(Re)Imagining The School As A Neighborhood Institution: A Vision Of A School That Is For The Community

BY

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THESIS

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JRT
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to revisit the historical role of the school in order to reimagine the relationship between schools and historically disinvested urban communities. Can the local school serve as an anchor institution for historically disinvested urban communities? Through the use of existing literature, case study analysis, survey data review, and a scenario development exercise this essay will arrive at a vision of the local school, properly imagined as a network, serving as an anchor institution for historically disinvested urban communities. There are five major conclusions to be drawn from this study. First, the high school – as currently structured in low-income communities in America – fails to act as an anchor for disinvested urban communities. Second, if conceived as a network, instead of disconnected silos, the local high school has the potential to act as an anchor institution for disinvested urban communities. Third, greater planning, organization and collaboration within low-income neighborhoods are necessary in order to realize the enormous potential the school has to offer the community. Fourth, in order to adequately serve disinvested communities, the high school must be (1) equitable, (2) accessible, and (3) providing sensible services that meet the needs of the community. Finally, the evidence of this vision would be that the high school would serve as a point of convergence between parents, youth, primary schools, post-secondary institutions, neighborhoods, and the city for the advancement of previously disinvested communities. These conclusions are important for educators, education administrators, community organizers, city planners, and urban education policymakers to consider because they re-imagine the school in the context of low-income communities.

Keywords: anchor institutions, schools, disinvestment, globalization, neoliberalism, standardization, neighborhood planning
SUMMARY

A case study of a socially and economically disinvested urban community was conducted using a descriptive, cross-disciplinary approach. The purpose of the case study was to determine whether or not the local schools in the community had the potential to serve as an anchor (politically, socially, physically, economically, and culturally) institution for the identified community. Data was collected from a wide range of secondary sources and combined with existing literature from the fields of education and urban planning, existing survey data, ethnographic observations and anecdotal evidence to build a body of evidence.

The evidence collected through the case study support the assertion that schools, if conceived properly, have the capacity to serve as political, social, physical, economic, and cultural anchors for historically disinvested communities. The evidence collected also suggests that while the local schools of the community have the collective capacity, they do not (in their current formation) have the organizing scheme to function as anchor schools.

The result of this study was a reimagining of the local school as a network of local “anchor schools” positioned and organized to stabilize and empower historically disinvested urban communities. This new conception of the local school is coupled with a set of planning and policy recommendations to make local anchor schools more (1) equitable, (2) accessible, (3) sensible, and (4) organized than current school models.
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<td>United States</td>
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<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Assessment of Educational Programs</td>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
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<td>J4J</td>
<td>Journey For Justice</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>CTA</td>
<td>Chicago Transit Authority</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Chicago Public Schools</td>
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<td>ACT</td>
<td>American College Testing</td>
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<td>Harlem Children’s Zone</td>
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<td>PTE</td>
<td>Pathways To Education</td>
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<td>NCCP</td>
<td>Netter Center for Community Partnerships</td>
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<td>FY</td>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
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<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-Time Employee</td>
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<td>H.S.</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<td>SQRP</td>
<td>School Quality Rating Policy</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
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<td>CC9</td>
<td>Community Collaborative to Improve District 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
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<td>J.D.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Local School at Risk

A common subject for debate in contemporary literature and news media is whether or not the current paradigm of education is working. Who is education working for? What is the purpose of education? What are the aims of education? What does it mean to be educated? What is the definition and scope of a quality education? How does a community plan for education? How should education be delivered in the 21st century? These questions are important to consider for anyone who thinks seriously about the fields of community planning, education, and schools as public goods. Questions like these have also been the subject of many publications and research studies in recent history.

In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education published an essay titled *A Nation at Risk*. The essay generated an avalanche of criticism about the effectiveness of American schooling in the past three decades. The rhetoric of the essay is seasoned with fear, disappointment, and pessimism regarding the educational landscape.

The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur – others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments … our educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them … (NCEE, 1983, p. 5-6).

Educational historians have written at great length about the merits, purposes, and outcomes of the report. Ravitch (2010) wrote the following about it:

Far from being a revolutionary document, the report was an impassioned plea to make our schools function better in their core mission as academic institutions and to make our education system live up to our nation’s ideals. It warned that the nation would be
harmed economically and socially unless education was dramatically improved for all children (Ravitch, 2010, p. 25).

*A Nation at Risk* was published to sharply criticize “the rising tide of mediocrity” creating an internal threat to America’s global position as an economic leader. Influenced by globalization, a rising tide of privatization, and a new wave of standardization – the document placed educators and the educational system in the spotlight – culpable for the current state of affairs but also responsible for creating a better educational system. The tenor of the report reflected the restructuring of the political economy towards systems of mass privatization and standardization to create competitive goods, services, and other social outputs for the new global economy.

This piece, in contrast to *A Nation at Risk*, is not intended to criticize the educational system from a global or national perspective. It is intended to closely examine the factors that created conditions of disinvestment in education as a public good. In revisiting the past, the aim is to envision an alternative local paradigm where the school is reconstructed for disinvested communities, not simply placed in the community. If properly conceived, the school becomes an anchor providing a more differentiated set of services that reflect the needs of the community it exists to serve. In order to begin such a venture, one must first understand the conditions that have contributed to the current realities of urban education. Along the way, one hopes to discover new possibilities for schooling and for living in American communities that have experienced disinvestment.

There is to me a contradiction in being simultaneously pessimistic and an educator. Whatever our individual experiences with a place called school, to think seriously about education conjures up intriguing possibilities for both schooling and a way of life as yet scarcely tried (Goodlad, 1984, p. 361).
Globalization, Neoliberalism, Standardization, and Disinvestment

To begin to envision the “intriguing possibilities for schooling” Goodlad (1984) describes, it is necessary to examine the historical context that led to pockets of disinvestment in the first place. The 21st century schooling enterprise must be understood within educational, political, and social constructs – it is, as a system, influenced by theoretical, political, and economic, agendas. This paper places the modern school within the context of 21st century mass standardization, privatization, and globalization. In the 21st century, states and schools are creating methods to objectively measure educational outputs through standardized test procedures. The neoliberal political economy is advancing the privatization of many schooling models by promoting charter schools, magnet schools, and other private schooling options. The international competition of globalization is demanding more of teachers and students who are eager to compete in educational and industrial markets. How do schools fare right now at serving their communities? What factors influence the ability of the school to serve the community?

Within the context of globalization, standardization, and privatization, schools, as institutions deemed to educate people, are not working for all communities. Simply put, the forces of globalization, standardization, and privatization are leading to disinvestment in some of America’s most economically, politically, and socially disenfranchised communities. To what extent is this statement evident?

Globalization

The demands of globalization have created several important issues for educators to consider. A major issue related to globalization is that many schools in America are failing to meet the academic needs of students who want to be competitive participants in the global economy. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP), the most reliable longitudinal measure of student achievement, American students in fourth and eighth grade have made significant test-score gains in reading and
mathematics since *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983. Objectively, American students are improving in reading and math.

While this is an indication of academic progress, it cannot be taken as academic achievement. The most recent NAEP report card shows that American fourth graders are still performing seven points below proficiency or “solid academic performance” on the mathematics portion of the test. By eighth grade, American students are 15 points below the lower limit of proficiency in mathematics (NAEP, 1990-2013).

In reading, the gap between American performance and proficiency widens. Reading growth has been less dramatic and the difference between actual outcomes and desired outcomes is greater. Fourth graders are scoring 18 points below proficiency and eighth graders are 12 points lower than the proficiency line (NAEP, 1990-2013).

Taken in context, this data is summarized nicely by Ravitch (2010):

There is no time in the past when American schools were first in the world on international tests. When the first international assessments were administered in the mid-1960s, our students ranked near the bottom of those nations tested. In the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, American students were often in the bottom quartile or near the international average, never first in the international rankings (Ravitch, 2010, p. 249).

Her summary emphasizes two important conclusions for American communities to consider. On the one hand, performance on the global stage is improving over time. On the other hand, American competitiveness has not historically been strong relative to other industrialized nations. The mythology of American preeminence in educational attainment must be debunked in order to have an honest conversation about the progress of educational attainment in American communities. There are pockets of our nation that are competitive and able to participate in the global economy. However, there are significant numbers of individuals who have little or no chance to contribute to global markets.
Neoliberalism

Unfortunately, dishonest conversation about the state of affairs in American education has been happening for decades. *A Nation at Risk* is not the only culprit of dishonest or inflammatory rhetoric about the state of education – that particular report simply added fuel to the flame. For decades, competing ideologies have waged war over the means and delivery of educational programming. Interestingly, this is not a battle line that is easily drawn. Traditional political boundaries and party lines are being crossed in the “war on mediocrity” initiated by *A Nation at Risk*. As a result, there is a new wave of privatized school (and social) reform propagating through America that threatens the school’s ability to meet the needs of the community.

The issue of competing ideologies in education is evident, in part, due to the limited role the federal government can play in educational policy formation.

The American Constitution leaves to the states the responsibility for developing and guiding public education. This has resulted in great variability in the programs and practices of the thousands of schools in the United States. But the thread of unity is their common purpose: the education of children to become informed, responsible citizens (Tyler, 1979, p. 1).

In recent memory, many modes of delivery have been proposed and debated by state legislatures. With the collapse of communism abroad and the rise of market-based systems, it is no surprise that most of the alternatives to a public schooling system involve free-market ideologies inherent within. David Harvey’s writing suggests this mode of thinking is in line with the neoliberal political economy.

According to Harvey (2005) and a long line of theorists and activists rooted in the liberation movement of Central America:
Neoliberalism is … a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

He goes on to say neoliberalism has become pervasive in the global political economy since the 1970s.

In many ways, charter schools and voucher programs are manifestations of a neoliberal agenda and attitude towards free markets, free trade, and privatization efforts.

One option is to give parents or their children vouchers by which they can secure education in a competitive marketplace. Some existing schools might survive and new ones appear, but the public educational system as we have known it would disappear (Goodlad, 1979, p. 9).

Some of the best schools I’ve ever been in are charter schools, some of which are blowing the lid off test scores in such vexed communities as Boston, New York, and Chicago. And some of the worst – flakiest – schools I’ve ever been in are charter schools. Yet people are choosing them (Finn Jr., 2004, August 18).

Vouchers and charters have attracted a lot of attention from policymakers, philanthropists, social entrepreneurs, education reformers, and other special interest groups in recent years. While these methods of school delivery are gaining in popularity, there are still droves of people who see a clear and necessary role for public school.

Despite the efflorescence of proposals for alternatives to public schooling, it seems likely that effective improvement of the education of the urban poor will occur within the public schools if, indeed, it is to come about at all (Tyack, 1974, p. 290).
Many in the debate still question the validity of the charter school movement at this early stage of development. Pauline Lipman is critical of what she calls the “neoliberal project” in urban education. One critique Lipman (2011) makes of the growing trend toward privatizing schools is that it further drives the wedge that exists between the ideologies that education is preparation for life and that education is preparation for participation in the market economy.

Education, which is properly seen as a public good, is being converted into a private good, an investment one makes in one’s child or oneself to “add value” in order better to compete in the labor market (Lipman, 2011, July 1).

As so often happens with competing ideologies, the empirical evidence on charter schools has not yet settled the theoretical arguments about their existence. We need better research on charter schools, it is true, a non-controversial recommendation endorsed by blue ribbon commissions. But we should not be overly optimistic that better data will settle the charter school debate. Future research will be of varying quality, the data will be mixed and difficult to interpret, and the findings subject to different interpretations. As it is unreasonable to expect charter schools to solve all of the problems of American education, it is unreasonable to expect research to settle all of the theoretical disputes about market-based education and school choice (Loveless & Field, 2009, p. 111-112).

Alternatively, those with the long-view of time like Ravitch, have a way of seeing both sides. Simply, she says, “we should celebrate the creation of good schools, no matter what form they took or who developed them,” (Ravitch, 2010, p. 9). Implicit in this statement is that some schools are failing their communities. However, Ravitch also calls for the acknowledgement of good schools when they are evident.

Who decides what a good school looks like, sounds like, or feels like in the community? The question of what kind of schooling is deemed appropriate for a community is often determined in the political arena. Mayors, school boards, policy analysts, bureaucrats, and
legislators are often responsible for determining the definition of “good schools” and creating conditions that promote one form of education or thwart another form of education. In this way, low-income, politically, socially, and economically disinvested communities can be left with little agency in defining their own educational agenda.

A secondary issue of schooling, generated by the political sphere and the neoliberal agenda, is that the educational agenda shifts focus and evades the public, creating schools that are failing because they are not working for their communities. The conversation about schools shifts focus because discussions are no longer about what the community needs and how the local community can meet those needs. The dialogue is about what kind of school the community needs and how the government can produce it from city hall or the capital. This subtle shift removes local citizens (teachers, parents, students, local administrators) from the table. Elected (or appointed) school board members, mayors, legislators, and bureaucrats then fill the seats of this metaphorical table where decisions are made for the community.

This is an issue of public participation. Giroux (2004) argues, “the neoliberal agenda has cultural dimensions that erode the public participation that is the very foundation of democratic life.” Under neoliberal policies, he shows, “populations are increasingly denied the symbolic, educational, and economic capital necessary for engaged citizenship” (Giroux, 2004, p. 1). This is a form of disinvestment because neoliberal policies and structures create artificial barriers of participation in the production of historically public goods.

**Standardization**

The rise of the neoliberal agenda sharply coincides with the rise of another important structural shift in educational policy. Policy analysts began looking for ways to measure the success (and failure) of the school system. One of the outcomes of this line of thinking was to develop a standardized system of measuring student-learning outcomes at strategic points in the life of a student. As the neoliberal political economy pressed for more privatization through
charter schools and voucher programs it also began the process of transforming the educational landscape through the use of mass standardization.

In the early 1990s, Bill Clinton ran for office with an educational platform to establish a national set of standards and assessments to improve learning and achievement outcomes across the nation. The standards-based movement, coupled with the neoliberal agenda mentioned above, created a national policy agenda that prioritizes increased standardized test results and free-market modes of delivery over many of the skills and knowledge needed to become an active participant in the broader context of community affairs.

The issue with the standards-based movement is closely related to Campbell’s Law:

The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor (Campbell, 1975, p. 35).

By prioritizing standardized test scores as a quantitative social indicator of school performance for the purpose of social decision-making (school closure, charter expansion, turnaround reform, etc.), schooling has been corrupted and reduced to a post-modern factory-model system of test-score production.

Shortly after the Clinton presidency, George Bush ran for office on a platform to improve the outcomes for each child in America over time by creating systems of accountability for all schools. The legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was political pressure to meet a social indicator (performance on a standard measure of proficiency). These two presidencies (and their collective educational policy decisions) set the stage for the kind of systemic corruption Campbell’s Law warns against.

There is a mounting body of evidence to support this proposition. One need not look far for a “school cheating scandal” in national media. In recent history, the Atlanta Public Schools
system has been under federal investigation for reportedly widespread and systematic cheating practices to achieve adequate yearly progress under the pressures of Bush-era NCLB legislation on standardized tests born out of Clinton-era standardization policies. The findings of that investigation have done, in some cases, irreparable damage to the trust between school and community. Processes and outcomes of this nature degrade and corrupt the potentiality of schools as institutions for the community.

Educational historian Diane Ravitch has also noted, “cheating was found in charter schools at almost four times the rate of traditional public schools,” (Ravitch, 2005, p. 155).

High standards for education are important. An educated citizenry must be a public priority and policy agenda. However, when the corrupting elements of privatization, standardization, and globalization take root, many of the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate in a democratic society are neglected. Because we are all citizens of the same democracy, because we will all be eligible to vote, because we all may need to advocate for our rights as American citizens, we must all be educated for those roles and responsibilities.

Disinvestment

As a nation, America invests a tremendous amount of resources into creating an educated citizenry. Millions of dollars are spent on the creation of curricula that align to state, national, and international standardized tests so teachers can train students to be competitive participants in the new global economy. However, it is not enough for the school to succeed on a global scale in math and reading without engaging the local community. It is also not adequate for the school to solely serve as an educational institution producing a standardized student from a standardized curriculum that doesn’t fit within its local context. Nor is it acceptable for the school to privatize as a whole, robbing the local community of valuable communal and public assets. The issue at hand is that the forces of globalization, privatization, and standardization are causing some communities to be disinvested (socially, politically, and economically) in the enterprise of
schooling. There are local, regional, and national policy agendas diminishing and reducing the possibility of the school that exists both in the community and for the community. Furthermore, a disturbingly small proportion of schools are adequately serving low-income communities that have access to fewer resources – often because of disinvestment.

In this section, anecdotal evidence has been provided to link globalization, privatization, and standardization to disinvestment. The new global economy is creating pockets of global participation and pockets of disengagement – disinvesting those communities that have lost access to the modern economy. Privatization efforts are shifting the dialogue about education in ways that diminish the voice of some individuals in some communities – disinvesting those communities that have lost their voice. Mass standardization is creating corrupting pressures on local school communities causing public distrust in the school as an institution – disinvesting those who have lost trust in the school.

**The Anchoring Potential of the Local School**

If executed properly, this paper will reimagine the school in a way that reinvests disinvested communities. The purpose of this paper is to (1) revisit the historical context that caused some communities to become disinvested in school and (2) reimagine the school in a way that allows it to serve as an anchor for disinvested communities. The historical context will be grounded in globalization, privatization through neoliberalism, and mass standardization. The anchoring potential of the local school will be explored through a relatively new field of urban planning focused on building anchor institutions that stabilize, revitalize, or modernize urban spaces.

Can the local school serve as an anchor institution for historically disinvested communities?
This paper will explore that question first by developing a conceptual framework for the school as place and potential anchor. Once a conceptual framework is established, a comparative historical analysis of urban planning and educational history will provide context to the reader about the convergence of planning and education throughout American history. The historical analysis will outline the relationship between the school and the neighborhood (as a spatial planning unit) from the 19th century to present (21st century) conditions.

After a comparative historical analysis, the reader will explore a series of cases that build a body of evidence for the existence of certain aspects of “anchor schools” – a term that is coined in this paper. Through secondary information gathering and best-case-study analysis this section builds a body of evidence in support of the idea that schools have the capacity to serve as anchors in their community.

The next section establishes criteria for evaluating whether or not an institution is, indeed, an anchor for the community it is situated within. These criteria are used in the following section through an in-depth case study of Englewood, Chicago – a historically disinvested community on the south side of Chicago. The intent of conducting this case study is to search for evidence that the local high school has the potential to anchor a disinvested community. Through a wide range of secondary information, years of ethnographic observations, first-hand experiences and insights from actively engaging in the community, and informal interactions with residents a case study analysis was conducted.

The results of the study indicate that the local school can, indeed, serve as an anchor institution – if conceptualized properly. The last two sections outline a new conception of the local high school and supporting policy and planning recommendations to begin to build “anchor schools”.
Journey for Justice

Why do communities need anchor schools? Why is this topic one worth studying? Is this study significant? Today there are citizens all over Chicago and other urban communities in America that are advocating for stronger anchors in their communities. Schools are being closed in record numbers in cities like Chicago across the country. Politicians are using the school as a platform to garner votes and support for other political purposes. Schools are being closed in the name of underperformance, low enrollment, and underutilization.

This summer, Journey for Justice (J4J), a grassroots education advocacy and organizing group, has been engaging with communities in the city of Chicago that are disinvested in the schooling choices being made for them. J4J serves as an organizing platform advocating for young people, parents, and other members of the community that have been impacted by decisions made by local governmental agencies. One goal of J4J, according to their website, is to “intentionally create a space [to] organize low-income and working class communities who are directly impacted by top-down privatization…” (J4J, 2015, July 10).

Many people, like the members and partners of J4J, recognize that the promises of education are not fully realized. The potential of the school has not been fully achieved. However, the school cannot be expected to simultaneously be under attack and thriving. America is at a critical juncture in its history where it, as a nation, is revisiting its relationship with the schoolhouse. This paper intends to join the broader conversation attempting to reimagine a future where the school reaches its full academic and democratic potential. The creative reimagining on the pages that follow is part of a personal and communal journey for justice that millions of individuals living and working in disinvested communities across America are seeking.
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

(Re)Imagining the School

The conceptual framework of this paper is to reimagine the school in disinvested communities in such a way that it begins to exist as an anchor institution for the community. Urban communities and neighborhoods across the United States are groaning for education that works. In each case, there is a need for a clearly articulated vision of how the school, as an institution, can serve its function of educating the community. The reimagining of the school in this paper will focus on two aspects of schooling: place and purpose. The purpose of the school is to anchor a specific place – the local community. This is of most importance in historically disinvested communities.

School as Place

The inhabitance of the school, as a place, has the potential to be physical, virtual, or some combination of these categories at a range of scales (local, regional, state, national, or international). The school has traditionally existed as a physical space – a point of convergence for people from a specific local community (neighborhood, district, town, village, etc.) to gather around common aims and goals. It has historically been geographically bound – a local civic hub for the people of the neighborhood and its immediate surroundings. Students, parents, and teachers from common geographic territories come together to address the needs of their unique community.

The forces of globalization, standardization, and privatization have simultaneously increased the presence of virtual spaces as part of learning and broadened the scale of the learning community. It is now more common than ever for students to be learning with one another across traditional district, state, regional, or national lines. 21st century media have made it possible for students to share experiences and insights through online data sharing platforms.
The school of the future will likely have a stronger virtual presence than ever—a social network of people will form across communities using integrated media to share skills and knowledge. This kind of learning will serve as an extension (but not replacement) of the learning environment into the home, the workplace, or the local coffee shop. Future educational practitioners will need to consider these implications for the 21st century learner. However, the place-based contention of this paper is that a school must exist for the local community—both physically and virtually. Otherwise, the school merely exists in the community without necessarily existing for the community.

Consider the following illustration that highlights the difference between being in a community and existing for a community. Two businesses occupy the same building in New York City. One business is an e-commerce company that sells widgets online to an international market. This virtual community employs people from all across the world and its mission is to increase profits for shareholders—who are also internationally located. This is clearly a business that exists in the community without having to exist for the community. It benefits from the infrastructure, the free-market economy, and the governing conditions of the community without having to offer a product or service to the residents of the community at all. It invests in both physical and virtual inhabitance, but does not commit to the local inhabitance of both spaces.

The second business is a local business that offers legal services for individuals who are in need of legal counsel. People who live in New York City are employed by this business. It offers legal services to people who live in the metropolitan area. The business offers free services and programs to those who are without adequate resources. It offers online and face-to-face legal services to meet the needs of the immediate community it serves. This business clearly exists both in the community and for the community. It, too, benefits from the infrastructure, the free-market economy, and the political and governing principals of the community. But it does so in a way that is reciprocal in nature. It then, in turn, benefits the community by offering high-quality
legal counsel, programs and services that meet the needs of the community, and allows members of the community to participate in the legal process in a way that promotes the democratic values and principles of justice in America. In this way, it occupies the physical and virtual spaces of a local community.

How can the school, as a place, be reimagined as a community institution occupying the virtual and physical spaces of the local community? What is the extent to which schools are currently institutions for the community? What is the potential that schools have to be a community institution in today’s political, social, and economic context? How can schools improve their relationship with the community as an institution for the community? How can schools become anchors for their community?

Anchor Schools

In simple terms, there isn’t a working vision for the role of the school as an institution for disinvested communities. The primary contention of this paper is that the school must work for the community by occupying both physical and virtual spaces in the local community. A school begins to serve as an anchor for the community when it is (1) occupied by the people of the community (accessible), (2) educates those people whom inhabit it (equitable), and (3) meets the needs of the community so that community stakeholders can be active participants in a larger context (sensible). If a school meets these criteria (accessibility, equity, and sensibility) and occupies physical and virtual spaces in the local community, it can serve as an anchor institution in disinvested communities.

In anchor schools, the school works for the community and educates children (and families) from the community it occupies. This claim has two sub-claims: the first (that it educates) alludes to the notion that the school is a space where people learn in measurable and observable ways. Without such a value criteria, the schooling enterprise loses steam and credibility in the community. The latter (the occupants are from the community) signals that the
school (as a public space) must be accessible to the members of the community that it exists to educate. There is a need for every neighborhood or community to have a school that exists for local educational purposes. There are many models of education in the American schooling system: public, private, and charter, magnet, boarding, virtual, and commuter schools to name a few. However, not all of these models have a history of emphasizing the importance of accessibility in schooling. In fact, some are deliberately exclusionary in practice. This paper, which attempts to create a vision for schools that work for the community they serve, begins with a heavy emphasis on the relationship between the school and the community it exists within – particularly the neighborhood.

In anchor schools, the relationship between school and neighborhood is critical because the school must meet the social and developmental needs of the community. Learning is a social process with the purpose of human development in mind. In order for the school to work for the community, it (as an organization made up of people) must be aware of the social and developmental needs of the community. Schools that ignore these two factors risk becoming culturally irrelevant or developmentally inappropriate for the community. In this sense, it is necessary for the school to exist as an extension of the community that it is surrounded by for the sake of elevating the human condition incrementally and ultimately creating a transformational experience over the lifespan of a student.

The transformation that must occur from childhood to adulthood is that the individual must go from dependence to codependence; from recipient to donor; from learner to teacher; from observer to participant. Thirdly, therefore, anchor schools must exist for the community as a place that promotes human development towards more active civic participation. In the context of a democratic society, self-actualization includes participation in democratic processes. The school must be a safe place where people can prepare to participate in their local, national, and global communities.
Urban communities have many needs that must be addressed by public institutions. In each of the three ways listed above, the school serves as an idealized microcosm of the larger society it exists within. There needs to be a space (physical and virtual) in each community where the student is transformed into an active and mature participant in the community through rigorous and accessible curricula and programming. The school can serve this function at the scale of the neighborhood. What is necessary is a vision that incorporates all of these aims into one place. In order to arrive at such a vision, let us begin our examination with a close look at the historical trajectory that has created the previously stated need.

**The School and the Neighborhood – A Historical Analysis**

In the neighborhood we must “examine the family, the school, the church, the media, and many other educative agencies” in order to adequately understand the role of the school as an institution for the community (Tyack, 1974, p. 9).

In the fields of urban planning and social science, the neighborhood has become an important unit of spatial aggregation for studying interactions and etiology of social problems (Smith, 1980). There is robust evidence suggesting neighborhood and locality effects on such social and educational phenomena as educational attainment (Garner & Raudenbush, 1991, p. 251-262), stakeholder attitudes towards education (Robson, 1969), stakeholder responses toward educational programming (Butcher, Ainsworth, & Nesbit, 1963, p. 276-285; Mouldon, 1980), reduced contact with adults influencing language development (Bernstein, 1970, p. 344-347), and motivational issues of futility and hopelessness in places where labor is predominantly manual (CACE, 1967, *The Plowden Report*).

Many of these disparities are economically derived in urban environments. Evidence reveals a strong relationship between income inequality and income segregation (Reardon & Bischoff, 2011, p. 1092-1153). Thus, suggesting locality effects are related to class-based segmentation across large populations. To compound the effect, there is also evidence to suggest
children from affluent schools know more, stay in school longer, and end up with better jobs than children from schools with higher concentrations of poverty (Mayer & Jencks, 1989, p. 1441-1445). If this evidence is true, (1) class segments neighborhoods and (2) class is correlated with educational attainment, then the relationship between the school and the neighborhood needs to be given careful consideration in the development of community planning efforts, particularly in neighborhoods where there are high concentrations of poverty.

This section will consider the historical relationship between the school and the neighborhood. The section is divided into five eras where the intersection of planning and education will be considered: (1) contention for community control of education; (2) establishing the school as the place for learning; (3) designing separate but equal educational opportunities; (4) reforming education through market expansion; and (5) the future of urban educational planning. Each era will consider the historical context and relationship between urban planning and urban education. Each era will also lead to a conclusion that will be summarized at the end of this section.

Contention for Community Control of Education

Schooling, for a long time, was viewed only as a small part of the total education offered by the community (Tyack, 1974, p. 14-15). The vocational component of learning happened through labor on the farm, in the shop, or at the local store. Moral and civic responsibility was learned through institutions such as the church, the home, the neighborhood, or the village square. During this period of the nineteenth century the school belonged to the community in every way conceivable. An early settler of Prairie View, Kansas, wrote its school “was a white-painted building which was not only the schoolhouse, but the center – educational, social, dramatic, political, and religious – a pioneer community of the prairie region of the West,” (Barber, 1953, p. 1). “As one of the few social institutions which rural people encountered daily, the common school both reflected and shaped a sense of community,” (Tyack, 1974, p. 17).
The prevailing attitude at the turn of the century among school and urban leaders was that a community-centered form of education was inadequate to equip young people to participate in the complex, technologically advanced urban society that was rapidly developing in places like Chicago where there were massive plans for development. These leaders and reformers failed to realize that a centralized, consolidated school system does little to improve the preparation of young people for a complex, technologically advanced urban society. Consolidation is a management solution that cannot adequately prepare a young person to participate in a complex economy. Localized, community-centered efforts to educate still prevail as the predominate form of education. However, the reformers of the time won this battle for control. As a result, they were able to exert power and apply pressure accordingly.

There was tremendous pressure created by the reformers to consolidate rural schools into larger, more complex urban forms. Studies in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Idaho showed most of the rural people of these regions were actually opposed to unification efforts made by outside change agents (Alford, 1960, p. 355-357). Nonetheless, “from 1910 to 1960 the number of one-room schools declined from approximately 200,000 to 20,000,” (Tyack, 1974, p. 25).

The principal reason for the trend toward consolidation will be found in the convergence of industrialization and urbanization in the middle decades of the nineteenth century (Higham, 1969).

To elaborate, Tyack argues:

Urbanization proceeded at a faster rate between 1820 and 1860 than in any other period of American history. While the total population grew about 33 percent per decade, the number of people in places of 2,500 or more increased three times as fast. A muddy small town in 1830, Chicago became a metropolis of over 109,000 by 1860 (Tyack, 1974, p. 30).
The following statistics demonstrate the frenetic demand for city building because of urbanization:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of places of various populations</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States of America, 1820 and 1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of 5,000 to 10,000 people</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of 10,000 to 25,000 people</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of 25,000 to 50,000 people</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of 50,000 to 100,000 people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places over 100,000 people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As more people move to cities, certain methods of organization become necessary to create sustainable or long-term solutions to the problems communities are facing. Where will a sufficient quantity of water come from? Who will maintain the roads and thoroughfares? Where will the residents live? Where will the next generation be developed, disciplined, trained, or educated?

Organization becomes necessary in the crowded schools in congested districts just as the hard pavements cover the city street, though the soft turf and the country road are easier for the steed and for the traveller (Marble, 1894, p. 154-156).

In the process of building a city or organizing a community, there becomes a pressure to establish an order for everything. Whether the scale is as large as the city or as small as a school, the pressure is similar. It is evident that many schoolmasters gave thought to the alignment between the order for everything in the city and the order of the school.

The first requisite of the school is *Order*: each pupil must be taught first and foremost to conform his behavior to a general standard … conformity to the time of the train, to the starting of work in the manufactory … the pupil must have his lessons ready at the
appointed time, must rise at the tap of the bell, move to the line, return; in short, go through all the evolutions with equal precision (Harris, 1892, p. 167-172).

The desire for order drove centralization, systems of stability, and methods of establishing efficiency. The city plans of the time were created to establish systems of order, efficiency, and centralization for the rapid urbanization of the time.

However, during this period of rapid urbanization schools were not viewed as institutions that could add value to a neighborhood. In 1909, Daniel Burnham, famous for his work as an architect and urban planner, presented his full-color city plan to the city of Chicago. Burnham’s Plan of Chicago was critically acclaimed for its scope and audacity. However, it has also been criticized for its failure to address social needs like education (Schaffer, 1996). The plan focused primarily on physical improvements – park infrastructure, freight handling infrastructure, docking infrastructure, railway infrastructure, street circulation, and physical planning as is evident in the scale and scope of the plan documents shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.
Figure 1. Burnham Plan – plan of a park proposed on the main east-and-west axis of the city at Congress Street and Fifty-Second Avenue, Daniel Burnham.

Figure 2. Burnham Plan – Chicago: diagram of a system of freight handling for land and water transportation, to be worked in conjunction with one another, Daniel Burnham.
The work of Burnham was necessary for the growth of the city, but also neglected some of the social byproducts of urbanization. What are the consequences of massive, rapid urbanization at the scale of the neighborhood? Historian and author David Tyack (1974) observes, “city promoters sketched plans of overnight metropolises, complete with universities and opera houses, but when actual cities grew as fast as did Chicago, the city fathers had trouble believing their eyes or planning for the actual services citizens would need,” (Tyack, 1974, p. 38). Services like public education, local healthcare, local food delivery systems, and housing suffered at the hands of this rapid growth.

Establishing the School as the Place for Learning

Between the late 1800s and the early 1920s, many American communities shifted from having no system at all to having a fully established schooling system. The pressures of rapid urbanization forced communities to create systems of order and efficiency that addressed the growing needs of growing communities. The educational framework of the common school in the community and for the community gave way to the school system created outside of the community prescribed to the community.

One of the cultural implications of this swing from the common school to the school system is that the school became the place of learning – not simply a place in the broader community where learning occurs. Educational professionals became experts who were entrusted with the fullness of human development. Students focused on learning primarily during school hours. The role of the church, the family, the farm, and other historically educative institutions was diminished as the expectations for the schoolhouse and the system of schooling increased. The responsibility to educate was reduced in the eye of the parent, the neighbor, the businessman or businesswoman, and the community elders. The result was the marginalization and isolation of young people from the community so the adult population could become more productive,
more independent, more connected, or more confident that their child was receiving the best education possible.

A certain category of people – the young – were taken away from the rest of society for a portion of their lives and separated in schools. Like inmates of the poorhouse, they were expected to learn order, regularity, industry, and temperance, and to obey and respect their superiors … schools, like other institutions, were supposed to counteract or compensate for indulgent or neglectful families (Tyack, 1974, p. 72).

Schools take on special significance because they and they alone were created to ensure that a deliberate, systematic, and sustained process of educating would go on in our country (Goodlad, 1979, p. 33).

In 1929, Clarence Perry published his urban perspective of the neighborhood as a planning unit. He argued the city is a conglomerate of small, “cellular” communities. His contention was the quality of life in these smaller communities is what most determines the quality of life in the city at large. “While the neighborhood has no political structure, it frequently has greater unity and coherence than are found in the village or city and is, therefore, of fundamental importance to society,” (Perry, 1929, p. 486-498). Of particular importance to the topic of this research, Perry notes the school must serve as one of the primary institutions of the neighborhood, alongside parks, shops, and residential units. Furthermore, he states “sites for the school and other institutions having service spheres … should be suitably grouped about a central point or common area,” (Perry, 1929, p. 486-498).
Perry’s prescriptions focused narrowly on the scale of the neighborhood for middle and upper-income families with children. This is evident in his design decisions and stated assumptions for the community. The neighborhood unit (as assumed by Perry) would provide roughly 800 single-family houses, 200 double houses, 30 row houses and 150 apartment suites – housing units for roughly 1,200 families. His assumption of nearly 5 people per household results in a neighborhood population of roughly 6,000 people with a school enrollment of nearly 1,000 students.

His prescriptions also focused narrowly on the scope and reach of the school. The school and other social services for young people were located at the heart of the community. Single-
family detached dwellings fan out from the core and connect with larger arterial streets on the
periphery where business centers and main thoroughfares exist for the sake of industry. His
designs are important today because they highlight how drastically different a community plan is
conceived when it is designed with the child’s end in mind. However, his designs have also been
criticized for ignoring the kind of messy, mixed, urban realities of the city that other urban
planners and critics such as Jane Jacobs have come to celebrate.

However narrow the boundaries of education or planning were constricted, one lesson
became clear from this era – the school exists primarily for the purpose of educating and only
minimally for anything else. What this vision neglects is the limited capacity of the school to
fully equip humankind for the complexity and the plurality of modernity, something well-known
to the community members of a 19th century town, where the “gaps” in youth education were
filled in on the farm, in the household, and in churches. The constriction also narrows the
potential of the school as an anchor institution for the community. Why couldn’t the school, as a
space, also serve the purpose of health and wellness? Why couldn’t the school, as a place, also
serve as the point of convergence for democratic engagement? Why couldn’t the school, as a
point of convergence, also serve as a gathering place for adults who are concerned about
community affairs?

Goodlad attributes the narrowing focus of the school as an institution for learning to the
pressures of industrialization, accelerating immigration, and rapid urbanization. The result of
these wide-sweeping cultural pressures, Goodlad contends, was parents were unable to prepare
their children for the many modes of knowledge required to navigate the new society their
children were operating within. Thus, the need for the school to provide all of the learning
required for young people to participate in society as adults.

Reconstruction [of schools] is toward having our schools be maximally educational and
minimally everything else. Even given substantial progress in such a direction, however,
our schools will not provide all the educating humankind requires. Such reconstruction raises interesting possibilities for alternatives in the educational ecology. Some important things pushed out of schools would be absorbed elsewhere. Some heretofore non-educational institutions would become more educative. New educational settings would emerge … the school is only part of what educates in our society and … it must not be equated with the whole of education (Goodlad, 1979, p. 114).

It is clear, Goodlad is critical of such a narrow vision of the potentiality of the school in the community. The school is a microcosm of the community at-large. It serves the primary purpose of educating – but should not be narrowed in its scope to exclude other basic functions or services that may be of benefit to the community of students and parents in the neighborhood. Goodlad also challenges the reader to consider the educative potential that exists in the household, on the television, through the internet and other social media, through personal interactions on the street, and other institutions like churches, hospitals, and families. In these ways, one can see how education may not be solely influenced by the distribution of resources – instead by the use of present resources. However, it would be negligent to ignore the impacts of unequal access to resources on educational outcomes in communities.

**Designing Separate but Equal Educational Opportunities**

The American history of inequality in education is best represented through the disparate outcomes between and across racial and socioeconomic boundaries. Outcomes ranging from test scores to graduation rates to job placement all suggest anything but equality. For example, research conducted by George Farkas demonstrates that by the age of three there are large vocabulary knowledge gaps between classes and races (Farkas, 2004, p. 464). Studies like this have suggested that, on average, some groups of children (primarily African American, Latino, and American Indian) arrive at kindergarten or first grade with lower levels of school readiness than do other groups of children (primarily White and Asian). Included in these lower levels of
readiness is oral language, reading, and math skills, general knowledge, and behavior less well suited for the school’s learning environment. A study conducted by Lee and Burkam (2002), shows that 75% of the African American cognitive skills gap in kindergarten is accounted for by the social class background differential between African American and White families. These two statistics only scratch the surface of disparities between Black and White children in American schools.

Patterns of inequality like these – which remain rooted in race and class – continue through the early elementary years, into high school and beyond. Farkas states “in concrete terms, whereas African American children begin elementary school approximately one year behind Whites in vocabulary knowledge, they finish high school approximately four years behind Whites” (Farkas, 2002, p. 1122). Others have demonstrated that the vocabulary knowledge of African American high school graduates is equivalent to that of White middle school graduates (Phillips, Crouse, & Ralph, 1998, p. 229-272). It is evident that the seeds of “separate but equal” yielded a harvest that was coined by Robert Garda Jr. as “separate and unequal” (Garda Jr., 2007, p. 1-92).

The United States has not yet realized the ideal of equal educational opportunities for all groups of students through redistributing resources equally and integrating more heterogeneous groupings of people into schools. From the rise of mandatory public schooling in the late 1800s, to the 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education there was a period of time where schools were segregated by race. In this period of American history, the school (as a public place) represented the doctrine of the time – that people of all races deserve access to equal public facilities without needing to share those spaces. As a result, the school was used as a social mechanism to perpetuate racist attitudes. The legal basis for this utilization of public space was the Supreme Court ruling in Plessey v. Ferguson where the nation’s highest court upheld the
constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities like schools under the doctrine of “separate but equal.”

Robert Garda, Jr. contends that America, as a society, has gone from “separate but equal” to “separate and unequal.”

Schools will return to the past path of ‘separate but equal’ in name, but separate and unequal in practice. The new ‘separate and equal’ paradigm is expected to succeed where Plessy failed, because racial separation is now voluntary instead of state mandated, equality requires both resource and outcome equity, and school choice will remedy inequality. These distinctions will not make a practical difference for students, however, as our separate schools will continue to produce disparate educational opportunities for our poor and minority students (Garda, Jr., 2007, p. 53).

According to Garda, equality requires both resource equity and outcome equity. In other words, schools across the city or state should receive equal funding for equal services and, as a result, should create equal outcomes. If equal funding is not producing equitable outcomes, then other measures must be considered to achieve equality. School choice, as Garda puts it, is not a panacea to rectify the gross inequities of public education separating Black and White students. The root of the issue cuts deeper in the educational landscape than school choice – much to the chagrin of the current wave of educational reformers.

Reforming Education Through Market Expansion

In 1988, Ray Budde (an educational planner, reformer, and theorist) proposed the idea of charter schools. Budde, a professor of educational administration in America, published a paper called Education by Charter: Restructuring School Districts. In his plan, charter recipients would have a new or audacious plan and would explore their vision through experimentation and exploration in school settings. According to Budde, the proposed changes to education: changing the role of the parent, the role of the student, the role of the teacher, or the role of the principal;
increasing teacher salaries; increasing the rigor of curriculum; or increasing the amount of homework were not sufficient. His proposal in 1988 to reorganize school districts through charter schools focused on what it means to organize schools and schooling. “The main rationale for *Education by Charter* involves placing the ownership of instruction with teachers and the ownership of learning with students,” (Budde, 1988, p. 122). This is a system of choice, standards-based performance, and accountability closely aligned with the legislative agendas of Clinton and Bush.

In the same year, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, proposed a similar idea of his own. In a speech to the National Press Club in Washington D.C. he stated his vision. In his vision,

The school district and the teacher union would develop a procedure that would encourage any group of six or more teachers to submit a proposal to create a new school. Do not think of a school as a building, and you can see how it works. Consider six or seven or twelve teachers in a school who say, ‘We’ve got an idea. We’ve got a way of doing something very different. We’ve got a way of reaching the kids that are now not being reached by what the school is doing.’ The group of teachers could set up a school within that school which ultimately, if the procedure works and it’s accepted, would be a totally autonomous school within that district (Shanker, 1988, p. 12).

The role of institutions like the teacher union or the local government is important to consider when weighing the full impact of charter schools and other free-market reform strategies like charter schools at the scale of the neighborhood. Milton Friedman (1955) published *The Role of the Government in Education* in 1955, stirring the consciousness of his readers to consider the extent to which the government should involve itself in the affairs of educating the citizenry. In his essay, Friedman contended that the government should fund schooling, but not run the schools (Friedman, 1955). As the 1990s began, autonomous school
movements of Budde and Shanker were merged with ideas supporting choice through vouchers and Friedman’s ideas of independent or autonomous school management. The result of this confluence was the birth of charter schools. These social pressures created a set of conditions that allowed for the expansion of market-based reform strategies in public schools to improve neighborhood conditions.

In 1990, the state of Wisconsin legislated its first voucher program into existence. The passage of this legislation suggested a shift in attitudes towards schooling and provided new legal grounds for the pursuit of a “market” of school choice. However, it became quickly evident that vouchers were politically infeasible because they represented ideals that were too conservative to be adopted across the country. Ravitch contends that charter schools triumphed over voucher programs in the 1990s and 2000s because they appealed to a broad range of political constituencies, whereas voucher programs only catered to conservative ideologies. Liberal predispositions supported charters because they represented a substitute for decidedly market-based solutions like voucher programs. Conservative inclinations supported charter schools because they were perceived as a tool to deregulate public education and create “market-based” competition in neighborhoods. Charter schools also served as a beacon of hope for educators looking for solutions to help unmotivated students and populations at-risk for dropping out of high school. Ravitch was originally persuaded by charter school advocates to support the reform. However, in some of her more recent writing she (along with others who originally supported charters) has retracted her stance.

As originally imagined, charters were intended not to compete with public schools, but to support them. Charters were supposed to be research and development laboratories for discovering better ways of educating hard-to-educate children … in their current manifestation, charters are supposed to disseminate the free-market model of competition and choice. Now charters compete for the most successful students in the poorest
communities, or they accept all applicants and push the low performers back into the public school system (Ravitch, 2010, p. 146).

These observations, and many others like them, highlight the ways in which market-based reform strategies can fragment communities and splinter the collaborative spirit of community when models of competition are introduced within a school, neighborhood, city, state, or nation.

The Future of Urban Educational Planning

Almost a century after the Burnham Plan, architects and planners still consider the role of the school within the context of the neighborhood. Steven Bingler and his colleagues at Concordia promote a nexus design concept in which the “nexus” is a place that brings together people, programs and places all in one location under a collaborative planning and leadership structure. His firm claims that this style of design is more economical, sustainable, equitable, and healthy.

Figure 4. Nexus Center Prototype, Steven Bingler.
Source: Bingler (2014).
The *nexus* concept advocates for a managerial, programmatic, and physical planning model that is highly integrated in its design and execution. A fully developed community Nexus center is conceived of as a place where a wide range of programs and services are effectively sited, coordinated and administered in a way that addresses the needs of the people who most need them. At the core of the concept is a cooperative governance model called the Community Trust.

Community programming is typically divided among a wide assortment of elected and appointed bodies. Non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) add additional programs and facilities to the mix. Each entity usually plans, funds, builds and operates its own administrative and facilities infrastructure. In order to improve efficiency and quality of service to all citizens, the Nexus planning model proposes the development of a collaborative planning entity called a Community Trust, composed of representatives from a full range of public, not-for-profit and community based organizations with responsibility for coordinating and improving the delivery of all community programs and services (Bingler 2014, February 1).

Bingler’s nexus model reflects an aspect of Perry’s neighborhood unit model in the sense that it focuses the community inward and on basic functions (education, recreation, commerce, and housing). In both cases, the focal point of the neighborhood plan is a community center that promotes educational programming; people coming together to exchange goods, services, and ideas; and leisure all within walking distance of the residential units of the neighborhood. The benefits of such spatial arrangements are numerous. For example, dense urban neighborhood development patterns like those shown above promote bicycling and walking, which increase physical activity (Frank & Pivo, 1995, p. 44-52) and social interaction (Yago, 1983, p. 171-190).
To borrow descriptive language Goodlad uses about schools, almost the same can be said about neighborhoods. Goodlad contends, “Alike as schools may be in many ways, each has an ambience (or culture) of its own and, further, its ambience may suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making it a more educative place.” (Goodlad, 1984, p. 81) Take that statement and replace the word “school” with the word “neighborhood”. Alike as neighborhoods may be in many ways, each has an ambience (or culture) of its own and, further, its ambience may suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making it a more educative place.

The relationship between the school and the neighborhood is critical not only because of the aforementioned neighborhood and locality effects. Educational historians have documented the long-standing relationship between the school and the neighborhood community.

Families of a neighborhood were usually a loosely organized tribe; social and economic roles were overlapping, unspecialized, familiar. School and community were organically related in a tightly knit group in which people met face to face and knew each others’ affairs (Tyack, 1974, p. 17).

However, there is a growing tide of influence on a global scale concerned more with the relationship between school and standardized test performance than between school and neighborhood.

As it elevated the concept of school choice, the Department of Education destroyed the concept of neighborhood high schools … neighborhoods were once knitted together by a familiar local high school that served all the children of the community, a school with distinctive traditions and teams and history. After the neighborhood high school closed, children scattered across the city in response to the lure of new, unknown small schools with catchy names or were assigned to schools far from home (Ravitch, 2010, p. 83-84).
The net effect of the reorganization, segmentation, division, and deterioration of the neighborhood schooling arrangement that Ravitch describes above is the fragmentation of the “loosely organized tribes” of the neighborhood previously described by Tyack. This outcome has negative social, economic, and political implications for those neighborhoods and groups of people most directly impacted by ill-conceived school reform models. Planners, city officials, architects, and educators alike must be aware of these implications.

The relationship between the school and the neighborhood is an important one in the city. Goodlad says it best in his optimistic remarks:

Hope for the future rests with our ability to use and relate effectively all those educative and potentially educative institutions and agencies in our society – home, school, church, media, museums, workplace, and more (Goodlad, 1984, p. 323).

The role of the architect, planner, school leader, or community activist is to envision the social relationship between the school, the neighborhood, and other “potentially educative institutions and agencies” in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has the potential to be a place where people have the ability to be healthy, the ability to be well educated, and the ability to acquire capital to meet the needs of the community. The school, as an institution in the community, has the potential to contribute to all three of these missions. In order for any of these aims to be achieved, careful thought, planning, vision setting, and coordination are needed within the community. The school, as it currently exists, must become a network. Presently, America is at a crossroads where there is a need to examine the educational institutions and values that exist (and may have been taken for granted) in urban neighborhoods across the country.

Summary of Historical Analysis

The history of the relationship between the neighborhood and the school is multi-faceted. As stated previously, the school has the potential to contribute to the vitality of the neighborhood. The school also has the potential to be commissioned, co-opted, and corrupted for ulterior
purposes. The past century alone has demonstrated that the school, situated within the context of the neighborhood, can be a place that is contended for community control against centralized authorities. Once the school was centralized and systematized, it was established as the sole institution responsible for teaching and learning – creating a specialized focus and utility for the school within the neighborhood as the place where people learn. As racial tensions heightened in the middle of the 20th century, the neighborhood school became a place where only certain members of the community could learn – “separate but equal” legislation and attitudes had a significant influence on the relationship between schools and neighborhoods. Most recently, the school has become a place where free-market expansion can occur within the neighborhood as more and more schools are privatized.

In summation, the school has been used for a variety of purposes in American history. City reformers used the school in the early 1900s as a place to contend for community control. As the economy became more complex and jobs became more specialized, the school became a more specialized place with a narrow purpose. In the middle of the 20th century the school became the stage for racial integration. Currently, the school is being used to expand the influence of market economies and the neoliberal project. The school is a contended place. Should the community control the school? Does the school serve any purpose other than educating? Whom should the school serve? To what extent should the school extend its services? How accessible should a school be to the community? How equitably do resources need to be delivered to the schools within a community? These are questions that any vision for schools in the community must address. Many lessons can be learned from the brief history recorded above. First, the school belongs to the community – as seen in the common rural schools and one-room schoolhouses of the 19th century. Second, in urban environments where large populations form there becomes a need for greater organization – high degrees of order. Third, the school is not the sole institution responsible for education and that while education is its primary
responsibility it can provide other useful services to the community. Fourth, schools should create opportunities for students to achieve equitable outcomes through means of accessibility. Finally, schools should not create market-based competition – rather they should create community-based collaboration. There are many schools that currently provide solutions to these historical challenges of urban schooling. These schools represent solutions that should be carefully considered and integrated into a sound vision for schools as anchors in the community.

The next section will consider visions that offer models for the various challenges facing communities of people interested in establishing the school as an anchor for the community. How does the school become a place that belongs to the community?

**A BODY OF EVIDENCE:**
**CASES OF ACCESSIBILITY, EQUITY, AND SENSIBILITY**

**Evaluation Criteria for a Local-School Vision**

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a community to meet the educational needs of its citizens (and to prevent the problems schools have encountered throughout history, as described above), three basic criteria need to be evaluated. First, is the school providing equity? Equity will be defined and evaluated in two ways for the purposes of this analysis. On the one hand, do children receive equitable access to public resources appropriated for education? On the other hand, do children achieve equitable outcomes regardless of school, place, geography, neighborhood, or socio-economic status? These variables can be quantified by measures like dollar expenditure per pupil and standardized test scores. If the answer to these questions can be yes, then the school within the context of the community can be defined as equitable.

Second, is the school accessible to the community? Accessibility can be considered using factors of geographic proximity and community stakeholder participation. Primarily, is the school proximal enough to the community it serves to provide meaningful learning experiences throughout the school day and school year? Of equal significance, is the community of parents
and students actively participating in the day-to-day services provided by the school? Land-utilization maps, attendance rates, and family involvement can provide quantitative evidence to support or contradict the claim of accessibility for a school in a particular community.

Finally, is the school sensible? Is it providing services to the community that meets the needs of the parent and student population they serve? Service-provision can be assessed by indications of a supportive environment and provision-need can be determined through U.S. Census data about the service area the school programming serves. What social services are offered to parents and students? What is the demographic composition of the students and parents at the school?

Let us now consider the nuance of these three evaluation criteria. A full understanding of these terms, categories, and criteria for evaluation will be necessary in order to formally assess a neighborhood and make a neighborhood plan for building the school into an anchor institution. Within each category, elaboration for evaluation will be provided through a body of anecdotes from case studies that demonstrate evidence of the vision in the previously articulated conceptual framework for anchor schools.

**Equitable Outcomes**

The notion of fair distribution is significant in community affairs – particularly affairs that are related to public goods. Education – as a public good – must be distributed in a manner that is perceived by the public to be fair. There are three basic criteria by which fair distribution are often conceived or evaluated: equality, equity, and need (Buttram, Folger, & Sheppard 1995, p. 261). First, the idea of equality purports the pursuit of equal distribution – regardless of need or competition. In an equal distribution educational system all students would receive access to the same resources. However, due to differing levels of need an equal distribution system has the potential to create unequal outcomes. Alternatively, the idea of equity seeks to distribute resources based on an individual or community’s contribution to the collective good. In an
equitable educational system, competition is encouraged and the distribution of goods and services depends on specific inputs. For example, the amount of money, time, or other resources devoted to the educational system may influence the amount of resources made available to the individual by the system. In this sort of system, there would be equal opportunity – but not necessarily equal outcomes. Finally, the underlying principle of needs-based distribution is to provide uneven amounts of resources in an effort to arrive at equitable outcomes. In a needs-based educational system, schools and students would get access to resources, goods, and services based on their specific needs – so that all pupils can arrive at equitable outcomes.

**Distribution of Resources**

In reality, the educational enterprise has not considered equality as something to be grasped. If equality were the goal – it would only require political will to achieve. Equality, however, is not the goal. The goal is equitable outcomes arrived at by needs-based-decision-making. One form of decision-making that can be assessed for equity is the distribution of resources within a given geo-political boundary. Major studies conducted in urban environments have measured and evaluated the distribution of resources from school districts to local schools. The findings of these studies reveal that the distribution of resources is often neither equal nor equitable.

Taken together, our results provide an answer to a question of particular interest: do schools with greater percentages of poor students receive a different level and mix of resources as compared to schools serving fewer low-income students? Our results suggest that the answer is ‘yes’. Overall, elementary schools with higher proportions of poor pupils receive more money and have fewer pupils per teacher but the teachers tend to be less educated and less well paid. In middle schools, we also find more teachers with lower qualifications, though we do not find the same positive relationship between the representation of poor students and spending. These additional staff members in high-
poverty schools could play a role in maintaining discipline and an orderly school environment, as well as providing instruction. Finally, as school size increases spending per pupil decreases, suggesting economies of scale in the provision of education (Rubenstein, Schwartz, Stiefel, & Bel Hadj 2007, p. 532-545).

This evidence suggests that schools serving poor students receive unequal resource allocations that are not necessarily based on the needs of the individual. More money, while seemingly addressing the need in poor communities, neglects other resource needs such as qualified teachers, incentives for teachers to work in disinvested communities, or student transportation services. Even if elementary schools in high-poverty areas receive more money, they may not be receiving adequate resources for the conditions of poverty they are uniquely experiencing or the specific set of needs they have.

Consider, as an illustration of the way resources are distributed, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). The CTA provides public transportation services to the city of Chicago. Equal distribution of these services would require the same services and the same access to transportation across the city. In this way, there would be bus stops in even intervals throughout the city. Train stations and service times would be equal regardless of location or time of day.

Alternatively, an equitable distribution of these same services would take the form of equal opportunity for bus stops and train stations. However, due to competitive forces and other sociopolitical agendas the reality would not be equal outcomes. The result would be uneven service provision and disparate service experiences for CTA riders. For example, the frequency of trains would match demand curves and riding patterns across the city. Therefore, the train system begins to serve those who contribute more regularly to it.

In a needs-based public transportation system, the CTA would assess the needs of the service areas and provide services based on those needs. Areas with greater access to private transportation might receive less access to public transportation. Areas with less access to other
transportation modalities might experience greater service provision – more train stops, more bus stops, or more frequent services. The result would be a more equitable set of outcomes based on a needs-based framework for decision-making.

The same can be extrapolated for educational systems. The question, though, in any system is whether or not the distribution of resources leads to equitable outcomes. Does it matter if the distribution of goods is fair or equal if the outcomes are unjust or inequitable?

**Distribution of Outcomes**

In education, equitable outcomes are often translated to result in equitable opportunities in the marketplace and college. As a result, many educational systems work tirelessly to arrive at equitable outcomes for populations across the system. However, recent history has demonstrated that equitable outcomes are sometimes not appreciated if the distribution of resources is not perceived as fair.

Take, for example, the Noble Street Charter Network in Chicago, IL. Noble Street has a service area that spans the size of the city of Chicago. According to their website, Noble was founded in 1999. Noble Street currently serves approximately 10,000 students from 70 Chicago communities at 16 campuses across the city.

![Figure 5: Noble Street Charter Network Service Area, 2014. Source: http://www.noblenetwork.org/campuses](image-url)
Noble has earned a reputation in the city of Chicago for creating equitable outcomes for students from disinvested communities.

### TABLE II
Comparison of Average Composite ACT Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CPS¹</th>
<th>GAP²</th>
<th>Noble²</th>
<th>GAP³</th>
<th>Illinois³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>+1.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>+2.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>+3.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>+3.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>+0.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>+2.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
¹ difference between CPS and Noble Charter Network Composite ACT Scores.
² difference between Noble Charter Network and Illinois Public School Composite ACT Scores.
³ ACT Data Archive: http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2014/states.html

The evidence above demonstrates that Noble is closing student achievement gaps between their students and the students across the state of Illinois. In 2003, the average composite ACT score for the state of Illinois was almost 3 points higher than the average for Noble. Within a decade, the gap was eliminated between students at Noble and students across the state. This is evidence that it is possible to achieve equitable outcomes for students in urban communities experiencing disinvestment.

Conversely, the gap analysis above also suggests that Noble is creating gaps between itself and other Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In 2003, CPS and Noble were achieving similar outcomes for their students on the ACT (American College Testing). A decade later, CPS students were averaging an 18.0 on the ACT – an improvement of 1.3 points, or 0.13 points per year. Noble, on the other hand, was able to grow as a network of schools from an average ACT score of 17.3 to an average of 20.6 over the span of the same decade. Noble’s growth rate was
approximately 0.3 points per year. That is a rate that is twice the rate of growth achieved by CPS during the same period of time on the same standardized test.

This data does not suggest that Noble is doing better than CPS in all aspects. Critics of this sort of comparative analysis may question the validity of comparing a sample of charter school students to a sample of public school students because charter schools have been criticized for cherry-picking students. However, the benefit of a standardized test is that it demonstrates how much an individual knows compared to the rest of a population sample. The conditions of the test are identical in every way possibly controlled. Is it possible that Noble prepares its students more adequately for this test? Yes. Is it possible that Noble spends more resources on preparing students for this test? Certainly. But it also suggests that, in this specific case, Noble is proving that equitable outcomes are possible when adequate resources are provided to meet the stated needs of a group of people.

This evidence also suggests that, while Noble is achieving equitable outcomes with the state in terms of ACT scores – it is not serving one of the founding principles of the charter school movement: to share ideas and practices with local public schools for the collective good. If Noble were sharing their practices, one might expect ACT scores to increase across the city of Chicago in ways that are similar to what Noble has experienced.

This raises interesting questions about the fairness of the distribution of resources. If there are human resources, curriculum resources, pedagogical resources, or otherwise being utilized by Noble – in the spirit of community-based collaboration, Noble has a moral responsibility to share these resources with the communities that it exists within. The reality, however, is that Noble was founded in the context of privatization and market-based competition for the sake of achieving educational systems of choice. A system of choice – as with any marketplace – is subject to market pressures of competition, which can hinder collaboration. Unfortunately, the education reform movement’s understanding of accessibility is currently
attached to choice within a community. Choice is not the same as access. In choice-based systems, there will be winners and losers – those who are chosen and those who are not – those who choose, and those who do not.

**Accessibility to Public Goods**

To say that education is a choice would be to misstate the governing conditions of the 21st century American school system. The school has become a compulsory part of youth culture. While there may be choice in which school to attend – there is no choice in whether or not a child attends school at all under the law. John Goodlad claims, “it seems more reasonable to assume that school provides a compulsory setting in which boys and girls seek to satisfy their interests – find relevance – as best they can,” (Goodlad, 1984, p. 29). However, to say that schooling is a choice may not have seemed like a foreign idea when America was in its embryonic stages of development as a nation.

A brief history of the foundations of American education can solidify the notion that education is compulsory in the United States today, but has not been historically. It is important to consider this brief history because it deals, in large part, with the ideal of accessibility in education. Allen Ornstein and Daniel Levine categorized American Education into three stages: the “Permissive Era,” the “Encouraging Era,” and the “Compulsory Era.” Through their work, they demonstrate that American legislation, attitudes, and beliefs about education have evolved from the desire for education to be a parental choice in the earliest stages of American history to the use of state-mandates for attending school in the early 20th century. The 21st century, much to the chagrin of some educators, has seen a tide of attitudes receding back in time to reintegrate elements of parental choice into the educational process. Others consider this to be a tide being pulled in the right direction.

The “Permissive Era” was from approximately 1650 to 1800. This period of time was characterized by public schools that were subject to the approval of local voters (Ornstein &
Levine, 1984, p. 159). In 1642, a Massachusetts General Court enacted the first education law. The law required parents and guardians of children to “make certain that their charges could read and understand the principles of religion and the laws of the Commonwealth,” (Ornstein & Levine, 1984, p. 147). In 1750, Benjamin Franklin founded a private academy. This academy offered a practical curriculum in a variety of subjects and useful skills. By the mid 1800s, many such private schools existed in the United States, offering a wide range of curricula and courses ranging from traditional and classical studies such as Greek and Latin to utilitarian fields such as Engineering, Science, and other vocational studies (Ornstein & Levine, 1984, p. 154). In this time, parents were responsible for the education of their children. Parents selected which schools, if any at all, to send their children to. Some parents had many choices – because many schools were accessible to them. Others, almost surely had no options because of the commute, the costs, or the rigors of the curriculum. All of the schools were privately managed, owned, and operated until 1821, when the first government-owned and operated public high school opened in Boston, Massachusetts (Ornstein & Levine, 1984, p. 154).

According to Ornstein and Levine, the “Permissive Era” gave way to the “Encouraging Era” when states started (1) opening government-owned and operated schools and (2) passing legislation requiring towns to choose school committees for the purpose of organizing public schools into a system under a single authority (Ornstein & Levine, 1984, p. 159). During this stage of American history, from approximately 1820 to 1850, governments explicitly encouraged the establishment of school districts and the utilization of tax revenues for the purpose of supporting those districts. At this stage, however, the government did not require the establishment of schools. Parents still had significant agency in the process of educating their child. Children were not compelled to attend public school and the majority of schools were still privately owned and operated. The schools were becoming more accessible because more schools were forming, with a wider array of curriculum options, and a wider net of funding.
However, there were signs on the horizon of a new era of compulsion – the Maine Supreme Court declared it “legal for all students in the government schools to be compelled to read the Protestant Bible” (Coulson, 1999, p. 82).

Many similar laws and legislation were enacted in the next fifty years, marking the beginning of the “Compulsory Era” of American education. During this stage of development, the government mandates the establishment of districts, taxation for government owned and operated schools, a centralized curriculum and system of schooling, and children’s school attendance (Ornstein & Levine, 1984, p. 160). This systematic effort to make school mandatory is characterized by three outcomes. First, the role of the parent has been diminished in the process of educating their children. Parental choice in education for a child became essentially attached to the choice of neighborhood, district, or township. Second, the role of the child is defined: student. The great migration of students into classrooms created a huge boom in the education sector and supporting economies. More students mean more teachers, more schools, more school designers, and more teacher training programs at universities. Third, and most importantly, the nature of the school is more accessible. Tax-funded schools began popping up in neighborhoods across urban school districts throughout the country. Children, who might not have had the opportunity to attend school because of the commute or the cost, now have access to the schoolhouse under the law.

In terms of educational accessibility, let us consider three factors for the sake of this analysis: cost, curriculum, and commute. These three factors each contribute in significant ways to the accessibility of education as a public good. Each of these issues was eventually addressed by a series of reforms over the brief history described above. It is important to consider each of these factors within the context of public, private, charter, and magnet schools – because these are the four primary forms of education delivered to the masses today.
For a school to be accessible, it must be affordable. The “cost” criterion refers to the expenses associated with obtaining an education. Public schools are generally the most accessible schooling option according to the cost criteria because they are funded by state property taxes. Critics of this policy might contend that this sort of tax is unfair because it places an unequal financial burden on property owners. Proponents of public schooling would contend that an even income tax would be regressive because it would place an unequal financial burden on low-income wage earners and still wouldn’t incorporate unemployed members of the population. Private schools, on the other hand, have notoriously high tuition rates because they rarely receive funding from the government. In order to afford private school tuition, parents often need access to large sums of money, scholarships, or financial aid to consider these options. As a result, these schools are considered to be less accessible. Charter schools and magnet schools often fall somewhere in between public and private schools. Some magnet schools have hefty program, curriculum, and activity fees because of the nature of the curriculum. Some do not. Thus, the accessibility of magnet schools varies depending on the nature of the school program and funding schemes. Charter schools are often supported by a combination of public and private funds. Depending on the budgetary needs of the school and the fundraising ability of the school, charter schools vary in cost accessibility in ways that resemble magnet schools.

Another critical element of accessibility is the availability (and suitability) of the curriculum offered by the school. Is the curriculum too rigorous or not rigorous enough, and therefore outside of the proximal zone of development for the student? Are the curriculum materials (books, articles, lab equipment, supplies, instruments, learning spaces, etc.) easily accessible? Are teachers easily accessible (telephone, email, student-teacher ratio, office hours, etc.)? Is the content offered through the curriculum allowing students to access their career and
academic goals? These are all questions that need to be considered when determining the accessibility of a curriculum.

Rigor (the quality and developmental appropriateness of a curriculum) is an important factor of accessibility because if the curriculum is too rigorous (or not rigorous enough) then students will not access new information. The purpose of learning is to explore new ideas in meaningful ways and to discover new information that can be generalized for the development of new theories or ways of thinking. When a curriculum is too rigorous, the materials are beyond the level of comprehension needed for real understanding to occur. This scenario is analogous to a five year old, who cannot yet read, being asked to learn about shapes by reading the definition of each shape. It would be more appropriate for that student to learn about shapes through exploring different forms in a puzzle. Alternatively, the student could learn how to read by practicing sight words or phonemes that are within the developmental stage of that child.

In a similar sense, a curriculum that is not rigorous enough will cause students to reach academic and mental plateaus. Again, if the purpose of learning is to explore new ideas in meaningful ways, then a curriculum without rigor fails in its efforts because it is not exposing the pupil to new ideas that challenge the mind and force a new way of thought. This scenario is analogous to an adult learner, who has already been parenting for ten years, being asked to sign up for a mandatory new parents class when her child is born with a mental or physical impairment. This parent is not going to be challenged to think in new ways in a class where the learning goals are focused on best practices for nurturing a child – a task that this particular parent has already achieved in her first child. This parent, instead, would benefit from a support group or class for parents who have children with physical or mental impairments. In this class, parents could learn how to care for their children and advocate for their educational rights.

Another crucial factor of accessibility is whether or not the curriculum materials are easily accessible. If textbooks, articles, lab equipment, special supplies, or instruments are not
easily accessible in the community then students are less likely to have the tools they need to achieve their goals. This can be achieved in one of two ways: the school can provide the resources needed or the student can purchase the resources. In order to purchase resources, they must be available in the community or through a virtual community or economy. These factors all influence the accessibility of the school curriculum.

In a similar fashion, teachers need to be accessible for a school curriculum to be accessible. Where are teachers of the school living? If they live in the community, they can be more available. With reduced commutes, these teachers may choose to spend more time at the school working with students. When are teachers available? If they arrive significantly before the school day starts and leave late in the evening, the curriculum is more accessible. Do they host office hours for student questions? If so, the curriculum becomes more available. Do teachers share personal contact information? There are school models where teachers get work phones that they are required to answer 24 hours a day in the case that students need to contact their teachers for help with their work. This is a policy that promotes accessibility to the curriculum. It is also a policy that controls teacher behavior without enhanced compensation.

Finally, is the content of the curriculum offered allowing students to access their specific learning goals and career goals? A school that has an accessible curriculum creates opportunities that allow students to access their future dreams and aspirations. This sort of school creates partnerships with local business organizations for internships. A school creating access to dreams hosts career days and sends students to career fairs. Students in these schools would be aware of their learning goals, be able to articulate them, and then be able to connect them to their long-term goals and plans.

Richard Rothstein has described how recent education reforms have narrowed the curriculum and altered the goals of schooling. By holding teachers accountable only for student performance in reading and mathematics, he contends, schools pay less attention to students’
health, physical education, civic knowledge, the arts, and enrichment activities (Rothstein, 2008, p. 45-52). Schools narrow their focus on students and students narrow their focus on their ambitions. Ideally, an accessible curriculum produces a generation of students wanting to become engineers, lawyers, doctors, scientists, artists, dancers, musicians, writers, teachers, and other such positions in society. A narrowing curriculum has instead built a generation of students who want to score a 97% on a state test. To what end? For what purpose? An accessible curriculum creates access to new opportunities, new ways of thinking, and new understandings.

This is a form of accessibility that many schools fail to achieve with their pupils. The nature of public schooling channels students through an “assembly line” model where students are the widgets and schools are the manufacturing plants. In these plants, the same students are produced over and over again, year after year, day after day, lesson after lesson. The curriculum is mandated by the state or district. The teachers come from across the city to teach their lessons and return to their homes, only to repeat the process day in and day out. Students are not given options for their learning goals and teachers do not have autonomy to deviate from state-mandated curricula. The result is a curriculum that has been reduced to serve the needs of the average American. This reduced curriculum assumes that all students must learn the same, in the same texts. It also assumes that all students have the same abilities to learn. The product is mediocre math skills, mediocre reading skills, mediocre thinking skills, and a student who is prepared to go to a mediocre state-funded college or university with no real plan for the future. The problem with this model is that it assumes that all students are on the same plane. It asserts that all students have the same learning abilities. It purports that the same resources will result in the same outcomes for students with a plurality of backgrounds and motivations. What about the student with a severe learning impairment? What about the student with an exceptional understanding of arithmetic?
Charter schools, magnet schools, and private schools have a bit more autonomy and focus in their curriculum and these factors can enhance the accessibility of the curriculum. Autonomous teachers have the agency to develop a curriculum that is accessible by each of their individual pupils. They have the freedom to share their personal contact information so that they can be in touch with their students throughout the day. Many charter schools, magnet schools, and private schools have longer school days to allow students more access to their learning materials. Private schools offer facilities and resources that are the envy of many public school leaders, employees, and students. The resources made available to these institutions make it possible for them to enhance the level of accessibility that their curriculum has for its students. This is important, because in other ways these institutions are not very accessible to students at all.

Commute

The commute to school has been a subject of accessibility to education for decades. When schools were integrated in the middle of the 20th century, busses were used to bring students from different communities together into the same school to offer “equal” services under the law. It is logical to consider the commute to school when evaluating the accessibility of a school because it is a journey that the student must take twice per day, each day of school. If a school is within a short walking distance, then it is accessible to the student. If a school is within a short driving distance, then it is considered by many to be accessible, but this evaluation neglects the implicit costs associated with owning, maintaining, and operating a vehicle. Alternatively, one might suggest that public transportation is an option as a substitute for privatized motor vehicles. This is true, but there are still costs (in money and time) associated with public transportation. Ultimately, this type of schooling prevents the possibility of working closely with the local community. The result is a detached student from its environment. Long commutes place (physical and social) distance between the school and the parents. Fragmented
student populations make it difficult for schools to network with local institutions in the enterprise of preparing students academically and socially for postsecondary options. The possibility of attending to the particular needs of students and parents is convoluted if student and parent communities are fragmented. This form of schooling may be critical at higher levels of education (college and university) but in earlier levels of education may be contrary to the purposes of education.

An accessible school reduces the negative externalities associated with transportation to and from school as much as possible. The costs of commuting a far distance include time, money for gas, money for car payments, money for car maintenance, money for parking, money for public transportation, and so on. By strategically placing a school in a location that is intended to serve a specific population, a school or community leader can significantly increase the accessibility of educational resources in a community.

Public schools are generally planned by a central office and placed according to the zoning maps, population trends, and stated needs of the community. This centralized, democratic process (where elected officials plan for the needs of their representative communities) allows for school locations to be optimized as much as possible. Private schools and charter schools do not have to adhere to the same level of rigor with regards to school placement and school location. Instead, these school models tend to adhere to the rigors of market-based transactions and the forces of the real estate market. Most private and charter schools have wider service areas because of their relatively loose regulatory environment.

According to William Alonso, open markets (school choice) create different locational preferences than centrally planned processes (public schools) do (Alonso, 1964). For example, he argues that the market driven outcome for two competing entities is for them to end up adjacent to one another along a straight line. This locational preference increases competition by forcing a choice upon people regardless of location. The planned outcome of the same scenario
would place the two entities the same distance apart so that all members of the market have equal access to the goods or services.

In the case of schooling, a traditionally planned social service, schools are located within districts that are defined by population density, zoning maps, and the needs of the community. There would not be need for two competing high schools in one community because all of the children of the community can be served through one campus. The two schools (School A and School B) would be separated by the greatest distance possible, thus ensuring that all children have equal access to a public school. However, in the school choice model preferred by many educational reformers today, it is possible for schools to end up so close to each other that parents are forced to make a choice about which community school to send their child to. School A and School B are so close together that they may even share the same building! However, because they are open to every child does not mean that they are equally accessible to every child in the community. Choice is perceived, by some, as good in the sense that it provides options for children who may not have them otherwise. However, within the context of accessibility, this market-influenced outcome is not desirable.

![Visualization of the market-driven outcome.](image1)

![Visualization of the planned outcome.](image2)

Figure 6. Comparison of market-driven and planned outcomes, William Alonso.
Source: Alonso (1964).

Considering the visualization above, if you are a student who lives at the left boundary of the line, in a market-driven outcome (choice-based outcome) both schools are equally far from your house. A similar walk would be necessary for both. Neither school is more accessible to you from your neighborhood. As a result, you choose the school for reasons other than accessibility. In the planned outcome (centralized-planning outcome) School A is specifically
designed for you and is significantly closer to your house than School B. As a result, you attend
School A because it is more accessible. In this way, it is easy to see why the public school model
where a centralized office plans school zones is a more accessible model than a choice-based
model where competitive market forces enter the school development process.

Accessibility Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL TYPE</th>
<th>LEVEL OF ACCESSIBILITY</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>CURRICULUM</th>
<th>COMMUTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter/Magnet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score Notes:**
3 = accessibility is high.
2 = accessibility is moderate.
1 = accessibility is low.

This analysis of accessibility in terms of three criteria (cost, curriculum, and commute)
suggests that public schools are, on average, the most accessible delivery method of educational
resources. Their score of seven was highest of the three primary school types analyzed in this
study. While access to curricular materials is low for public schools due to funding and
budgetary constraints, public schools are accessible because of the minimal costs and commute
times associated with attending a public school.

Charter schools and magnet schools are moderately accessible in each of the three criteria.
Their curricular focus and teacher autonomy allow for the curriculum to be more accessible for
the students that attend the school. Their public/private nature allows for many of the costs of
tuition to be less than that of private institutions. The commute must be evaluated as less
accessible than public schools which have specific zones of service provision that are often less
than a mile across in urban neighborhoods. However, they are no less accessible by commute than private schools – which are also randomly spread throughout the community according to the availability of land and other forces of the real estate market.

**Sensible Needs-Based Services**

It is evident that effective schools can have a profound impact on the academic achievement of their students – as schools like the Noble Network of Charter Schools have demonstrated in the city of Chicago, which was discussed previously. However, on the whole, community leaders must acknowledge that the social, economic, and political impacts of poverty cannot be overcome through schooling alone. Neighborhoods that have a disproportionately high concentration of poverty should have places where antipoverty programs and services are made available based on the stated needs of the community. Many of these programs can be offered at the school – not necessarily by teachers, but through the facilities, resources, and networks afforded by the school. This section wishes to consider how schools are effectively providing services that meet the stated needs of the community they are situated within.

Research has shown that living in high-poverty neighborhoods can have negative impacts on educational achievement (Ludwig, Ladd, & Duncan, 2001, p. 183-184), physical health (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997, p. 57), and economic mobility (Corcoran, 1995, p. 261). The school, as an anchor institution in the neighborhood, has the opportunity to strategically plan programs that address the needs of the population that it serves. Programs like early childhood education and prenatal care for women could help address the issue of educational achievement of young people. School policies that include mandatory physical education and nutritious meals could improve the physical health of the community. Community partnerships with professionals and local institutions could create greater rates of economic mobility. Three cases immediately come to mind to serve as best practices for this kind of community-based programming. In each case, service provision is based specifically on the stated needs of the community.
Harlem Children’s Zone

Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) is a model of neighborhood-based service provision in New York City. HCZ was founded by Geoffrey Canada – an educational reformer with an appetite for equal social outcomes across racial and socio-economic lines. HCZ builds community programs on the assumption that the conditions of poverty require intentional planning and programming – planning and programming that may require a significant amount of resources to implement. What is unique about the vision of HCZ is the underlying notion that, if planned for, all children can have access to the resources they need to thrive. It is extremely rare to see a neighborhood-scale plan that focuses primarily on youth as the most important stakeholder of the plan. When plans are made for a community from this point of view, interesting physical and social arrangements are imagined.

HCZ provides a broad array of social and medical services to children and their families. Children and their family members can enroll in the HCZ program to receive its services. HCZ offers health programs, preschool services, after-school tutoring, and parenting classes. Many of these programs are offered through the facilities, resources, and networks established by a series of charter schools affiliated with HCZ. The schools offer coursework during the day and social support services in the morning and evening. This neighborhood-based model of schooling has been lauded by some and criticized by others.

Critics of HCZ highlight two points of concern. The first is that HCZ has deep pockets from a wealthy board of trustees and broad professional networks. The amount of money made available per child in this community raises questions about whether or not HCZ is sustainable or replicable in more traditional school settings with less external investment. The second point of contention with HCZ is that its schools have not produced significantly better results than other schools in the city with equal or less resources. The charter schools had many students in 2010 that did not meet state standards for proficiency in reading: 62 percent in one school and 38
percent in another. In this way, HCZ is failing to meet the expectation of equity that the choice model promotes (Ravitch, 2010, p. 258).

Proponents of the HCZ model recognize the benefits this sort of service provision model can offer to a community crippled by the negative effects associated with high-concentrations of poverty. HCZ demonstrates that impoverished communities benefit from additional services and targeted social programming. If pregnant women in a community are offered prenatal care and nutrition, their children are more likely to be born healthy. If children are healthy and well nourished, they have a better chance of doing well in school. If those same healthy children have access to a quality education from the earliest stages of development, they are likely to have more opportunity for economic mobility. The HCZ model acknowledges that there are basic needs that must be met in order for children to fully develop and flourish in society. It acknowledges that these services must be offered to the same audience that the neighborhood school serves. As a result, it creates a neighborhood-based organization that streamlines these social support services.

Further research is needed to determine how effectively HCZ engages parents. How much of a voice do parents of children in this zone have? It would also be advantageous to consider the ways in which HCZ operates within the local institutional ecosystem. Is HCZ an isolated node of service provision or an integrated member of a larger web of service providers? Answers to these questions may adequately assess the effectiveness of HCZ, but do not fit within the scope of this analysis.

Pathways to Education

In 2001, Carolyn Acker founded an organization called Pathways to Education. Acker, a community health nurse turned social innovator and activist was working for a community health center in Regent Park – a neighborhood in the Canadian city of Toronto. Regent Park, like Harlem in New York, was a high-poverty community in 2001. There were nine murders in the
community the year before Pathways to Education was founded. In the same year, roughly 56% of the high-school aged students of Regent Park dropped out of high school. The community was in despair. Like Geoffrey Canada (founder of Harlem Children Zones), Acker established a community-based organization in response to the needs of the community of Regent Park.

The Pathways to Education (PTE) model offers academic, social, financial, and one-to-one mentoring support to the students who enroll. In order to enroll, students and parents must sign a contract. The program relies heavily on volunteers to provide academic support and social support. Academic supports are primarily after-school tutoring in core academic subjects. Volunteers also offer social support in the form of group mentoring, problem solving advice, and career planning services. Scholarships and financial support are made available to students to help reduce the barriers that prevent college completion. Lastly, PTE staff provides one-to-one supports to help students succeed in school, at home, and in the community. Through community engagement, PTE determines communities with need and the ability to deliver their program. The need exists where students are at-risk for dropping out. The ability to deliver the programming exists wherever there is local support from parents, teachers, and other engaged volunteer community members. The final aspect of the program includes research-based practice and program evaluation. These aspects of the program ensure continual improvement.

In this case, PTE has focused on a single issue and worked alongside the school system to provide these services. Similarly to Canada, Acker recognized the school as an institution within the community that could serve as an anchor for her community-based program. PTE also recognizes that the negative outcomes of a failed educational system and an impoverished citizenry must be addressed by social services that go beyond the traditional public school model. All of these services are made available, through the facilities, resources, and networks of the school outside of traditional school operating hours.
In 2001, over half of high-school students were dropping out of high school in Regent Park. The national average at the time was somewhere between 25 and 30 percent. In affluent communities, the average drops to roughly 6 to 11 percent. In low-income communities the rate can soar as high as 70%. Research has suggested that high school dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, convicted of a crime, ill, or dependent on social assistance. The estimated collective lifetime loss of earning potential of high school dropouts in Canada is roughly 307 billion dollars. Another 115 billion dollars are estimated to be lost due to tax revenue that would not have been collected by potential high school dropouts. Additionally, 623 billion dollars are needed for their collective private health care costs. PTE has recognized and clearly articulated this problem (stated need) through their external communications.

By 2014, the program was achieving several measures of success that are worth noting. More than 80% of youth in the community participate in PTE programs. High school graduation rates have more than doubled and dropout rates have declined by more than 70%. The rate of students going to college or university has increased by up to 300%. A study conducted by the Boston Consulting group found that the PTE program generates $24 of social return for every $1 invested in the organization. Other external reports have touted PTE as “one of four programs most likely to reduce poverty and dropout rates in the Province of Quebec” and others have claimed “never before have we seen such impressive results” while the United Nations highlighted PTE as “one of the most outstanding educational models seen”.

The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center

In 1993, Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor were the principal and assistant principal of an award winning high school in New Hampshire. That year, they were asked to improve educational outcomes in the state of Rhode Island. A few months later, Theodore Sizer of Brown University, invited Littky and Washor to be Senior Fellows at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform.
In 1994, a South Providence referendum brought to voters the option to start a new high school and an accompanying bond issue for its creation. The public supported the proposition on both fronts. Littky and Washor set out to design and implement a “school for the 21st century” that promotes learning with “hands and minds.”

Littky and Elliot built their curriculum on the foundation of Educational Progressivism: an educational philosophy that students learn best when they confront problems that arise while doing activities that they find interesting (Levine, 2002, p. xix). Their vision for the school was to facilitate opportunities for students to learn through real work. Littky and Elliot’s framework became known as “LTI” or “Learning Through Internships”. The school became known as the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center. Affectionately known as “the Met”.

“Things really take off when students find an LTI they love with a mentor they love,” Dennis says.

That’s when they get the most out of the Met. For 20 years I was the principal of schools with caring advisors and interesting projects, but it wasn’t enough. When students do all their projects inside the school building, their inspiration eventually drops off. But when they work in real-world settings with a great mentor, they shoot up to the next level. They get so proud and their learning takes on such meaning for them. We’ve had dozens of students who were ready to drop out until they got turned on by an LTI (Levine, 2002, p. 41).

Each student at the Met participates in one LTI per year on average. These internships meet during the school day, starting in the fall. Students can work on their project for as long as it takes – which has ranged in the past from 3 months to 3 years. LTI topics also vary from areas of culinary arts to political science. Each student participating in an LTI has a mentor on campus and a mentor at their work placement site that is aware of the learning goals for the LTI. Eliot
Levine’s analysis of LTIs in his book *One Kid at a Time* suggests that LTIs have many benefits for the community and the learner.

First, LTIs allow students to explore their unique interests through problems and solutions that exist within their community. Internships are chosen from a variety of participating community partners. If a student’s interests are in dance, (s)he may offer a dance class in a local dance studio. By doing so, (s)he may be exposed to the business of running a dance studio. This will develop her/his entrepreneurial and business acumen. Alternatively, (s)he may be exposed to the art of curriculum planning and lesson implementation by offering his class. This process will develop his teaching and planning faculties. In these cases, the school provides the framework for learning through internships, the local businesses provide the space and the opportunity for internships – in most cases students are not compensated so the only resources needed are meaningful tasks and the space perform them in a real-world context.

Second, LTIs tap multiple levels of intelligence – allowing students to broaden their set of competencies for workforce integration. Modern research in the field of cognition has revealed that hands-on learning is important for engaging the brain in more than one modality. According to Howard Gardner, a cognitive scientist and researcher, humans have multiple “intelligences” or ways of learning about and understanding the world. His theory is that humans are “linguistic, logical-quantitative, spatial, musical, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic,” (Gardner, 1999). His work suggests that hands-on learning is a better way for students to learn because it requires more of the human capacity to learn and demonstrate understanding of the world.

Third, LTIs serve as a hybrid curriculum that balances the “academic” with the “vocational.” A survey of roughly 3,000 American companies revealed that the majority are “afraid to hire young people, viewing them as unreliable workers,” (Schorr & Yankelovich, 1997, p. 293). The Met methodology puts faith in the idea that employers will be attracted to students
who have endorsements from their LTI site and faculty mentors. The beauty of the curriculum is that there is a tremendous amount of academic learning expected of students as well. For example, while working on a political campaign, a student might also be writing a research paper about the democratic process in 21st century America. Strong site mentors and faculty mentors make this possible.

Finally, LTIs bring youth into closer contact with adults inside the school and inside the community. Many people who study adolescents have noted the importance of adult-youth relationships for child development.

Most teenagers – about 80 percent – traverse the teenage years with aplomb. But these teenagers’ success … isn’t based on immutable attributes such as wealth or race, but on more mundane things like having at least one adult who cares about them and being connected to their school (Strauch, 2003, p. 85).

Many students of education have also observed the extreme isolation that 20th century schooling has created for young people. Cremin notes that schools:

 managed increasingly to isolate young people from the rest of society, organizing them into rigidly defined age groups … that have little contact with either younger children or adults. In the language of one report, the schools have effectively ‘decoupled the generations.’ As a result, the reports conclude, the ordinary processes of socialization have been weakened, confused, and disjointed, and the symptoms are everywhere apparent (Cremin, 1976, p. 63).

Cremin goes on to propose reforms:

 all designed to increase opportunities for children to associate with adults in realistic social situations where they could undertake genuine responsibility for worthwhile tasks (Cremin, 1976, p. 65).
The essence of learning through internships at the Met is to address these issues of socialization that have been too-often neglected by the community. Instead of the community embracing inter-generational socialization it has promoted and encouraged isolation and stratification that separates the generations and detaches the youth from the meaningful work of solving real community issues.

Skeptics of the approach recognize the significant barriers associated with replicating such a complex web of community partnerships. Can the community support enough internship opportunities for each student? Does the community have enough mentors to support all of the students? Does the community believe that internships are a valuable use of time for students? How much of an academic year should be devoted to such a program? These questions, while relevant, cannot be fully addressed in this short case study.

**Sensibility Framework**

These case studies highlight three different aspects of sensible service provision that promote a stronger relationship between the community and the school.

First, the case of Harlem Children’s Zone highlights the need for a school that is integrated and synchronized with the efforts of the neighborhood to improve the human condition. HCZ has successfully planned for and implemented social services that meet the needs of the community by using the school as a platform for social service provision. This model highlights the positive net effect of planning specifically for the vulnerable population that schools serve – young people.

The Pathways to Education program highlights the social services that a school or educational planning program can offer to increase educational attainment in a community. Through tutoring, financial services, social services, and one-to-one mentoring PTE was able to significantly raise the number of students graduating from high school. This model highlights the importance of strong relationships between schools and social welfare programs in the
community that are striving towards the same end. It is strengthened by parental involvement and support.

Lastly, the Met draws attention to the positive social and economic benefits of creating linkages between the school and the workplace. The Met’s curriculum centered on learning through internships (LTIs) builds strong linkages between the school and the workplace making it easier for young people to integrate into the economic fabric. Additionally, LTIs build strong connections between and across generations as youth work with mentors on campus and in the community. Finally, LTIs ignite the curiosity and passion of young people by engaging them in real-world problems that their community is currently facing. LTIs are not intended to be workforce development. Rather, they are intended to be opportunities to explore academic interests through real-world problems with one-on-one mentors. Parents, again, are important stakeholders in this model because they must support the style of learning proposed by LTIs.

Each of these cases provides big lessons for even the smallest of schools or communities. No matter how large the community, institutions will exist – some will serve as anchors for the community. In recent literature, universities have been conceived as potential anchors for the communities that they are situated within. This argument has been criticized because some universities have acted as negative agents in the context of the larger community. Is it possible to consider the high school an anchor institution at a different scale?

**ANCHOR INSTITUTION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**Defining Anchor Institutions**

In many American communities, deindustrialization and globalization have eroded the economic underpinnings of their traditional manufacturing based economies. The result of this erosion is unemployment, education that does not prepare citizens for the new economic demands, and higher rates of poverty. Deindustrialization has been linked with devaluing labor-
intensive skills and prioritizing knowledge-based skillsets instead. Institutions like universities have served as a model “anchor” for the new urban economy.

In an essay titled, *The University and the Urban Challenge*, Henry Cisneros and Ira Harkavy contend that colleges and universities need to contribute to their cities (Cisneros, 1996, p. 1-14). It is their belief that institutions like colleges and universities have a moral imperative and an obvious self-interest to improve the conditions of the city they are positioned in. Harvaky goes so far as to say, “universities cannot afford to be islands of affluence, self importance, and horticultural beauty in seas of squalor, violence, and despair,” (Boyer, 1994, p. A48).

The logic is that place-based institutions, like colleges and universities, have a vested interest in their geographic communities. An illustration of vested interest would be the vested interest of a homeowner in the conditions of his or her neighborhood. If the surrounding environment improves, the value of the homeowner’s property also improves. Colleges and universities are significant landowners in their own geographic communities and they have vested interest in seeing economic vitality and competitive market rates in their surrounding regions.

In an “Anchor Institutions Toolkit” prepared by The Netter Center for Community Partnerships at The University of Pennsylvania, the authors identify a set of criteria for evaluating whether or not an institution could stand as an anchor institution in the community.

Their criteria are the following questions:

1. Does it have a large stake and an important presence in your city and community?
2. Does it have economic impacts on employment, revenue gathering, and spending patterns?
3. Does it consume sizable amounts of land?
4. Does it have crucial relatively fixed assets that are difficult to relocate?
5. Is it among the largest purchasers of goods and services in your region?
6. Is it a job generator?
7. Does it attract businesses and highly skilled individuals?
8. Is it one of the largest employers, providing multilevel employment possibilities?
9. Is it a center of culture, learning and innovation with enormous human resources?

Anchoring Characteristics

These questions can be categorized into five distinct anchoring characteristics. Anchor institutions have (1) political stake, (2) economic impact, (3) land acquisition capabilities, (4) fixed assets, (5) culture maintenance systems, and (6) mass appeal. Without any of these characteristics, an institution will not be as effective at anchoring the community.

Across the country, educational institutions are among the largest employers in their regions and have significant impacts on the local economy. Additionally, educational institutions attract a highly educated and highly skilled workforce. The result of these resources is often the production of cultural landmarks and amenities that create secondary and tertiary benefits for the community. Finally, as public resources and allocations for social services dwindle, community groups and non-profit organizations are actively pursuing partnerships with anchor institutions in their service provision (Leiderman, Furco, Zapf, & Goss, 2003, p. 2-18).

Is it possible that a network of well-organized high schools could serve as an anchor institution for a historically disinvested community at the neighborhood scale? High schools, like colleges and universities, are place-based institutions that can impact (and are impacted by) their surrounding geographies. Not all communities experience the economic multipliers of major
universities and colleges. How could this model be scaled down to the neighborhood level? How could high schools become an anchor institution that works for a disinvested community, not simply in it?

**ENCEWOOD, CHICAGO:**
**ANCHOR INSTITUTION CASE STUDY ANALYSIS**

**Community Profile**

Englewood is a neighborhood in Chicago located about seven miles south of downtown Chicago – bound geographically by 55th Street to the north, Racine Avenue to the west, the Belt Railroad, 75th and 76th Streets to the south, and Stewart/Harvard/Yale Avenues along with the Chicago to Joliet Rock Island District Metra rail line on the east. It has a total area of 3.1 square miles (Lyderson, 2012, November 15).

First settlements in Englewood date back to 1854, when German and Irish farmers and workers began to develop the area. By 1920, many institutions (schools, churches, universities, and cultural centers) and public services were established to serve the booming population of Chicago and the expected visitors of the Columbian Exposition on the south side of the city. At this time the population of Englewood was under 87,000 people and was still primarily of German descent. The decade of the 20s was considered to be the golden age of Englewood. The decade of the 20s included rapid business expansion, and development in sectors of the economy including commerce, retail, and housing (Vaughn, 1995, p. 194).

The late 1930s and 1940s, in contrast to the 1920s, represent an era of sharp decline. The Great Depression hit Englewood and impacted the predominately white working class backbone of the community. Jobs were lost. Property values began to fall. Social institutions suffered. Families were separated by work or the war. The post-depression, post-war era Englewood, as with many other communities across the country, was not the same as it was before.
In the 1940’s only 2% of the residents of Englewood were African American, but slowly this number began to rise. Located at 67th Street and Racine Avenue in Englewood was a terminal of the Underground Railroad, a vast network of secret routes and safe houses used by slaves to flee from the south. As people arrived in Chicago and looked for new homes, Englewood proved to be a convenient and comfortable location: housing prices were dropping due the dwindling economy, but there were still retail and robust social institutions in the area.

Moving forward through history, the next chapter in the story of Englewood must be understood through the lens of post-depression attitudes and beliefs in the United States. The average middle-income American was looking for stable and trusting neighborhood institutions. From 1960 – 2000, the economy experienced decline and disinvestment; people continued losing their jobs and housing prices continued decreasing.

While people were looking for stability, urban communities were simultaneously becoming more diverse. Some people feared that rapid urbanization meant urban communities would undergo rapid diversification. Racial tensions increased and race riots erupted all over the nation and in Chicago neighborhoods. In the 60s, the civil rights movement was gaining strength, further shifting race and power relations across the nation. On the one hand, urban communities were home to a white population looking for stability and were a remnant of the era of prosperity before the Great Depression. On the other hand, urban communities were the stage for the swelling civil rights movement – a movement that demanded real change in the social fabric of the United States. Civil rights leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. demanded and dreamed of the kind of change that would disrupt the status quo of every existing neighborhood institution – schools, churches, and families. No stone would go unturned in the pursuit of racial equality. This period marked the first signs of demographic shifts in the population of Englewood.
By the end of 1960 only 31% of Englewood was white, and by 1990 the white population fell to an all-time low of 0% (Vaughn 1995, p. 194). Currently the neighborhood is 98% black. Englewood transformed from a community that was 98% white in 1940 to a community that is 98% black in 2000. Accordingly, Englewood is representative of the large number of communities that experienced “white flight” as a response to the civil rights movement and the rapid diversification of urban spaces.

As the population shifted dramatically, Englewood entered into a period of serious economic and social disintegration. Commercial and civic institutions, which were once sustained by the white middle class dissolved. New construction ceased, and businesses relocated, leaving empty buildings and vacant lots (Vaughn 1995, p. 194). The number of vacant units increased by 5.7% in the 90s to over 2,500 by 2000. Currently, Englewood’s vacancy rate is at 17%. These vacancy increases have been directly correlated with population decline. The population has decreased steadily over the years from a peak of 97,000 in the 1920s to approximately 40,222 in 2010 (US Census – Historical Statistics, 1920-2010).

Today, there is little evidence to suggest a changing trend from the conditions of the 80s, 90s, and early 00s. Depopulation and disinvestment continue to be challenges facing the community. The basic infrastructure that was established in the era of prosperity from the 20s, 30s, and 40s still exists. However, due to a lack of investment the infrastructure is slowly eroding. The streetcars that ran along 63rd Street have been removed. Institutions and employers continue to relocate or close. The shells of the structures established nearly a century ago still stand – many of which are boarded up or have been razed for the purposes of redevelopment or repurposing. The 1950s and 60s brought projects like the Dan Ryan Expressway and Kennedy King College which required a considerable amount of demolition of housing units to the east end of the neighborhood with the former actually separating the easternmost section of
Englewood from the rest of the community.

Economic indicators suggest that Englewood is still experiencing considerable financial challenges. Jobs are scarce and poverty is increasing. The percentage of Englewood residents living at or below the federal poverty line is currently at 43.8% compared to the rest of the city of Chicago at 19.6%. Median household income is $22,131 compared to the median household income of Chicago, which is $45,734. Educational attainment is equally low, less than 40% of the population over 25 completed High School, compared to roughly 75% of people over 25 in the whole of Chicago.

Still, in 2015, Englewood is well connected to the City of Chicago through major expressways and surface streets, and relies on a relatively good network of public transport. Also, above ground rapid transit and traditional rail routes, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) train lines and buses are available to residents.

The boundaries of Englewood as a whole are defined by unnatural geographies created by man-made systems of transportation. However, within the neighborhood, boundaries are defined by politics and gerrymander (Haines, 2000). Englewood is currently composed of 6 wards, and is a particularly fragmented community, both socially and politically.
The break down of Englewood into so many wards is an issue that has been documented by past conversations with residents. They complain that the re-mapping of the community in 1990 that resulted in 6 different wards greatly eroded the social and political ties of the community, as this respondent commented, “when they re-mapped us, they tore us apart,” (Haines, 2000).

Englewood is a disinvested community in need of anchor institutions. Their purpose should be to improve the human condition and to alleviate or ameliorate some of the human suffering described above. Englewood is a community that has experienced many of the phases of an urban community. Rapid growth and prosperity created strong social and economic institutions. This prosperity allowed for investment in modern infrastructure and development. The era of prosperity was followed by rapid diversification and white flight. White flight caused population decline. Population decline was followed by disinvestment from the city, high vacancy rates, and disintegrating social, political, and economic institutions.

**Institutional Inventory**

Institutions can play an important role in community life. They serve as safe spaces
where people gather and exchange ideas, information and other tacit resources, while providing a sense of social order and structure in people’s lives. This section of the case study will consider the institutions that are present in Englewood. The purpose of this is to consider how the school may become an anchor institution within the current social fabric.

**Churches**

According to a study done in 2000, there are 250 churches in Englewood (Haines, 2000, 26). The population in 2000 was roughly 40,000 people; that equates to 1 church for every 150 residents. Scholars who have studied the area argue that religion has a prominent place in the community (Haines, 2000, p. 26). Churches in Englewood are an important component of social life. They are also the main service providers for the community; meanwhile, non-profit agencies responsible for a variety of programs like youth clubs, domestic violence groups, and food banks (Haines, 2000, p. 26) have come and gone.

**Block Clubs**

Block clubs are not traditionally considered to be a neighborhood institution, but residents of Englewood have made the case that block clubs can serve as effective grass-root level institutions. “Block clubs are institutions that at the grassroots level have been used to organize people and activities as well as to address critical issues. We are attempting to organize block clubs in Englewood in order to address some significant community problems, one of which, first and foremost, is safety. Others include job training and connecting people to social services that they may not be aware of;” (Muhammed, 2012, November 15).

In 1995 there were 300 well-established block clubs in Englewood. In 2007, 40 more were founded with the help of Wanda White, executive director of Teamwork Englewood, in an effort to foster social relations in the community. Some of the block clubs have a large
membership base, are committed and well-organized. For example, the 73rd and Loomis Block Club has over 80 active members, who tackle issues of drugs, community security, jobs for youth, and renovate neighborhood homes. Thanks to support from Teamwork Englewood, some of the block clubs even have 501c3 status and are able to apply for grants.

**Kennedy King College**

Anchor institutions are entities that can have a huge impact on a community due to their employment, revenue-generation and spending. Kennedy-King College has potential to be an anchor institution for Englewood. A new college replacing the old facility opened in 2007 on a 40-acre campus. It is still early to measure the full impact that the new facility has had on the community in terms of multiplier effects on the economy, but in principle the development certainly should strengthen the institution of education. In fact, in 2015 the Aspen institute will award the college with a “Rising Star Award” for continued academic improvement.

This is especially important considering the overall educational attainment in the population. In an area where less than 40% of young people have finished high school, providing a community with high quality, accessible education can have a powerful effect and greatly impact social mobility, income, poverty and crime rates in the long term.

**Saint Bernard Hospital**

A final institution of note is the St. Bernard Hospital, located on 64th Street. Reverend Bernard Murray, the leader of St. Bernard’s Church in Englewood, envisioned St. Bernard Hospital. In an effort to provide adequate health care to the community, Murray worked with community leaders from other municipalities to develop a local hospital for Englewood. According to the hospital’s website, it was dedicated as a hospital for the Englewood community in 1905. St. Bernard was once one of four hospitals serving the Englewood community. Today, it
is the only hospital in the community.

In addition to providing health services to the community, St. Bernard’s mission in Englewood “goes beyond providing high-quality medical care.” The hospital has a community development arm of service as well. St. Bernard has collaborated with the city of Chicago and the Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives to contribute to housing development in the community. One particular project worth noting is Bernard Place – an award winning property development that provides roughly 70 families, individuals, and seniors with housing in the community. Additionally, St. Bernard was one of the founding members of Teamwork Englewood – a local organization responsible for running a New Communities Program and developing a quality-of-life plan for residents of Englewood.

While this list is not exhaustive, it is a sample of the major actors in Englewood.

**Existing Anchor Institution Viability**

Do the current “institutions” of Englewood fit the criteria defined by the Netter Center for Community Partnerships (NCCP) to be considered anchor institutions?
### TABLE IV
Existent Anchor Institution Viability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Block Club</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Hospital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does it have a large stake and an important presence in your city and community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it have economic impacts on employment, revenue gathering, and spending patterns?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it consume sizable amounts of land?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it have crucial relatively fixed assets that are difficult to relocate?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it among the largest purchasers of goods and services in your region?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a job generator?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it attract businesses and highly skilled individuals?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it one of the largest employers, providing multilevel employment possibilities?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a center of culture, learning and innovation with enormous human resources?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis demonstrates that there is a need for anchor institutions in the Englewood neighborhood according to the criteria established by the University of Pennsylvania’s “Anchor Institution Toolkit”. The purpose of this paper is to articulate a vision in which the school could serve as an anchor institution that works for the community. Is it possible that the local high school (viewed as a network of aligned services) could serve as an anchor institution for the community at the same scale as a community college or a community hospital?

Let us begin our analysis by considering the possibility, or the potentiality of the high school as an institution for the neighborhood. In each case, the author will examine the individual schools and then the schools as a collective network. It is important to consider both organizational methods because it is possible that conceiving the school as a network may lead to
different conclusions about the potentiality of the school as an institution for the neighborhood.

**Political Stake Viability in Schools**

Does the local high school have a large stake and an important presence in the community?

In Englewood, a community with a declining population, there are four public high schools and three charter high schools. Paul Robeson High School, once known as Parker High School, opened in 1910. In 1977, the school changed buildings and was given its current name. From a historical perspective, this school has had the longest, and most important presence in the community. The school served the majority of students in the Englewood community for that duration of time. As populations declined and enrollment dipped, student achievement became a growing concern for the community. The other “historic” school in Englewood is John Hope College Prep. Hope College Prep, a public school, opened in 1971 as a middle school. In 1997, it became a high school in response to shifting enrollment trends in the community.

From 2000 to 2012, four schools opened in response to the low educational attainment in the community. TEAM Englewood Community Academy was opened as a public charter “turnaround school” with the support of a community organization called Teamwork Englewood. TEAM Englewood HS was developed in response to the needs of the community and opened its doors in 2007. In 2011, nearly all graduates of TEAM Englewood were accepted into colleges. Simultaneously, three charter organizations paying attention to low educational attainment opened school doors in Englewood as well. Johnson College Prep, Urban Prep Academy, and Amandla Charter School were all given permission by the board of education to open schools in Englewood. Urban Prep Academy, an all-boys school, shares a space with TEAM Englewood HS. Johnson College Prep, an open-enrollment campus of the Noble Street Charter Network, deliberated with the city of Chicago and the community to occupy a previously underutilized public elementary school space. Amandla, an open-enrollment middle and high school, shares
space with Robeson High School.

Given the number of high schools in the community, it could be suggested that there is at least the potentiality of high schools serving as large stakeholders with an important presence in the community.

**Economic Impact Viability in Schools**

Does the local high school have economic impacts on employment, revenue gathering, and spending patterns?

Schools receive tremendous amounts of resources from a variety of funders – local, state, federal, and private. The following excerpt from the Chicago Public Schools website gives a picture of the amount of revenue gathered by schools on an annual basis. This data represents the 2014 fiscal year budget for the entire city of Chicago.

*School Budget Overview*

The FY2014 budget contains $3.54 billion budgeted at school units, including more than $2.0 billion budgeted for core instruction at 649 schools. The following charts show how funds and positions are allocated among the major school types and across the main program areas:
Given the information provided in these tables, it can be suggested that high schools have economic impacts on employment, revenue gathering, and spending.

Is the local high school among the largest purchasers of goods and services in the region?

This requires additional research to quantify. However, one can assert that with budgets...
the size of those listed earlier by Chicago Public Schools, it is plausible that high schools are among the largest purchasers of goods and services in low-income communities. One can easily speculate that schools regularly purchase high volumes of desks, curriculum materials, books, paper, copiers, and a variety of other office supplies for their daily operations.

Fortunately, public schools are required to report their annual budgets for approval. Additionally, ending budgets must be reported for record-keeping and public accountability purposes. As evidence to support the previous assertion that schools are among the largest purchasers of goods and services in a local neighborhood, consider the following budgetary data from Chicago Public Schools:

**TABLE VII**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Contingencies</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robeson H.S.</td>
<td>$10,561</td>
<td>$170,131</td>
<td>$22,330</td>
<td>$117,688</td>
<td>$320,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope H.S.</td>
<td>$42,521</td>
<td>$4,972</td>
<td>$19,020</td>
<td>$124,303</td>
<td>$190,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM Englewood H.S.</td>
<td>$10,576</td>
<td>$10,860</td>
<td>$17,554</td>
<td>$102,255</td>
<td>$141,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson College Prep H.S.</td>
<td>$43,340</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$43,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandla Charter H.S.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Prep H.S.</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$-331</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$-331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$695,854</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The information in the table above demonstrates that schools in Englewood budget for nearly three-quarters of a million dollars in spending per year on equipment, contingencies, transportation, and commodities. Commodities include school supplies, postage, and food supplies for students, software licenses, and instructional material that are not digital. Equipment, in this case, is defined as equipment that is added to the property to benefit the building facility.
Transportation, as a category, includes carfare, pupil transportation, and travel expenses for employees. Contingencies are defined as miscellaneous charges to the school account that do not fit nicely in the other categories of expenditure.

Including contracts, benefits, and salaries the schools of Englewood are distributing large sums of money in the local economy each year. Table VIII (below) compares the FY2014 budgets for each of the local high schools.

**TABLE VIII**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>FY2014 Ending Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robeson H.S.</td>
<td>$5,654,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope H.S.</td>
<td>$4,977,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM Englewood H.S.</td>
<td>$4,191,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson College Prep H.S.</td>
<td>$8,179,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandla Charter H.S.</td>
<td>$3,682,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Prep H.S.</td>
<td>$4,634,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$31,319,621</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 2014, high schools in Englewood budgeted for over 31 million dollars of expenditures. These expenditures are funds that distribute throughout the neighborhood, city, and region. This economic output is a form of local investment that allows anchor institutions to provide stability to their immediate surroundings.

**Is the local high school a job generator?**

High schools generate jobs. The more obvious roles are related to instruction and administration – these are the responsibility of teachers, deans, assistant principals, and principals. Beyond the skeleton of a school organization chart – a wide array of other professional services is needed. Social services are provided in schools by social workers, guidance counselors, and other youth programming providers. Food services are provided in
schools as well. Most schools have a small 5-10 member staff of food service professionals. Additionally, there is a need for security and general youth supervision. In most high schools this takes the form of at least one on-site officer and a team of professionals that survey the unsupervised spaces in the building. Furthermore, there are wide ranges of duties that are assigned to individuals who work in and for the main office of the school. These individuals manage the day-to-day operations of the school.

Using as examples two high schools in Englewood, Robeson H.S. has 1 principal, 29 teachers, and 10 staff members serving a variety of purposes for the daily operations of the school. Johnson College Prep, however, provides jobs to nearly 90 individuals according to their staff directory.

**Land Acquisition Viability in Schools**

Does the local high school consume sizable amounts of land? School spaces require large amounts of land. A space that is designed to serve hundreds of young people, with common building programming that includes cafeteria, assembly, gymnasium, outdoor recreation, and parking facilities demand large footprints of land for service provision. The following map shows the collective footprint of schools in the Englewood community.
Figure 9. City of Chicago map of schools in Englewood.
Source: City of Chicago Zoning Map - https://gisapps.cityofchicago.org/zoning/

Figure 9 only shows school footprints in the land immediately within (and surrounding) Englewood. Individually, none of these parcels are sizable amounts of land. However, collectively, these spaces represent one of the largest single land uses in the community behind residential housing. This demonstrates, at least, the possibility of a network of schools working towards common goals occupying a significant amount of land in the community.

**Fixed Asset Viability in Schools**

Does the local high school have crucial relatively fixed assets that are difficult to relocate?

Schools offer a wide array of programs and services in the community. Many of those assets are relatively fixed, in terms of location. Examples of fixed assets in schools include, but are not limited to, athletic facilities, classrooms, laboratories, auditoriums, art studios, technology centers, and other similar spaces.

For example, Robeson H.S. has a technology center. This center stores assets that would be difficult to relocate. Johnson College Prep has a small practice field made of a synthetic material for use in all seasons. Obviously, this kind of asset cannot be relocated. Urban Prep and
TEAM Englewood are located on a site that has a track, a football field, a baseball diamond, and other large-scale athletic facilities. These spaces have been designed to offer a specific use for the community. They cannot be relocated easily without having a significant amount of land to redevelop for the same uses. In each case, it is clear that schools – as organizations in communities – have many crucial assets that are difficult and costly to relocate.

**Cultural Maintenance Viability in Schools**

Is the local high school a center of culture, learning and innovation with enormous human resources?

The high school also has the possibility to serve as a center for culture, learning, innovation, and human resource expansion. A quick analysis of the mission and vision statements of each school can reveal that these organizations are committed to promoting culture, learning, and innovation.

*Paul Robeson High School:*

Our mission is to provide college preparatory academic instruction and support for all students, including those with special needs. We will provide an environment of excellence, responsibility and leadership that fosters the ability to read well, think skillfully, communicate effectively, and choose wisely those actions which lead to employability in the urban, technological, and global marketplaces.

The vision of Paul Robeson High School is to create a positive, friendly and challenging learning community with a supportive, respectful, and safe environment; We foster an environment where all students are encouraged to acquire a core body of knowledge, and to become independent life-long learners and contributing members of our global marketplace.

*Hope College Prep High School*

We must design our school to address the needs of the students indicative of our population and educate each student to the highest attainable levels of academic excellence. We will utilize inquiry-based instruction, implement workshop structures, and integrate literacy skills. As a result, we will create the desire to excel, emphasize reading, and establish a professional, respectful, caring, and literate student-centered environment, committed to high standards of “Excellence Without Excuses”.

Our vision is to create a high school environment that enhances the Englewood Community by creating life-long learners who will successfully integrate into an advanced society. Our highly qualified teachers will utilize researched based practices to provide a rigorous curriculum that encourages students to excel; our school community will foster and encourage individual creativity, self-directed learning and responsible decision making; our students will aspire to be successful leaders through academic achievement, social consciousness and personal growth and sophistication.
**TEAM Englewood Community Academy**

Our mission is opportunity.

TEAM is a learning environment where students are accepted, nurtured, and loved. TEAM challenges students to develop resilience, talent, and intellectual ability. TEAM students become independent learners through rigorous and responsive instruction. TEAM prepares graduates to become productive members and leaders of society.

**Johnson College Prep**

Our mission is The Noble Way: Scholarship, Discipline, and Honor.

Our vision is to provide a comprehensive educational experience that effectively prepares scholars for success in college and life.

**Amandla Charter School**

Our mission is to prepare Chicago students for college and beyond through a powerful college prep curriculum beginning in grade five.

With the vision of helping Englewood students overcome the challenges facing their community, four dedicated Englewood public school teachers designed Amandla Charter School with an academic approach that combines their personal experience teaching in the neighborhood with the proven success of instructional methods developed and tested in similarly troubled areas throughout Chicago and the U.S.

**Urban Prep Academies**

The mission of Urban Prep is to provide comprehensive, high-quality college preparatory education to young men that results in our graduates succeeding in college.

The Urban Prep motto is We Believe. Our motto is a constant reminder that Urban Prep students will not fall into the trap of negative stereotypes and low expectations. Instead, Urban Prep students believe in their potential and believe in their ability to exceed that potential. The Urban Prep family (teachers, administrators, staff, board of directors, community members and donors) also believe in these young men, and in our important and long lasting role in their lives. At Urban Prep, We Believe.

In the language of these online mission and vision statements it is evident that these places were created to promote cultures of learning and innovation.

**Mass Appeal Viability in Schools**

Does the local high school attract businesses and highly skilled individuals?

There is evidence to suggest that local high schools attract highly skilled individuals. The state of Illinois requires teachers and educational leaders to hold, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree. In many cases, a master’s degree or specialized certification is required for specific roles within Chicago Public Schools. As a result, high schools spend a lot of time recruiting and attracting individuals that are highly educated. Even when not required, school leadership often
have postgraduate degrees (masters and doctoral), indicating a level of expertise that has the potential to add value to the community.

Is the local high school one of the largest employers, providing multilevel employment possibilities?

In an aggregation of staff directories for the high schools in Englewood, there is evidence to suggest that they provide multilevel employment possibilities at a large scale for the community. The table below summarizes the type and quantity of each role that exists within each school.

**TABLE IX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source List:
1. http://www.prhs.org/apps/staff/
5. http://amandlacarterschool.org/about/faculty-staff/

According to this table, the three categories included create three different levels of employment. Teachers are generally educational professionals who are highly qualified in their field of expertise to teach a specific set of content or skills to students. Teachers hold three primary titles: teacher, instructor, or specialist. In each case, this role makes up the most common task in the organization. Administration is a form of educational management. Administrative roles vary, but include the following titles: principal, assistant principal, dean, or director. Staff level positions are generally those roles that support daily services and operations in the building. These roles include: paraprofessionals, building engineers, office clerks,
operations coordinators, culture specialists, security personnel, service advocates, behavioral specialists, case managers, counselors, social workers, nurses, and other supportive roles.

It is apparent, according to NCCP criteria that the high school has the potential to serve as an anchor institution for low-income communities. However, it remains to be seen whether or not this ideal is being realized in Englewood, as it exists today.

**Schools as Anchors? Reality Check**

Does the high school currently serve as an anchor institution that works for Englewood as a community? While there is evidence of the theoretical potential to define the school as an anchor institution – there has not been evidence presented to determine whether the school currently executes this ideal – providing equitable and equal opportunity for young people, being accessible, and offering services that meet the needs of those families with children in Englewood.

**Equity**

In terms of equity, let us consider two major criteria. First, do the students in this neighborhood have access to the same amount of resources? Second, do the students in this neighborhood achieve similar outcomes to one another and similar outcomes to their peers and competitors as members of a global economy?

In terms of resource allocation, there is evidence to suggest that students in the community do not receive equal resources for their schooling. Two-thirds of the high schools in Englewood are charter schools. According to the information provided earlier, charter schools do not receive the same amount of funding for core instruction, special education, bilingual education, early childhood education, discretionary funding, or operations as public schools receive. This means that students in communities with charter schools do not receive access to the same amount of resources from the district that students in communities without charter schools receive. This suggests that resource distribution is not equitable in the community.
The table below further illustrates that, in addition to resource equity, there is not educational equity in Englewood. The data show all six high schools and compares them according to four basic categories. The first category, “type” indicates the schooling profile of Englewood. One-third of the high schools in Englewood are public schools, while the remaining two-thirds are charter schools. In terms of equity, this profile is often interpreted as a positive indication because it suggests that students in the community have choice for schooling.

### TABLE X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>ACT Score</th>
<th>SQRP Score</th>
<th>5 Essentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope H.S. TEAM</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>1.8 (Level 3)</td>
<td>Organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>1.9 (Level 3)</td>
<td>Not Yet Organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson H.S.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>2.0 (Level 3)</td>
<td>Partially Organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson College Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>3.2 (Level 2+)</td>
<td>Well-Organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>2.9 (Level 2)</td>
<td>Partially Organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandla Charter H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>N/A**</td>
<td>2.5 (Level 3)</td>
<td>Not Yet Organized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Not enough students tested to be included in report.
** School does not have students who are in the testing year of the ACT yet.
Sources:
1 CPS Data Archive: http://cps.edu/Performance/Pages/PerformancePolicy.aspx
2 CPS Data Archive: http://cps.edu/Performance/Pages/PerformancePolicy.aspx
3 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoimpact.org/5essentials

According to ACT performance, there is not educational equity for students in the community. ACT annual reports state that the national average for the ACT is currently 21.0. Three-quarters of the schools in Englewood with scores to report are scoring below 15.0. The only school to score above 15 scored nearly a 20. This indicates a significant educational knowledge and/or skills gap between individuals attending schools in Englewood and individuals across the country. Additionally, there is a disparity even between the public schools in Englewood and the charter school that reported an ACT score of nearly 20, a fascinating
disparity that exists between two schools in the same neighborhood - serving students with similar profiles.

Educational inequity can also be seen for students in Englewood according to SQRP reports. The SQRP is the Chicago Public School’s “School Quality Rating Policy”. This is a district-level policy created by educational experts and policy makers to evaluate schools based on a number of criteria (attendance, student growth, outside institutional research, etc). The rating levels range from 1+ (highest performing, nationally competitive schools with the opportunity to share best practices with others) to 3 (lowest performing, schools in need of intensive intervention directed by the district). Englewood has four high schools that are Level 3 schools. These findings demonstrate that two-thirds of the high schools in Englewood are in need of intensive intervention because of their low performance. One of the schools in Englewood is a Level 2 school – meaning that it is below average in performance and in need of provisional support. The highest-performing school in Englewood was rated as Level 2+, meaning average and in need of additional support from the district. According to this set of measurements, Englewood is not yet a place of educational equity.

As a third set of data to support the claim that Englewood is not positioned for educational equity, let us consider the University of Chicago’s ongoing research about school organization. The University of Chicago conducts the 5-Essentials survey every year. The survey is expertly written and utilized to conduct research about the quality of schools in the city of Chicago. The survey is administered to teachers and students of schools in CPS to determine their overall organization as a school. The criteria for organization include: ambitious instruction, effective leadership, supportive environments, family involvement, and instructional collaboration. A highly organized school is better positioned to provide an equitable educational opportunity for a member of the community than one that is less organized. According to the 5-Essentials survey conducted by the University of Chicago, only one school in Englewood is
considered well organized – it is a charter school. One school was classified as organized – it is a public school. The remainder of the schools were categorized as either partially organized or not yet organized. This is interesting when considering the age and history of some of these schools. One of the youngest schools in the community is considered to be the most organized and one of the oldest schools in the community is considered to be the least organized.

**Accessibility**

Is the school accessible to the community? Accessibility can be considered using factors of geographic proximity and community stakeholder participation. Primarily, is the school proximal enough to the community it serves to provide meaningful learning experiences throughout the school day and school year? Of equal significance, is the community of parents and students actively participating in the day-to-day services provided by the school? Land-utilization maps, attendance rates, and family involvement can provide quantitative evidence to support or contradict the claim of accessibility for a school in a particular community.
According to Figure 10 and Figure 11 above, one could argue that the school is accessible to the residents of the neighborhood. There is a school within one city block of each residential corridor. Interestingly, the high schools are not as evenly distributed as the middle and elementary schools are throughout the community. There are three high schools located within a quarter-mile radius of a Chicago Transit Authority train stop. Two of the other high schools in the neighborhood share a site only a half-mile south of the three schools along 63rd Street. The other high school is at the northern boundary of the neighborhood. In keeping with Alonso’s locational theory, schools would be most optimally accessible if they are equidistant from one another. This conclusion suggests that the high schools are less accessible than the elementary and middle schools. This may not seem problematic at the surface. After all, high school students are more mature and expected to be more independent. However, longer commutes create conditions that make school less accessible. Longer commutes cost more money, demand more time, and create more exposure to the dangerous elements of neighborhoods plagued with violent crimes. Residents living on the south and west sides of the neighborhood have longer commutes to access the local school than residents on the north and east sides of the neighborhood.

The maps below also suggest that the schools are interestingly concentrated at only three sites in the neighborhood. It is important to note that these sites are all along streets that have access to buses and train stations. Additionally, all three of the sites are immediately adjacent to major expressway exits.
According to the data provided in the table below, all of the schools are less than a one-mile walk from the nearest train station. In each case, there is also a bus stop that is closer than the distance to the nearest public transportation train stop. This suggests that by a variety of transportation modes – the school is accessible in this neighborhood. It is interesting to note that the average distance a charter school is from the train is 0.38 miles. Contrasted with the average distance a public school is (0.65 miles) – this difference may suggest a slight prioritization difference for charter schools seeking property that is accessible to residents of the city from outside of the neighborhood.
TABLE XI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Attendance Rates(^1)</th>
<th>Family Involvement*(^2)</th>
<th>Distance to Public Transportation(^3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope H.S.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0.6 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM Englewood H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0.3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson H.S.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0.7 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson College Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0.3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandla Charter H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.7 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
*% of 5-Essentials survey teacher respondents that answered “most parents attend parent-teacher conferences when they are requested”.

Sources:
1 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoimpact.org/5essentials
2 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoimpact.org/5essentials
3 Web Application: www.google.com/maps

Accessibility by multiple transportation modes may influence other indicators of school accessibility. For example, charter schools in the neighborhood experience greater attendance percentages (91.6%) than public schools in the same neighborhood experience (82.8%). While this could be explained by other confounding factors, there is scanty evidence of a correlation between distance from public transportation and school type and between school type and attendance rates in this neighborhood. Further research would be needed to determine causal factors influencing attendance in these specific cases.

A third dimension of accessibility that needs to be explored is related to parental involvement. For a school to have the possibility for parents to be involved, it needs to be accessible to the adults in the community – allowing them to attend PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) meetings, athletic events, and parent-teacher conferences. According to a survey of teachers and students at each of the six high schools, one could suggest that family involvement is an area of improvement for the neighborhood if it wishes to have a more “accessible” school.
Of the respondents to the survey, conducted by the University of Chicago, between 20% and 50% of teachers reported, “most parents attend parent-teacher conferences when they are requested.” This is a wide range – suggesting differences within the individual approaches and practices of each school. However, the range also has a low upper-limit. If the school with the most family involvement has only 50% of its teachers reporting most parents attend conferences when they are requested – the data suggests significant room for improvement in all cases. Additionally, one could infer that if compulsory parent-teacher appointments are honored less than 50% of the time then opportunities for voluntary involvement are probably happening with even less frequency. There is little evidence to suggest that parental involvement differs much between public schools and charter schools in the neighborhood.

Sensible Service Provision

The third criterion of adequate service is whether the school provides services to the community that meets the needs of the parent and student population they serve. Service-provision can be assessed by indications of a supportive environment and provision-need can be determined through US Census data about the service area the school programming serves. What social services are offered to parents and students? What is the demographic composition of the students and parents at the school?

Englewood is notable for high levels of poverty and violent crime coupled with low levels of educational attainment and economic development. These conditions have significant implications for parents, students, and teachers – the primary stakeholders in a neighborhood education system. Educational services are often considered to be tools to address poverty, violence, low educational attainment, and low economic development for young people. This section will consider student and teacher perceptions of student support services (i.e. extra help and tutoring), the risks associated with participating in the school, and the future benefits of
engaging in the educational process. The table below reveals survey results from students for the following statements:

1. Teachers are willing to give extra help on schoolwork if I need it.
2. I feel safe outside or around the school.
3. High school is a place to prepare for the future.

These three questions, while perhaps not ideal, most closely indicate a school that provides adequate service provision to the community.

TABLE XII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Extra Help*</th>
<th>Safety**</th>
<th>Future Orientation***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope H.S.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM Englewood H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robeson H.S.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson College Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Prep H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandla Charter H.S.</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
*% of 5-Essentials survey student respondents that answered “agree or strongly agree that teachers are willing to give extra help on schoolwork if I need it”.
**% of 5-Essentials survey student respondents that feel “very safe or mostly safe outside or around the school”.
***% of 5-Essentials survey student respondents that answered “agree or strongly agree that high school is a place to prepare for the future”.

Sources:
1 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoinimpact.org/5essentials
2 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoinimpact.org/5essentials
3 University of Chicago Data Archive: https://uchicagoinimpact.org/5essentials

Interestingly, four out of every five students across the community feel that they have access to extra help from their teachers for schoolwork whenever they need it. This suggests that one of the social services available in the community through the school is tutoring and help on homework or schoolwork. Students are, on average, able to get the help they need to complete their schoolwork and learn the content or skills they are asked to master.

Similarly, an overwhelming majority of students in the neighborhood believe that the high school is a place to prepare for the future. This suggests that there is a strong future
orientation in the minds of young people in the community when they attend their neighborhood high school. The various mission and vision statements of each school that were listed in the previous section support this conclusion. Students, on average, believe that the high school is a place where they get to prepare for their future. In terms of social service provision, this belief supports the notion that the high school is providing career development, job skills training, personal development, employment preparation, and college preparation services for the young people of the neighborhood.

Of particular concern from this set of data are the student perceptions of safety around or outside of their high school. In all cases, more than 50% of students do not feel safe around or outside of their high school. This suggests that there is not a safe climate or set of environmental conditions in the spaces immediately surrounding high schools. While it is unclear whether this data is a matter of perception or objective fact – the unsettling reality is that no matter the case (real or perceived) students do not feel safe around or outside of their school. Pupils cannot be expected to learn if they are actively concerned about their safety. This set of data also suggests that there may be a real (or perceived) need that the school or local community could address. Possible service provisions to improve safety perceptions include increased safety personnel or adult presence outside and around the school. Coordinated efforts may be needed to stagger the release of all high school students to change the conditions around the local schools. Local political efforts can be made – but ultimately this is an issue of local school control and neighborhood safety.

It is interesting to note that 50% of students from Johnson College Prep HS reported feeling safe around or outside of their school while no more than 40% of students from any other school in the neighborhood had the same perception. What unique services is this school providing to create a perception among students that they are significantly safer while walking the same streets, riding the same buses, and boarding the same trains after school? How could
these practices be shared across the community to improve the conditions for all students in the neighborhood?

TEAM Englewood and Urban Prep share a building and both schools report a 39% safety rating. These schools are less than a block from Johnson College Prep so one might expect Johnson College Prep to have similar outcomes because the location is so similar. However, this is not the case and further research is needed to determine the cause of such differences.

Who is responsible for collecting, collating, and comprehending this kind of information? Once the information is understood, who is responsible for responding to the data? The list of likely stakeholders includes parents, students, teachers, school administrators, local aldermen, and other local public service providers. In addition, educational planners or policymakers at the local or regional level of governance could address these, and many other questions. Consider the following section about planning and policy recommendations. The ideas, conclusions, and recommendations listed below are informed by the observations and conclusions drawn in Englewood. More broadly, Englewood represents the conditions and characteristics of many low-income, disinvested urban communities in the United States. The following pages could serve as the foundation for an attempt to establish schools that anchor historically disinvested communities.

**URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

What can the field of urban planning teach us about how to build anchor schools in disinvested communities? What can urban planners, educational planners, urban policy makers, and school administrators do to improve the condition of the school as a neighborhood institution? What role, if any, does community development play in transforming the conception of schools at the scale of the neighborhood?
Today, there is a growing recognition by practitioners that there is a fundamental condition that consistently undercuts all our efforts to rebuild struggling communities—chronic disengagement … It is enough to say that a community needs a functional civic infrastructure in order to shape and sustain physical and economic development of any kind, whether implemented by nonprofits, private developers, or the public sector … The degradation of the civic habits and institutions that supported public life in these places has been dramatic if not complete (Traynor, 2012, p. 210-211).

**Lessons From the Annals of Planning**

To answer these questions, let us consider the tradition of social planning and community organizing. In order for high schools (singular entities) to begin to function as a cohesive (network) anchor for the community a careful amount of planning, organizing, and coordination would be necessary. The field of urban planning has much to say about planning, organizing, and coordination. Planning, as a field of study, can also offer a variety of methodological approaches for organizing, coordinating, and planning for communities the size of an urban neighborhood.

Urban planning is a social science that utilizes knowledge of urban issues, analytical skills, and organizing principles to ameliorate the challenges of life in urbanized regions of the world. Planning, as a field, aims to improve the quality of life for those who experience the conditions of living in the city. While planning practice often gravitates towards downtown-oriented land-use planning and real-estate development, there is also a lineage of planning tradition that focuses on neighborhood issues, social change, and redistributing resources to the poor and working class residents of the city. The development of theories like advocacy planning, equity planning, transformative planning, and participatory action research are all born of the planning ideology that carefully planned outcomes can have positive impacts on all members (and in all sectors) of society.
Advocacy Planning

Paul Davidoff coined advocacy planning in 1965. Davidoff, an American planner, created a framework of planning that advocated on behalf of inner-city residents who had limited power and limited voice in relation to community change. Davidoff sensed that there were destructive schemes and structures being formed by mainstream planning authorities, governmental bodies, and other agencies that were ignoring the low-income perspective.

In his own words:

City planning is a means for determining policy. Appropriate policy in a democracy is determined through political debate. The right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact. Planners should engage in the political process as advocates of the interests of government and other groups. Intelligent choice about public policy would be aided if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans. Plural plans, rather than a single agency plan should be presented to the public (Davidoff, 1965, p. 331).

In his framework, planning is a form of advocacy work where a plurality of voices has the agency to weigh-in on the decision-making process. The result is a structure of planning by special interest groups. Educational equity could serve as a special interest group representing the broad array of stakeholders invested in the education of young people.

Equity Planning

According to Metzger,

Equity planning is a framework in which advocacy planners in government use their research, analytical, and organizing skills to influence opinion, mobilize underrepresented constituencies, and advance and perhaps implement policies and programs that redistribute public and private resources to the poor and working class in cities (Metzger, 1996, p. 113).
Strong equity plans, like the Cleveland Policy Planning Report of 1975 have goals and objectives that focus on ameliorating the conditions of poverty:

In a context of limited resources and pervasive inequalities, priority attention must be given to the task of promoting a wider range of choices for those who have few, if any (Metzger, 1996, p. 114).

The focus of this plan is on the conditions of urbanization that most directly impact low-income individuals. Similarly celebrated equity plans, like the Chicago Development Plan of 1984 – drafted by the Harold Washington administration – have similar goals focused on improving living conditions for low- and middle-income city residents:

- Increase job opportunities for Chicagoans.
- Promote balanced growth.
- Assist neighborhoods to develop through partnerships and coordinated investment.
- Enhance public participation in decision-making.
- Pursue a regional, state, and national legislative agenda.

(Metzger, 1996, p. 114)

The tradition of equity planning is aligned with the conceptualization of equity described above as one of the three criteria for evaluating a community vision for education. Through a framework of equity, a neighborhood plan for education would advocate for equal distribution of educational funding, enhanced participation by parents, students, and teachers in decision-making, increased partnerships and coordinated efforts for the common goal of preparing the next generation, and promoting choice for those who have few.

**Transformative Planning**

Planning happens for a variety of purposes. Some planning is done to create new systems that have not existed. Other planning efforts are made to sustain systems that already exist. In some cases, the systems that are in place are in need of transformation. As is the case for urban education, these systems need to undergo major change in order to succeed and that change will require planned, coordinated, or organized efforts across the community.
In a book titled, *Transformative Scenario Planning: Working Together to Change the Future* Adam Kahane (2012) describes a planning process and framework for developing change at the community scale. Kahane’s process involves five steps. The first step is to convene a team from across the whole system. Kahane follows the tradition of advocacy planning by forming a team of individuals that represent the plurality of stakeholders involved in the issue. Once the team is assembled, they must observe what is actually happening. This process will require research, education, and conversation to make sure all stakeholders understand the complexity of the issue. With a common understanding, the team can begin to construct stories about what could happen. These stories represent alternative scenarios – or future outcomes – that are compelling to the group. In order to fully consider each scenario, the planning team must discover what can and must be done to enact each scenario. This stage is more or less a feasibility study of each scenario. What are the existing resources? What resources will be needed? Is this scenario feasible given our current understanding? What would be necessary to make this scenario possible? Once the planning team decides on a planned future – the team must commit to act. The planning team has to act in unison through a set of coordinated efforts to truly transform the system.

Kahane contends that through this process, new stories can be told and that those new stories can generate new realities. Given the realities described earlier about the conditions of urban education as a community, there appears to be a need for some level of transformative planning in urban communities across the country.

**Educational Planning**

There are examples of communities that are committing to plan for and organize around educational outcomes. In these cases, the planned efforts follow the tradition of advocacy, equity, and transformative planning. Michael Fabricant documented one case study in a book titled, *Organizing for Educational Justice: The Campaign for Public School Reform in the South Bronx.*
Fabricant uses this particular case to highlight the power of a well-organized group of people who are advocating on behalf of a special interest. The primary purpose of the book is to describe a parent-led campaign for school reform. The organizing mechanism for this group was a common educational structure – the Parent Action Committee. The particular parent group that formed in the Bronx became known as the Community Collaborative to Improve District 9 schools (CC9). Their impact is well documented in the book.

Of particular note to this discussion is the form and structure of the planning process – and the particular outcomes that it created.

Early in the book, Fabricant states:

The discourse on education reform has been monopolized by politically conservative policy makers and bureaucratic technicians emphasizing privatization and high-stakes testing. Missing from this discourse are the politics and expertise of parents who live daily with the failures of public education (Fabricant, 2010, p. xxiv).

In his description of the organizing that took place, he states:

What parents recognized throughout the meeting was the relationship between targeted investment in public education and increased achievement in the neighborhood schools serving very poor children of color. Their particular expertise is a product of witnessing daily the failures of local schools through the experience of their children, yet it is systematically ignored by policy makers. Their voice is notably absent in the discourse about reforming public schools, which is monopolized by academics, policy makers, and politicians with greater power and access to media. The parents of CC9 are engaged in building organizing campaigns that both correct for this imbalance in power and in turn create seats at the table for grassroots leadership in the negotiation of public school reform (Fabricant, 2010, p. xiv).
This case highlights many of the aspects of advocacy, equity, and transformative planning. By creating an organizing mechanism for parents, it gives their voice more strength and increases the plurality of perspectives at the table for decision-making purposes. By educating parents of the political realities, they have an opportunity to educate politicians about their educational reality. The result of this exchange is a more diverse, more equitable set of choices that can, through advocacy, provide equitable options for parents in pursuit of transforming the community for their children.

Many of the local concerns addressed by the planning and organizing efforts of CC9 need to be carefully designed by a variety of stakeholders in urban communities across the country. Historically disinvested communities, like Englewood and the Bronx, deserve equitable outcomes achieved by sensible needs-based services that ensure accessibility for all members of the community.

The following set of planning and policy recommendations is by no means a panacea, but rather a foundation to build anchor schools in disinvested communities. The intention of these recommendations is to improve the working relationship between the school and the neighborhood in addressing the key areas of analysis of this paper: equity, accessibility, service provision, and careful planning.

**Recommendations for Building Anchor Schools**

**Recommendations for Equity in Disinvested Neighborhoods:**

1. Instill a new culture in the fields of planning and education that turns schools into anchor institutions of the community and defines their functions accordingly.

2. Increase human resources for less-educated communities to promote more equal academic outcomes.

3. Increase capital resource expenditure for low-income communities to promote more equal conditions influencing educational experiences.
4. Improve the condition of educational facilities to promote more equal opportunities for learning, exploration, competition, and development.

The first recommendation might include the establishment of true school councils that include all stakeholders in education. Teachers, parents, students, aldermen, local businesses, local service providers, and higher education institutions would work together to drive school policy, curriculum, and programming.

Lawrence Cremin once contended that teachers should be prepared at the level of a professional doctorate. In the case of medicine or law, the profession requires the equivalent to a doctorate degree in order to practice alone. One cannot practice medicine without an M.D., or law without a J.D. The role of teacher needs to be treated similarly in order to increase the human resources made available to less-educated communities.

A policy ambition like this will necessarily require more capital resources devoted to education. Teachers will be more qualified to teach and will, thus, deserve better compensation for their increased level of expertise. Extra capital resources will be needed to account for the improved quality of the teaching force. Ironically, the majority of teachers that hold doctorate degrees today are not actually teaching – they are administrating.

None of this will happen without the establishment of a culture or climate where educational attainment is honored in the same way that military service is honored. It is impossible to realize a vision like the one above without first re-establishing education as a national priority – arguably more important and worthy of more money than the multi-billion dollar defense industry that currently dominates political spending and appropriations.

If the conditions surrounding educational spaces were equal, one would expect similar outcomes because of similar opportunities afforded to people of all socio-economic status. Equal outcomes in education could provide the possibility for equal access to the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness described in the United States Declaration of Independence.
Recommendations for Accessibility in Disinvested Communities:

1. Create charter school regulations that match local funding percentages with local participation percentages.
2. Create land use regulations protecting land designated for public, charter, and private school from rezoning or redevelopment.
3. Provide incentives to cities to promote transit-oriented school development plans.

Charter schools currently receive approximately 75 cents for every dollar per-pupil that public schools receive. The first policy stated above suggests that a fair approach, a just compromise, for charter legislation might be to provide charter schools a per-pupil funding expenditure that matches their neighborhood student population percentage. For instance, a charter school that draws 40% of its student population from outside of the neighborhood would receive 60 cents for every dollar that public neighborhood schools receive. If 100% of a charter school’s students come from the neighborhood boundary drawn by the district, the charter school receives equal funding per-pupil as the local public school. This creates a per-pupil expenditure incentive on charter schools to recruit and draw students from within the neighborhood. If it is effective, it will make school spaces more accessible for the people of the neighborhood. In addition, it will protect public schools from becoming under-resourced as a result of charter school expansion in a community. In essence, the district pays for students who attend schools within their designated boundaries and the market pays for students who choose to participate in the school choice model outside of their assigned school zone.

Planners can also consider land-use regulations and re-development programs that promote ease of access for school sites. The second policy recommendation of this section demands the creation of a land-use regulation that protects educational sites. This kind of policy ensures that schools can serve as anchors with relatively “fixed” assets. The educational facilities
of the school become fixed because they are protected under the law from future redevelopment or repurposing plans.

Additionally, policy makers can promote accessibility of educational services through legislation that requires neighborhood planners and transportation planners to coordinate efforts around schools. Imagine a scenario in which planners worked together to create transit-oriented school development plans where there was a bus stop, train station, parking lot, and sidewalk within a half-mile of each high school.

**Recommendations for Sensible Needs-Based Services in Disinvested Communities:**

1. Incentivize improved linkages between local service providers (i.e. tutoring, before and after school programming, nutrition programming, access to mental health services, prenatal services, public housing, etc.) and schools.

2. Create zoning regulations for land uses that benefit children implicitly or explicitly.

3. Incentivize community programming in schools that matches the needs of the community.

In many cases, there are isolated pockets of educational success. Students often excel despite the conditions within their school. Schools often excel despite the conditions within their neighborhood. However, it is rare to see these pockets of success lead to community-scale transformation. To begin to address this phenomenon, policy makers could incentivize improved linkages between local service providers and schools. This could connect successful tutoring services with successful or unsuccessful schools. In either case, the connection of these services enhances the educational ecosystem of the community.

Planners could implicitly or explicitly create zones within neighborhoods that are designated specifically for the betterment of children. Imagine zones, or clusters, in neighborhoods that provide pediatric services, educational services, childcare services, recreational opportunities, and other developmental services that benefit children. These zones would exist as a resource for children across the community. It would be centrally located and
offering services to all children of the community. This kind of effort would require coordination between various public agencies to create a one-stop system for all services needed for young people. The place-making and plan-making process would change drastically if this were the goal of the neighborhood at its core.

Critical to the success of these clusters would be two factors: (1) alignment and (2) flexibility. The services offered within these clustered environments would need to be aligned to the needs of the community at the time. These clusters would also need to be flexible in their service provision so as to stay aligned with the changing conditions (and needs) of the community. This would require flexible architectural arrangements, special orientation, service provision, building occupancy, and funding schema. However, flexibility seems imperative to truly achieve the aim of service provision that meets the needs of the community - particularly under the assumption that the stated needs of the community will change with time as the community improves its conditions.

**Recommendations for Organizing Anchor Schools in Disinvested Communities:**

1. Create a community education asset map as an inventory of educational opportunities within the community.
2. Create a community education forum to promote school partnerships and educational service linkages.
3. Cluster other community services in or around the school to improve linkages between the school and other social services.
4. Create an educational administration position in each school that focuses on community partnerships and collaboration.
5. Create a neighborhood plan designed to develop the capacity and connectivity of existing educational institutions.
6. Create a central office role titled “Neighborhood Planning Commissioner” responsible for creating neighborhood education plans.

7. Create a community investment fund intended to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the community.

8. Create a Neighborhood Educational Facilities Fund to ensure that the conditions of the built environment are suitable for learning.

9. Create an annual survey that can be given to the community to understand the true needs of the community.

10. Conduct annual scenario planning conversations with vested educational stakeholders.

ANCHOR SCHOOLS SCENARIO

Imagine a scenario where the schools across a neighborhood were coordinating their efforts, as a network with common goals, to meet the educational and social needs of the community. As stated before, this sort of arrangement would require more funding, more resources, more strategic planning efforts, more flexibility, and more awareness of the needs of the community. If more resources cannot be acquired, a necessary reordering of what already exists could be an appropriate first step. This reorganization could develop targeted and coordinated interventions to meet the needs of the community. As the system is reorganized additional resources can be added progressively to buttress it in due time. In order to achieve this sort of educational ecosystem that is (1) equitable, (2) accessible, and (3) providing services that meet the needs of the community a number of shifts would be needed away from the current paradigm.

The creation of a central office position called “Neighborhood Education Planning Commissioner” could facilitate the ambition communicated above. This person could also staff the efforts needed to make the vision a reality. This role would exist as a planning role within the school district. This planner would be responsible for planning, organizing, and coordinating the
efforts of local stakeholders in the neighborhood(s) (s)he is responsible for. This planner would
conduct annual scenario planning conversations with vested educational stakeholders. Part of this
process would include the distribution and collection of an annual survey that is intended to
determine the true needs of the community.

The planning commissioner would also be responsible for the development and
maintenance of a community education asset map. The purpose of this map would be to
communicate the existence and location of various educational assets within the community. For
example, where are the auditoriums located for civic engagement events? Where are the
gymnasiums for large indoor competitions? Where are the libraries with books? Where are the
computer labs and media centers? Which schools have robotics labs? Which schools have
gardens or botany labs? An understanding of this information could allow for increased
collaboration and cooperation across sites.

A third component of the work of this neighborhood planning commissioner would be to
draft a neighborhood plan designed to develop the capacity and connectivity of existing
educational institutions. The goal here would be to strengthen that which already exists instead
of continuing to create new educational institutions that may or may not succeed despite
significant investment. An aim of this plan could be to cluster other community services in or
around the school to improve linkages between the school and other social services.
Alternatively, it may cluster schools to improve linkages between schools for academic, social,
or other purposes.

The fourth component of this role would be to organize a set of school administrators that
would need to be created for such a plan to exist. These administrators (called community school
delegates) would be the link between school and community. They would function as a principal,
assistant principal, or dean within the school. However, they would also function as an advocate
and delegate within the neighborhood. This role is critical for the school to connect to the
community in a way that allows for increased collaboration across schools. The planning commissioner would hold quarterly meetings with a committee of community school delegate to increase collaboration and sharing of concerns within the community. For example, if student safety proves to be a concern for students and teachers according to the annual survey, the community school delegates and the planning commissioner could collaborate and search for solutions to this community problem. Through this quarterly forum, the neighborhood (and the school) becomes more organized for the betterment of the people living and going to school in it.

In order for this plan to be feasible, two additional entities are needed for this planning commissioner to oversee. The first is a fund or foundation for the community. Let’s call it a community investment fund for educational purposes. This fund could exist as a 501c(3) that is available for the specifically stated needs of the community. Any community school delegate could petition for funds to create a solution to a stated need. The delegate would need to present a proposal to the community school delegation at their quarterly forum. Upon approval, the project or program would be approved and the outcome of the project or program would be shared upon completion of the stated timeframe for completion. Funding could also come from existing foundations that are already seeking opportunities to support similar efforts. Additionally, this sort of planning would invite the participation of other philanthropic organizations with programs that fund community-level work.

This fund could also serve as a coffer for ensuring that the conditions of the built environments designated for education are suitable to meet their stated purpose. In the same way, the community school delegate could submit a petition for funds to improve a laboratory or renovate a wing of the school. The proposal serves two purposes – it must go before a committee that knows the educational assets within the community. This serves as a more rigorous peer-review process before moving forward with a new project or program. It also promotes further collaboration and deeper understanding of the educational assets within the community.
The aim of a process like this is more connected, better organized, and more collaborative educational practices. The outcome of this is intended to create a school, functioning as a network that exists for the community – not simply in the community. This is not a panacea. Instead, it is a framework to understand how schools could work more together within a place-based system (like a neighborhood) for the sake of the community the institution seeks to serve.

CONCLUSIONS

This collective body of work was intended to articulate a vision for the school as an anchor institution for the neighborhood. The goal was to envision a school that works for the community – rather than simply in the community. Five major conclusions can be drawn from this particular line of thought.

First, one must agree that the high school – as currently structured in low-income communities in America – fails to link properly with its communities and subsequently fails to act as an anchor for the community. Urban schools in low-income communities are failing their stakeholders in three primary aspects: (1) equitable outcomes, (2) accessibility to resources, and (3) providing services that meet the needs of the community. There is mounting evidence to suggest that urban schools in low-income communities are not achieving equal outcomes when compared to other schools. At the same time, there is a growing tide of privatization and neoliberal policymaking that limits the accessibility of schools in neighborhoods to only those who “win the lottery” and make their way into private or charter schools – which are often not even in the neighborhood. In addition to these influences, standardized testing and increased accountability through No Child Left Behind and its legislative successors have forced schools to reduce the amount of attention they pay to the social and physical needs of their primary stakeholders: students and their families. Schools have been reduced to test-preparation factories in some cases, low-quality babysitting service providers in other cases, or, heaven forbid, prison-population pipelines for high school dropouts.
Once it can be agreed upon that the high school is failing to serve as an anchor institution, consider for the moment the possibility that the high school could be conceived as a network of aligned community organizations within a single neighborhood. If properly conceived as a network, instead of disconnected silos, the local high school has the potential to act as an anchor institution for the neighborhood. Building on the research of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, one can reasonably see the potential of the local high school as an anchor institution in the community. The high school can have a large stake and an important presence in the neighborhood. The high school can have economic impacts on employment and spending at the neighborhood scale. The high school can consume sizable amounts of land. The assets of high schools are relatively fixed and difficult to relocate. High schools consume a significant amount of goods and services. They generate jobs. They attract highly skilled individuals. They are large employers that offer employment at multiple levels and across multiple skill-sets or disciplines. Finally, high schools can exist as centers of culture, learning, and the development or exchange of ideas because of their enormous human resources.

Thirdly, greater planning, organization and collaboration within the neighborhood are necessary in order to realize the enormous potential that the school has to offer. Schools will need to work together more regularly. This starts with administrators and works its way down to the teachers and other support personnel on staff within the school. Local community leaders and planners need to organize these efforts on a quarterly basis. The local school district or neighborhood governing body could create an administrative position to coordinate these efforts. It would be important, under this framework, for at least one person to be aware of the educational landscape of the neighborhood to better facilitate the points of convergence within the neighborhood system. Only a coordinated and comprehensive effort can adequately serve the broad needs that are present in low-income communities. The school can play a critical role in this coordination.
Fourth, in order to adequately serve low-income communities, the high school must be (1) equitable, (2) accessible, and (3) providing services that meet the needs of the community. The equitable school offers choice in curriculum and equal outcomes for its students in educational attainment and achievement. The accessible school is proximal, affordable, and attainable. It is important that opportunities for personal development be nearby for all citizens. It is critical that these opportunities be affordable. The programmatic demands of the school system must be attainable for all in order for it to be fully accessible. Finally, the school that is for the community meets the needs of the community that it claims to serve. The services offered are aligned with the stated needs of the community. The outcome of those services is that the quality of life in the neighborhood is improved in large batches as groups of students matriculate through the school system. The school becomes a point of convergence and a conduit of positive change for the community when it exists for the community – not just in the community.

Finally, the evidence of this vision would be that the high school would serve as a point of convergence between parents, youth, primary schools, post-secondary institutions, neighborhoods, and the city. Parents and youth would come together for celebrations, civic events, assemblies, performances, and conferences with their teachers. Primary schools and post-secondary institutions would converge at the high school as students are handed off from one institution (the high school) to another (college or the workforce). Counselors would build relationships with college admissions officers and employers to ensure that every student can transition from adolescence to adulthood. The neighborhood and the city would work together to pool resources from state and federal coffers for the betterment of the community. Principals and administrators would work with district-level officials to make sure that their constituents and stakeholders are being provided for in the specific ways that they need provision.

The high school has great potential as an institution for the neighborhood. The purpose of an anchor is to hold steady a vessel in the shifting currents of the ocean. Urban communities are
vulnerable to the shifting currents of economics, politics, population demographics, and so on. The school has the opportunity to stand firmly as a point of convergence and an anchor for the community, as the neighborhood shifts and changes over time.
REFERENCES


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RESEARCH INTERESTS: The intersection of education and community development. The role of the school as an anchor institution in urban neighborhoods. The interplay between school and community. The role of educational attainment as a catalyst for local economic and community development.