Chapter 4, "Are we sacrificing children to the growth machine?"

A better approach would be a broader economic development policy that embraces schools as key partners. This approach is highlighted in Chapter 5, which

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discusses how Baltimore has promoted a 21st Century School Building Program. Some of these initiatives promote institution collaboration and help schools address a broader range of social and economic needs in their communities. This is the promise of integrating economic development and school policy.

In this section, we argue for an economic development policy that focuses on building the future work force, overcoming historical inequities and promoting accountability and transparency as an example of good governance and robust community development policy.

3

THE COST OF TAX INCENTIVES TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS[1]

Christine Wen and Greg LeRoy

Growth and redistribution are conflicting goals for community development (Campbell, 1996). Targeted business incentives exemplify this conflict as both the primary tool for boosting the economy and a drain on public coffers. Local governments in the United States rely on a menu of tax abatements to stimulate private sector investment. In doing so, however, they forego the revenues needed to fund other public priorities. Each incentive agreement represents a trade-off between potential future revenues from incented activities and actual immediate costs from revenue diversions. Not all deals are worth the sacrifice—some, in fact, are the result of rent-seeking practices masquerading as job creation strategies (LeRoy, 2005). Incentives can undermine the equitable delivery of public services. Even with the best intentions, deciding when to forego tax dollars (and how many) to attract local area investments is not easy.

Some of the fiercest battles around tax incentives are fought around the conflict between adequate school funding and new job creation. Those on the frontlines defending the disadvantaged and marginalized—community planners, advocates, and interest groups—often lose out in the competition for resources. Sometimes the promised benefits of incentives don't materialize, and critical community institutions like public schools end up paying the price.

Property tax is the single largest revenue source for local governments, and education is the costliest of the services they provide; property tax *abatements* are the most lucrative incentive for the typical US corporation to seek out, even though all state and local taxes make up only a small fraction of their expenses. Hence the tension between incentive-fueled economic growth wherein wealthy corporations profit and equitable access to education whereby skilled workers are forged. When dispensed with unnecessarily, tax abatements can harm the givers (governments) a lot more than they benefit the recipients (firms).

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Yet despite the severe and consequential tension, there is yet little research that analyzes the *social* costs of tax incentives, which may explain their continued proliferation. Conventional economic impact analyses show mixed results—and this ambiguity favors action (e.g., awarding incentives) over inaction (e.g., withholding incentives) in terms of the rational calculus for politicians. In depressed areas, especially, any kind of economic development intervention is seen as "worth a try."

New Government Accounting Standards Promote Accountability

In 2015, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), which sets the standards (known as the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, or GAAP) for public-sector financial reporting in the US, issued Statement No. 77 on Tax Abatement Disclosures (hereafter GASB 77). It changed the game for researchers of incentive-based development planning and policy. Now we have figures from some school districts for their *share* of abatement costs. By tasking finance officials with converting the price of incentives into jurisdiction-specific cost figures, GASB 77 marks the very first mechanism for transparency in *local* tax expenditures and—to date—the only one of its kind ever to have been codified by the GASB.

The keyword or caveat to this apparently transformative rule change is "some"—many school districts are spared from disclosing tax abatements for a variety of technical reasons. Education-specific cost data is absent altogether in 23 states and scant or uneven in many others. But for a dozen states, thanks to GASB 77, we now know how much schools forego for economic development starting FY 2017 when most places that adopted the rule were required to implement it.

Enforcement of the GASB's GAAP falls to state authorities: auditors, comptrollers, and/or treasurers. In some states, school districts' financial reports are overseen by education departments. Many states require most cities, counties, and/or school districts to adhere to GAAP by law or administrative code. School districts that receive $750,000 or more in federal funding (e.g., Title I districts) must also use GAAP.

We amassed 10,370 school district financial statements from FY 2019, searched each one, and found 1,807 districts having lost revenues to tax abatements. These figures, from just the one year and undoubtedly incomplete, totaled $2.4 billion. A few districts reported $0 revenue loss, and the rest did not include the GASB 77 Note, without explanation. As governments are not obligated to include the note if they didn't have tax abatements, we don't know how many had nothing to report versus how many neglected to follow the new rule.

Among the states that had sufficient disclosures for at least summary analysis, South Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana schools reported the highest tax abatements, per-pupil abatements, and abatements-to-revenue ratios, respectively. Four-fifths of all the foregone school taxes we termed "passive losses," meaning that they were awarded by cities, counties, or states—not by the school districts themselves. (This "intergovernmental free lunch" is created by state laws enabling tax incentives.) Later, we will discuss the role of school boards in the abatement-awarding process.

What GASB 77 fails to reveal—the unseen part of the iceberg—is a lesson in itself. The continued opacity after such a monumental reform is not conducive to the critical task of more precisely targeting tax incentives where they are in fact needed and warranted. Based on our analysis of both the available and missing data, we argue that the impact on schools and students should be considered in economic development planning. Such re-prioritization can be accomplished in part by establishing independent review of proposed and ongoing economic development incentives, shielding school district revenues from abatements, and removing unnecessary barriers to open information.

How Tax Abatements Impact Public Schools

There are many moving parts in the fiscal machinery economic development agencies use to approve a tax incentive. The property tax schools receive can be influenced by many factors, including the presence of tax abatement agreements and any piece in the property tax equation—assessed property value, tax millage rate, state equity and adequacy formulas, tax caps and expenditure limits, and so on. School districts may also be affected by sharing in new income tax revenues or payments in lieu of taxes or PILOTs. A report from 1981 by the Upjohn Institute demonstrated how some of these moving parts interacted by applying a hypothetical tax exemption under a real incentive program to several hypothetical school districts of varying wealth. By this method, districts that neither qualify for equity-based state assistance nor have sufficient wealth to forego taxes with impunity tend to be most hurt (Wendling, 1981). Several other studies use statistical methods:

- Weber (2003) and Weber et al. (2008) found that the use of tax increment financing (TIF), a common and risky form of tax abatement, is linked to slower property tax revenue growth for school districts in Cook County, Illinois. Some school districts made up for it by raising the tax rate. To do that requires voters to override the Property Tax Extension Limitation (PTELL), which caps tax rate increases, and thereby raise their own taxes. Overrides do not often happen in more distressed areas.
- Nguyen-Hoang (2014) also looked at TIF and found its use to be associated with lower per-pupil expenditures in Iowa after controlling for the actual amount of state aid. Impacts on school districts can be ameliorated by other intertwined factors like state aid and revenue yield.
- Kenyon et al. (2020) found that in Franklin County, Ohio, higher tax abatements relative to total market value are associated with lower millage and effective tax rates but higher market values. This study controlled for the intensity of other types of tax abatements but not the amount of state aid or extent of property tax reliance. The more positive findings are likely due to the less generous nature of this Ohio program (firms rarely qualify for 100% exemption) as well as implementation of accountability measures.

Other inferences on how tax abatements impact schools have to be drawn indirectly from more general studies. The spatial ones are illuminating: Since many targeted economic development incentives target places (even if firms are the targets, there usually are specific addresses or locations in the discussion), they may influence uneven development. For example, when distressed localities are more eager and willing to pay incentives to secure outside investment (Felix & Hines, 2013; Reese & Sands, 2006; Peters & Fisher, 2004), that may increase existing inequalities. The distribution of the net impact of tax incentives may also be inequitable. For example, Henderson and Wheeler (1998) showed how localities surrounding an incented project all benefit from the positive spillover effects without sharing costs.

In summary, these findings indicate that poorer central school districts bear the costs yet split the benefits with their wealthier neighbors. Furthermore, subsidizing growing areas may spur gentrification, making the area-targeted strategy miss its intended targets (Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2023).

Besides errors and miscalculations in the awarding decision, there are also systemic distortions that could lead to inefficiency and loss of value. For instance, if the entities that award tax abatements do not themselves pay the full price, or even most of the price, they might do so with less restraint (Wassmer, 2014). In most states, cities and/or counties have sole authority to abate property taxes even though they have a much wider array of revenue options to fall back on (Wen et al., 2020). Moreover, the geographic boundaries of the awarding government and the school district are not always synonymous: this undermines coordination and can lead to free-riding. The extent and configuration of the overlaps, as well as the political and administrative relations undergirding them, can impact both award decisions and fiscal outcomes (Ross, 2018), and conflicts that arise may close off negotiation.

Regardless of the specific net impact in each case, in general, localities would do well to 1) not expend more public resources than are necessary so as to maximize the cost-efficiency of tax abatements and 2) to solicit input from affected entities so as to ensure the fair distribution of the net costs. Some care and restraint can go a long way toward the first end (Sands et al., 2007), like limiting the magnitude and duration of abatement agreements and choosing fewer, more deserving recipients. While a popular argument for incentives is that some costly projects eventually generate enough revenues to cover all tax abatements, those long-term effects may play out many years after today's students suffer lower K12 funding.

As for public engagement, the collective impact framework, in particular, could be effective in addressing this particular "wicked" problem. Through more effective communication, coordination, collaboration, and collective action, duplicative or counterproductive actions can be reduced. Key to those goals is the reduction of information symmetry (Kania & Kramer, 2013; Walzer et al., 2016). While GASB 77 does not yet generate enough data for full analysis, it has gotten some important conversations started around accountability and equity. When tracked across time

and linked to other indicators, tax abatement disclosures could be instrumental in cultivating a shared awareness of ineffectual incentive policies and eliciting timely community responses (Wood, 2016).

Economic development planners are starting to place more weight on these issues. In 2023, the American Planning Association formed a new section on Public Schools + Communities and staged an initial webinar for its members on "Tax Incentives and School Funding: What Every Planner Needs to Know." The accredited training was recorded and is available online.[2]

How Local Tax Abatements Are Accounted For

Though far from perfect in its design and implementation, GASB 77 newly enables access to critical information about tax incentives for a variety of stakeholders—school boards, parent-teacher associations, elected policymakers, appointed public staffers, residents, activists, auditors, journalists, and credit rating agencies. Tax abatements in fact have long been recognized as expenses (Wassmer, 2014; Propheter, 2017), but, given they were undisclosed, they long eluded scrutiny more than appropriated expenditures.

By concluding that tax abatements meet the GASB's test for "prevalence and magnitude," the Statement's issuance represents a formal acknowledgment that tax abatements can seriously limit a jurisdiction's ability to raise revenues; thus, accounting for foregone revenues is integral to maintaining fiscal discipline and budget control. GASB 77 disclosures capture many of the characteristics of tax abatements suggested by Wassmer (2014) as necessary for a full accounting of tax abatements as expenditures: entities that grant them, entities that in turn passively bear the costs, types of property that qualify, and terms of the agreement, including any clawback provisions (i.e. recapturing the foregone revenues in instances where a recipient fails to hold up its end of the bargain).

Tax abatement reporting promotes accountability by shifting the onus of accounting from the *users* to the *preparers* of financial statements. Treasurers or finance officers do the work in tandem with their auditors to find out which abatement programs to disclose and how to apportion and assign revenue losses (Billings et al., 2018). Users of financial statements thus have more time to create products from the data that add value, such as cost-benefit analyses for economic development planners, revenue campaigns for social equity activists, and quantitative studies for researchers using the local government as the unit of analysis. Moreover, information empowers communities, and less power asymmetry aids in negotiations (Reece et al., 2023).

However, because the data is relatively new, time-consuming to collect, and geographically porous and uneven, its value to *academic* research remains to be seen (see Wen, 2024). The only current repository is the "Tax Break Tracker"—an online, free-to-access database kept by Good Jobs First.[3] Even with better geographical coverage, the utility of just a single dollar value as in GASB 77 disclosures is

limited. More specifically, the rule demands way too little information for a full accounting of tax abatements (see, for example, Wassmer, 2016):

1) governments are not required to provide information on individual agreements such as identity of the incentive recipients or future-year liabilities.
2) where school districts are not independent (i.e., a stand-alone financial entity), their finances are lumped with those of the parent governments.
3) tax-increment financing districts and abatements bundled with industrial revenue bonds—two of the costliest and riskiest forms of tax abatement—are too often not captured at all.
4) tax abatements that don't meet the "materiality" threshold (which is undefined and discretionary) don't have to be reported.
5) "as of right" tax breaks that can be claimed without application/approval, such as research and development tax credits, which can be very costly, are excluded from the definition of "tax abatement."
6) the GASB doesn't police compliance, leaving room for individual state agencies or accounting firms hired to write audits to inject their own interpretation.[4]

All these issues notwithstanding, GASB 77 has already generated enormous new insight. The requirement that each governmental entity report *only its* own share of the foregone revenue for all tax abatement programs is particularly significant for school districts because they mostly lose revenues passively to abatements awarded by other governments and development agencies (see Wassmer, 2009). The ultimate impact on school finance is complicated by state aid equalization and adequacy formulas. Until disclosure requirements are made more rigorous, detailed, and comprehensive, all that can be done is what we present here: examine available cost data to get a sense of the magnitude of incentive use and reporting.

Understanding Tax Abatement Impact on US Public School Districts

The primary data behind this chapter is the self-reported foregone revenue from GASB 77 tax abatement disclosures from US public school districts' 2019 financial statements. School demographics and finances from the National Center for Educational Statistics, funding adequacy measures from Baker et al. (2021), and state and local government finance data from the Census Bureau are used to supplement and contextualize the tax abatement figures.

The 10,370 school districts in our sample cover all 50 states and D.C. (Among the 13,074 school districts in the country, some 1,000 either do not produce financial statements or had still not issued their 2019 statements at the time the study took place.) Due to the massive time requirement for finding and searching these documents, which in some cases required contacting individual school districts, we

stopped seeking additional files for a state when the probability of finding disclosures was low, but we made sure to always check large districts in major cities in each state, as these are more likely to have tax abatements.

Among the 10,370 financial reports, 2,498 contained tax abatement disclosures. These districts will hereafter be referred to as "GASB 77 reporters" or "reporting districts." Overall, 1,807 of the 2,498 reported amounts greater than $0. We will refer to these districts and their students as being "affected" by tax abatements. They span 27 states but are concentrated in just 17: Georgia, Louisiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia.

Only 10 states have enough reliable data to summarize, which we determined based on evidence of strong state oversight and/or triangulation from other sources. Nevertheless, we included all data points in our initial reporting for completeness so as to clearly show the full extent of the *current* GASB 77 coverage.

Qualitative information about the rationale, process, and impact of tax incentives was obtained from interviews or e-mail exchanges with key personnel like school district finance officers or state auditing staff as well as engagements from our advocacy work. State statutes provided the information about the powers of school boards in the awards process.

Tax Abatement Disparities in US School Districts

Reported Figures

There are 27 states where at least one school district reported tax abatements. Reporting rates vary widely; only a few states have substantial data for making inferences. What is not clear is whether districts that omitted GASB 77 notes had tax abatements or whether reported GASB 77 figures represent the complete revenue costs. Overall, there are 9.4 million students enrolled in the 1,807 school districts that reported non-zero tax abatements totaling $2.37 billion, making the nationwide average per-pupil tax abatement $253 across all the affected districts. South Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana rank the highest in terms of, respectively, total tax abatement ($423 million), per-pupil tax abatement ($734), and relative revenue impact—measured as tax abatement over property tax revenue (22.3%).

Reported Programs

City- and county-controlled programs account for over 80% of abated school taxes. Place-based or area-targeted incentives such as TIF districts and enterprise zones (EZs) are common, and these may be layered on top of other area- and non-area-specific tax benefits through other programs. Eight states reported TIF revenue diversions away from school districts to businesses or developers. (Nearly all states allow TIFs, but not all affect school districts, and GASB 77 generally does

not require reporting TIFs if the increments pay for public infrastructure.) School districts in five states reported having foregone revenues to EZs. Other place-based tax abatements include Ohio's Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs), Pennsylvania's Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZs) and Neighborhood Improvement Zones (NIZs), and South Carolina's Multi-County Industrial Parks (MCIPs).

School districts in several states reported having foregone revenues to abatements bundled with industrial revenue bonds (IRBs), though these sometimes go by other names. For example, New York exemptions granted by Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) and some of South Carolina's Fee-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (FILOT) agreements entail the same sales-leaseback (plus PILOT) structure as IRBs. In this arrangement, a public entity finances and owns a property by issuing bonds and leases it to the recipient company. For as long as the public entity holds the title, the property is property tax exempt (legally akin to a library or school). The company makes regular payments on the debt service—sometimes with a PILOT equal to a highly discounted property tax bill—until the bonds are paid off, at which time the company takes the title.

Such transactions are a work-around for awarding abatements in states where constitutional "gift and gratuity" clauses prohibit public gifts to private entities. Even though they are clearly tax abatements (and are touted as such by economic development officials in states that use them), the GASB never formally ruled on whether they meet its "tax abatements" definition, which means that they are likely under-reported. Tennessee's school districts, for example, are among those that failed to disclose abatements bundled with IRBs.

Noteworthy Districts

The largest absolute tax abatement figures are mostly reported by large urban school districts in places that rely on incentives, such as Philadelphia City Schools ($121.2 million). These numbers show the large price tags of New York IDAs and Texas's Chapter 313, as well as the Tesla deal in Storey County, Nevada, for which the state created a program to provide additional benefits for mega-scale investment ($3.5 billion or greater) beyond those through its four standard programs. The school district, which has fewer than 500 students, lost about $16 million in FY 2019. Its high gross cost attracted public scrutiny and prompted the creation of an online disclosure system which tracks project performance in job creation and capital investment, which would be a silver lining if the state had indeed overpaid Tesla.

Disparities by Geography, Race, Income, and State Aid

We gathered the data for four additional district-level variables from the NCES: total enrollment; percentage of Black and Hispanic students; percentage of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (a common measure of student poverty); and location characteristics—cities, suburbs, towns, and rural areas. (Per-pupil tax

abatements tend to be highest in remote areas where districts have fewer students and in large cities where more taxes are abated for the high volume of economic activities.)

The per-pupil tax abatement, computed by dividing the sum of district tax abatements by the number of students, for the five poverty quintiles (from the poorest to the wealthiest as measured by share of students qualified for free and reduced-price lunches) are $620, $424, $370, $442, and $265—that is a $355 difference between the top and bottom quintile. The ratio of tax abatement to taxing capacity, which in this case is approximated simply as the cost of tax abatement versus total revenue, or "relative tax abatement," is 8.3% for the highest poverty quintile and 2.4% for the lowest poverty quintile.

In educational funding, the state plays an important role in equalizing local revenue yield with or without tax abatements. Figure 3.1 shows the extent or severity of underfunding for the poorest districts as (Baker et al., 2021, p. 24: the ratio of actual to required spending to achieve national average test scores) against statewide average per-pupil abatement for the 17 states that have adequate data points. The states in the top right corner—Texas, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania—are high in both. Among the cluster in the lower right, where per-pupil abatement is relatively low but poor districts are also underfunded, Missouri stands out in particular. Michigan has relatively low per-pupil tax abatement mainly because the state offsets almost half of it, but it has the most programs of any state. On the left, New York and New Jersey use tax abatement extensively but are well funded. We suspect that the actual losses for Nebraska and West Virginia are greater, but at least their poor districts are adequately funded.

School Board Authority in the Award Process

School districts rely more on property tax revenue than cities and counties, and over four-fifths of the total abated school taxes are the result of city- and county-controlled programs. School districts have varying formal powers in the approval process. Some states allow school districts to negotiate agreements directly with businesses, such as Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and most notably Texas. A minority are given some veto powers, control over their share of the revenues, and/or representation on the committee responsible for awarding incentives. Some districts receive advance notification of proposed incentive deals. Some are excluded from the approval process but are allowed to offset losses by raising millage rates or negotiating compensation payments from the abating governments. Others are not given any chance to comment on proposed deals or recoup the foregone revenue. The following examples are not exhaustive, but they paint a picture of the wide variation in school board powers.

In Ohio, where school districts, cities, and counties derive 42%, 8%, and 19% of their revenues from property taxes (compared to 37%, 24%, 28% nationwide, respectively), TIF and EZ exemptions greater than 75% or longer than 10 years

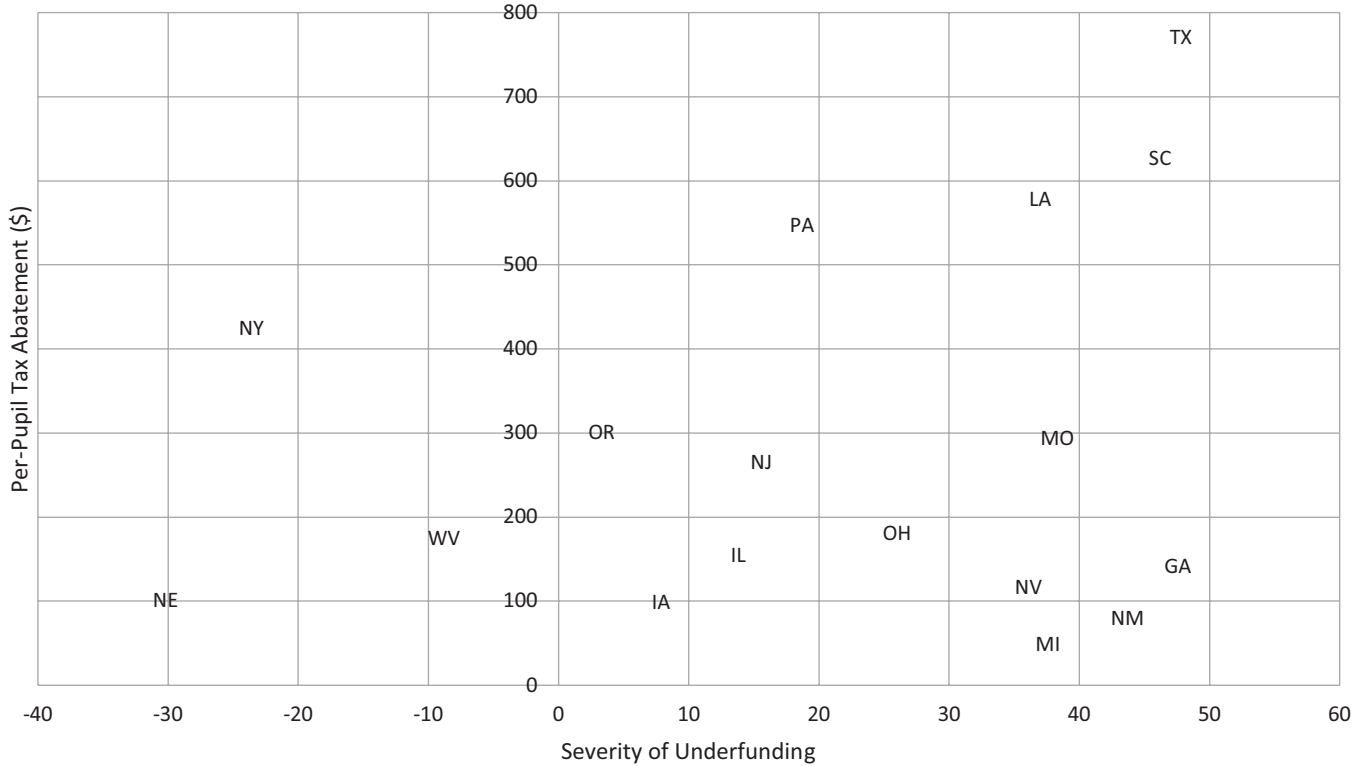

FIGURE 3.1 Per-pupil tax abatement vs. underfunding severity

Source: 2019 US school district financial statements; NCES Common Core of Data.

Notes: "Underfunding" is an index computed by Baker et al. (2021) based on comparisons of current expenditure with required expenditure as for the poorest quintile of school districts; higher values indicate greater underfunding (negative values indicate adequate funding).

require school board approval. To obtain approval, cities and counties must notify school boards of these proposals at least 45 days in advance. School board approval is not required for TIF proposals that pledge to fully reimburse school districts for their lost revenues. CRA agreements that entail PILOTs to school districts above 50% of the property tax they would have paid in the absence of an abatement also do not require school board approval (see also Halbert, 2019). In all instances, however, school boards must be notified in advance and given the power to veto impactful deals. In addition, tax incentive review councils are established at the local level to evaluate company performance, and these are required to have at least one school board member (Kenyon et al., 2020). While the effectiveness of these accountability and representation measures is up for debate—especially since school boards are also authorized to adopt resolutions to waive their right to approve or reject tax abatement deals (and some do so because of political pressure from other local governments and pro-growth coalitions), they are the main factors to which Kenyon et al. (2020) attributed Franklin County's success in protecting public education.

Short of giving school districts the power to reject proposals, Pennsylvania and Utah allow them to opt out of TIF districts and hold on to their share of the incremental taxes. In Pennsylvania, the redevelopment authority must make a presentation to school districts in the proposed TIF area and meet with school district representatives prior to signing. The school districts then will, by ordinance or resolution, either agree to participate in or opt out of each TIF. Similarly, Utah's school districts can choose how much money they are willing to contribute to the TIF fund and for how long.

Missouri and North Dakota require school boards to be represented on boards for approving some economic development incentive deals. In Missouri, when a municipality creates a redevelopment area (which sometimes entails the use of TIF), it must notify the school districts 30 days in advance for it to appoint two members to serve on the commission in charge of the redevelopment plan. EZs must also include one school board representative on each of their boards. However, since school bords do not have veto power and can easily be outvoted, this constitutes weaker authority than Ohio, where they can block some of the bigger deals. In North Dakota, municipalities are required to include one *nonvoting* representative from each affected district during the negotiation of tax exemption agreements to voice their input.

Some programs in some states (Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, Nevada, and New Jersey) require school boards to be notified of proposed tax abatement deals in advance but give them no formal role in the negotiation process nor control over their revenues. Missouri's Chapter 100 program requires the agency to produce a cost-and-benefit analysis.

Finally, some states take steps to ensure school districts do not lose revenue to tax abatements. Alabama completely excludes educational taxes from abatements. New Mexico and South Dakota hold school districts in TIFs harmless by raising

taxes (though such "safeguards" actually enshrine tax-burden shifts). Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania explicitly have provisions for increasing state aid to schools in some of their tax abatement statutes. State offsets explain why, for example, Michigan localities use tax abatements extensively, but the amount of net foregone school revenue is small. Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, and Ohio have provisions for sharing new revenues with affected school districts. A few school boards in New York have influence over the decisions of local governments and IDAs, but they do not have any formal statutory authority in tax abatements, even though more than half of their revenues come from property taxes. South Carolina's school districts are generally powerless.

Toward More Cost-Efficient and Accountable Incentives Policy

Even though, in aggregate, tax abatements constitute a small percentage of total revenue, the effects are uneven: some school districts are more harmed than others. The cost, which was $2.37 billion, or $253 per student, for the one year of FY 2019 based on very incomplete reporting, still leaves the question regarding the fair distribution of burdens and benefits. Moreover, positive returns may not manifest for a long time or at all if awarded to risky, footloose, or "disembodied" companies (i.e., those located in one place but with nexus or labor pool somewhere else, such as e-commerce or film production). Finally, the fact that so few school districts have any meaningful role in the award process is concerning. The mismatch between power/authority and payment/responsibility undermines accountability.

This chapter also revealed the shortcomings in both the GASB 77 disclosure requirement and state oversight of it. The figures in existence are incomplete as well as uneven from state to state, because the disclosure rule omits most tax diversions due to TIFs and fails to clearly include abatements bundled with IRBs/IDBs and because many school districts are noncompliant or excused from complying by state rules or structural configurations (i.e., they are component units).

To advance our knowledge of the impact of tax incentives, the quality of cost data first needs improvement on the part of GASB and those state agencies that enforce GAAP. The data also needs to be made more accessible through either standardization of reporting language or implementation of machine-reading financial reporting. There needs to be a consensus regarding the methodology for evaluating as accurately as possible the benefits specifically attributable to incentives (see Wassmer et al., 2016). Finally, longitudinal analyses are needed to understand causal mechanisms and long-term effects.

While there is no limit to making fiscal impact analysis more robust and predictive, we argue that based on existing evidence, many tax incentives may be unnecessary. There are no reports of significant shocks or crises from states that have canceled programs (as some states have in budget crises, for example), curbed their use (as part of a "ceasefire" with neighboring jurisdictions, for example), or simply let them expire. While state and local taxes are a small portion

of a typical business's cost structure, the share of revenue lost to some local governments is, by contrast, great enough to lead to substantial budget cuts and service rollbacks.

We hope that our findings provide a foundation for more complex studies and more effective policies. We have made our data available to the public through Good Jobs First's Tax Break Tracker and advocated for greater transparency. Tax incentives are a manifestation of the conflict between growth and redistribution. Education straddles these two priorities. Not only do schools broaden and equalize opportunities for all children, but education is also essential to economic development through its contribution to productivity and innovation. Moreover, schools are central community institutions that serve social functions beyond educating children (Warner & Zhang, 2023; Bierbaum et al., 2023). However, economic development planning often neglects public schools in pursuit of incentive deals. The disregard for the fiscal health of the schools, as reflected in lack of transparency and participation, may be part of the more general pattern of not prioritizing the needs of children in growth-driven planning, especially in resource-poor communities, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Both economic and community development planners should have a common interest in protecting public education from the harm of tax incentives. We recommend school districts be kept in the loop of any proposed agreements and given a deciding vote. Even if all parties approve, the share of school tax revenues that can be abated should be capped based on rigorous and regular evaluations.

Notes

1. Adapted from Wen, C., & LeRoy, G. (2023). Making the students pay? The gross cost of property tax abatement for US school districts. *Community Development*, *54*(4), 479–495.
2. The APA webinar is at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMdzGerQ61Y&t=1318s.
3. Good Jobs First: Tax Break Tracker. https://taxbreaktracker.goodjobsfirst.org.
4. Good Jobs First details rule implementation in each of the 51 states: https://goodjobsfirst.org/good-jobs-first-gasb-77-state-roadmaps-2/.

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4

URBAN SCHOOLS AND THE GROWTH MACHINE[1]

Jason Reece and Victoria Abou-Ghalioum

Introduction

In states that are highly reliant on the property tax base for school funding, development policies can have a direct impact on school finances. In the preceding chapter, Wen and LeRoy show how these abatements hurt low-income and minority districts the most. The following chapter provides a specific example which explores the conflicts between urban growth machine policies, public-school finance, and educational equity in Columbus, Ohio. The City of Columbus is one of the fastest-growing cities in the Midwest, but its largest urban public school district (Columbus City Schools) has grown smaller, more segregated, and poorer. First, we introduce historical development policies (related to annexation), which dramatically altered the trajectory of the city and school district's growth. We follow this historical context with an analysis of the contemporary conflict between urban growth policies (specifically tax abatements) and school funding. The city's aggressive use of tax abatements for urban redevelopment directly impacts the local property tax base for Columbus City schools. Debates about the scope and impact of tax-abated school revenues have spurred strong opposition from education stakeholders in the community and the teachers' union.

Next, we explore the growth of abated revenues and their relationships to school finances and educational equity. Despite ongoing public policy debates on the impact of tax abatements, data limitations have made it difficult for past analyses of abatements to estimate the true size of abated revenues, the trends in abatements over time, or the impact of abatements on the school district. We close with a discussion on the need for greater integration of development policies and public education systems.

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Growth Machine Politics and Policies: Contemporary Debates

The City of Columbus is a contemporary example of the urban political theory of the "growth machine." A growth machine is characterized by the way in which land-based elites exercise power over communities and governmental authorities to achieve capital gains and urban growth (Molotch, 1976). While this tendency has been framed as value-free development, in which land is viewed solely as a market commodity (Molotch & Logan, 1984), land values and taxation are closely linked to school funding.

In Columbus, city and governmental leaders have adopted a pro-development agenda commonly known as "The Columbus Way." This agenda orients city leaders as highly amenable to the interests of the business and development community. The growth machine aligns well with neoliberal paradigms of power which impose political and economic arrangements on urban areas (Lipman, 2013). Growth machine theory has been applied to several dynamics of urban redevelopment, including gentrification, urban revitalization, and "green" growth (Hackworth, 2007; Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

In this chapter, we are primarily focused on property tax abatements. Tax abatements have been identified as a mechanism of growth machine regimes which stimulates investment but reduces local tax resources for urban education (Weber, 2003). In Ohio, cities with residential tax abatement programs can distribute abatements by designating geographic areas as zones where all new development is eligible for residential tax abatements (Dalehite et al., 2005). Similar to other forms of tax abatements, residential tax abatements can be detrimental to public school finances, particularly in states where school districts are highly reliant on property taxes, as shown by Wen and Leroy in Chapter 3.

The variety of tax incentive programs and vague state guidance on abatement approval policies further complicate the implementation of tax abatements. For example, Ohio state law and policy guidance to establish Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) recommend school district engagement but do not require approval for CRA designation in all cases. Newly abated properties in older CRA areas generally do not require school board approval or require any supplemental compensation be provided to the school district (Halbert, 2019). Even when approval is required, research indicates that incentive packages are still likely to be granted approval by school boards, as a result of the immense pressure by other local politicians to provide abatements in order to generate economic growth (Nuamah, 2020).

Residential tax abatements are commonly utilized tools in community reinvestment areas to stimulate new housing investment. Policymakers have traditionally targeted CRA and other abatement programs to neighborhoods that have experienced substantial disinvestment and poor housing market conditions. By reducing development costs, tax abatement use in areas of disinvestment can help stabilize neighborhoods through physical development and improvement. Some research

suggests that abatements can provide a net fiscal benefit through new construction and property rehabilitation in areas with a high degree of distressed properties (Rosentraub et al., 2010). Past research has documented the impacts of tax increment financing (TIF) and corporate tax abatements on school funding, with findings indicating that increased prevalence of corporate abatements leads to inequities in school funding (Wen et al., 2021; Farmer & Poulos, 2015), and public criticism of this form of tax incentive has grown (Litvinov, 2019; Rigney & Wen, 2021).

Kenyon et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of residential tax abatements on property values and school taxation rates in Franklin County, Ohio, and determined the abatements had no negative effect or a minor positive effect on school finances. Their study could only estimate the volume of abatements (density of CRA abatements by census tract) and did not look specifically at the actual value of taxes lost to individual agencies (such as school districts). Although analyses by Kenyon et al. suggest a minimal or positive impact of abatements, they recommend targeted and strategic use of abatements. The analysis looking at school districts across the county also did not account for the differential resource needs of the diverse school districts in Franklin County. Older, larger, and higher-poverty districts have unique financial needs, due to dilapidated facilities and educational barriers facing lower-income children. Previous research also has not explored the longitudinal effects and persistence of abatement programs after neighborhood housing markets improve. Understanding the impact of abatements on school funding is challenging due to poor and inconsistent data collection, as Wen and Leroy have shown in Chapter 3 (Wen & LeRoy, 2023).

Columbus, Ohio: Embrace of the Growth Machine and Inequities in School Funding

This chapter presents a single case study with Columbus as a critical case selection (Yin, 2014). Critical case selection can increase the potential analytical generalizability of a case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Patton, 2014). Residential tax abatements are a common urban redevelopment tool applicable to many cities throughout the nation.

The City of Columbus is an exemplar for the chapter because of its aggressive embrace of tax abatements. Ohio ranks sixth nationally in the amount of school taxes abated and reported in GASB77 disclosures ($134 million in 2019) (Wen et al., 2021). The city of Columbus is recognized as a leader in aggressively embracing public-private partnerships. This approach, known as "The Columbus Way," has been featured in case studies by the Brookings Institution and the Harvard Business School (Rivkin, 2015; Cox, 2021). Similar to Chicago, Columbus is one of the few urban school systems where the teachers' union (Columbus Education Association) has identified tax abatements as a critical policy conflict in union negotiations with district leadership (Pearlman, 2019).

The state of Ohio's inequity in school funding has been long documented. The state has had a series of four state Supreme Court decisions from 1990 to 2002 (the

DeRolph rulings) that found the state's over-reliance on property taxes for school funding unconstitutional (Obhof, 2005). Despite four court rulings, the State Supreme Court was unable to force the legislature to reform the state's dependence on local property taxes. As a large central city urban school district experiencing the effects of both economic and racial segregation and aging infrastructure, the Columbus City School District is not unique. Conditions mirror many of the challenges experienced in large central city urban public schools nationally.

This chapter triangulates three sources of data. First, longitudinal quantitative data for abatements, district demographics, and district finances explore the breadth of abatement activity and its relationship to school finances. Second, a content analysis was conducted of public statements in the media from local stakeholders pertaining to the tax abatement debate and financial conditions for Columbus City schools. Third, semi-structured interviews and member checking of preliminary findings were conducted with local stakeholders. Tax abatements were analyzed utilizing a recently developed database of abatements at the parcel level from 2014 to 2022 for Franklin County, Ohio. Analysis of school district budget and tax revenues utilized financial data produced by the Ohio Department of Taxation, Ohio Department of Education, and the Columbus City Schools.

Columbus: A Growing City and a Shrinking School District

This chapter focused on the largest public-school district in Ohio, Columbus City Schools. The district enrolls over 45,000 students and is the 95th largest district in the nation. The school district's enrolment has been declining since the 1970s. In contrast to the school district and peer cities in the rust belt, the City of Columbus is growing rapidly, with the city gaining nearly a quarter million residents in the past 20 years. Columbus now ranks 14th in population among all US cities. The City of Columbus was the only city in the Midwestern US to add more than 100,000 residents between 2010 and 2020 (Warren, 2021). Current census data indicates that much of the state of Ohio's population and labor force growth is in the Columbus metropolitan region (Greater Ohio Policy Center, 2022).

Columbus's growth is a result of historical annexation throughout Franklin County, Ohio, and contemporary reinvestment in many of the city's core urban neighborhoods. The city has multiple successful urban redevelopment efforts situated in proximity to the city's major anchor institutions (Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University) (Holley et al., 2020; Kelleher et al., 2018). The Columbus City government and the Columbus City School District are distinct government entities with limited direct financial relationships. Local tax revenues for Columbus City schools primarily come from real estate taxes collected by the Franklin County government, while the City of Columbus generates most of its revenue from the city's income tax (Columbus City Schools, 2020; Columbus City Government, 2022). Due to its aggressive annexation policies, the City of Columbus is much larger than the Columbus City School District, and its boundaries overlap nine

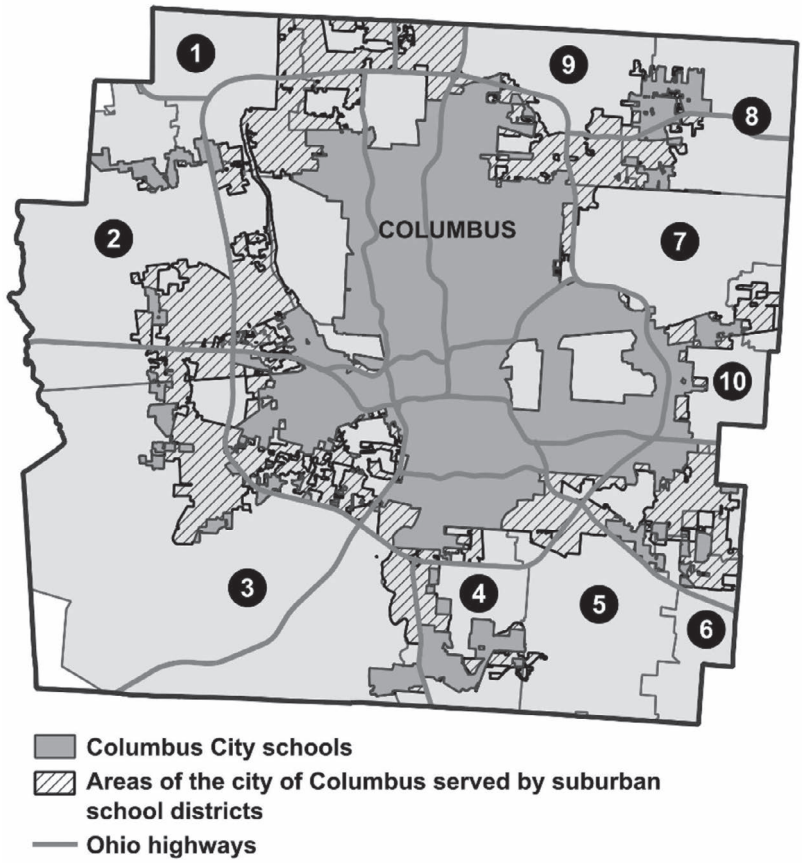

FIGURE 4.1 Areas of the City of Columbus annexed by the city but not served by Columbus City Schools. Numbers indicate suburban school districts serving children living in annexed areas: 1 Dublin City; 2 Hilliard City; 3 South-Western City; 4 Hamilton Local; 5 Groveport Madison Local; 6 Canal Winchester Local; 7 Gahanna City; 8 New Albany Plain Local; 9 Westerville City; 10 Reynoldsburg Local

Source: Created by author.

suburban school districts (Figure 4.1). Four additional smaller independent school districts are associated with smaller older suburbs (Bexley, Grandview Heights, Upper Arlington, and Whitehall) and are landlocked by the City of Columbus.

Historical Context: Sacrificing City Schools for Suburban Annexation

After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, the Ohio legislature approved municipal annexation without school district expansion in 1955. The result

of this state reform allowed cities to annex nearby suburbs while assuring White suburban households that they would not be integrated into the city's public school district (Jacobs, 1998).

Unlike other midwestern regions, the City of Columbus is an elastic city, meaning the city has been able to utilize annexation to grow the city's land area during the second half of the 20th century (Rusk, 1993). Seeking to avoid becoming landlocked by suburbs, like the state's two historically largest cities (Cincinnati and Cleveland), Columbus utilized infrastructure policy to push annexation as the region suburbanized. The city controlled much of the County's water infrastructure, and the "Columbus First" policy enacted in the 1950s refused water service expansion to emerging suburbs without annexation. The aggressive annexation policy would grow the city from approximately 55 square miles in 1950 to 219 square miles today.

The city benefited from the post–*Brown v. Board of Education* state law allowing school district decoupling from city boundaries (Jacobs, 1998). Suburbs were less likely to defy annexation if they did not have to be incorporated into the Columbus City schools. The Columbus City School District made multiple attempts at expanding its district boundaries during this time frame, and Black leaders in central Ohio called for district consolidation and integration. Suburban political influence and resistance to desegregation in the state government created more barriers for the district (Jacobs, 1998). In 1965, the school district requested nine transfers of annexed lands into the city school district. The State Board of Education blocked eight of these nine requests. With school district boundaries effectively frozen from 1955 to 1985, the city's annexation activities had an adverse effect on Columbus City schools. Newly annexed areas benefited from suburban growth, while older urban areas within the Columbus City School District lost population and tax base. By 1979, nearly 40% of children living within in the City of Columbus's incorporated area were attending suburban schools (Jacobs, 1998). As described by Jacobs (1998), racial tensions and fears of school desegregation played a substantial role in the design of the city's approach to annexation.

> The complicity of city leaders in the expansion and development of the common areas (annexed areas not served by Columbus City schools) indicates that, from the beginning, they viewed desegregation itself as incompatible with growth. The common areas thus proved a unique and effective safety valve, preserving both public-private and city-suburban cooperation in the economic and geographic growth of the metropolitan area.
>
> *(p. 139)*

Excluded from the city's expansive suburban growth, by the late 20th century, Columbus City schools were deeply destabilized by the city's growth policies. The city had effectively avoided being landlocked from suburban growth, but the Columbus City School District would see increasing poverty, declining student

populations, and a shrinking tax base (Jacobs, 1998). During the 1980s, the common areas (Columbus neighborhoods served by suburban districts) experienced a property tax base increase of 330%, compared to a 70% increase in tax base in the Columbus City Schools' boundaries. By 1990, 90% of City of Columbus households in poverty were located within the Columbus City School boundaries (Jacobs, 1998).

In 1986, the district was finally stabilized to some degree, through a "win-win" agreement which negotiated an end to annexation without district expansion and provided some modest tax revenue sharing of new development in city neighborhoods served by suburban schools. This revenue sharing agreement ended in 2016, with Columbus city schools no longer receiving funds from suburban districts (Bush & Edward, 2016). Conditions in the City of Columbus and Columbus city schools began to diverge over time (Reece, 2021). As a result of the city's growth policies in the second half of the 20th century, the City of Columbus nearly doubled in population size since 1970 (growing from 539,000 to 905,000 residents), and Columbus City Schools lost more than half of its student population during this time (from 110,000 students to 45,000). Currently, in comparison to households in the municipal boundaries of the City of Columbus, households within the Columbus City School District have large disparities in income, poverty, racial and ethnic makeup, and adult educational attainment.

Columbus is not unique in pursuing territorial expansion as a regional growth strategy; the City of Indianapolis utilized city/county government consolidation to create the Unigov (Owen, 2021). Similar to the Columbus case, Unigov consolidated some aspects of public services but did not consolidate the school districts in Marion County, Indiana. In the Indianapolis case, suburban opposition and racial tensions were also a primary consideration in intentionally excluding school district consolidation. As summarized by Hunt and Bailey:

> In fact, the exclusion of schools from the merger was integral to the passage of the law. The proponents of Unigov specifically avoided the creation of a unified school district and widely advertised that fact, so as to "eliminate certain and strong opposition of any of the eleven school districts" in the majority-white suburbs.
>
> *(2023, p. 1)*

Similar to the experience of Columbus City schools, the Indianapolis Public School District experienced a substantial decline in its student population from a peak enrolment of 108,000 in the late 1960s to enrolment of just under 23,000 students in 2021 (Cavazos, 2016). Demographically, the Indianapolis district also experienced increased racial and economic segregation after creation of the Unigov. Currently just under 80% of the district's students are Black or Hispanic, and 55% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch (US News & World Report, 2023). In both the Columbus and Indianapolis cases, expansion of city boundaries was achieved at the expense of the primary central city school district.

Contemporary Context: Tax Incentives for Urban Redevelopment

After the central Ohio region's economy and housing market recovered from the 2008 housing crisis, the city has seen rapid population growth and investment in downtown and most core urban neighborhoods (Reece et al., 2022). The city's Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs), which allow 15-year 100% property tax abatements for all new construction and rehabilitation projects, was an essential priority within the city's growth strategy during this time. While this policy would assist in bringing new investment, population, and disposable income into these neighborhoods, the school district would not directly see immediate financial benefits from this reinvestment. In the context of the City of Columbus, tax abatements within CRA areas generally do not require approval authority by school boards, although Tax Increment Financing projects and abatements outside of CRA areas may require board approval.

Opposition Builds to Tax Abatement Policies

In August of 2022, members of the Columbus Education Association voted for a work stoppage (strike) in the state of Ohio's largest school district, Columbus City Schools (CCS). With more than 4,500 members, the CEA is the largest teachers' union in the state of Ohio, and the strike received national media coverage (Shapiro et al., 2022). The union had not voted for a work stoppage since 1975, and although traditional labor negotiation topics (such as compensation and benefits) were included in negotiations, school conditions (both physical facilities and support services for students) were primary points of contention. Undergirding the conflict regarding school conditions was the ongoing tension between the union members and the City of Columbus's development policies, specifically the city's aggressive use of tax abatements and their financial impact on the school district. The strike was a manifestation of several years of ongoing protests, public statements, and marches by the union to challenge the growth in tax abated properties in the city.

Growth in Abated School Tax Revenues

Analysis of 2022 Franklin County auditor's data finds 5,071 tax abated parcels representing more than $155 million in all abated property taxes in Franklin County, Ohio. The vast majority of abated property taxes (more than 90%) are derived from Community Reinvestment Areas. In Franklin County, three of the top four government entities losing tax revenues are serving children (public schools and county agencies). Over 63% of abated taxes are abated school property tax revenues (approximately $98 million). The second highest proportion of abated taxes are from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities (7.5%; $11.6 million), followed by local township governments (6.9%; $10.7 million) and Franklin County's Children's Services (6.9%; $8.2 million). Not calculated in these totals is the influence of the county's various Tax Increment Financing agreements, which divert an additional $23.5 million dollars from county school districts.

The parcel data from the Franklin County auditor suggests that previous statewide estimates of abated school tax revenues based on GASB 77 disclosures were severely underestimated. Most of Ohio's 22 older urban legacy cities utilize CRA abatements (Greater Ohio Policy Center, 2022). Analysis by Policy Matters Ohio estimated a loss of $125 million in abated school taxes statewide in 2018 (Halbert, 2019). This figure is similar to the statewide estimate of $134 million in abated school tax revenues by Wen and LeRoy (2023). In contrast to earlier estimates, we find Franklin County, Ohio, alone abated $98 million in school property tax revenues in 2022. This discrepancy is possibly due to limitations in data in traditional reporting, GASB 77 disclosures and underreporting of the taxes abated through the CRA abatement program throughout the state's urban areas.

Variation in Abatements by Franklin County School District

All but one Franklin County school district abated school tax revenues. The variation in abated values range from a low of $70,000 to a high of $61 million (Table 4.1). The number of tax abated parcels and the volume of abated school

TABLE 4.1 Abated school tax revenues 2014 to 2022 for all Franklin County, Ohio, school districts

School district	*Abated school revenues 2014*	*Abated school revenues 2022*	*Change in abated school tax revenues 2014–2022*
Bexley City	$199,107	$127,846	–71,261
Canal Winchester Local	$185,535	$2,588,832	2,403,297
Columbus City	$16,923,030	$61,462,439	44,539,409
Dublin City	$242,587	$2,411,101	2,168,514
Gahanna City	$1,224,687	$1,331,734	107,047
Grandview Heights City	$591,951	$2,760,429	2,168,478
Groveport Madison Local	$7,725,269	$9,539,160	1,813,891
Hamilton	$1,553,020	$1,750,396	197,376
Hilliard City	$962,286	$3,966,974	3,004,688
New Albany Plain Local	$6,439,228	$4,304,462	–2,134,766
Reynoldsburg City	$5,237	$17,687	12,450
South-Western City	$3,634,639	$5,787,735	2,153,096
Upper Arlington City	$69,867	$—	–69,867
Westerville City	$204,964	$70,312	–134,652
Whitehall City	$167,996	$1,219,372	1,051,376
Worthington	$60,220	$634,348	574,128
Total for County	$40,189,623	$97,972,827	57,783,204

Source: Analysis of Franklin County Auditor's Office tax abatement database created by author.

taxes have increased sharply from 2014 to 2022 in Franklin County. Total school property taxes abated increased from $40.2 million in 2014 to $98.0 million in 2022 (growth of 143%). The increase in abated school tax revenues was even larger for Columbus City Schools, which experienced a growth in abated tax revenues from $16.9 million in 2014 to $61.0 million in 2022 (growth of 260%).

Columbus City Schools represent a disproportionate share of abated school tax revenues. Proportionally, Columbus City Schools represents 27% of all public-school students in the county, but the district accounts for 63% of all abated school tax revenues in 2022. The district also represents most of the growth in abated school tax revenues in the past 8 years. The district accounted for 77% of all growth in abated school tax revenue in the county between 2014 and 2021. The district's proportion of abated school tax revenues in Franklin County accounted for 42% of abated revenues in 2014 and now represents 63% of all abated school tax revenues.

The Relationship Between Abated Revenues, School District Demographics, and Finances

To understand the relationship between abated school tax revenues, district demographics, and finances, a database tracking socioeconomic conditions and school finance measures was developed by integrating data from the Franklin County auditor, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Department of Taxation. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for four measures of abatement activity (total abated revenues, abated revenues per pupil, change in abated revenue 2014–2022, and change in abated revenues per pupil 2014–2022). These measures were correlated with several measures of district demographics (race/ethnicity and economically disadvantaged students) and finance (total expenditure per pupil, percent of revenues generated locally, percent of revenues spent on instruction, and average property value per pupil). For comparison purposes, small districts (those with fewer than 5,000 students) were excluded from the analysis (for more detail on these correlations, see Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2023).

Abated school tax revenues and the increase in abated school tax revenues were all positively correlated with student economic and racial/ethnic demographics. All but one abatement measure indicated a strong to very strong positive correlation (greater than 0.8) with the proportion of students who are economically disadvantaged. All abatement measures indicated a moderate positive correlation with rates of racial and ethnic diversity in the school district (ranging from 0.57 to 0.59 for the four abatement measures). Surprisingly, per-pupil expenditures were positively correlated with all of the abatement measures, although this correlation was low to moderate (ranging from 0.24 to 0.46 for the abatement measures). In contrast, negative correlations were found in relation to the abatement measures with the three other measures of financial conditions. The proportion of revenues generated locally had a low correlation with the abatement measures (ranging from −0.2 to −0.35). All but one abatement measure had a moderate to strong

negative correlation with proportion of spending on classroom instruction per pupil. The assessed property values per pupil (APV) measure was also negatively correlated with the abatement measures, although this correlation was low (ranging from −0.23 to −0.36).

Abatements are primarily occurring and growing in economically disadvantaged districts with higher non-White or Hispanic student populations. Districts with higher abatement losses are generating fewer resources locally and dedicating less funding to classroom instruction. While the abatements have low but positive correlation with per-pupil spending, this may be due to state or federal funds needing to compensate for the limitations of local tax revenues.

Stakeholder Reflections: Student Needs and Unhealthy School Buildings

Insights from our qualitative data suggest substantial student needs are unmet in the Columbus City School District. In interviews and stakeholder engagements, stakeholders identified socio-emotional support and physical facilities as the primary unmet financial needs in the district. Socioemotional needs were directly influenced by external challenges facing students, such as poverty, food insecurity, community violence, and housing instability. Stakeholders indicated that socio-emotional needs for students have increased in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial justice protests of 2020. Stakeholders also indicated that supporting enhanced behavioral intervention services and wrap-around support services for students were undermined by district financial limitations.

Stakeholders indicated that the poor quality of physical facilities within the district impaired learning and teaching environments. Columbus City School buildings were criticized for containing mold, pest infestation, and malfunctioning heating and cooling systems. Cooling challenges remain a consistent problem for the district. In 2019, more than 30 school buildings (representing 28% of total buildings in the district) did not have central air conditioning (Holmes, 2019). The lack of air conditioning has proven extremely challenging with an increase in high-temperature days in late summer and early autumn in the region. In the 2018 and 2019 school year, the district was forced to close numerous times due to heat emergencies.

Our content analysis of media statements also identified degraded physical facilities as a consistent theme and critical need in the district. Climate control issues were extensively profiled in local media and statements from the Columbus Education Association, teachers, and students. The lack of focus resulting from excessive heat was captured in a statement from a student who testified to the school board on heat challenges in their high school. “Sweat runs down your face. It gets in your eyes. Your eyes start to burn, and your skin is sticking to the desk. And it makes it very difficult to concentrate and focus on learning” (Holmes, 2019). Excessive heat also has resulted in medical emergencies for students and for staff in uncooled CCS

buildings (Holmes, 2019). An investigative analysis of public health department inspections of city school buildings by journalists at the Columbus Dispatch found substantial and chronic building safety concerns. As described by Ferenchik and Henry (2022): "(schools) were reported to have no warm or running water in certain areas, while others had stained ceiling tiles from leaky roofs, chilly classrooms because of faulty heating systems and other safety issues."

Analysis of capital expenditures in the district indicate that abated school tax revenues could make an impact on addressing the physical facility needs of the district. The Columbus City School District has recently increased its capital improvement and maintenance expenditures from approximately $40 million in 2020 to $67 million in fiscal year 2021. Considering that the district lost more than $61 million in abated tax revenues in the past year, the district could almost double its capital expenditures if it had access to abated revenues. The district could easily meet the cost (estimated at approximately $40 million) of installing air conditioning in all of its school buildings with one year of abated revenues (Columbus City Schools, 2021).

Discussion: Complexity in Understanding Unmet Needs in High-Need Districts

What is unclear in our quantitative analysis is if funding is meeting the needs of students in districts across the county, particularly in higher-poverty districts. Equal funding is not necessarily equitable funding for districts with extreme rates of student poverty and degraded physical facilities. Qualitative engagement with stakeholders and our content analysis suggest funding is not meeting the current needs of students in relation to supportive services and facility maintenance for low-income students. Economic disparities facing urban children are correlated with increased educational and socio-emotional needs (Tough, 2012). Additional resources for libraries, arts or creative studies, physical education, intervention specialists, trauma-informed practices, and lower student-teacher ratios may be necessary in more economically disadvantaged districts. Access to behavioral and mental health services must respond to the increased needs for these services among lower income children. Chronic stress and exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) exacerbate mental health needs for lower-income youth, as shown in Chapter 2.

Districts like the Columbus City Schools are more likely to have capital facilities that are older. The nexus of limited funding and older physical school infrastructure creates physically deteriorated and unhealthy building conditions in urban schools (Hudley & Duran, 2012). National studies find higher poverty districts have greater physical facility needs and less capital spending than low poverty districts (Filardo, 2021). Physical deterioration of buildings can lead to increased exposure to indoor environmental health risks, such as exposure to mold or extreme temperatures. Inadequate building conditions are directly linked to impaired educational outcomes for

youth. Nationally, lower-income students of color were more likely to be attending non-air-conditioned schools with extreme heat conditions, with research estimating that 5% of the "achievement gap" in student outcomes can be attributed to extreme heat in school buildings (Goodman et al., 2018). Disparities in physical conditions in schools also acts as a psycho-social stressor which can limit the ability to concentrate and reduce student engagement and motivation (Hudley & Duran, 2012; Duran-Narucki, 2008). Evans et al. (2010) finds the combination of poor building conditions and housing instability among lower income urban youth exacerbates the impact of these environmental conditions. But, as shown in Chapter 5 by Bierbaum et al., school building renovation can be an opportunity to expand school programs and to address broader community issues.

Urban public schools are also financially vulnerable due to other neoliberal school reforms such as charter schools and vouchers. In Franklin County, the Columbus City School District loses more revenues to charter and voucher programs than tax abatements. School choice vouchers were estimated to have diverted more than $40 million in revenues from Columbus City schools in 2022 (Neese, 2022). Columbus City School students attending non-profit and for-profit charter schools (referred to as community schools by the Ohio Department of Education) diverted another $212 million in revenues from CCS in the 2021/22 school year (Columbus City Schools, 2022). These additional financial losses are not accurately captured in per-pupil expenditure data. Cumulatively, abatements, vouchers, and charter schools reduce district resources by more than $310 million annually, representing 20% of the district's total $1.5 billion annual budget (Columbus City Schools, 2022).

Residential tax abatements have traditionally been important and useful in neighborhood revitalization efforts, as they can support affordable housing promote private investment. However, the experience in Columbus suggests that when markets return to normalcy or grow hot, abatement programs shift in whom they serve, primarily serving the needs of higher-end development and luxury housing (Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2020).

Similar to other tax incentive programs, ongoing analysis of neighborhood needs, market conditions, and tax incentive impacts should guide implementation and termination of these policies. Sands et al. (2007) analyzed best practices in Tax Increment Financing districts, recommending that TIF policies "should be used in limited areas for limited durations, and it must include citizen-based planning" (p. 66). This suggests that, while abatements did serve an explicit purpose of revitalizing areas in distress in the past, their continued use can be a detriment to public institutions, like Columbus City Schools, which are highly dependent on property taxes and financially vulnerable.

After many years of public criticism, the City of Columbus is reforming its tax incentive and abatement programs. Broad-blanket CRA areas in which all developments qualified for tax abatements are being replaced with a three-tiered system utilizing six measures of neighborhood distress, with tax incentives and affordability requirements tailored for each tier of neighborhood distress (City

of Columbus, 2023). These recent reforms may provide better oversight, more strategic use of incentive resources, and equitable outcomes for the city's incentive programs.

Conclusion: Growth Machines Policies and Urban Education

The City of Columbus's success in growing its population is directly tied to its historical annexation policies. Annexation worked as a policy to avoid the challenges of landlocked cities, but it did not benefit children in the Columbus City School District. Recent conflict pertaining to tax abatements speaks to the durability of the divide between development policies and urban education. Although the policy tools to support the city's growth have evolved, the city's urban growth machine policies are still in conflict with the City's urban educational system. Today's development policies are oriented toward redeveloping the city and not annexing in pursuit of suburban growth, but as this chapter demonstrates, these contemporary policies are reducing local revenues for the educational system.

Our analysis suggests that previous estimates of school resources lost to tax abatements have been underreported and are actually growing rapidly in Franklin County. Schools and agencies serving children are impacted the most by abated revenues. Abatements are much more likely to occur in more racially segregated and economically disadvantaged districts in the county, and these districts are more likely to have a more limited local tax base and lower classroom expenditures. Surprisingly, total per-pupil expenditures had a low positive correlation with abatements, suggesting that state and federal funds may be compensating for abatement losses.

The Columbus experience speaks to a larger dynamic in which planning and development policy fails to engage enough with urban educational systems. Abatements are an important tool for redevelopment but may undermine urban public education systems, which have higher needs due to higher rates of child poverty. Urban districts are also vulnerable due to the nexus of aging infrastructure, unstable enrolments, and financial challenges. The long-term consequences of these challenging conditions can lead to extensive school closures, leading to a loss of a critical community asset for community development and other negative community impacts (Bierbaum, 2021; Green, 2017).

Planners and community development practitioners must be more attentive to the needs of public-school systems, particularly in higher-poverty, high-need districts. Planning can be a critical ally in serving the needs of youth and supporting healthy spaces for children through "collaboration, inclusion, and engagement" (Warner & Zhang, 2020). Bierbaum et al. in Chapter 5 have found school investment can positively impact community development through four domains (social, institutional, economic, and physical). Educational systems also can support a variety of community development needs through shared use or joint use agreements of school facilities, as shown by Warner and Zhang in Chapter 6. A number of comprehensive community collaborations have demonstrated the ability to support

educational improvement for marginalized youth and greater access to opportunity (Bonilla-Santiago, 2020).

Relationships and power play a role in fostering more successful collaborations (Warner & Zhang, 2023). Chapter 6 describes national survey data showing schools and local governments are more successful in collaborative action when power functions horizontally (power with) rather than hierarchically (power over). In both the historical and contemporary context, the Columbus City government has exercised more hierarchical power (power over) the Columbus City School District. Schools can be challenging entities to collaborate with due to their unique external pressures from local, state, and federal government. However, Biddle et al. (2018) suggest that intentional framing of goals and ensuring equitable engagement can produce successful community development and school collaborations to address childhood adversity. We need to be more attentive to the conflicts between growth machine policies and urban education. We also must be proactive in elevating the potential for greater integration and collaboration between planning, community development, and public schools to holistically address the problems facing marginalized youth.

Note

1. For more a more detailed analysis, from which this chapter is drawn, please see: Reece, J., & Abou-Ghalioum, V. (2023). Urban schools and the growth machine: When public education and development policy conflict. *Community Development*, *54*(4), 588–609. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2023.2217899

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5

SCHOOL-CENTERED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Lessons from Baltimore's 21st Century School Buildings Program[1]

Ariel H. Bierbaum, Alisha Butler, and Erin S. O'Keefe

Introduction

In 2013, the Maryland State Legislature passed the Baltimore City Public Schools Construction and Revitalization Act, which authorized the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to leverage $60 million in bonds, providing $1.1 billion to support the renovation and/or replacement of 28 Baltimore City schools in 25 neighborhoods. The act authorized the collaboration of the City of Baltimore (the City), Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), the Maryland Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC), and the MSA to:

> design schools that allow for recreational opportunities for the community, combined with other cooperative uses and school partnership programs . . . [and] be good stewards of Maryland taxpayer dollars and champions for education, economic development and neighborhood revitalization.
>
> *(21st Century School Buildings Program, n.d.)*

This effort, anointed the 21st Century School Buildings Program (21CSBP), held great promise for leaders in the City, BCPSS, citywide non-profit organizations, and philanthropy. They saw these new and renovated schools as an opportunity to support educational *and* neighborhood improvement. A new $40 million school building would be the largest single infrastructural investment that many of these neighborhoods had in decades. Further, 21CSBP held the potential to connect BCPSS's commitment to community schools—a school improvement approach that links schools and surrounding community organizations to provide social and healthcare services, after school programming, and other resources (*Coalition for Community Schools*, n.d.)—with Baltimore's planning and community development efforts.

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Herein, we draw on Good's (2022) framework that describes the four domains of community development—social, institutional, economic, and physical—to understand the relationships between community schools and community development efforts in Baltimore. While prior scholarship points to some links, school and neighborhood improvement have largely been viewed as distinct processes (Good, 2022). Good (2022) uses the crisis of school closures as a revelatory case to center schools in the context of community development, making it an appropriate framework for our study of school construction and rehabilitation. Specifically, he speculates that the nexus of organizations—from school district to community partners—in the community schools model, along with the "physical properties" of school buildings, provides "significant potential for publicly coordinated place-based community development" (Good, 2022, p. 606). He calls out community schools as sites of possible synergies, where "school districts, municipal governments, and planning departments can better work together to coordinate community development and school improvement priorities" (Good, 2022, p. 606).

We begin with a summary of Good's framework of community development's four domains and background on the community schools model. Next, we describe our data collection, analytic methods, and Baltimore's context. We draw on data collected for a study of the implementation and early outcomes of the 21CSBP and analyze interviews with philanthropic partners, city agency and school district personnel, and school- and community-level stakeholders in three geographies—Southwest Baltimore, Southeast Baltimore, and Cherry Hill. We then present findings from our analysis, organized along the four domains.

This chapter extends the community development literature and generates important insights into the cross-sector integration designed to transform urban schools and neighborhoods in tandem. Depending on the neighborhood context, the 21CSBP community schools fulfilled elements of the social, institutional, economic, and physical domains of community development. However, the full realization of schools as agents of community development relied on lead agencies and their staff having a clear vision for the links between schools and their surrounding communities and the structures to support development. Ultimately, the 21CSBP case sheds light on how and when investments in school buildings align with the fundamental principles and aims of community development practice.

Aligning Community Development and Schools

Community development is a process of place- and people-based initiatives that infuse resources into economically disadvantaged and disinvested communities (Wolf-Powers, 2016). Community development practice and scholarship is cross-sector and multi-dimensional. It includes strategies to expand affordable housing, connect residents to social services, enhance economic opportunity, beautify and stabilize neighborhoods, increase political power, and build stronger social connections within neighborhoods (see, e.g., DeFilippis & Saegert, 2008)

While some research points to schools' critical roles as neighborhood assets and in community development (Biddle et al., 2018; T. L. Green, 2015; Patterson & Silverman, 2013a; Taylor et al., 2013), school and neighborhood improvement largely have been viewed as distinct processes (Good, 2022). Good (2022) uses the crisis of school closures as a revelatory case to center schools in the context of community development and proposes that schools exemplify four domains of community development: social, institutional, economic, and physical.

The social domain "focuses on the strength and character of the relationships that connect people to each other and the provision of services to meet social needs" (Good, 2022, p. 600). Efforts to build "bonding social capital" (Putnam, 2001) among group members and collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1999) at the neighborhood level and programmatic interventions to meet resident needs (e.g., social services) fall under this domain. In addition to being sites of learning and youth development, schools—especially community schools—often connect youth and families to a broad range of health and social services, serve as centers for older adult learning, recreation, and other cradle-to-career programming (Oakes et al., 2017). Finally, schools facilitate social capital through parent engagement and school-site activities (Brownlow, 2013; Horvat et al., 2003; Joseph & Feldman, 2009; Nast & Blokland, 2013).

The institutional domain focuses on neighborhood organizations and other public and non-profit agencies and the ways these entities "build community connections and mediate between diverse groups" (Good, 2022, p. 600). Here, the unit of analysis is organizations and how they facilitate "bridging social capital" (Putnam, 2001) between neighborhood residents and "grasstops" outside of the neighborhood. Attention to political organizing and access to financial and political resources outside the neighborhood also falls under this institutional domain. Schools also facilitate "bridging social capital" through connections to broader organizing and political advocacy at neighborhood, districtwide, and citywide levels (Brownlow, 2013; Joseph & Feldman, 2009; Nast & Blokland, 2013; Warren, 2013).

The economic domain "conceptualize[s] neighborhoods in terms of economic processes, seeking to cultivate local economic growth and to leverage resources into a neighborhood" (Good, 2022, p. 600). Here, attention is to the development potential, financial resources available to and within neighborhoods, and the ways that private markets participate in changing neighborhood conditions. Studies have looked to the possibility of schools as anchor institutions for economic development and neighborhood improvement by simultaneously attracting new, higher-income residents and improving outcomes for incumbent, lower-income residents (Khadduri et al., 2003; Patterson & Silverman, 2013b, 2014; Steif, 2015; Varady & Raffel, 1995; Weiss, 2004). Extensive research has documented how schools and school improvement contribute to local housing markets, finding strong associations between school quality as measured by test scores, housing valuations, and investments by individual homeowners (Black & Machin, 2011; Horn, 2015).

Finally, the physical domain of community development concentrates on "how the built and natural environments affect life for residents" (Good, 2022, p. 600).

The central concerns here are the physical conditions of neighborhoods and potential design and structural interventions that can enhance quality of life. Normative urban design ideals have placed schools as central features in the physical landscape of cities, emphasizing the importance of schools as social spaces in neighborhoods (Lawhon, 2009; Mumford, 1938; Vitiello, 2006). School districts are responsible for the education mission of schools, but they implicitly enter the realm of planning and community development when they make decisions about school facilities, including the closures of school buildings (Bierbaum, 2018).

In his study of school closings, Good found that residents' understandings of closures mapped to each of these domains. For example, community stakeholders identified schools as a social hub and a space for community supports. They believed that closing schools would threaten their local economy, including local businesses and real estate. Closing schools also meant the loss of a civic asset, vacancy, and a predatory potential for developers to repurpose buildings in ways that were not in the interests of the community.

Communities' resistance to closures emphasizes how schools are experienced and understood as core neighborhood public infrastructure and linked to legacies of racial oppression and continued disinvestment of Black neighborhoods, even while school district management does not necessarily consider these metrics (Bierbaum, 2018; Ewing, 2018; Good, 2017, 2022; T. Green, 2017; Kitzmiller & McWilliams, 2019; Nuamah, 2020). Bierbaum (2018) has argued elsewhere that a source of tension in closure processes is the deep disconnect between the school district's rationale for closing schools, grounded in quantitative metrics like student enrollment and academic achievement, and residents' understanding of schools' role in their communities. Good (2017) also describes how Black residents in Philadelphia were acutely aware of how school closures were part of a long history of disinvestment in the city's communities of color and how they could give way to broader neighborhood displacement through housing and economic development that would largely benefit the city's White, middle, and upper-income residents.

The extreme case of school closure reveals schools' ties to community development. But what about open and operational schools? Based on his findings, Good (2022, p. 606) specifically calls out community schools as a space for future research to delve more deeply into the potential for cross-sector collaboration in community development practice.

Community schools are a place-bound approach designed to improve the lives of students, families, and communities. Community schools begin with the premise that children's basic needs must be met before they can be successful in school (Dryfoos, 2002). The community school model is associated with a range of benefits, such as improvements to students' academic outcomes and engagement in school (Dryfoos, 2002; Heers et al., 2016) and the cultivation of both bonding and bridging social capital for students, parents, and school site personnel (Galindo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2019; Jean-Marie et al., 2010).

In their review of school–community partnerships Valli et al. (2016) developed a typology of four partnership models. Whereas the first three approaches

(family and interagency collaboration, full-service schools, full-service community schools) center the school, students, and families as the primary units of change, the final approach—what they call "the community development model"—aims to transform entire neighborhoods by leveraging school–community partnerships to benefit schools *and* to stabilize neighborhoods. Although this approach is the least well documented, Valli et al. (2016) found inklings of a place-based partnership model where community developers pair wrap-around services in schools with a broad range of investments in and outside of schools. Prior research and Valli's framework, however, locate community school efforts within the social and institutional domains, leaving open possibilities for more robustly connecting community schools across all four domains of community development practice.

Socioeconomic Disparities in Baltimore's Neighborhoods

Baltimore is home to nearly 600,000 people. In 2019, over one-fifth of residents lived in poverty (Benson, 2020; US Census Bureau, n.d.). Like many post-industrial cities, Baltimore faces fiscal instability, shrinking populations, deteriorating infrastructure, and persistent needs among its high-poverty communities. Baltimore is a deeply segregated city, the result of generations of housing, transportation, and education policies. Its inequality is patterned along neighborhood geographies, with the central axis—the "White L"—home to more affluent and predominantly White neighborhoods, and the east and west sides—the "Black butterfly"—home to predominantly Black communities (Brown, 2021). The Black butterfly neighborhoods continue to contend with the legacies of intentional disinvestment, redlining, housing demolition, over-policing, and an overinvestment in surveillance (MacGillis, 2016; Theodos et al., 2019).

These neighborhoods have also borne the brunt of educational instability. Since 2000, BCPSS has experienced enrollment declines and roughly half of its students come from economically disadvantaged households (Baltimore City Public Schools System, 2020). Declining enrollments and low academic performance are central rationales for closing schools (E. Green, 2011), yet these schools are most often located in the east and west majority-Black neighborhoods and thus contribute to the destabilization of these communities (Brown, 2021). Despite these challenges, Baltimore is organized around strongly identified neighborhoods and has a long history of neighborhood-based community development and planning (Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development, 2019; Baltimore City Department of Planning, n.d.; Baum, 2010).

Leveraging School Investments in Neighborhoods

The 21CSBP provides a window into understanding the relationships between community schools, school construction and rehabilitation, and community development efforts. The 21CSBP provides $1.1 billion to support the renovation and/or

replacement of 28 Baltimore City schools in 25 neighborhoods. These physical improvements complemented BCPSS's growing commitment to community schools, one of the many strategies BCPSS has implemented to meet the often dire needs of its students and families (Shiller & The Teachers Democracy Project, 2020). Each school has a dedicated community school coordinator and receives technical and financial support from a lead agency—either BCPSS or a non-profit organization. The coordinator helps manage programs and services that are specifically customized to the needs of its school community. These may include food pantries, clothing drives, mental and physical health services, job training, and/or adult education (Durham & Connolly, 2016).

Operating out of the City's Planning Department, the INSPIRE (Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence) program seeks to leverage the 21CSBP school building investments with additional neighborhood improvements. INSPIRE facilitates participatory planning processes and funds implementation projects in the one-quarter-mile radius surrounding each of the 21CSBP schools. As of this writing, INSPIRE has resulted in 13 plans officially adopted by the City Planning Commission, with another 11 in process and three awaiting initiations (INSPIRE Plans, 2016). The program has successfully implemented small capital projects, like parks, murals, and streetscape improvements, and worked with other city departments to implement larger-scale infrastructure like sidewalk repairs. The program has its limitations, however. It operates with few staff and a small budget, and frequently is disconnected from the BCPSS 21CSBP planning and construction processes.

Local philanthropy further leveraged the 21CSBP investment through grantmaking programs. Specifically, the Maryland Philanthropy Network's (MPN) School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative (SCNII) formed to contribute to the 21CSBP's broad goals of school and neighborhood transformation. In the short term, SCNII aimed to build neighborhood capacity, support community development in 21CSBP neighborhoods, and facilitate cross-sector collaboration. Long term, SCNII saw coordinated efforts around 21CSBP sites as contributing to stabilizing neighborhood populations, fostering partnerships between community organizations and schools, increasing public and private development investments, and improving the physical neighborhood conditions through large and small scale planning and implementation (School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative (SCNII), 2018).

Assessing Baltimore's Community Schools Initiative

In the summer of 2018, MPN SCNII funded our research team to analyze 21CSBP's implementation process and early outcomes. Over two years, we attended meetings; conducted interviews with city, school district, and non-profit organization staff; and reviewed relevant policy and archival materials.[2] We drew on several secondary data sources, including the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

Vital Signs report (2019), The Reinvestment Fund's (2018) market value analysis (MVA), and INSPIRE plans' neighborhood descriptions.

Members of the SCNII committee also selected three geographic areas of Baltimore for exploratory case profiles: Southeast, Southwest, and Cherry Hill.[3] The SCNII committee selected cases in geographic areas that vary in location, neighborhood characteristics, organizational capacities, school demographics, and implementation stage. At the time of our study, three schools had completed construction or renovations, and three others were under construction. A summary of the three cases and their 21CSBP schools' status is in Table 5.1.

The cases were not selected to be comparable; rather, the three communities were selected to understand the implementation and emerging outcomes across a range of 21CSBP communities with varying physical conditions, partnership infrastructure, and opportunities for community development. While not generalizable to all 21CSBP neighborhoods in Baltimore, this chapter contributes to understanding how and under what kinds of conditions school facilities investments in community schools can support broader community development.

Our chapter focuses specifically on the interview data relevant to these three neighborhoods to understand the extent to which community schools are actualized as neighborhood assets and catalyze community development on the ground. We used snowball sampling based on recommendations from MPN staff, SCNII committee members, and interview participants with knowledge of the three neighborhoods to identify respondents who could speak to the role of the 21CSBP schools in their neighborhoods and community development efforts. We spoke with stakeholders at the new 21CSBP schools, community-based organizations, philanthropic partners, city and school district agencies, and other citywide non-profit staff, for a total of 42 interviews.

Our semi-structured interviews covered issues about neighborhood conditions; potential and active community development efforts; and the new school, its role in the neighborhood, and the impact of the 21CSBP investment. We conducted interviews in person or by phone, and audio recorded and transcribed all interviews. Data analysis was concurrent and iterative with data collection. We met frequently as a research team and submitted quarterly memos and presented emergent findings to MPN staff and SCNII members. For this analysis, we created deductive codes drawn from Good's (2022) framework for the four domains of community development (e.g., social domain [parent code], building social capital, collective efficacy [sub-codes]) and coded our interviews in NVivo (Saldaña, 2016).

Understanding the Community Impact of 21CSBP Schools

Following, we share evidence of the extent to which 21CSBP schools contribute to community development. We organize our findings by neighborhood geography, describing each area's composition and conditions, and then providing evidence analyzed along Good's (2022) framework of how these school building

TABLE 5.1 Case neighborhoods and their 21st Century School Buildings Program schools

	New construction	*Renovation*	*School closures*	*21CSBP status*	*Market value analysis 2017*[4]	*In a CDC boundary?*	*Community school coordinator home organization*
Southwest	1	0	1	1 new construction complete Opened 2017–18	Type I/J	No	School
Southeast		3	0	1 renovation complete 2 renovations ongoing	Type B/C/E/F	Yes	Neighborhood CDC
Cherry Hill	1	1	2	1 new construction complete 1 renovation complete Opened in 2018–19	Type G/H	Yes	Citywide youth development non-profit

Source: Author analysis.

investments reflect community developments four dimensions: social, physical, institutional, and economic.

Southwest: Persistent Legacies of Mistrust Limit School Community Partnerships

Southwest describes a collection of neighborhoods located west of the city's central business district. Our focus is on a quarter-mile radius surrounding the new 21CSBP school, which includes portions of six neighborhoods. In the late 1800s and early decades of the 20th century, Southwest Baltimore was home to a diverse mix of residents, including working-class Black and White residents, who settled in homes near the neighborhood's factories. Like many areas of the city, restrictive covenants segregated Black and White residents within neighborhoods. In the middle of the 20th century, most White residents left the neighborhood, and by the 1970s, Southwest Baltimore was home to a majority-Black community. At the same time, the neighborhood also lost a population of middle-income residents of all races, leaving higher proportions of residents living with lower incomes and in poverty.

Even today, Southwest Baltimore sees twice the population decline as the citywide rate (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, 2019). Today, Southwest is majority Black residents, with a growing population of Latinx residents. The area faces high poverty rates and significant economic need. Close to half of all children (49%) live below the poverty line in Southwest Baltimore (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, 2019). Despite these data, the neighborhoods are home to a diversity of residents. One community partner critiqued what he called "the tyranny of statistics" as he described who lives in Southwest, arguing that aggregate data do not necessarily capture the neighborhood's demographic composition: "There's a lot of diversity within that. There's not a whole lot of income [diversity], but there's a lot more middle-class incomes than you would think."

The racial and ethnic demographics of the school reflect the neighborhood population; the school serves a majority-Black student population and a majority of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Like schools across the city, the Southwest elementary school saw declining enrollments between the 2010 and the 2017 school year: over the seven-year period, the school saw a 46% decrease in its population. To stabilize enrollment, BCPSS closed one Southwest elementary school. This closure and merger with another school motivated the decision to site a new 21CSBP building in this neighborhood. Students from the closed school were reassigned to the new 21CSBP school. This consolidation boosted enrollment at the new school and, according to district staff, aimed to mitigate the harms of closure by offering a new school to the community, which opened for the 2018–19 school year.

Given the neighborhood conditions, it is unsurprising that neighborhood residents and students face tremendous needs, and the social service dimension of

community development is well established inside the walls of the school through its community school model. A partnership with a health-services provider, along with resources from the community school coordinator's host agency, supports multiple services for the school community, including a food pantry, health fair, and a backpack program that provides school supplies to students.

The school falls short, however, in fulfilling a role as a gathering space that can facilitate social connections in the neighborhood. The closure of the neighborhood school challenged social bonds. The announced closure generated significant opposition in the community. Following that, according to some respondents, families had few meaningful opportunities to contribute to the 21CSBP planning process. These experiences engendered deep mistrust. According to one respondent, feelings of betrayal by many residents towards BCPSS, the City, and even neighborhood associations negatively affected their willingness to engage with the new school. One respondent noted that the original school community—administrators, teachers, students, and parents—felt like a family. While the new school staff were not individually responsible for the hurt, families still have a tenuous connection to the school.

From an institutional perspective, the community school approach was more inward focused, which limited school–community collaborations. The community school coordinator was a school district staff member and accountable to the principal. They focused more on bringing services into the building rather than seeking out opportunities for engagement with outside organizations. Respondents emphasized the key role that the school leader has in determining the relationship between the community school and the neighborhood. The longevity of a principal's tenure and their vision are key for building community connections. According to one community partner, "It's a matter of timing; [the school has] a new principal who may not have the roots and connections to the [neighborhood] community."

Realizing institutional dimensions of community development through school–community collaborations relies not only on the school leader's vision and capacity, but also on that of local community-based organizations, which is limited in Southwest. The neighborhoods benefit from several local organizations and anchor institutions that support projects to improve residents' health; neighborhood conditions; and access to educational, housing, and workforce opportunities. However, while technically in "Southwest," many of these organizations work outside of the neighborhoods immediately served by the 21CSBP school. Further, other neighborhood organizations and associations have limited capacity to implement plans for development.

Even amidst these limitations, some community partners speculated that the renovated school building may be an incentive to other funders to support projects in the neighborhood surrounding the school. One partner observed that the new school has sparked a sense of stewardship among some residents, commenting "There's a lot of residents who are organized and involved in these neighborhoods. They're saying, 'Hey, we got a new school. Let's build up this neighborhood.'"

The potential for resident organizing around the 21CSBP and towards other community development goals exists, although the institutional infrastructure to realize it remains lacking.

This lack of organizational capacity also limited the possibilities of physical improvements around the 21CSBP school, particularly as the school tries to engage families from the closed school community. The new 21CSBP is further away from the closed school, exacerbating these families' disconnection described previously: "I think the school is perceived as a zoned school, and not the neighborhood school because it's not in the neighborhood." With the school closure, community members worried about students' safe passage as they traveled further across other neighborhoods to get to the 21CSBP school. One community partner observed, "It was one thing to walk through our violent neighborhood but then we were going to another neighborhood with violence. Parents did not want their babies walking."

As a response, the INSPIRE plan included a walking school bus to help students safely travel to and from school, but with mixed reception. Some respondents questioned whether this approach was an adequate solution to safe passage, especially when even some adults were hesitant to walk through the neighborhoods. Another respondent linked the physical safety to issues of organizational capacity; although the community organizations started the walking school bus, they have not yet supported projects that would create sustained improvement in neighborhood safety, such as the development of vacant lots around the school.

The vacancy near the school, the unsafe neighborhood conditions, and lack of development potential reflect a long history of economic disinvestment in Southwest Baltimore. One community partner described the neighborhood as one that has "been historically left behind in terms of having a voice and opportunity to participate in larger Baltimore discussions about investment and revitalization." Accordingly, the area's housing market is among the weakest in the city (The Reinvestment Fund, 2018). For a community with such significant economic needs, the decision to invest in a new school signaled a broader commitment to strengthening neighborhoods most neglected and in need like Southwest. According to one community partner, "It was really exciting that the school district would say, 'We're going to put a 21st Century School in [the neighborhood]. Let's put our money where our mouth is.'"

However, others—particularly those in the community development field—remained skeptical. We heard dismay that the school district would invest so many millions of dollars in a neighborhood with very little economic potential. One respondent, for example, observed that the school "on its own, wouldn't make a community impact. There's no reason to think that it would. I'd be shocked if it did." Similarly, one city-level respondent recounted being told that the neighborhood surrounding the 21CSBP school is often a last resort for residents looking for housing: "As soon as [residents] have a choice, they move out. Can a school combat that? Doubt it." Although the 21CSBP represented a significant investment for the neighborhood, residents' service needs, market conditions, and the cumulative

harms of disinvestment along with a skepticism from city actors may overwhelm this singular investment.

Southeast: High-Capacity Organizations Support Community-School Integration

Southeast refers to an area east of the central business district that includes more than 20 racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse neighborhoods. We focused on three of these neighborhoods: Hopkins Bayview, Greektown, and Highlandtown, and their three 21CSBP elementary/middle schools slated for renovation or expansion. As Baltimore rose in prominence as an east coast industrial center in the latter half of the 19th century, the three neighborhoods became home to immigrants from Europe. Racial demographics shifted throughout the later 20th century, as Black residents increasingly settled in southeastern neighborhoods. However, the roots of working-class, European immigrant enclaves remain visible today, especially in Greektown and Highlandtown. Today these neighborhoods and their schools are seeing demographic changes—a growing population of new immigrant Latinx families, while the historically working-class parts of Southeast are seeing influxes of younger, White, and more affluent residents (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, 2019).

Community school coordinators tailor services to respond to the realities of the specific communities they serve. One community school hosts a Newcomer Center that serves both new immigrant families in the neighborhood and from across the city. This center delivers academic supports to students to bolster English language skills and other services to ease families' transition to their new community. The community schools also provide the opportunity for social interaction across the diversity of neighborhood residents. One community school coordinator stated,

> The folks that do come [to our farmer's market] right now are folks who live in the really big condos. They'll be shopping alongside someone who has food stamps. That's really amazing, to be able to have these spaces for this overlap of different demographics and different groups of people.

The community school programming creates a space to bridge divides across racial and socioeconomic divides.

A community development corporation (CDC) leader saw these kinds of spaces as one arena for resolving growing tensions between in-mover Latinx immigrants and incumbent Black families: "There's an opportunity while the schools' demographics are somewhat mixed to really work on relationship-building and breaking down some of that tension and resentment." Her bird's-eye view of changing residential patterns and neighborhood demographic shifts provided a perspective on how school integration can help foster broader community development goals for relationship-building among diverse residents.

The CDC leaders have access to both neighborhood and school level dynamics because of the organizational arrangement in the neighborhood. Unlike in Southwest, the Southeast community school coordinators are not school district staff. Rather, they are funded through outside resources and are staff of the high-capacity CDC. The CDC's comprehensive vision and resources shape that of the community school coordinators. Interview respondents explained that the CDC's work starts from the premise that schools are the "hubs and hearts" of neighborhoods. The community schools work, thus, aims to support students' academic outcomes *and* to fulfill its broader mission to create the conditions for strong, stable neighborhoods through housing, economic development, and community-building efforts.

The CDC saw its work in the institutional domain of community development as directly aligned to its work inside schools. According to a CDC leader, this work emerged from a growing desire to "be where families convene." She continued, "They go to schools to see what's going on with their kids, and really, that's their community. So, we started investing in community schools." Schools became a key site for activating community organizing both before and after the 21CSBP efforts to improve both school and neighborhood infrastructure, including local organizations. As one community leader commented: "How do we get [parents] involved in your communities, and how do we teach them to take the lessons they're learning at the school about leadership onto their blocks?" For community partners, the connections between schools and neighborhoods are part of a larger strategy to "work pretty smartly to make sure [we] are weaving people together throughout the neighborhood."

Notably, political capacity-building among parents linked to the physical dimension of the schools and their neighborhoods. Prior to the 21CSBP investments, newcomer immigrant parents from Central America expressed frustrations about the conditions of their school buildings and organized a beautification project. Out of this, community partners formed a parent leadership group, supported through a grant, that has advocated for additional school improvements and helped parents successfully participate in the 21CSBP design process.

The schools also provided enhanced recreational spaces, although not without conflict. One school-level partner described the "more guarded" stance of the school site or district, which excludes some community members. She explained, "I think we're going to just constantly be dealing with . . . Can we lock the playground, so it doesn't get trash on it? Well, if you lock the playground, then you limit the options of who's able to participate on there and when." The institutional dimensions of community development—particularly in defining relevant stakeholders—are tied to tensions around the 21CSBP physical spaces. The "community" in "community school" was not necessarily perceived by all organizations to be the same as the "community" in "community development," which led to these tensions around the joint use of school spaces.

The 21CSBP rehabilitations tangibly improved the neighborhood's physical environment and became part of the CDC's broader investment and development strategies. Housing market conditions in these three Southeast neighborhoods

have been described as relatively stable compared to other parts of the city, with private investment in new housing and retail development (The Reinvestment Fund, 2018). This stability is in no small part due to the high-capacity CDC that has helped garner investments in housing, retail, and other programming and their intentionality about connecting these investments with the 21CSBP rehabilitations. One community partner observed that a school's physical appearance is key for attracting families to schools. She explained, "For us, having a beautiful, clean, well-designed, brand new school building in the heart of the neighborhood where we're trying to attract new people and increase investment is a huge win."

The more favorable market conditions enable the linking of community schools' efforts with community development and provide a pathway to retain newcomer, more affluent, White families in the neighborhoods too. According to one community partner, whereas affluent families were once skeptical about the neighborhood schools, their perceptions are starting to shift: "They're like, 'Ah! Look at this really beautiful building!' Because we put the designs out there as much as we can." The school as a physical asset helps stabilize social and economic dimensions of the neighborhood.

These market conditions do pose risks of displacement of longer-term residents and other, lower-income newcomers who are predominantly renters. The CDC leaders and community school coordinators in Southeast are deeply attuned to the issues of housing stability, its impact on families, and ripple effects in the school setting. To mitigate displacement, community partners have connected incumbent families to home ownership counseling programs and have developed a loan program specifically for residents that cannot get traditional mortgages. These efforts reflect a deep intentionality behind organizing their community development work in financial literacy and housing initiatives around school stakeholders, in particular parents.

Cherry Hill: Historic Isolation Fosters Contemporary Community Connection and Vision

Cherry Hill is geographically, racially, and economically isolated from the rest of the city. In the 1940s through post-World War II, Cherry Hill became a site for segregated public housing developments designed to house the growing population of Black residents in the city. The public housing authority remains the largest property owner in the neighborhood. Cherry Hill's intentional segregation has had a lasting impact on the neighborhood's demographics. Today, Black residents still make up the largest share of residents, with more recent small increases in the proportions of White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx residents. Poverty is also concentrated in Cherry Hill; as one community partner explained, "Cherry Hill by design is a low-income area. It was made that way to stay that way." The neighborhood's median household income has typically fallen below citywide medians, and in approximately half of all households had incomes less than $25,000 (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, 2019).

The legacy of segregation and isolation in Cherry Hill has engendered a strong sense of community among residents. Respondents consistently described the neighborhood's "closeness" as one of the community's greatest strengths. One community partner explained, "We're very tight knit [and] take care of our own. . . . We definitely look out for each other." Similarly, a city agency employee described Cherry Hill as a "resource-rich" community, in part, because of its community institutions like churches and community-based organizations and its strong self-image. Cherry Hill has two 21CSBP schools, one new construction and one renovation; both schools opened to students for the 2018–19 school year. The schools' demographics reflect the neighborhood. Both schools serve majority Black students, and most students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. One school saw slight increases in the proportion of Hispanic/Latinx and White students, but the total number of families is still low.

Many Cherry Hill residents require social service supports to meet their basic needs, and the addition of community spaces within 21CSBP schools has helped bring social services into schools and the neighborhood. One school hosts social service "office hours," where public agencies come out to the neighborhood to answer questions, get residents registered, and provide other interventions locally. In addition to expanding access, bringing these services into the schools has ancillary benefits for students. The logistics of travel to downtown to reach service agencies coupled with getting kids to and from school often proved arduous for parents, and as a result, children missed school. With services available at neighborhood schools, parents no longer must choose between their children's attendance and their families' much-needed social services.

Under the leadership and vision of the community school coordinator and facilitated by the 21CSBP building design, dedicated entrances and spaces for outside community members create an opportunity to foster community development goals of social connection, relationship-building, and organizational connections to schools. Local community groups now can use the school for meetings and events. One community school coordinator explained how the design of the building with a separate community-serving space is "a huge help because when we were in the older building, that was a concern. We had to balance [opening the school to the community] with the safety of our students." This community wing also has become a "third space" for parents and other community members with a television and music, coffee and tea, and a space to hang out and build relationships.

Here, like in Southeast, the community school coordinator is funded externally and housed in a non-profit organization that supports out-of-school time opportunities, school outreach to families, and school-based health services. He viewed his role as cultivating connections among schools, local businesses and organizations, and the community to address the out-of-school conditions, entrenched poverty, and systemic racism that impact students' academic and psychosocial outcomes and broader community members' lives. For example, through an annual needs assessment, the coordinator identified access to healthy foods as an immediate need.

Although the community school coordinator operated a food pantry at the host school, he still found that the community had limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. To respond to this need, the coordinator partnered with a local organization to host a produce market at the school. By tapping into long-standing community leaders, local groceries, and nearby hospital centers, the community school coordinator could connect across sectors and meet needs of families and the broader community.

The physical design of the 21CSBP school buildings along with high-capacity and adequately resourced community school coordinators have been important factors to facilitate cross-organization connections in Cherry Hill. Beyond the interior design of the schools, the new and renovated school buildings offer improvement to Cherry Hill's built environment. The 21CSBP schools came after closures of two other schools, which one community stakeholder described as dividing Cherry Hill across four schools. He saw the closures and 21CSBP investments as a positive, "Now that we have all kids going to school together, there's no more division. There's no more 'I can't be your friend because you live in this part of Cherry Hill.'" Unlike in Southwest, the consolidation into two 21CSBP schools created stronger physical locus of community connection. Other physical investments catalyzed by 21CSBP, particularly those from INSPIRE, also improved the built environment, such as beautification projects, street trees, and improved sidewalks around the schools.

Despite these efforts, some community stakeholders in Cherry Hill questioned whether planned improvements could address the structural challenges that residents faced because of Cherry Hill's geography, topography, and history. According to one school partner, although these projects improved school aesthetics, these upgrades did not mitigate the neighborhood's physical isolation nor address the community's need for public transportation to access jobs and opportunities outside of the neighborhood. In the interim, community partners have engaged both private and public partners to improve neighborhood residents' access to public transportation, such as exploring expanded bus service for students and commuters.

Historically, the geographic isolation posed challenges for activating investment and new development in the neighborhood. However, recent developments in nearby neighborhoods are affecting community development approaches in Cherry Hill. Specifically, spillover investments from a large mixed-use development project on the city's waterfront are coming into Cherry Hill. Local leaders see these developments as synergistic with the 21CSBP school investments. Cherry Hill also benefits from long-standing support from national community development intermediaries like Enterprise Community Partners and a new partnership with Purpose Built Communities, an organization that helps communities initiate cross-sector and multi-agency action to bring mixed-income housing development and wrap-around services to neighborhoods. As one community member explained, these resources flowing into the community "are resources that never existed before for Cherry Hill," and the public 21CSBP investment was critical in securing these subsequent nonprofit and private leveraged investments.

Ultimately, the dynamics of the housing market are critical for the continued viability of the 21CSBP. As of writing, the two 21CSBP schools were under-enrolled. Increasing student enrollment—a necessity to keep schools open—requires a comprehensive housing strategy. The Housing Authority remains the largest landowner in Cherry Hill, and the market overall is considered weak with home prices that are below citywide averages and low rates of owner-occupied properties (The Reinvestment Fund, 2018). One respondent observed that housing development strategies must be done in conjunction with the city's Housing Authority because Cherry Hill is a unified community—whether residents lived in public or private housing. Yet, the respondent perceived some hesitancy at the city agency to move forward with public housing development plans: "We've got resources that have never been available in this community before, ways to take advantage of this small window that is not going to stay open because Housing Authority says, 'We got to wait 'til we're in a better position.'" This attitude frustrates some who are ready to see change in their community. One community stakeholder, for example, saw developments as an opportunity to attract middle-class residents to Cherry Hill: "I want more diversity in my neighborhood. Diversity from an economic standpoint. More 9 to 5 job holders and teachers living in the neighborhood who could hold you accountable."

This eagerness for new development and private investment are not universally expressed, however. For others, in-movers could create displacement risks for incumbent residents. One community school coordinator shared his reflections in talking with neighborhood residents about the promise the 21CSBP investments offer, "On one side, people are in awe of it. They love it. . . . Then, there's people who feel like it's just another step in the gentrification process." These observations hold the complex and painful legacies of this neighborhood, and many majority-Black neighborhoods in this country: their systematic neglect by public institutions, the justified feeling of entitlement to public investment, and the disbelief—due to years of cultivated mistrust—when that investment actually comes. Infrastructure investments—including the 21CSBP schools—get embroiled in these long-standing contestations of community development practice.

Possibilities and Limitations for School-Centered Community Development

The 21CSBP affirms how schools are deeply embedded in neighborhoods and community imaginations, and how community schools can be instrumental in the social, institutional, economic, and physical dimensions of community development, as summarized in Table 5.2. Yet, as our study finds, school–community relationships and community development efforts are complex. While school building investments can facilitate some activities, they are not a panacea. Existing community conditions—market conditions, organizational capacity, community trust, and social cohesion—can facilitate or constrain whether schools catalyze community development.

TABLE 5.2 Summary of 21CSBP investments' alignment to Good's (2022) four domains of community development

	Domain definition	*Southwest*	*Southeast*	*Cherry Hill*
Social	Social services meeting acute resident needs Individual relationships, social capital, collective efficacy	Food pantry, medical care, school supplies, other social service access	Food pantry, medical care, other social service access, farmers market, "newcomer" center, housing and financial counseling Meeting/event space for organizing and community groups	Food pantry and local produce market, social service access Meeting/event space for community groups Casual gathering space for community members
Institutional	Organizations building community connections Political power building Access to financial and political resources outside the neighborhood	Limited connections between school and school-serving organizations	Parent organizing Linking parents to neighborhood activities Connecting PTAs with neighborhood associations	Connecting local businesses and non-profits to school site
Economic	Neighborhood development potential Private markets and other financial resources available to and within neighborhoods	None	Marketing 21CSBP school for new investments in housing, retail, etc. Focus on housing stability through home buyer loan program for low-income residents	Purpose Built Communities partnership
Physical	Neighborhood physical conditions (e.g., vacancy, buildings, urban design)	One new 21CSBP school INSPIRE walking school bus	Three rehabilitated 21CSBP schools Joint use of school playgrounds	One new and one rehabilitated 21CSBP school INSPIRE streetscape and beautification projects

Source: Author analysis.

In all three neighborhoods, community schools play a critical role in the social dimension of community development. The community schools model meets core needs of students, families, and sometimes the broader community. Each 21CSBP school benefits from partnerships that support multiple services for schools and their place-based communities. But the extent to which the 21CSBP serve as communal meetings spaces and create opportunities for social connection across neighborhood residents varies. The school buildings themselves perhaps most obviously manifest physical improvements in their neighborhoods. These new or rehabilitated schools are multi-million-dollar investments and include new school buildings, open and/or play space, and updated entrances and egresses to the buildings.

Institutionally, community schools can become spaces of collaboration for school and non-school organizations. In Southeast, they also provide a platform for cultivating stewardship and organizing parents and residents for school and neighborhood change. Actualizing cross-sector interaction is impeded at times, however. For example, the "community" in "community school" was not necessarily perceived by all stakeholders to be the same as the "community" in "community development." This lack of definitional alignment, which often belies a lack of geographic and jurisdictional alignment, has important consequences for the integration of school and community development.

The limitations and opportunities to leveraging the 21CSBP community schools in the economic domain of community development highlight the complexities of neighborhood stabilization. Underlying market conditions and established community development efforts are strong factors in whether and how community schools can be activated in this domain. New and renovated schools may foster investment potential, but they also feed persistent concerns about how community development can support investment without stimulating displacement.

The stories of these neighborhoods reveal how leveraging school building investments for community development can hinge on clear vision and staff capacity to implement a cross-sector approach. In Cherry Hill and Southeast, for example, elements of all four community development domains are more evident in part because lead agencies and their staff have a clear vision for the link between schools and student success *and* their surrounding neighborhoods' social and economic stability. Capacity of local CDCs and of the community school coordinators' home organizations play an important role in cultivating and enacting this more expansive vision. In Southwest, fewer community-based organizations and more inward-facing school staff mean less consideration of neighborhood issues and constrain the potential of community schools for supporting community development.

Our chapter points to the potential of using the physical dimensions of schools—through school building improvements—as a launching pad for community development's social, institutional, and economic activities. Overcoming resource, leadership, and other constraints are critical to developing and enacting a cross-sector, shared social agenda for school and neighborhood change through massive school facility investments.

Notes

1. This chapter draws from Bierbaum, A. H., Butler, A., & O'Keefe, E. (2022). School-centered community development: Lessons from Baltimore's 21st Century School Buildings program. *Community Development*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2022.2123015. This research was funded by the Maryland Philanthropy Network, School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative.
2. See Bierbaum et al. (2020) for full description of data and methods.
3. We use the term "neighborhood" to refer to each area selected. Cherry Hill's neighborhood boundaries are clearly defined, but we use Southeast and Southwest to refer to a broad collection of neighborhoods adjacent to 21CSBP schools.
4. The market value analysis (MVA) is a neighborhood market typology developed through analyses of key indicators, including median and variability of housing sales, housing and land vacancy, rate of owner occupancy, mortgage foreclosures, commercial land use, proportion of subsidized rental properties, and density. Census block groups are rated A through J, with A representing the most competitive housing markets and J neighborhoods representing the most distressed markets (The Reinvestment Fund, 2018). Data accessed using census tracts defined by INSPIRE plans and mapped through PolicyMap.

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PART III

Institutional and Social

Opportunities for Collaboration and Innovation

Schools are a critical community development partner. In this part, we explore how schools could be better integrated with their communities. Shared services with schools is one popular strategy. School buildings can be used after hours for community activities. Especially in low-income and rural communities, schools can provide library, computer and recreational services to the broader community. In short, schools could become full-service community institutions.

Chapter 6 presents national survey data on the level of joint use service sharing with schools and finds that nutrition, recreation and adult education programs are the most common, followed by programs for seniors. Challenges to providing shared services include concerns over liability, cost, safety and wear and tear on the school building. But these challenges can be overcome. Schools are powerful institutions in the community, with large professional staff and quality buildings. This is especially important in low-income and rural communities. But schools often operate as silos unto themselves, and it can be hard for community groups to enter. Chapter 6 explores dimensions of power and finds that horizontal power with schools leads to more service sharing than hierarchical power over schools. This is a useful insight, as most communities do not have budget or planning power over their schools.

Chapters 7 and 8 look specifically at New York state. A survey conducted of all school districts in the state found sharing was more common in administrative back office services (joint purchasing) than in community services. It also found that sharing of community services was more common in rural and small city school districts and in districts with more children of color, but not in those with more lower income children.

Chapter 8 showcases an exemplary program of School Based Healthcare Centers (SBHCs) by the Bassett Health Care network in four rural counties in the

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Catskills. This chapter shows the promise of schools as community institutions. These communities have limited access to health care facilities, and the school becomes a health center. The impacts are profound. Children are able to access care when they need it for medical, mental health and dental care. Higher vaccination rates, more comprehensive medical care and less missed school days are all benefits of the program. By giving students agency as health care patients, the SBHCs build a culture of health and create a more empowered health care consumer. This is an example of the exciting potential of schools as community development partners.

6

JOINT USE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

Unpacking Dimensions of Power[1]

Mildred E. Warner and Xue Zhang

Introduction

Schools are critical community institutions. In addition to their educational role, schools can be used as centers for access to recreation, nutrition, adult education and health care (Filardo & Vincent, 2014; Filardo et al., 2010; Vincent, 2010, 2014). The community schools movement and promise neighborhood initiatives have been growing in some urban areas (Bonilla-Santiago, 2020; Horsford & Sampson, 2014; Kelleher et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2013), but little is known about the level of school–community collaboration across suburban and rural communities. This chapter provides an analysis of both rural and urban communities across the US.

Schools often exist as silos onto themselves. But that is changing. Both schools and local communities are recognizing the need to work together to achieve both educational and broader community development goals (Filardo et al., 2010; Schafft, 2016; Talmage et al., 2018). Community development requires collaboration across a range of institutions and issues. Cross-agency collaboration has been shown to be especially important in ensuring a broad range of services to meet the needs of children, families, and seniors (Warner & Zhang, 2020, 2021). Collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008) is receiving increasing attention in community development and public health (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016), but more research is needed on the nature of power in these collaborations. This chapter helps fill that gap.

Organizational structure and power matter for school–community collaboration. In most communities, schools are special districts with boards and taxing authority independent of local government. Schools have a large number of highly trained staff and buildings that can be key community resources. In most communities, local governments have no formal budget or administrative control over schools.

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Thus, collaborative governance is the typical approach to analyze joint use services with schools (Bierbaum et al., 2022).

What constitutes joint use? Research on joint use service delivery between communities and schools has focused on planning (Filardo & Vincent, 2014; Filardo et al., 2010), access to recreation (Spengler et al., 2007), and other school resources for the broader community (Talmage et al., 2018; Vincent, 2010, 2014). This can involve sharing computer and library resources, access to adult education, support for health and nutrition services (for children and seniors), and recreation (sharing gyms and ball fields). While schools typically focus on serving children during the school day, they can be an important resource for services for children and families outside of school hours. Schools also can be a resource for seniors. For example, in NYC, school buses are used to take seniors grocery shopping in neighborhoods that lack grocery stores (New York Academy of Medicine, 2011). Nutrition access has become a key focus of schools (Flora & Gillespie, 2009), with breakfast and lunch during the school day, and some schools offer evening meals and send food back packs home with children on weekends. Some schools provide school-based health care centers (Knopf et al., 2016). These are especially important in low-income and rural schools where access to health care is a challenge (Kjolhede & Lee, 2021).

In this chapter, we look at factors that differentiate communities with more joint use service delivery with schools. We use data from a 2019 survey of 996 local governments across the US. We measure seven different services in the areas of recreation, education, health and nutrition, child care, and transportation. These are services which would be of importance to children and seniors. We also control for factors that might promote joint use and obstacles to collaboration. We give special emphasis to forms of power in the organizational context for school-local government joint service delivery.

Theoretical Basis of Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance theory emphasizes the importance of trust and shared understanding to lead to more collaborative action (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ostrom, 2010). Attention must be given not only to the incentives and constraints for collaborative action but also the legal and administrative practices which set the context for power sharing and collaboration (Lynn et al., 2001). Collective impact theory emphasizes the need for an organizational infrastructure to support collaboration (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016). We explore these factors but give special attention to types of power that may affect joint use service collaboration between communities and schools.

First, we draw insights from community development theory to understand some of the factors that lead to more school–community service sharing. Emery and Flora (2006) and Flora and Gillespie (2009) have articulated the community capitals framework—with a focus on political, social, cultural, financial, physical, and

human capital—particularly as it relates to community development and health. As mentioned in Chapter 1, schools represent all six community capitals. They have excellent physical buildings and playgrounds and relatively stable financial resources from local taxing power and state aid. In many communities, schools are the largest employer, so they have excellent human capital. They are important non-partisan leaders in local communities, and they build the social, cultural, and human capital of the community and future generations. Prior community development research has looked at the role of schools in building social capital (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004; Warner, 1999), sense of community and place (Lyson, 2002; Sipple et al., 2019), and youth engagement in local planning processes (McKoy & Vincent, 2007).

Community development scholarship gives special attention to the importance of developing a common vision with schools (Biddle et al., 2018). This can help address power imbalances. Common vision is particularly important in communities where there are divides by race, age, and class (Myers, 2015). Visioning is important for intergenerational programming in schools (Kaplan, 2002). Participation of families with children (Makarewicz, 2022; Warner & Rukus, 2013) and of seniors (Warner et al., 2017) has been shown to be particularly important in helping communities plan for their needs. Children's engagement in community visioning is especially important in disadvantaged communities, as children provide a unique view (Driskell, 2017; Severcan, 2015). In rural communities, social engagement has been found to be more important than the built environment in differentiating communities with better health (Zhang et al., 2020). This is why both UNICEF (2018) and the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007) emphasize the importance of engagement and respect in creating more child- and age-friendly cities.

There are many challenges to promoting joint use with schools. Liability concerns are commonly reported in the literature (Spengler et al., 2007). Finance can be another issue, though some schools view joint use as a way to raise extra funds (Center for Cities and Schools and 21st Century School Fund, 2014). One of the main challenges is that schools can act as separate, single-purpose institutions in the community. This siloization is a problem, but many local governments are working to create cross-agency collaboration with schools to meet the needs of children and seniors (Warner & Zhang, 2020, 2021). For example, community planners are giving increasing attention to schools. A 2008 national survey of planners found almost half reported working with their school board (Israel & Warner, 2008). The survey found that 37% of survey respondents collaborated with the school board to reuse old buildings, and 59% of respondents reported that schools function as the center of their communities. When asked about the most significant challenges to planning for family-friendly communities, they reported lack of voice for families (65%) and lack of authority (53%) (Israel & Warner, 2008). Local government planners have worked with schools, through joint planning, to promote investment and institutionalization (McKoy et al., 2011).

Local governments play a crucial role in planning, service delivery, and promoting cross-agency collaboration to serve the needs of children and seniors (Warner & Zhang, 2019). School–community collaboration is just one form of shared service delivery. There is a wide body of research on inter-municipal cooperation, which finds shared services are an important means to improve quality and access to public services (Hefetz et al., 2012; Warner, 2011). Research on local government shared service agreements finds they are longer lasting when they focus on service quality, not just cost savings, and when they have formal organizational structures to support service sharing (Aldag & Warner, 2018, Aldag et al., 2020). Experience builds trust, and formal agreements help maintain shared services over time.

Elinor Ostrom's (2010) work on community collective action emphasized the importance of trust, networks, norms of reciprocity, and experience over time. But Ostrom's work gives little attention to the role of local government or mechanisms to address power differentials. Ansell and Gash (2008) bring government into collaborative governance theory, emphasizing the role of facilitative leadership and institutional design. Collective impact theory also addresses the role of local government in the attention it places on an organizational structure to support cross-agency collaboration. It emphasizes the importance of a common agenda which is built from a process of engagement, communication, and common measurement (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016). Such collaborative governance can facilitate engagement that brings in marginalized voices and can lead to a process to promote equity in community services (Reece & Gough, 2019).

Community development scholarship recognizes the importance of power differentials between communities and schools (Biddle et al., 2018). Schools are an important anchor institution which can help build social capital networks and collective civic identity (Clopton & Finch, 2011). Attention must be given to both horizontal and hierarchical power in bonding and bridging networks (Flora et al., 2016; Warner, 1999). This is especially important in collaborative governance networks where there are strong anchor institutions involved, such as schools. Clopton and Finch (2011) raise concerns about the type of power these social anchors hold in community networks. To address this concern, we differentiate hierarchical and horizontal forms of power. Ostrom (2010) focuses primarily on horizontal power, arguing that collaborative community networks require trust and norms. Similarly, communicative planning theory points to the power of dialogue, networks, and institutional capacity (Innes & Booher, 2004). But collaboration must pay attention to both horizontal and hierarchical power. This is why both collaborative governance and collective impact theory also focus on the institutional arrangements that form the context for the collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016). In this chapter, we develop measures for two types of power in the organizational context: hierarchical "power over" and horizontal "power with." We are interested in examining if the differences

between types of power can help explain differences in the level of joint use services with schools.

Power over: Schools have a lot of power in local communities, but few communities have power over schools. In some districts, the local government has power over school siting and financial power over school budgets. We control for these measures to see if communities with more siting and budget power over schools have more shared services.

Power with: When communities share power with schools, they use them for information dissemination and partnerships, and they develop formal agreements. These help lay the foundation for shared services, and much work has been done on how to structure such agreements (Testa, 2001). We control for local governments that use schools as partners for information dissemination and have a formal joint use agreement to see if these organizational relations are associated with higher levels of joint use services.

Community development theory emphasizes collaborative power for action, and thus we want to test if horizontal *power with* leads to more joint use with schools than our measures of hierarchical *power over*. This chapter is the first study of joint use services to make that theoretical distinction, and it contributes to the call for more research on how *power over* and *power with* are connected (Westin, 2022).

National Survey Measures Level of Joint Use Services

We designed a survey to assess the community-level factors that lead to more joint use services with schools. We collaborated with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to send the *Planning for All Ages* survey to city and county managers across the US in 2019. The survey sample frame included all counties and all municipalities over 25,000 population, a one-in-three sample of municipalities under 25,000, and a one-in-2.5 sample of towns and townships over 2,500 in population for a total of 8,016 local governments.[2]

Survey questions measured the number of services offered through joint use with schools, our main focus in this analysis. The survey also asked a set of questions about the organizational forms of collaboration between schools and local governments in providing information, facilities, and services, which we refer to as "power with," and local governments' planning and budget control over schools, which we refer to as "power over."[3] The survey also measures factors which collaborative governance and collective impact theory suggest will differentiate communities with more joint use services. These factors include engagement of families with children and seniors in planning for their needs; the level of common vision among seniors and families with children in the community; trust that families with children and seniors have in their schools; and barriers to shared services such as liability, regulations, opposition, and school quality. We linked the survey data

with socioeconomic data from the American Community Survey (2015–2019) (US Census Bureau, 2021).

Which Are the Most Common Joint Use Services With Schools?

The survey measured seven services offered jointly with a community's public schools. Child nutrition is the most common service provided by a community's public schools (46%). About a third of communities have joint use services with schools to provide childcare (35%), recreation programs for all ages (33%), and adult education services (32%). A lower percentage of communities have senior-related joint use services, including nutrition programs/meals for seniors (23%), and school buses used to transport seniors (12%). Only 12% of public schools have healthcare services for all ages. We added up all seven services to create the joint use service variable. On average schools provide 1.93 of these 7 services.

How Is Power Measured?

Horizontal power with measures the organizational nature of collaborative relations between local government and schools in terms of formal joint use agreement, partnership, and information. The formal joint use agreement measures whether the local government has any joint use (or similar) agreements or with schools and whether schools and the local government share facilities. Survey results show that 56% of communities have a formal joint use agreement, and 57% of communities have shared facilities. Partnership measures whether the school district engages with the local government in cross-agency partnership to serve children or seniors, and information measures whether the local government works with schools to deliver information and services. Schools are commonly engaged in cross-agency partnerships (51%) and information delivery with local governments (66%).

Hierarchical power over measures if the local government has authority over siting and budget control over schools. School siting measures whether the comprehensive plan considers schools or school siting and whether the local government participates in school district educational facility planning. Survey results show that 31% of communities have a comprehensive plan that addresses school or school siting (31%), and 35% of local governments engage in school facility planning. Budget control measures whether the local government has tax or budget control over schools. Only 17% of local governments report having budget control over schools.

Planning, Participation, and Political Engagement Matter

To get a sense of the broader community context for collaboration, the survey measures whether the community's comprehensive plan addresses the needs of families

with children or seniors. Survey results show that 40% of communities have a comprehensive plan addressing the needs of families with children (*planning for children*), and 43% of comprehensive plans address the needs of seniors (*planning for seniors*).

Participation is an important element in collaborative governance theory, and our survey includes measures of public engagement and political engagement. The survey asked about the level of engagement for children, youth, and seniors in planning for their needs. The engagement of each age group is measured on a scale of 1 (not at all engaged), 2 (somewhat engaged), to 3 (very engaged). Seniors are the most active age group, and 24% of communities reported that seniors are very engaged in planning for their needs (*engagement of seniors*). *Engagement of children* includes two age groups: families with children and youth. Only 12% of communities reported families with children are very engaged, and only 6% report youth are very engaged. The survey also asked about the role of *political engagement of seniors* (reported by 94%) and the *political engagement of families with children* (73%) in motivating local governments to plan for their needs.

Funding and Trust Are Critical

Both collective impact and collaborative governance theory emphasize the importance of common vision and trust. These could lead to more joint use services. The survey measures the level of common vision, trust in schools, school quality, and whether raising local funds for facilities is easier if they are for all ages. The survey asked which institutions are most trusted sources of information about services by seniors and families with children. For families with children, 81% of responding communities reported schools are most trusted (*children trust schools*), while only 7% of respondents reported schools were highly trusted by seniors (*seniors trust schools*). *Raising funds* measures whether it is easier to raise local funds (e.g. bonds, taxes) if facilities are for all ages. About half of responding communities reported it is easier to raise funds for multi-generational facilities (51%).

School quality and common vision are measured on a Likert scale of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Forty-three percent of the responding communities agreed that "public schools are of high quality in my community," and 29% of respondents strongly agreed with that statement. Regarding common vision, more than half of the respondents were neutral on whether "senior participation has led to a common vision" (*common vision from seniors*, median value=3) or "participation of families with children has led to a common vision" (*common vision from children*, median value =3).

Barriers Affect Joint Use

The literature shows that liability, safety concerns, and community opposition are often barriers to joint use services (Spengler et al., 2007). Thirty-one percent of respondents reported that *liability* is a barrier to joint programming for different ages.

Barriers related to safety concerns include *regulations to protect children* (reported by 13%) and *regulations to protect frail elders* (8%). *Opposition* includes two measures: opposition to joint programming from seniors toward children (7%) and opposition to joint programming from families with children toward seniors (3%).

Local Need and Capacity

To measure the effect of community characteristics on joint use services, we include local need, local capacity, racial heterogeneity, and metro status. Data are drawn from the American Community Survey 2015–2019 (US Census Bureau, 2021). Local need is measured by the dependent population (percent of population under 18 and over 65) and the Gini index of income inequality. Local capacity is measured by per capita income. This is an indirect measure of local government capacity commonly used in local government studies, as taxes are drawn from income (Kelly & Lobao, 2021; Xu & Warner, 2022). We also control for the total population and racial heterogeneity. Racial heterogeneity is measured by the ratio of the non-Hispanic white senior population (over 65) to the minority child population (under 18). This ratio indicates if the municipality has more white seniors than minority children. We might expect more joint use services in communities with more dependent population and fewer joint use services in communities with more racial heterogeneity between the old and the young.

We group communities into the metro core, suburb, and rural areas based on US Census delineations (US Census Bureau, 2018). Metro core places (19% of sample) have at least one principal city, and suburbs (52% of sample) are other places inside metropolitan areas. Rural are nonmetropolitan places (29% of sample). Metro core places are set as the reference. Composition of model variables is shown in Table 6.1; for more detail on descriptive statistics, see Warner and Zhang (2023).

What Differentiates Levels of Joint Use?

We model the number of joint use services as a function of the eight factors described previously: power with, power over, common vision, age-friendly planning, funding and trust, political engagement, opposition, and barriers. We also control for per capita income, Gini index, total population, percent of dependent population, racial heterogeneity, and metro status (suburb, rural).[4]

We found that *power with* has the largest effect on the number of joint use services. Local governments' *power over* schools also has a positive effect on service delivery, but it has a much smaller effect. Opposition to joint programming and barriers are not related to joint use services with schools. See Figure 6.1.

The second most important factor was common vision. Civic participation leads to common vision and is related to more joint use services with schools. The third most important factor was age-friendly planning. When communities give more

TABLE 6.1 Joint use with schools: factor composition

Joint use services with schools	
• Child nutrition for evenings/weekends or summer • Child care services • Recreation programs for all ages	• Adult education services • Nutrition programs/meals for seniors • School buses used to transport seniors • Health care services for all ages

Power with schools
- Local government has any joint use (or similar) agreements or with schools
- Schools and the local government share facilities
- School district engages with the local government in cross-agency partnership to serve children or seniors
- Local government works with schools to deliver information and services

Power over schools
- Comprehensive plan considers schools or school siting
- Local government participates in school district educational facility planning
- Local government has tax or budget control over schools

Age-friendly planning
- Communities have a comprehensive plan addressing the needs of seniors/families with children

Political engagement
- Political engagement of seniors/families with children motivates local governments to plan for their needs

Common vision and participation
- Engagement of seniors/families with young children/youth in planning for their needs
- Participation of seniors/families with children has led to a common vision regarding planning for all ages

Funding and trust
- It is easier to raise local funds (e.g. bonds, taxes) if facilities are for all ages
- Schools are most trusted institutions by seniors/families with children

Opposition
- Opposition to joint programming from seniors toward children
- Opposition to joint programming from families with children toward seniors
- Public schools are of high quality in my community (reverse coded for analysis)

Barriers
- Liability is a barrier to joint programming for different ages
- Regulations to protect children/frail elders is a barrier to joint programming for different ages

Source: Author analysis of Planning for All Ages Survey 2019. 996 municipalities.

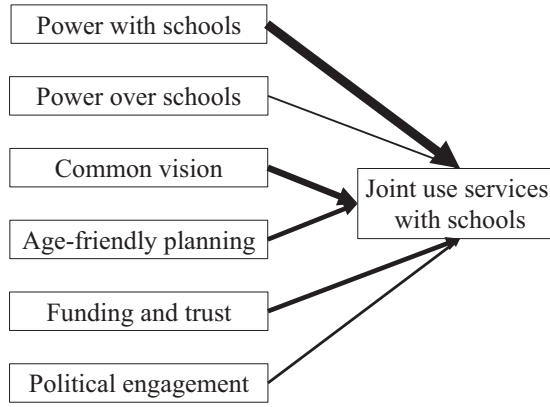

FIGURE 6.1 Factors affecting level of joint use services with schools

Source: Author analysis of Planning Across Generations survey, 2019.

attention to the needs of children and seniors in their comprehensive plans, joint use services are higher.

Trust leads to action. In communities where there is more trust between residents and schools, and where raising funds is easier because facilities are for all ages, we find more joint service delivery with schools. Political engagement of seniors and families with children is also important.

Larger communities have more joint use services, but other socioeconomic conditions do not differentiate the level joint use services. The number of services is not related to income, Gini, dependent population, racial heterogeneity, or metro status. This is a surprise, as we expected joint use services with schools might be greater in communities with more dependent population or lower in communities with more heterogeneity across generations. Schools can be especially important institutions for community development in rural areas (Schafft, 2016), and our research shows rural municipalities report similar levels of joint use services as their suburban and metro counterparts.

Shared Power, Community Engagement, and Common Vision Are Key

This chapter contributes to theories of planning, collaborative governance, and collective impact, with specific attention to community-school collaboration. While much research on joint use services between communities and schools focuses on barriers related to liability and opposition, our analysis shows these are not significant in differentiating the level of joint use across communities. This chapter shows that communities with more shared services with schools are those with shared power, community engagement, and common vision.

Community development theory recognizes the importance of collaboration. But prior work on collaborative governance has not given enough attention to dimensions of power. Collective impact theory (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016; Reece & Gough, 2019) and cross-sector collaboration research (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Warner & Zhang, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020) emphasize the importance of trust, planning, engagement, and common vision. Similarly, Elinor Ostrom's framework (2010) for communities addressing collective action emphasizes trust, norms, and repeated interaction. Our model results show participation, common vision, and community planning are found in communities with higher levels of joint use.

Power also matters. Joint use requires horizontal collaboration with schools. But, as local anchor institutions, schools often do not share power with their local governments. Clopton and Finch (2011) have elaborated social anchor theory as foundational for community development but raise concerns about the type of power these social anchors hold in community networks. Planning theorists have called for more attention to differentiating *power with* and *power over* (Westin, 2022). Flora et al. (2016) have articulated the community capitals framework, giving special attention to forms of power found in social, political, and financial capital. As communities build social capital, it must be horizontal, not just hierarchical, and this can be difficult to achieve with schools due to their power position within the community (Warner, 1999). Interestingly, our research finds that it is not hierarchical power over school budgets and site planning that matters. Few communities have this power over schools in any case. What matters is shared power with schools for collaborative action. Shared power involves the ability to debate and contest issues with partners. Contestation helps build community social capital (Flora & Flora, 1993; Warner & Weiss Daugherty, 2004). Collaborative governance and collective impact theory emphasize broad stakeholder engagement (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016). This helps create shared power across the network.

What matters most is shared power—through partnerships and formal joint use agreements between communities and schools. These lay the foundation for collaboration. Our analysis shows that horizontal *power with* has more effect on joint use than hierarchical *power over*. This is an important insight for collaborative governance and community development theory and for work on school–community collaboration in particular.

Implications for Community Development

Increasing attention is being given to the role of schools as communitywide resources for joint service delivery to meet the needs of children, their families, and seniors. This chapter offers the most recent national survey data on school–community collaboration to provide services for children and seniors. It unpacks the drivers of joint use with schools, giving explicit attention to horizontal and hierarchical dimensions of power. We find that horizontal power between communities and

schools in information sharing, partnership, and formal agreements has the greatest impact on the level of shared services. Engagement and common vision have the next largest impact, and planning is the third. These results have important implications for practice, as they confirm that attention should be given to participation and building the organizational framework for collaboration, as argued by collaborative governance and collective impact theory.

What is much more difficult to address is hierarchical power. But our analysis suggests that hierarchical power over schools in terms of siting and budget authority is not as important. This is a valuable insight, as schools are generally independent of local government, and few local governments have direct power over schools. Even though communities are often divided by race and age, these factors do not differentiate the level of joint use with schools.

These results suggest a way forward in addressing service deficits for children and seniors. Schools, as a community institution, can provide joint services. Local governments can promote more community services through schools by building partnerships based on shared power.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on Warner, M. E., & Zhang, X. (2023). Joint use between communities and schools: Unpacking dimensions of power. *Community Development*, *54*(4), 496–511. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2022.2124529. The research was supported in part by US Department of Agriculture, National Institute for Food and Agriculture Grant no. # 2019–68006–29674 and #2021–67023–34437, and National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health grant # R01MD018385.
2. We did two representative tests: 1) *T* tests show that the total population in the survey sample is similar to the universal sample, and 2) the two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test shows the sample captures more larger places. Survey respondents are from all four regions of the US, and there are few significant regional differences.
3. Factor analysis was used to differentiate our dependent variable, joint use services, from collaboration between local government and schools in information sharing (power with) and local government's planning and budget power over school (power over).
4. Due to the discrete and skewed nature of the dependent variable, we ran negative binomial regression to examine factors that differentiate communities with more joint use services with schools. For details on factor loadings and model results, see Warner and Zhang (2023).

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7

JOINT USE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS[1]

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Introduction

Across the nation, planners and education policy scholars are calling attention to the connection between public schools, community development, and neighborhood enhancement. In this chapter, we explore the joint use of school facilities and/or grounds by "non-school" actors such as local governments and non-profit organizations who extend access to non-school users, particularly during non-school hours. This extension encourages programmatic synergies that not only maximize the use of school buildings and athletic fields but also make better use of public parks, libraries, and other frequently under-utilized community assets (Morken & Baran-Rees, 2012). Shared services and programs, in turn, improve community outcomes by maximizing facility use and service delivery to meet the specific needs of children, taxpayers, and the broader community. Joint-services may also help fight obesity, enhance school attendance, improve early-care and education, and promote public health, as described in Chapter 8 (Casto & Sipple, 2021; Tennyson et al., 2023). In many neighborhoods, the indoor and outdoor physical activity spaces in public schools are the only ones available and deemed safe by parents. Community cooperation for administrative services may be a viable option for reducing costs and promoting efficiency, important facets of successful community development.

Joint use service sharing is one example of inter-municipal service sharing implemented to promote community efficiency, service quality, and regional coordination (Warner & Zhang, 2023; Aldag & Warner, 2018; Bel & Warner, 2015, 2016; Hefetz et al., 2012; Holzer & Fry, 2011). A national survey by the American Planning Association in 2008 found only 43% of city planners "co-locate schools with parks, recreational areas, libraries, and community centers." The same survey

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found 59% report their school "buildings are used for a wide variety of community functions, including childcare, continuing education courses, public meetings, community recreation, library, computer facilities" (Israel & Warner, 2008). School facilities can become important community assets (Miller et al., 2013), and state funding of these facilities has been shown to help address racial and wealth inequity and social, institutional, economic, and physical community systems, as shown in Chapter 5 (Bierbaum et al., 2022).

We build on the importance of a "thick" conception of community development needs (Dean, 2012)—identifying underlying and more primary needs such as income, work, health, and social well-being for families and communities—rather than more frequent attention to the "thin" conception of individual need, including immediate individual hunger and safety needs. Strong connections between schools and other community services and agencies foster "community-aware" education policy that aims to meet the needs of not only the students but also the community writ large (Casto et al., 2015). In other words, rather than focusing solely on providing free meals to poor children, what if attention were jointly paid to fundamental family and community needs that in the long run would provide greater supports for children outside of school? This is particularly salient and beneficial in rural areas where there are fewer non-school institutions than in urban or suburban communities. Whether it be service provision for workforce development, healthcare, nutrition, childcare, recreation, or adult education and training, the school plays a more central role given the relative lack of other service providers in rural communities. This requires power sharing between the school and broader community as described in Chapter 6. Each of these areas is fundamental to community development initiatives and priorities.

This chapter measures differences across administrative and community services in joint use cooperation and assesses the socioeconomic and management factors that drive joint use differences by metro status.

What Are the Key Factors That Determine Levels of Joint Use?

Much of the research on joint use is focused on physical exercise (Talmage et al., 2018) due to concerns about the rising prevalence of childhood obesity (Grover & Horent, 2011; French et al., 2001). By changing the discussion on diet and exercise and offering routine and convenient opportunities for access to physical activity, joint use of school facilities (playgrounds, gymnasiums) is a potentially important intervention strategy for health promotion (Spengler et al., 2011). By integrating schools and community, joint use service sharing encourages increased physical activity in an engaged community setting (Vincent, 2006, 2010).

Joint use represents a broader vision in which schools go beyond their traditional roles by serving families and communities as a local hub for diverse programming. Productive school–community partnerships can facilitate enhanced community-level social and economic outcomes (Zuckerman, 2019). Community

planning for the needs of all ages helps create and sustain active, integrated communities and vibrant neighborhoods (Grover & Horent, 2011; Warner & Rukus, 2013). Smart growth advocates are promoting the creation of "complete communities" in which joint use service sharing plays a critical role in fostering community (Filardo et al., 2010).

Joint use is considered a *special* case of inter-local cooperation and regional coordination. Inter-governmental cooperation is an important reform strategy of local government service delivery based on principles of cooperation, where neighboring units join to gain scale and coordination and promote efficiency (Bel & Warner, 2015; Holzer & Fry, 2011). Such cooperation also enhances inter-governmental communication, which breaks down transaction costs, reduces information asymmetries, and promotes attention to sustainability and equity, especially in rural areas (Warner & Hefetz, 2002). Baker (2018) argues that efficient and strategic use of school district resources is more likely to lead to educational enhancement than does competition from charter schools. Indeed, the research on shared services shows they are more important for enhancing service quality than for cost savings (Aldag & Warner, 2018; Aldag & Warner 2024).

Attention of school and municipal leaders is often concentrated on the legal implications of joint use, as liability is a major concern for implementation. Spengler et al. (2007) argue that liability is a pertinent barrier to allowing community use of school property for the purpose of physical activity. However, many states' recreational user statutes limit concerns about liability issues (NPLAN, 2010). The National Policy and Legal Analysis Network (NPLAN) has prepared legal tools to assist communities in forming joint use arrangements, including fact sheets on joint use agreements and checklists for developing them. Research in NYS has found that concerns about liability are not a barrier to service sharing across municipalities (Aldag & Warner, 2018).

The education sector maintains numerous shared service arrangements such as Educational Service Agencies (https://www.aesa.us), community schools (Dryfoos, 1994), and school-based health clinics, as described in Chapter 8. These typically coordinate services for component school districts to enable service provision that individual school districts cannot provide by themselves. These efforts create *networks* in a community; shared service provision fosters these networks and meets a thicker conception of need in the community (Casto et al., 2015; Dean, 2012).

In New York State, school districts' exploration of service sharing opportunities is facilitated by the Boards of Cooperative Educational Service (BOCES), which transcend both county and municipal boundaries. New York State is 1 of 45 states with some version of these regional service agencies. This institutional structure allows BOCES to provide cross-boundary leadership (Hayes, 2013) in facilitating sharing among schools for educational services (special education, career and tech education) and back-office administrative services (finance, staff development, data collection). In addition, the Local Government Efficiency Grant Program, initiated by New York State's Department of State, encourages the development of

cost-saving opportunities through service-sharing by making funding available to assist with feasibility studies or implementation costs. Training and technical assistance are also provided for a variety of grants and administrative activities.

New York State Survey Differentiates Administrative and Community Shared Services

This chapter analyzes data from a School District Shared Service Delivery Survey we conducted in New York State between March and May of 2013. The survey of school superintendents, undertaken in cooperation with New York State Council of School Superintendents, sought to understand the prevalence, variety, and impact of shared service delivery across school districts in New York State.

The survey includes all 675 New York State school districts (omitting New York City) and reflects a total response rate of 36% (n = 245). As compared to the entire population of all NYS school districts, survey responses represent a higher percentage of school districts in rural places (53% vs 44%), with smaller enrollment (1829 vs 2490), and with relatively poorer students (39% vs 34% on free and reduced-price lunch). Thus, our sample captures communities where joint use cooperation may prove more important in community development efforts.

We concentrate on administrative services, community services, and facilities. Administrative services (non-instruction support services) include seven services: payroll/accounts payable, cafeteria services, transportation services (buses, garage, and maintenance), tax collection, security/SRO/police, health insurance, and joint purchasing. Community services and facilities include ten services: library/computer lab, gymnasium/pool/auditorium/indoor space, field/playground/outdoor space, youth recreation, childcare/even start/pre-school, community transportation, adult education (ESL, GED, etc.), adult recreation, adult healthcare/social services, and community feeding.

Survey respondents were asked questions regarding outcomes of service sharing (cost savings, service quality improvement, and, in some cases, educational benefits), how formal the arrangement is, and the partners for each service shared. They were also asked general questions about motivators, management issues, school district fiscal stress, and obstacles to cooperation.

Joint use cooperation differs between administrative services and community services, as shown in Table 7.1. While cost savings is the primary outcome in administrative services, the primary outcome in sharing community services is obtaining better service quality. Almost 70% of the respondents report that sharing on library and computer lab, youth recreation services, childcare, pre-school, and adult recreation programs will attain higher service quality.

Table 7.1 shows that school–community service sharing is more prevalent with administrative services (45%) as compared to community services (24%). Administration service cooperation deals primarily with “back office” sharing and frequently utilizes formal agreements (93%). By contrast, community services

cooperation is more interactive and less likely to involve formal agreements (58%). Moreover, liability concerns are more likely to appear in community joint use service sharing than in administrative joint use cooperation.

We supplement our survey data with NYS comptroller data on each school district's enrollment trends (Office of the New York State Comptroller, 2009). The demographic and fiscal data used in this analysis include: expenditure per pupil (2011; in real dollars), percent white (2011), and number of students qualifying for free/reduced price lunch (2011). These data are linked together by the New York State Center for Rural Schools from multiple datasets made publicly available by the New York State Education Department (see http://NYEducationData.org).

The metro status of school districts is based on US Department of Education's Urban-Centric Locale Codes (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries). More than half of respondents represented school districts in rural areas.

TABLE 7.1 Joint use service sharing and outcomes

Service categories	*Services*	*% Sharing*	*% Formal contract*	*% Cost savings*	*% Maintain/ improve service quality*
Administrative services	Payroll/accounts payable	34	95	86.3	43.8
	Cafeteria services	38	96	88.9	54.4
	Transportation services (buses, garage, maintenance)	40	76	88.3	51.1
	Tax collection	20	83	61.7	57.4
	Security/SRO/police	23	87	51.9	68.5
	Health insurance	71	100	90.5	58.3
	Joint purchasing	85	96	88.9	46.2
	Total	45	93		
Community services	Library/computer lab	17	74	47.5	77.5
	Gymnasium/pool/ auditorium/indoor space	43	46	27.0	65.0
	Field/playground/outdoor space	51	41	23.9	63.2
	Youth recreation	42	41	39.2	74.2
	Childcare/even start/ pre-school	36	97	51.2	70.2
	Community transportation	9	61	50.0	45.0
	Adult education (ESL, GED, etc.)	21	93	63.8	72.3
	Adult recreation	14	42	33.3	69.7
	Adult healthcare/social services	1	100	100.0	100.0
	Community feeding	3	33	33.3	83.3
	Total	24	58		

Source: Author analysis, NYS School District Shared Service Delivery Survey (2013), $N = 245$.

The proportion in suburbs and small cities is around 20%, and the remaining proportion operate in larger cities. For more detail on model variables, see Wang et al. (2023).

We explore if the number of shared services provided by each school district is affected by the nature of sharing arrangements (*formality, sharing with municipality*) and management factors (*motivators, management issues, obstacles*) after controlling for socio-economic characteristics, including fiscal stress, community wealth, race, capacity, and geographic locale.

Formal Agreements May Facilitate Joint Use

Signed legal contracts that delineate the terms and conditions for sharing facilities could address issues concerning maintenance, operations, scheduling, ownership, liability issues, and costs (Morken & Baran-Rees, 2012; Aldag & Warner, 2024). By articulating these responsibilities, formal joint use agreements structure the shared service process and may promote smoother relationships between the partners over time (Aldag & Warner, 2018). Written agreements formalize partnerships and provide clarity on roles and partner responsibilities, facilitating satisfying cooperation among multiple partners.

However, designing formal cooperative arrangements may require significant effort and design sophistication. Small school districts may not be able to afford the upfront transaction costs associated with designing and implementing sharing agreements. However, actors within small communities may foster informal sharing agreements (so-called hand-shake agreements; Spicer, 2016) in lieu of more formal, legalized arrangements (see, e.g., Casto et al., 2016; Tieken, 2014).

We measure the percentage of shared services under formal contracts and expect formality to be positively associated with joint use service sharing, as establishing formal contracts enhances durability and clarity of responsibility across partnerships.

Partnerships With Municipalities Are Important

Schools can share services with other school districts, the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), municipalities, community groups, and for-profit organizations (e.g., transportation, food service, healthcare). Among all the partners, we are especially interested in school–municipal cooperative relations. Cooperating with municipalities may help schools benefit from a larger market scale while retaining public control and local identity in service delivery (Hefetz et al., 2012; Warner & Hefetz, 2002).

Management Factors Matter

School districts can be isolated from their local communities (Casto et al., 2015), either by choice or by inability to establish a partnership. This separation can

increase the difficulty of navigating joint use cooperation. Trust and power sharing are important in promoting joint use between communities and schools, as shown in Chapter 6 (Warner & Zhang, 2023).

One rationale for joint-use collaboration is fiscal efficiency. Cost savings may motivate joint use cooperation, but the primary incentives for inter-local service sharing also include enhancements in service quality and regional coordination (Bel & Warner, 2016; Aldag et al., 2020; Aldag et al., 2020; Holzer & Fry, 2011).

To promote service sharing, its foreseeable benefits must outweigh the estimated transaction costs of monitoring and implementing the sharing agreement. Transaction costs occur in obtaining information, coordination, outcome measurement, and enforcement (Williamson, 1999). Both the upfront costs of negotiation and design and deferred costs of implementation and oversight will affect the extent of joint use collaboration and research has linked transaction costs to higher costs at the beginning of sharing arrangements (Aldag & Warner, 2018), but costs can also escalate over time (Aldag et al., 2020).

Legislation and policy are also crucial to facilitate partnerships for public–private, intergovernmental, and interagency use of school facilities and resources (Vincent, 2010). An established institutional framework and a set of practical procedures can facilitate effective implementation of joint use (Filardo et al., 2010). Liability, however, remains a barrier for school districts to undertake joint use, and lack of knowledge about accident rates or state protection further discourages cooperation (Spengler et al., 2007). A 2010 national survey of school administrators found that 91% of those who did not allow community access were "somewhat to very" concerned about liability issues such as after-hours injuries on school property (Spengler et al., 2010).

Our survey measured management factors relating to motivators, management issues, and obstacles. We conducted factor analysis to examine the array of survey responses and derived five statistically distinct dimensions: financial motivators, other motivators, design of agreement, budget and data compatibility, and obstacles. Liability concerns are included in the "obstacles" factor. We built indexes based on the factor groupings on a 5-degree Likert scale (0 = Not important . . . 2 = Somewhat important . . . 4 = Extremely important) aggregated across all elements in each factor. For a complete discussion of the factor analysis, see Wang et al. (2023).

Financial Motivators Promote Collaboration

We measure financial motivators with two questions regarding alleviating financial burdens and obtaining fiscal efficiency through joint use cooperation. All school officials rank "cost savings" and "fiscal stress on local budget" as important drivers of joint use cooperation.

We group an additional 11 items relating to labor and personnel, community environment, service quality, and regional equity into an "other motivator" index.

The most common motivators in this index are "maintaining service quality" and "enriching educational opportunity," both reported by 98% of respondents. Eighty-nine percent of school officials expect that "regional equity in educational opportunity" may be achieved through inter-local collaboration. Respondents also reported "unable to provide important services without sharing" and "enriching educational opportunity" as important motivators.

Agreement Design Requires Trust

Management difficulties can reduce a jurisdiction's inclination to participate in joint use cooperation. We measure agreement design with five elements: "local leadership/trust" (94% of respondents); "planning and design of sharing agreement" (96%); "implementation and maintenance of sharing agreement" (96%); "policy, legal or governance structure to facilitate sharing" (93%); and "availability of willing partners" (100%).

Budget and Data Compatibility Needed

We also develop an index of budget and data compatibility to present school officials' current difficulties in managing funds and information. The most commonly cited elements of this index are: "similarity among partners (size, population, income, etc.)" (84%), "combining multiple funding sources" (82%), and "compatible data and budget systems" (78%).

Obstacles May Limit Joint Use

The obstacles index includes concerns regarding liability, accountability, labor and personnel, politics, and legal aspects. The most commonly reported barriers to joint use cooperation recognized by school officials are "state rules/legal regulations" (89%), "accountability concerns in sharing arrangements" (88%), and "loss of flexibility in provision options" (87%). The heaviest loadings on this factor are for the elements most closely related to local control and labor—loss of flexibility in provision options and restrictive labor agreements and unionization.

Do Fiscal Factors Limit or Encourage Joint Use?

Demographic changes have concentrated poverty in certain communities and wealth in others, resulting in increasingly segregated neighborhoods and schools (Orfield & Lee, 2005; Bischoff & Reardon, 2014). Schools located in low-income rural and urban communities are facing greater pressure to fight conditions of poverty and to offer health care, educational support, and enrichment for students and families.

The financial burdens and difficulties that school districts experience are fundamental stimulants for joint use service cooperation. Inter-local cooperation is considered a tool to achieve cost savings. Hence, schools with high expenditure per pupil may be more inclined toward joint use service sharing to reduce costs.

In our analysis, the percentage of students eligible to receive reduced or free lunch is included as a proxy for poverty in the district. We also measure the relative wealth of the broader community (i.e., within school district boundary), using the combined wealth ratio (CWR), where each district is ranked against the statewide average on a combination of two factors—property wealth per pupil and income wealth per pupil. We also include expenditure per pupil. Survey respondents were asked to describe the fiscal stress facing the local school district (as significant, moderate, weak, or none). The measure of fiscal stress is coded 1 if the respondent's answer is "significant" or "moderate" and 0 if the answer is "weak" or "none." We expect variables measuring expenditure per pupil and school district fiscal stress to correspond with increased levels of joint use service sharing.

Enrollment Size and Capacity

Service capacity and need are captured by enrollment and enrollment change data obtained from the NYS comptroller office's government finance data (2012). We expect school districts with smaller enrollment size and declining enrollments to participate more in joint use service sharing.

Optimal size and student enrollment patterns play an essential role in the analysis of local services and the allocation of school district resources. Population size is the variable most frequently used in studies investigating factors associated with inter-municipal cooperation (Bel & Warner, 2015; 2016). Theory implies frequency of cooperation would decrease as enrollment increases, as districts with larger enrollments—and internal economies of scale and—may not see benefits from collaboration. As enrollment rises, crowding of school facilities can make it more difficult for non-school users to access heavily utilized school spaces and resources. In school districts with shrinking enrollments, by contrast, voters may be less likely to support taxes to fund education—particularly its costly expenses such as capital programs (Filardo et al., 2010). There may be opportunities to repurpose the excess space for other community needs (elder care, day care, etc.)

Does Metro Status or Racial Heterogeneity Matter?

Schools are especially critical to the social and economic well-being of rural communities, as they provide social, cultural, and recreational opportunities and assistance to sustain community vitality (Lyson, 2002; Sipple et al., 2019; Holme et al., 2014). Geographical proximity, relatively homogenous circumstances, affluent economic resources, and sub-optimal service size make inter-municipal service sharing a popular choice in suburbs, offering them an opportunity to exploit the

benefits of economies of size whilst overcoming limited managerial and technical capability (Warner & Hefetz, 2002). Although inter-municipal cooperation between suburbs and municipal governments is a common trend (Hefetz et al., 2012), the literature on joint use with schools is primarily urban (Spengler et al., 2010, Vincent, 2006, Filardo et al., 2010). Our sample includes urban, suburban, and rural school districts based on federally defined locale codes that classify school locations into four major types: city, suburban, small city, and rural (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2014). Heterogeneity is another concern affecting local cooperation, as it may undermine collaboration by imposing higher transaction costs. However, the theoretical foundation for the relationship between racial homogeneity/heterogeneity and inter-local cooperation is quite weak (Bel & Warner, 2016). We use the percentage of White students enrolled in the school district and expect more cooperation in districts with more racial homogeneity.

What Differentiates School Districts That Share More Services?

We assess the factors that differentiate the level of 1) all joint use services, 2) community joint use (ten services), and 3) administrative joint use (seven services). Summary model results are presented in Table 7.2. Factors leading to more shared services are shown in bold with positive (+) signs. Factors leading to fewer shared services are shown in italics with negative (–) signs. All other factors have no impact on the number of services For a complete description of model results, see Wang et al. (2023).

Management Factors Play an Important Role

Across all three models, service sharing is more common if a municipality (as opposed to another school) participates as a partner. Municipalities stand as a primary partner of school service sharing; 27% of the contracts on sharing community services are between schools and municipalities. We also see a strong positive association between the formality of sharing agreement and level of both administrative and community service sharing. Formal agreements facilitate more sharing.

Problems with budget and data compatibility discourage joint use in the overall and community services models, and design of a sharing agreement discourages joint use in both the overall and the administrative services models. Financial motivators, consisting of cost saving and fiscal stress on local budget, are not significant in any of the models. Other motivators related to service quality, regional equity, community support, and personnel opportunities have a positive effect on sharing levels for overall and administrative services but not on community services.

Surprisingly, our models find that community service sharing occurs in places where superintendents report *more* obstacles. This suggests that superintendents are willing to pursue joint arrangements specifically with their communities—despite

TABLE 7.2 Joint use service sharing among school districts and municipalities in NYS: model results

Variables	*All services (17)*	*Community services (10)*	*Administrative services (7)*
No. services provided	+	+	+
Sharing with municipality	+	+	+
Formal contract	+	+	+
Financial motivators			
Other motivators	+		+
Design of agreement	-		-
Budget and data compatibility	-	-	
Obstacles		+	
Combined wealth ratio 2011–2012			
Fiscal stress	+		
Debt per pupil			
Expenditure per pupil			
Reduced/free lunch percentage	-	-	
White percentage		-	
Enrollment (2013)	-	-	-
Enrollment change (2008–13)			
Rural	+	+	
Small city	+	+	
City			+
Adj. *R*-squared	0.674	0.824	0.554

Source: Author analysis of data from the NYS School District Shared Service Delivery Survey (2013), $N = 218$.

the obstacles—to reap these types of benefits for their students. In contrast to earlier work suggesting that liability concerns are a major barrier to joint use (Spengler et al., 2007), we do not find liability to be a significant barrier. While liability was ranked by almost all districts as a barrier, liability concerns are *not* hindering community joint use service sharing in New York State school districts.

Fiscal Stress Leads to More Sharing

Superintendents' perception of fiscal stress shows a positive relationship with the overall level of joint use services. However, long-term debt is not a significant factor. Thus, it appears immediate financial burdens may increase superintendents' inclination to implement joint use cooperation, as they may expect potential cost savings to help address foreseeable fiscal stress. Our models find no relationship between joint use service sharing levels and school district spending (expenditures per pupil). Similarly, there is no relationship between community wealth and sharing for all three models.

Sharing Is Less in Poor Districts, More in Racially Diverse Districts

Poverty—as measured by the proportion of students on free or reduced-price lunch—is inversely related to joint use service sharing level overall and in community services but shows no difference in joint use service sharing for administrative services. Poorer communities implement fewer joint use services overall and in community services. These are precisely the students who might benefit from more community service sharing, and these are the districts facing the greatest fiscal constraints. However, we find community joint use service sharing occurs more in places with a greater percentage of minority students. This may reflect the higher interest in building "thick" community ties in those districts.

Smaller, Rural School Districts Share More

Prior studies probing the relationship between district size and cooperation frequently mention that smaller districts are more willing to engage in cooperative relationships. Our models show this is true for all service types. We also find that rural school districts and small cities are more likely to engage in joint use service sharing. This is true for community joint use services and overall joint use services but not for administrative functions. Administrative services, on the other hand, are more commonly found for school districts in big cities.

Policy Implications

Sharing Enables Rural and Small City School Districts to Find Economies of Scale

Prior research has shown that smaller school districts are more incentivized to undertake shared services for the sake of exploiting scale economies to achieve cost savings (Holzer & Fry, 2011). Overall, school districts tend to share more administrative services than community services; this is especially true for districts with smaller enrollment. This is likely related to diseconomies of scale in small districts and cost savings associated with sharing back-office administrative functions. It also may be because the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, the regional service centers that encourage joint use, focus on administrative, not community, services. We looked closely at expenditure data and found expenditure per pupil drops as district enrollment rises but only to a point, with the optimal size—or inflection point—of 2500 pupils for New York upstate school districts (see Wang et al. (2023) for more details). An especially sharp rise in expenditure emerges when enrollment size dips below 500 pupils. By contrast, expenditure per pupil remains relatively constant when enrollment exceeds this level. Smaller school districts may be incentivized to embrace the benefits of cost savings from scale economies and thus may engage more in joint use cooperation.

School districts in rural areas and small cities, when compared to suburbs, are more frequently engaged in joint use cooperation for community services but not for administrative services. The average enrollment size of school districts in rural places is 940 and in small cities is 1726. Their comparatively small size demonstrates the potential benefits reaped from cooperation in expanding joint service opportunities. By comparison, school districts in suburbs (mean enrollment 3700) and cities (mean enrollment 10,000) may lack incentives to seek scale economies through service sharing.

In addition, the ability to find cooperative partners varies given prospective districts' socioeconomic similarities and differences. According to our survey, the primary partners of administrative joint use services are other school districts (24.9%) and BOCES (53.8%), while those for community services are municipalities (27.2%) and community or non-profit groups (43.2%). Therefore, a neighboring municipality's characteristics would impose greater effects on collaboration for community services than for administrative services.

Schools Are Community Development Assets, Especially in Rural Communities

Schools are increasingly recognized as assets to their communities, as they can play a central role in creating and sustaining healthy communities. Joint use service sharing has emerged as a significant cooperation strategy between communities and school districts. Our study of school districts in New York State finds shared administrative services are more focused on cost savings, while joint use community services are focused on improving service access and quality. It may be that services directly benefiting the community may add costs (in dollars or time), while the administrative services are sources of fiscal savings—especially when supported by supra-school district administrative structures (e.g. regional service agencies).

School districts with smaller enrollments share more services, and rural and small cities engage in more joint use service delivery than suburbs. While short-term fiscal stress motivates sharing, student poverty seems to impede joint use service sharing. Communities with greater proportions of poor children would benefit from more shared services, but our survey found they have fewer shared services. This may be because there are fewer organizations to partner with in these communities and/or fewer resources available to enhance partnering. Districts with more students living in poverty are likely to be located in municipalities with less capacity for sharing services. Promoting greater participation by lower-wealth districts in shared services is a continuing challenge. This makes the school-based health centers described in Chapter 8 all the more special. Bassett Healthcare Network has the capacity and resources to be a strong community partner, and the school directly benefits from improved student health outcomes (Tennyson et al., 2023).

Our survey found improvements in service quality and regional coordination are more important drivers of shared services than financial motivators, and management issues relating to data and budget compatibility and obstacles regarding labor, local identity, and legal aspects are easily overcome. An important asset in New York are the regional service agencies (i.e., BOCES), and fortunately, these are not unique to New York State. Many states have such regional service agencies that may be able to foster enhanced joint-use partnerships. Liability concerns present no prominent obstruction to joint use cooperation, a finding contrary to traditional wisdom.

For community developers, planners, and educators, these results show both a promise and a challenge. On the one hand, joint use collaboration between schools and communities is highest in small communities and in those with more minority children. On the other hand, joint use is lower in districts serving impoverished children—the children who may benefit most from joint use collaboration between schools and communities.

Note

1. This chapter is based on Wang, Y., Warner, M. E., & Sipple, J. (2023). Sharing spaces: Joint use service delivery in New York School districts. *Community Development*, *54*(4), 567–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2023.2217900. This research was supported in part by USDA, NIFA Grant # 2019–68006–29674 and #2021–67023–34437.

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8

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS AND RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH[1]

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Introduction

This chapter explores the benefits of school-based health centers (SBHCs) for rural communities. SBHCs are full-fledged health care providers located within school buildings and provide on-site primary care, reproductive health care and education, dental care, and mental health services for children and youth within schools or on school grounds. SBHCs are commonly staffed by nurse practitioners or physician assistants supervised by a licensed physician. SBHCs are authorized by federal and state legislation, established with the objective of improving access to healthcare in impoverished communities located in urban, suburban, and rural areas in the US (Keeton et al., 2012).

SBHCs can contribute to community wellbeing in disadvantaged rural areas by improving children's health care access and enhancing the culture of health across the community. Human-ecological approaches and the social determinants of health framework emphasize that social, economic, and environmental factors affect an individual's overall well-being. Inequitable access to preventive and primary care may have corrosive impacts on a child's long-term social, economic, and educational outcomes (Brindis, 2016). Poor social and economic conditions can generate a vicious cycle, resulting in higher rates of school dropout, poor health, poverty, and negative impacts on community and economic wellbeing. SBHCs may help to disrupt this negative cycle by reducing the distance to care providers and providing consistent preventive care, linking to the community through the school as a known local institution, leveraging understandings of community challenges in providing health care services, and positively impacting social determinants of health (e.g., Selby-Nelson et al., 2018; Sykes et al., 2018).

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SBHCs can also become a key contributor to community development. The United Nations once defined community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems," with the aim of building stronger and more resilient communities.[2] Community development involves coordinating actions, assets, and relationships, cultivating leadership and ownership, advancing community visioning, and enriching access to services (Worthy & Beaulieu, 2016; Allen & LaChapelle, 2012; LaChapelle, 2020). In many communities, establishing an SBHC to expand access to health care services invokes these same coordinating, communicating, and relationship-building processes. If these processes help to activate social, cultural and economic capitals, enhance resource sharing, communication, and relationship building, SBHCs can contribute to community development.

We elucidate these ideas with a network of SBHCs operated by the non-profit Bassett Healthcare Network in New York state. We describe the process by which the SBHCs came into existence and are maintained and the outcomes of SBHC services for enrolled students. We highlight the formation of community partnerships, improved health care access, increased health care utilization, and reduced school absenteeism, demonstrating that this SBHC network is successful in generating outcomes that can contribute to community development.

Rural Communities Face Numerous Challenges

Many rural communities in the United States are experiencing long-term economic restructuring that has led to poor employment conditions, increased levels of poverty, declining populations, and disruption of family structures (Rural Sociological Society, 2014; Brown & Schafft, 2019; Thiede et al., 2017). Rural households also face spatial and connectivity isolation due to inadequate private and public infrastructure including lack of transportation networks and broadband access. This connectivity challenge was laid bare in rural communities across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, as students and patients had to rely on Zoom school and telehealth.

Linked to issues of broadband access, poverty, isolation, and transportation in rural economies are issues of health and healthcare access. A wealth of research demonstrates substantial rural health disparities among youth in the prevalence of obesity, tooth decay, and infectious diseases (Burton et al., 2013) and elevated rates of psychological disorders, risk behaviors, and substance use and abuse (Evans et al., 2016). Rural youth have a higher risk for poor health outcomes due to poor socioeconomic conditions, lower levels of social support, and inadequate transportation compared with non-rural youth. (Edwards et al., 2011).

A confluence of factors has led to rural residents facing growing health care shortages (MacKinney, 2014). The pace of rural hospital closures has increased in recent decades, with many hospitals facing extreme risk of closure due to declining patient populations and financial instability (iVantage Analytics, 2016). Hospital

closures and declines in the numbers of healthcare providers increase the already greater distances between rural populations and their providers and reduce access to specialty care (Cornwell et al., 2007; Burton et al., 2013; Farrigan et al., 2014), with access to mental health services in rural areas a particularly significant problem (Coughlin et al., 2019).

SBHCs Increase Health Care Access

Providing comprehensive health care within schools is a community-level service model that may help to address problems of health care access. Health care access is more than just the availability of healthcare services, incorporating in addition the population's ability to use that care. A 2014 study by the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) highlights four critical dimensions of health care access in rural areas—*people*, *place*, *provider*, and *payment* (MacKinney, 2014)—as focal areas to examine policy and programmatic utility in enhancing access to health care. In the domain of *people*, the report identifies the importance of understanding the characteristics of the population served, especially of those at risk for inadequate care. The *place* dimension of access addresses the common concerns of geographic distance, transportation, and internet connections in rural areas. The *provider* domain emphasizes the importance of the nature of providers and services, cultural competence, and a good fit between providers and patients, beyond just the number of providers. The *payment* dimensions of access consider patients' access to insurance and ability to pay as well as the adequacy of payments to providers (to assure continuing service availability). What is notable about this framework is the recognition that access must be local, familiar, culturally relevant, and convenient.

SBHCs can improve health care access for rural children across all four of these dimensions. SBHCs make healthcare providers available in the location where students spend most of their time during the school year: the school. The proximity of care means that factors such as transportation, parent availability, and missed appointments are reduced in SBHCs (Kjolhede & Lee, 2021). Integration into the school means that providers serve a population unified by a common institution and geography and are connected to the environment their patients experience (Clayton et al., 2010). SBHC staff work in conjunction with nurses, social workers, alcohol and drug counselors, mental health care providers, and other health professionals to provide somatic and mental health services (Keeton et al., 2012). Many states require SBHCs to provide services regardless of an individual's ability to pay, ensuring access for hard-to-reach, high-risk, uninsured populations (Larson et al., 2013; Gustafson, 2005; School-Based Health Alliance, 2020).

Research outcomes demonstrate that SBHCs improve access to health care and improve health outcomes for medically underserved youth (Guo et al., 2010). Specifically, SBHCs are associated with an increased use of preventive health care (Brindis, 2016) and dental care (Fowler et al., 2018), improved asthma care resulting in decreases in asthma hospitalizations (Mansour et al., 2008; Webber et al.,

2003; Webber et al., 2005), and decreased frequency of depressive episodes and suicidal ideation (Bains et al., 2017). SBHCs can improve follow-up compliance (Kisker & Brown, 1996) and can serve as a student's primary medical home (Kjolhede & Lee, 2021). However, there is much less evidence on the practice and efficacy of SBHCs in rural areas in comparison to urban locales (Bersamin et al., 2016; Knopf et al., 2016). In sum, by bringing health care providers into the school setting and by removing payment barriers, SBHCs can provide students greater access to a regular source of health care and more comprehensive treatment for chronic health conditions.

SBHCs Generate School Partnerships

The presence of schools provides economic and social benefits to the communities they serve (Lyson, 2002), including enhanced property values and household incomes (Sipple et al., 2019). Schools are often the most stable social and economic institution and a central pillar of rural communities (Tieken, 2014; Flora et al., 2016). Schools and communities interact in a variety of ways—sometimes serving as a central hub of social activity, providing economic benefits through hiring for stable jobs, and enhancing democracy. Sometimes, however, schools hold priorities that differ from those of local communities and exist as islands within their communities (Casto et al., 2016) and can choose to spend their local, state, and federal aid in ways that either enhance or hollow out their local communities (Carr & Kefalas, 2009).

There is growing awareness of the need for community-aware education policy design and implementation (Casto et al., 2016) in which school officials collaborate with community leaders and families to better understand, react to and serve the underlying relational and chronic ("thick") needs (e.g., access to healthcare) of children and families they serve rather than focusing on the more instrumental ("thin") needs of children (e.g., students coming to school without access to a toothbrush) (Casto et al., 2016; Dean, 2012). A community, a school, and a healthcare provider partnering to offer health care services through school-based health centers is one strategy to build social networks, grow relational knowledge, and address these more fundamental "thick" needs of families while still attending to the more acute needs seen daily by the school.

SBHCs Can Promote Community Development

A central premise of SBHCs is that the provision of school-based care is more efficient for students and families: it is easier to make appointments, and students can often return to class once they are seen and cleared by the healthcare provider. An appointment with an outside healthcare provider requires leaving the school campus, resulting in missed class time and potentially a full day of school. These impacts may be especially great in rural communities where there are fewer sources

of health care nearby. In addition, the presence of a SBHC may result in improved attendance by providing health care (particularly preventive care) to students who would not otherwise have access to care, leading to better health outcomes. Several studies find that SBHCs reduce lost learning time (Klerman, 1996; Van Cura, 2010) and chronic absenteeism (Walker et al., 2010; Kjolhede et al., 2021).

Of course, the simple existence of SBHCs does not guarantee enhanced service provision and community wellbeing or signify community development. Researchers describe the necessity of a balanced partnership between schools and social, economic, and leisure partners—with all parties rowing in the same direction toward a common goal (e.g., Biddle et al., 2018; Bonilla-Santiago, 2020). As described in Chapter 6, a national survey of local governments found that common vision is an important predictor of joint use service delivery between communities and schools (Warner & Zhang, 2023). These criteria suggest that the community benefits of SBHCs may depend crucially on the specific community and organizational context and relationships.

Case Study of a Rural SBHC Network

To explore these ideas, we examine a well-established network of rural SBHCs to illustrate how the process of establishing and maintaining a collaborative system of school-based health can promote better outcomes in disadvantaged rural communities. We study the not-for-profit Bassett Healthcare Network with a self-described mission-driven commitment to identify and respond to regional community health care needs. Our case includes a contiguous four county region that comprises 39 school districts.

Fifteen of the school districts in these counties are linked together in an identifiable network of SBHCs operated by the Bassett Healthcare Network. The SBHCs are linked by electronic medical records and a shared standard of care and professional and social partnership. The other school districts in the region are not part of this relational network but are embedded within the same rural region. Yin (2014) might call this a single-embedded case study where we study the embedded network of students within districts with SBHCs functioning near a set of students from other school districts in the same four county region.

Founded nearly a century ago, the Bassett Healthcare Network expanded from a local hospital into the predominant healthcare provider in its region and is the only provider of school-based healthcare in the region. The Bassett Healthcare Network operates five hospitals and more than two dozen community-based health centers, including eight emergency departments and urgent care centers. Bassett has been partnering with schools in the region for 30 years. Provision of school-based healthcare is consistent with Bassett's mission by extending the scope and quality of care provided to the region's rural children and youth.

The Bassett SBHCs are permanent structures within the schools and provide comprehensive care (well care visits, health screenings, immunizations, preventive

dental services, and mental health services) and referrals to specialty care and community resources. They are staffed by a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, nurses, mental health counselor, and administrative staff and have access to a pediatrician for consultations and who is on-site, along with a dental hygienist, on a periodic basis. All the SBHCs have received recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance as Patient-Centered Medical Homes, which means that healthcare providers and the patient or patient's family work as a team to coordinate the patient's health care.

Services are provided by the SBHCs with no out-of-pocket costs to families, and SBHC staff assist in enrolling uninsured children in public insurance programs. SBHC services are available during school hours every day that school is in session, with 24-hour on-call services and in-person services at select times beyond the school day, during summer, and over school holidays.

SBHC Network Description

The Bassett SBHCs reside in a four-county region located in New York State that also includes the northern districts of the Appalachian region of the United States. The average population density in the region is 46 persons per square mile, and the USDA Economic Research Service Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCA) and Business and Industry ineligible designations classify the area as rural. The region is geographically isolated from major urban centers (45, 80, and 140 miles from the three closest large cities) and has limited access to the interstate highway system. There are regional public transportation systems, but they provide limited or no service to the less-populated villages and hamlets in the counties. The communities in this region also face economic challenges—with lower household income, higher levels of unemployment, and higher rates of poverty than statewide averages. For full details on these differences, see Tennyson et al. (2023).

Because of the rurality, school districts in the region typically have only one school at each level (elementary, middle, high school), and in many districts these are located on a single campus and sometimes in a single K12 school building. As a result, school district boundaries are equivalent to school catchment areas, and SBHCs offer health care to every child enrolled in the district.

Table 8.1 shows the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of school districts in the region and compares school districts with a SBHC to those without. The data show few meaningful differences between the two sets of school districts. School districts in the region without a SBHC are slightly larger, on average, than those with a SBHC. The districts are predominantly White, with just 8.6% and 6.4% minority students, respectively, for non-SBHC and SBHC districts. Neither group of districts has many students who have limited English language proficiency, and there is no appreciable difference between the share of economically disadvantaged populations in the two groups of districts.

TABLE 8.1 Characteristics of school districts with and without SBHCs for 2017/18

2017–2018		*K12 enrollment*	*% minority*	*% econ disadvantaged*	*% limited English Proficient*	*Expenditure per pupil*	*Property wealth per pupil*	*Household income per pupil*	*State aid per pupil*
No SBHC	N	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
	Mean	610	8.6%	58.6%	0.4%	$28,716	$800,986	$117,346	$14,991
	Median	360	7.0%	58.7%	0.0%	$27,459	$469,160	$110,182	$14,877
	SD	495	6.0%	8.1%	1.2%	$6,040	$832,694	$33,390	$3,968
With SBHC	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
	Mean	565	6.4%	53.8%	0.2%	$26,431	$470,545	$110,341	$16,306
	Median	388	6.0%	53.7%	0.0%	$25,842	$410,775	$103,920	$16,468
	SD	315	2.7%	10.4%	0.3%	$3,109	$195,272	$33,359	$3,861

Source: Authors' compilation from the New York State Education Data & Research Hub located at Cornell University: http://NYEducationData.org using data from the New York State Education Department, including the School District Financial Profiles.

Given their location in New York State (the highest-spending per-pupil state in the nation), the two groups of districts spend, on average, between $26,000 and $29,000 per pupil. There are three districts that are not as small and remote as the rest, but none of them have a SBHC. These three districts have more businesses, and hence the taxable property-wealth per pupil is larger than in other districts. Property wealth and household income per pupil are key factors in the New York State school aid formula and combined lead to higher rates of state aid to poorer districts. An average of $1300 more state aid per pupil is provided to SBHC districts than to non-SBHC districts. Note that although the non-SBHC districts have greater property wealth, incomes are similar across the two sets of districts.

Establishing and Growing the SBHCs

Establishing a SBHC takes considerable resources, which means that building the SBHC network has been a dynamic, evolutionary, and opportunistic process. The first SBHC sponsored by the Bassett Healthcare Network was founded in 1992 after a community-based assessment of the health needs of the population determined that a SBHC was the best way to meet those needs (Geisz, 1998). Funding for this SBHC was secured from an endowment held by the school district, received from the estate of a long-time area resident (Geisz, 1998). Three subsequent SBHCs were established in 1997 with funding from a competitive grant through a SBHC pilot project in the state. Later SBHCs have been funded through a variety of sources, including state and federal grants and private local donations. Since 2017 two additional SBHCs have opened—one in 2020 and one in 2023. From the first SBHC to the last, expansion of the SBHC network has been driven by school

district initiatives and requests, constrained only by the resources and capacity of the Bassett Healthcare Network.

In New York State, SBHCs are recognized as community institutions, according to the New York State Department of Health Guidelines (NYSDOH, 2017). While details of the degree to which NYSDOH expects SBHCs to remain connected with the community are not explicit, the Guidelines set some clear expectations. For one, they are to maintain community-oriented care, which "assures that the views of community members are incorporated into decisions involving policies, priorities, and plans related to the delivery of SBHC services" (p. 17). Additionally, they are expected to be "family-centered" (p. 16), meaning that the policies involving access, availability and flexibility recognize the unique needs of families. Finally, all SBHCs are required to form and maintain a community advisory council. The membership of this council is to include school staff, community members, health care providers, parents, and students. The Bassett Healthcare Network's SBHCs are operated in accord with this model.

Each SBHC operates under a signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the school district, formalizing a partnership with the school to provide health care services for children. The school district provides clinical and office space, phone lines, utilities and maintenance, and access to student listservs and schedules; the Bassett Healthcare Network provides clinicians, medical staff, office staff, and medical equipment and monitors the services for quality assurance. The school district commits to provide support for communication and education of community members regarding the purpose and goals of the SBHC, and Bassett commits to assist with public relations and feedback to the community.

Bassett's SBHC program leadership collaborates extensively with local school and community partners in the planning and design of SBHCs. Discussions with key members of the school district, including the superintendent, principal, school nurse, and parents, are used to assess both the feasibility of establishing a SBHC and to identify community needs and preferences.

Needs of the target population are confirmed using state and local data resources and conversations with knowledgeable health authorities such as the New York State Department of Health School-Based Health Centers Program, the relevant County Department of Health, and community service providers. Prior to establishing a SBHC, Bassett leadership staff attend meetings of important constituent groups (students, parents, school health staff, school administrators and teachers, Board of Education, and local government officials) to present the school-based health model and invite feedback. Pre-opening surveys are distributed to school parents to obtain updated information on student health status, previous medical and dental care, and health habits.

An early evaluation study commissioned by the Bassett Healthcare Network—which included interviews with key stakeholders, on-site observations, and surveys of parents and teachers at the three SBHCS in operation at the time—concluded that the SBHCs were organized and operated in a manner that resulted in a good

fit with user and community needs (Geisz, 1998). Among the characteristics of the SBHCs that parents mentioned positively were that children are seen quickly and get good follow-up care, that children do not have to miss school to see the doctor, and that program staff "know the kids" and "see them every day" (Geisz, 1998, p. 76). Seventy-seven percent of parents surveyed believed that the SBHC teaches their children about "taking care of their health" (Geisz, 1998, p. 103), and 79% felt that having the SBHC gave them "a more positive view of the school" (Geisz, 1998, p. 94).

More recent data suggest that the SBHCs continue to successfully serve the needs of their communities. The SBHCs have high enrollment rates: statistics show that on average 82% of children enrolled in the school district are enrolled in the well-established SBHCs and that all the SBHCs have at least two-thirds of the district's students enrolled. Patient satisfaction surveys show that parents and children are satisfied with the SBHC services provided and trust the SBHC providers.

Both the 1998 evaluation study and our recent communications with local school superintendents indicate that the SBHCs are credited with making a large difference in their communities. Sample quotes from community members in 1998 included that the SBHCs are "very well regarded in the school community, in the larger community and by the medical partner" and that they are "a critical part of life in this rural area" (Geisz, 1998, p. 55). This review of the development of the SBHC network demonstrates the SBHCs have clearly established successful partnerships with schools and families, fulfilling preconditions we identify for contributing to community development.

Health Care Access Is Enhanced in Schools Served by SBHCs

The 1998 evaluation study found the SBHCs increased access to health care. Over 90% of parents and teachers surveyed agreed that "without the SBHC there are many students who would not get al. the health care they need" (Geisz, 1998, p. 99). Thirty-seven percent of parents stated that at least one time in the past year they would not have been able take time off work to get their child health care, 29% stated that they would not have had the money to pay for their child's health care, and 13% of parents stated that lack of transportation would have prevented them from getting their child health care (Geisz, 1998, p. 100).

To provide a more quantitative analysis of whether the SBHCs have a positive impact on students' current health care utilization, we obtained de-identified, individual-level data of pediatric patient visits in calendar year 2017 to any of Bassett's health care facilities, including SBHCs. For each patient visit, the database includes the diagnosis codes, department (e.g., SBHC, clinic, emergency), date of visit and age. Although the visit records are de-identified, a unique identifier allows us to link visits by the same individual. Patient addresses are geocoded into school district boundaries, allowing us to determine whether the

patient lived in a district with a SBHC. Because the database is de-identified, we cannot directly determine which patients attending a school with a SBHC are enrolled in that SBHC. For this reason, we report the data aggregated to treated (SBHC districts) and control (non-SBHC districts) groups. We have seen that most students who have access to a SBHC do in fact enroll, so this approach is reasonable.

In our dataset we observe over 16,000 individual school-aged children that have at least one inpatient or outpatient visit. There are more than 70,000 patient encounters with healthcare facilities by school-age patients in the year. Approximately 55% of school-age patients served by Bassett in this region live in a school district that has a SBHC. Patients with access to a SBHC utilize the healthcare system more intensively: the ratio of visits to school-age patients in districts with a SBHC is 5.3 but is only 3.3 in districts without a SBHC—an average of two more encounters with the healthcare system for students with access to a SBHC.

Raw averages in patient visits do not capture the extent of differences in health care utilization by patients. Moreover, we are specifically interested in the effect of SBHCs on patient access to and utilization of regular care and the availability of a medical home, which can be measured by two additional indicators: (1) rates of patient office visits and urgent care visits and (2) preventive care visits, including well-care visits and immunizations. Receiving health care via an office visit rather than through an urgent care facility (hospital emergency department or convenient care center) indicates better access to a regular source of healthcare and reduced cost. A visit to receive a routine well-care check or to get an immunization also indicates better access to regular preventive care. Table 8.2 compares data across SBHC and non-SBHC districts for these indicators. The specific measures shown in the table include the median number of office visits per school-age patient, the fraction of school-age patients who have any urgent care visit, the proportion of school-age patients receiving a routine well-care check, and those getting an immunization in the year.

The comparisons show that patients in school districts with a SBHC have twice as many office visits as those in other districts. The differences are highly statistically significant. School-age patients in districts with a SBHC are also less likely to receive health care at an urgent care facility, since the proportion of patients utilizing urgent care is over 6 percentage points lower in SBHC districts. Patients in districts with a SBHC are about 11 percentage points more likely to receive a well-care visit in a year and nearly 9 percentage points more likely to receive an immunization in a year. Although the data on immunizations may not indicate a greater likelihood of receiving an immunization (since immunizations may also be received at locations other than a medical office), evidence of the higher rate of immunizations at SBHCs indicates that SBHCs enhance access to a regular source of preventive care. Overall, our data provide strong evidence that students served by SBHCs have greater access to health care.

TABLE 8.2 Patient visits (ages 4–19) by type of encounter for 2017

Median number of office visits per patient		
Non-SBHC districts	SBHC districts	Difference
4.0	8.0	–4.0
Proportion of patients with any urgent-care visit		
Non-SBHC districts	SBHC districts	Difference
0.217	0.153	0.064
Proportion of patients with any well-care visit		
Non-SBHC districts	SBHC districts	Difference
0.654	0.753	–0.113
Proportion of patients receiving an immunization		
Non-SBHC districts	SBHC districts	Difference
0.299	0.386	–0.087

Source: Authors' calculations from Bassett Healthcare Network patient records data. All differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

Absenteeism Is Lower in Schools Served by SBHCs

We use data from school district reports submitted to New York State via the SIRS reporting system to compare student absenteeism in districts with SBHCs and those without. Data were compiled by the regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) district office in our area before being provided to us in de-identified form. Because data on school absences are not linked to data on SBHC enrollment, we aggregate data to SBHC districts and non-SBHC districts across the 33 school districts in our area that fall within the BOCES region. We measure the percent of days a student was absent in a school year, defined as the ratio of the number of days each student is enrolled in the school and the number of days they are officially marked absent for excused or unexcused reasons.

We calculate the mean percentage of days absent and frequency by grade for students in districts with and without SBHCs. The mean percentage of days absent is greater for students attending school districts without SBHCs (6.6%) than for students attending schools with SBHCs (5.8%), and this difference is statistically significant. Comparing grade-by-grade percentages from pre-K (typically 4-year-olds), kindergarten, and grades 1 through 12, we find children attending districts with SBHCs miss less school than do children attending districts without SBHCs. The most pronounced differences are found in pre-K, where children in schools with SBHCs are absent only half as many days as those in schools without SBHCs, and kindergarten, where SBHCs are associated with a 50% lower rate of absenteeism. In grades 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8, we also see the same pattern in absenteeism rates favoring students in districts with SBHCs. We do not see significant differences in absenteeism for most of the high school grades, but for older students, factors other than health might affect absenteeism. For a detailed analysis of the data and statistical tests, see Tennyson et al. (2023).

SBHCs Address the Critical Dimensions of Health Care Access

Our analysis shows that SBHCs in rural communities can expand health care access, reduce health disparities, and support community wellbeing. The process by which communities come to have a SBHC engages community interests with school and healthcare interests and expertise. The supportive evidence of parent and community buy-in to get the SBHC started and maintained over years and decades speaks to the value of these networks, communication, expertise, and partnership. The tenure of a SBHC signals a durable set of relationships that includes contributions that can be leveraged for other purposes that meet social and economic needs of individuals, families, and the broader community.

The collaborative and coherent planning to establish SBHCs in these communities has worked in support of community development. We have empirically shown that this network of SBHCs has had a positive impact on the four critical dimensions of health care access—*people*, *place*, *provider*, and *payment* (MacKinney, 2014). The SBHCs are embedded in one of the central hubs of the community, and service provision is tailored to the needs of the community at no cost to patients.

We find that SBHCs increase health care utilization. Students in SBHC districts have two additional patient visits per year on average—these visits benefit the children directly and the community collectively via healthier and better-cared-for children. We also found emergency care visits are reduced in districts with SBHCs, as enhancing primary care access can reduce the need for and cost of emergency department visits. In addition, children in districts with SBHCs have immunization visits 9 percentage points higher than others.

We also emphasize family and community needs addressed by these school-healthcare partnerships. Children and families enjoy less absenteeism when attending schools with SBHCs, especially in the critically important formative years of pre-K, kindergarten, and early elementary years when children are learning how to be in school and interact with peers and teachers. These early years are also years when parents need to be home if their child is not in school, so reducing student absenteeism also enables working parents to miss less work.

SBHCs Advance Community Wellbeing

In this chapter, we argue that school-based health care enhances health and community wellbeing by supporting positive community development priorities. Human-ecological approaches and the social determinants of health framework (Cosgrave et al., 2019) emphasize the connected nature of healthy families, communities, and local institutions. When families lack access to health care in rural areas, they are often more isolated from schools (enhanced absenteeism) and engage in more risky behaviors and substance abuse (Evans et al., 2016). When children are home from school, parents are challenged to get to work. Moreover, the closure of rural hospitals over the past three decades has only increased the distance to health care

for rural families, and there exists much research that finds reduced mental health and dental health services in poor, rural regions (Coughlin et al., 2019).

We presented a case study of a networked set of SBHCs in a four-county rural region of New York State run by a single healthcare organization in collaboration with local school districts. We find that the SBHCs are associated with enhanced access to health care and education, two important domains of social determinants of health. Better health care and educational access contribute to economic vitality and can attract and retain families and workers. The healthcare sector has been shown to be an important pillar of society and has been linked to the economic development and growth (Strittmatter & Sunde, 2013). Healthy populations are associated with increased workforce productivity, higher educational investments, and lower rates of poverty (Bloom et al., 2020). We conclude that SBHCs have potential to serve a key role in local rural community development. Future research examining the effects of SBHCs on community capital and development indicators is needed to deepen understanding of community-level outcomes and their determinants.

Notes

1. This chapter is a modified version of Tennyson, S., Sipple, J. W., Fiduccia, P., Brunner, W., Lembo, E., & Kjolhede, C. (2023). School-based health centers and rural community health. *Community Development*, *54*(4), 549–566, 9.

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2. United Nations. Community Development. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_development (Accessed on 7 July 2014).

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PART IV
Conclusion

We have argued in this book for a broader approach to both school and economic development policy. We see schools as critical community development partners, which can help communities address a broader range of needs beyond education. To get to this broader approach requires developing common vision, engaging a broad range of voices and overcoming the silos that so often characterize schools and economic development institutions.

US society is divided, and schools are well positioned to help overcome those divides. Schools represent the diversity of the future of our society. They can encourage a sense of belonging across generational, class and racial difference. Collaboration and shared power help schools link with community development institutions. By engaging diverse voices, schools can encourage a creative democracy to help build a broader school and community development agenda.

That is the promise that this book has tried to illustrate.

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9

CONCLUSION

A Broader Vision of Community Development, Schools, and Power[1]

Mildred E. Warner, Jason Reece, and Xue Zhang

Introduction

This book argues that the field of community development needs to address the role of schools, and by doing so, the field of economic development will be broadened. Schools can be important sources of health care, nutrition and economic development, in addition to their educational role. Schools will benefit from addressing these broader community development issues, as these have positive impacts on school performance (Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, 2016). Historically, both schools and economic development have been siloed. Schools are separate governmental institutions with their own budgets and governing boards. Similarly, economic development has been primarily focused on attracting investments with tax abatements as a primary tool. Abatements are often determined by industrial development agencies (IDAs), and these entities are separate and often criticized for inadequate accountability to local government and schools (Wen & Leroy, 2023). This creates challenges for building collaboration and a common agenda. In this book, we address the challenges of power regarding taxation, tax abatement and urban development policy. We also explore the promise of schools in shared services and health care. Schools can help build a culture of health and connect children, families and services (Knopf et al., 2016). We present a framework for incorporating schools into community development policy and addressing differential power relations.

Our theoretical framework, introduced in Chapter 1, builds off Good's (2022) framework and articulates the importance of financial, institutional, physical and social aspects, especially in the context of demographic change. This book provides new insights on the links between finance and economic development, arguing for more transparent data and new models of economic development that don't sacrifice poor children to the growth machine (Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2023).

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Financial. There is a long history of research challenging both the lack of effectiveness and the lack of accountability of tax abatements as economic development policy (Zheng & Warner, 2010), but only recently, with the chapters in this book, has community development begun to tackle the issue of tax abatements and their effect on schools. Wen and LeRoy in Chapter 3 and Reece and Abou-Ghalioum in Chapter 4 show how tax abatements, handled by industrial development authorities and local governments, give away the school tax base without consultation with schools. Shared power is critical if the broader promise of school/community collaboration is to be realized. How to craft shared power is the challenge.

Physical. Finance is especially important, as it relates to funding educational services and providing adequate school buildings for the next generation. Many school buildings are old, and as society ages, there may be pressure to consolidate and close schools to serve a smaller youth population. This can be done in positive ways that promote community development, as shown by Bierbaum et al. in Chapter 5, or without regard to community development impacts, as research on school closures in Philadelphia and Chicago shows (Good, 2022; Lee & Lubienski, 2017; Weber et al., 2020).

Institutional. We have shown how collaboration is key. Collaboration helps build a common vision and support for broader community development goals. But there needs to be an institutional structure to support collaboration. Collective impact theory (Kania & Kramer, 2011) argues what is needed is a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, communication and a backbone support organization. While this is all very practical, it ignores the problem of differential power. Chapters in this book highlight the importance of hierarchical power relations, as schools may wield power over community or lose power to tax-abating authorities or higher levels of government.

There are many actors involved in the school/community development nexus. While schools, local governments and industrial development authorities are the focus of this book, we also find nonprofits, families, unions and public health and social service authorities are key actors. See Figure 9.1.

Because collaboration can narrow discussion to common agendas, we argue that attention needs to be given to engaging diverse voices to enable comprehensive community collaborations that lead to a broader agenda for community development. Prior research on comprehensive collaborative initiatives has found that these multi-agency efforts bring conversations to the middle—the shared agendas (Pitt, 1998; Warner, 1999). This can silence minority views. The silencing can be a form of self-censorship by minority views in order to be accepted within the power structure of the collaboration, or it can be by the agenda setting or differential power of the players. Thus, while collaboration can hold all the parties together, it also limits the space where common agendas are found. The challenge is to move from the interior circle of shared and common agendas to the external circle (dotted line in Figure 9.1) that encompasses the wider set of community interests.

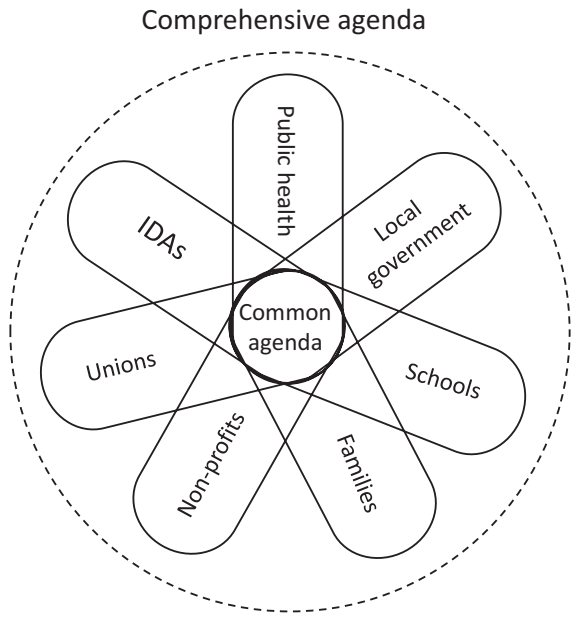

FIGURE 9.1 Community development actors—common agenda

Source: Author.

For example, one powerful voice for schools has been teachers' unions. They have played a role in highlighting the assaults on public education represented by the charter and privatization movement, as well as the evaluation rigidity imposed by No Child Left Behind (Ravitch, 2020; Brogan, 2014). Teachers' unions also have been strong advocates to maintain or increase public funding, even during the cutbacks of the Great Recession (Swain & Redding, 2022). But during COVID-19, it was the city schools with the strongest unions that stayed shuttered the longest, with severe negative outcomes for children in terms of educational attainment, nutrition and mental health (Khan & Ahmed, 2021; Marianno et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2023). Thus unions, while powerful voices, represent only one set of interests. We need mechanisms to create a balance across a broader set of interests.

Because power is not evenly shared between schools and communities, partnering with schools requires addressing power imbalances (Biddle et al., 2018; Warner & Zhang, 2023). Schools are separate units of government with separate taxing authority. Schools are representative of the community but subject to state and federal funding and regulation. Schools do not have to collaborate with local government and broader community actors unless they wish to do so. Rarely does local government have budget control over schools, so shared power is needed if the promise of schools as community development actors is to be realized. But

economic development agencies often have power over school funding, as they can give away tax revenue through abatements.

Theories of power articulate both hierarchical and horizontal dimensions (Lukes, 1986; Westin, 2022). Thus, schools both exert and are subject to hierarchical power—*power over*. But community development rests critically on shared, horizontal power (Biddle et al., 2018). To promote broader community development, schools need to share power with community—*power with*—and this enables *power to* effect change (Warner & Zhang, 2023). This can lead to a more comprehensive agenda and more shared services, as shown by Warner and Zhang in Chapter 6. Similarly, economic development agencies need to share power with schools regarding tax abatements.

Community development has a broad focus—which means it is diffuse, with multiple constituencies, multiple objectives and multiple funding sources. How to bring these different aspects together is a primary challenge and concern for the literature. This effort to bring multiple parties together often makes community development practice accommodationist, as it tries to be practical and achieve change in the short term. We argue community development needs to do more to address power.

Social. Schools can be important venues for delivering a broader range of social services and supports. From school-based health centers described in Chapter 8 by Tennyson et al. to a broad range of shared services, such as nutrition, recreation and education, joint use delivery with schools may be most important in low-income rural and minority urban communities where alternative service providers are scant. Exciting initiatives are described in Baltimore in Chapter 5 by Bierbaum et al. and in Chapter 7, where Warner et al. look across New York State and find shared services are greater in communities with greater need.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health framework emphasizes the importance of partnership and multi-sector collaboration in building a healthy community (RWJF, 2024). This book illustrates that schools, as anchor institutions in the community, collaborate with other community actors to provide services beyond education. The social, institutional, economic and physical linkages between schools and communities can help address the social determinants of health. Building on a dynamic human ecological framework, schools and other community actors at the meso level can help build a culture of health through collaboratively providing services and addressing broader community development issues of transportation, economic development and housing. At the meso level, the school/community nexus establishes a broader agenda for community development emphasizing collaboration, shared power and diverse voices (Figure 9.1). At the macro level, the school/community nexus could stimulate comprehensive policy change to better link economic and community development with population health. By combining attention to the social, economic and physical environment built at the meso level with policy change at the macro level, the needs of families and children at the micro level can be better addressed. Collectively, the three levels work together to improve community health and well-being (Figure 9.2).

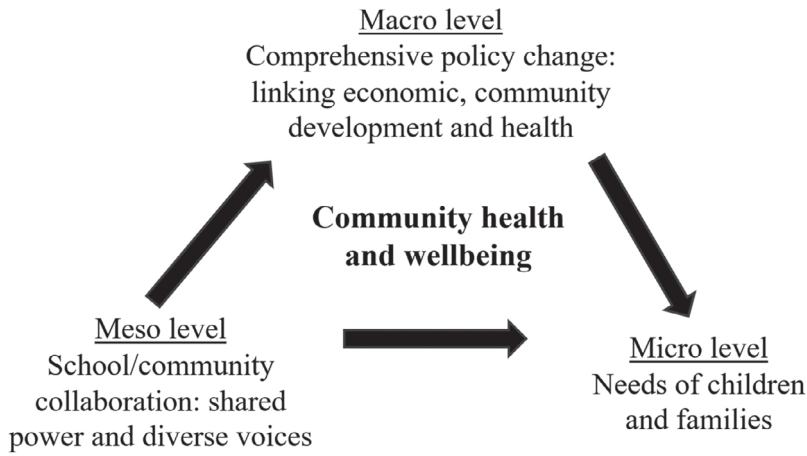

FIGURE 9.2 Multi-level approach to build a healthy community

Source: Author.

Future Challenges as Public Education Emerges From the Pandemic

While the chapters in this book have focused primarily on financial and institutional aspects, there are important community development issues future research needs to address. In the past two decades, urban redevelopment efforts have prioritized attracting wealthy empty nesters (Lang et al., 1997) and the creative class (Zimmerman, 2008), spurring gentrification while placing less emphasis on the needs of urban children (Diem et al., 2019). These policies have led to a "childless urban renaissance" (Siedentop et al., 2018) and shrinking public school enrollments in gentrifying areas (Green et al., 2022). These broader demographic changes create new challenges but also opportunities for schools if they link to a broader community development agenda.

On the negative side, this can lead to power relations of dispossession, as seen in the privatization (Rooks, 2017) and resegregation of schools (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014) and the "school to prison pipeline" (Mallett, 2017). These issues expose the racist and classist power relations that underlie school/community relations (Wilson et al., 2023).

On the positive side, schools can become full-service community institutions, offering a broader array of services to all ages—children, families and older adults—in the community. The Harlem Children's Zone is the most notable example, but such full-service schools are rare, and the model has not been widely replicated (Levin, 2013). Valli et al. (2016), in their typology of school–community collaboration, emphasize two-way communication and shared power as schools attempt to address broader community development issues of housing, transportation and

economic development. This broader agenda for schools also reinforces a broader agenda for community development in a mutually reinforcing way.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, public schools are met with substantial challenges. The impact of the pandemic on youth was uneven in terms of both disease and mortality experienced among their families but also in terms of the intensity of pandemic relief measures, as described by Reece in Chapter 2. Pandemic learning loss has impacted all youth, but the pandemic has had the longest-running and deepest impact on youth who were already vulnerable or were in communities with fewer resources (Kane & Reardon, 2023; Fahle et al., 2023).

School systems now face new economic pressures, as federal pandemic relief funds end in 2024 (Yarrell, 2023). School districts on average will lose approximately $1200 in funding per student as a result of expiring federal relief programs (Singh & Querolo, 2023). Higher-poverty school districts received more federal pandemic support and can be expected to experience a larger fiscal impact from expiring relief programs. In addition, lower-income children in their communities benefited from the expanded child tax credit in 2021, but its demise in 2022 resulted in an increase in the child poverty rate from 5.2% in 2021 to 12.4% in 2022 (Shrider & Creamer, 2023). Scholars estimate that had the expanded child tax credit continued, it would have kept more than 5 million children out of poverty (Koutavas et al., 2023).

In the aftermath of the racial justice protests in the summer of 2020, some public-school systems and educators attempted to integrate anti-racist practices into school policies, organizational culture and curriculum. Often overlooked in these efforts is the role of students as emerging leaders advocating for these reforms (Hurd et al., 2023, Mansfield & Lambrinou, 2022). From changing the name of buildings, challenging the use of law enforcement in public schools and calling for enhanced diversity and inclusion programming or curriculum reforms, students have been actively involved in challenging norms in a time of racial reckoning (Welton & Harris, 2022).

As more supportive policies and practices pertaining to racial equity and LGBTQ+ youth have grown, schools have become a target of political backlash to these shifting societal norms. Political conflict has involved not only political figures and policymakers but also parental rights organizations (e.g. Moms for Liberty). These attacks are not unprecedented, with schools historically facing political and public backlash during earlier periods of disruption or crisis (Dahlgren, 2016; Delmont, 2016). Nondemocratic parent resistance movements, such as Moms for Liberty, have utilized this moment of crisis to call for stricter control over engaging issues of race, gender and sexuality in the context of public education (Williams, 2022; Sinha et al., 2023). These resistance movements, which may only reflect the concerns of a small number of parents, are parallel to the disproportionate voice given to homeowners in "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) land use and community development disputes. In both cases, a small but highly motivated constituency utilizes political processes to gain political influence and cause disruption.

Looking to the Future—Diverse Voices and a Broader View

We argue for the critical importance of voice, deliberation and equity in promoting broader school and economic development agendas. Many schools are still siloed, focused primarily on educational performance. National surveys show that fewer than half of communities report shared services with their schools (Warner & Zhang, 2023), and even fewer schools are full-service community schools (Valli et al., 2016). While we profile examples of broader shared service arrangements in Chapters 5 through 8 of this book, we recognize there is a long way to go.

Economic development is similarly narrow, with a primary focus on jobs and investment, with tax abatements as a primary tool. We have shown how these abatements undermine school budgets and educational services for children. Abatements also lead to greater inequality in neighborhoods, as Reece and Abou-Ghalioum show in Chapter 4. Both economic development and school policy need a broader view. The way to get there is through diverse voices, shared power and collaboration. These can enhance a sense of belonging across generational, racial and class differences and help build a creative democracy (Lake, 2017). See Figure 9.3.

Public schools are a focal point in our society because of the critical role they play and their potential contribution to an equitable and just democracy. Schools foster an environment that facilitates learning but also helps shape identity and values (Reay, 2010). Public schools represent an opportunity to serve the traditional vision of the American melting pot, a pluralistic space where a diversity of identities is acknowledged and embraced (Jenlink & Townes, 2009). They

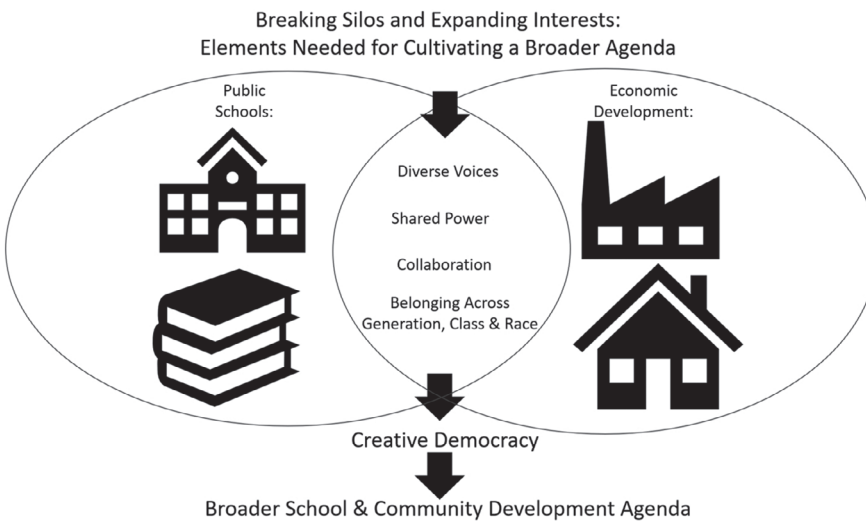

FIGURE 9.3 A model for linking schools and community development

Source: Author.

are fundamental spaces to explore our commonality and differences in a diverse multi-racial society. From the foundation of the United States, the nation's founders advocated for public education because they recognized it was fundamental to democracy (Pangle & Pangle, 1993). While the US constitution does not include education as a fundamental right, all 50 states have requirements to establish and provide public education in their state constitutions, and the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment in the US Constitution requires equal access to public education (Parker, 2016). Public schools offer the opportunity to support broader social and racial equity and promote a functional democracy with an informed citizenry. To achieve this ideal vision of the nation, diversity must be embraced as an asset and not a threat to society (Zou & Cheryan, 2022).

However, increasing diversity is often seen as a threat, and new populations or identities can become dehumanized and stigmatized. As legal and civil rights scholar john powell notes,

> When societies experience big and rapid change, a frequent response is for people to narrowly define who qualifies as a full member of society—a process I call "Othering" . . . Othering is not about liking or disliking someone. It is based on the conscious or unconscious assumption that a certain identified group poses a threat to the favored group. It is largely driven by politicians and the media, as opposed to personal contact.
>
> *(2017)*

We see evidence of othering in conflicts and the vitriolic response to LGBTQ visibility among youth and growing racial and ethnic diversity in our school age population. But othering can manifest in more subtle ways in our community and economic development policy. Subtle othering can surface in the context of public schools in gentrifying urban areas, in the generational divide between a predominantly White aging population and a multi-racial youth population with no racial majority, and in exclusionary land use policies that specifically seek to prevent lower-income families with youth from accessing public schools in suburban communities. Indeed, tax abatements and economic development policy can contribute to marginalization, as shown in Chapters 3 and 4.

Powell calls for an alternative paradigm to be embraced in a time of societal change, a construct of "belonging and bridging." Belonging and bridging occur when new populations and identities are seen as an asset that enriches or enhances our society and not as a threat (powell, 2017). Belonging places emphasis on recognition of our shared humanity while also recognizing and embracing our individual diversity (powell, 2021). Belonging asserts the importance of ensuring co-creation and self-determination for groups who are othered (Mahar et al., 2013). Belonging is supported through bridging, the creation of spaces of dialogue and recognition, where we acknowledge and "see" those who are traditionally othered. Schools can be these spaces.

Peter Block (2018) has further refined the concept of belonging in the context of community building and community development. Block defines belonging as not just ensuring we "see" each other and our shared humanity but that we work across our differences in collaboration to address wicked problems. This is similar to Frug's (1999) argument that community building is the fundamental public good. Block (2018) argues that belonging occurs at various scales, between sectors and institutions, between society and marginalized groups and within the social or geographic context of community. In the context of community development, belonging is supported through the creation of physical spaces that allow for collaboration across lines of difference, community dialogue and engagement. Belonging is centered on collaboration, engagement, dialogue and action. Across these various scales, belonging counters the siloization of schools and community development and introduces norms of connectedness and caring. We argue this will broaden both school and community development agendas.

Community development should embrace the construct of belonging, with an explicit focus on connecting the role of schools to the needs of the broader community. As our society ages, schools can become places for older adults to gather and receive services and share in the creative project of community development and democracy. Rather than closing schools as the child population shrinks, schools can be re-envisioned as community institutions and classrooms repurposed for child care, adult day care, congregate meals and broader service delivery to the community. Politically there is more community support for taxes to support facilities that serve all generations (Warner & Zhang, 2022). Community development and schools need to adopt a multi-generational approach (Warner & Homsy, 2017). Doing so will also improve outcomes for children (Warner & Zhang, 2020).

Community building is the fundamental goal of community development, and belonging is key to that process. Belonging requires collaboration across lines of difference, sectors, institutions and community, with a goal of creating environments where everyone can thrive. In a practical sense, it requires fields such as community development, economic development, housing, transportation and public education to work collaboratively, recognizing the role of various sectors and institutions in impacting youth and community outcomes.

A framework of belonging builds from theories of asset-based community development (Kretzman & McKnight, 1996), viewing difference as an asset and not a threat, seeking to leverage the positive benefits of our diversity in schools, in neighborhoods and intergenerationally. In this context, gentrification is not a threat to urban public schools but is leveraged as an opportunity to bring financial and human capital into resource-deprived public schools. Growing youth diversity is not a threat; it should be leveraged as an opportunity to enrich our society and future labor force. Our generational demographic divide is not a threat but an opportunity to build cross-generational and cross-racial relationships (Myers, 2007). Addressing the inequities facing marginalized youth today is not just a problem to be solved but an opportunity to invest in ensuring a well-prepared labor force and informed citizenry.

To achieve a paradigm change not only in school behavior but in community development more broadly, we need to reawaken the public about the importance of public schools, especially in a divided and aging society. How do we encourage stronger alignment between community development and education stakeholders? Schools represent our demographic future. We have shown in Chapter 2 that child populations are more racially and ethnically diverse than American society as a whole. After the expiration of the expanded child tax credit in 2023, child poverty is on the rise, and schools are the primary institution to address its myriad effects (Parolin et al., 2022). But we cannot ask schools to handle all these societal challenges alone. Multi-sector collaboration, which is structured to be sensitive to issues of power, is necessary to align stakeholders, resources and systems to effectively engage issues of educational equity and community development in the 21st century. The cases in this book show both the potential and the challenges. By outlining the implications for community development theory, we offer a blueprint for action—centered on collaboration that promotes diverse voices and builds a sense of belonging that balances power across a wide range of community partners and interests.

Future research in community development needs to explore these issues in much closer detail to identify how power can be shared to yield a different vision and outcome. Addressing power is a challenge for community development theory. While more explicitly Marxist approaches address power (Harvey, 2005), they do not give solutions on how to address power imbalances. While planners emphasize communicative planning theory as a means to shift power relations (Forester, 1982), communication is not enough. Explicit attention must be given to how to address hierarchical power imbalances and strengthen horizontal shared forms of power (Westin, 2022). Some of the chapters in this book (3, 4, 5, 6) begin to address this issue (Bierbaum et al., 2023; Reece & Abou-Ghalioum, 2023; Warner & Zhang, 2023; Wen & LeRoy, 2023).

How do we move forward? At this point, values are contested. But Lake (2016), in his theory of creative democracy, argues there is an interplay between values and actions. When you cannot lead with values, you can lead with action. We have seen the negative of that with the book banning and LGBTQ shaming of the last few years, but we also have seen a value pushback on these actions—reaffirming the role of public schools as safe spaces to embrace the full diversity and open information so critical to a democratic society. The chapters in this book have shown the power of actions toward community development in shaping a more collaborative future for schools. Data transparency and reform of economic development policy can put the needs of children and communities first, as Chapters 3 and 4 show. New approaches to building and repurposing schools can build more community engagement, as described in Chapter 5. New approaches to expand access to health care for rural poor students can be achieved through school-based health care centers, as shown in Chapter 8. And a host of joint use service delivery, from nutrition to recreation to computer access, can place schools at the center of a community development agenda, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7.

Voice is key, and schools represent a broad range of voices. Schools provide a place for diverse voices to engage, and this is the basis of a democratic society. Power must be shared, and the institutional structures that facilitate school–community interaction must be accountable and democratic. Funding is key, and reform of economic development policy may begin from recognition that schools, our children's future, are hurt by tax abatements. In all of this, collaboration is critical. Community development provides tools for collaboration. This facilitates broader service delivery to children and communities and builds the foundation for a broader approach to community development itself.

Note

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