



Community Schools: A Strategy, Not a Program




National Center
for
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



The Children's Aid Society

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***“Could someone help me with these?
I’m late for math class.”***

Community Schools: A Strategy, Not a Program



By the end of this session, participants will:

- ◆ Be able to refer to several definitions of a community school
- ◆ Understand the four capacities and have examples of each from the field
- ◆ Be introduced to the developmental stages of community schools

Definitions

A Strategy for What?



A strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success...

Pat Harvey, Former Superintendent
St. Paul Public Schools

What is a Community School?



A community school is both **a place** and **a set of partnerships** between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, services, supports and opportunities leads to **improved student learning, stronger families** and **healthier communities**.

Coalition for Community Schools

Another Definition...



A community school is characterized by:

- ◆ Extended Services
- ◆ Extended Hours
- ◆ Extended Relationships (“swinging door”)

CAS Developmental Triangle



A Closer Look



Key Ingredients



- ◆ Education First
- ◆ Lead Agency as Partner, Not Tenant
- ◆ Full-Time Presence of Lead Agency
- ◆ Joint Planning (Particularly between Principal and Coordinator)
- ◆ Integration of Partners into Governance and Decision-Making Bodies (e.g., School Leadership Team)

Key Components



- ◆ After-School and Summer Enrichment
- ◆ Parent Involvement
- ◆ Adult Education
- ◆ Medical, Dental, Mental Health and Social Services
- ◆ Early Childhood
- ◆ Community and Economic Development

National Movement in the US



- ◆ National Coalition for Community Schools founded in 1998
- ◆ 21st Century CLC program grows from \$1 million to \$1 billion over five years
- ◆ Majority Leader Steny Hoyer sponsoring Full-Service Community Schools bill
- ◆ Cities and districts (like Chicago and Portland) begin “going to scale”



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Several well-known models:



- ◆ Beacons
- ◆ Bridges to Success
- ◆ Children's Aid Society
- ◆ Communities in Schools
- ◆ Healthy Start
- ◆ Polk Brothers Full-Service Schools
- ◆ Schools of the 21st Century (Yale University)
- ◆ WEPIC (University of Pennsylvania)



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Results of Mature Community School Initiatives



- ◆ Improved academic performance – reading and math
- ◆ Improved student and teacher attendance
- ◆ Reduced dropout rates and higher graduation rates
- ◆ Improved behavior
- ◆ Gains in indicators of positive youth development, such as leadership and conflict resolution skills
- ◆ Greater parent involvement
- ◆ Community benefits, such as better use of school buildings and safer neighborhoods

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Capacities & Stages

Critical Capacities



Effective community schools continually develop a set of four key capacities:

1. Comprehensiveness
2. Collaboration
3. Coherence
4. Commitment

1. Comprehensiveness



Programs, services and opportunities respond to a wide spectrum of identified needs by marshalling a full complement of partnership resources

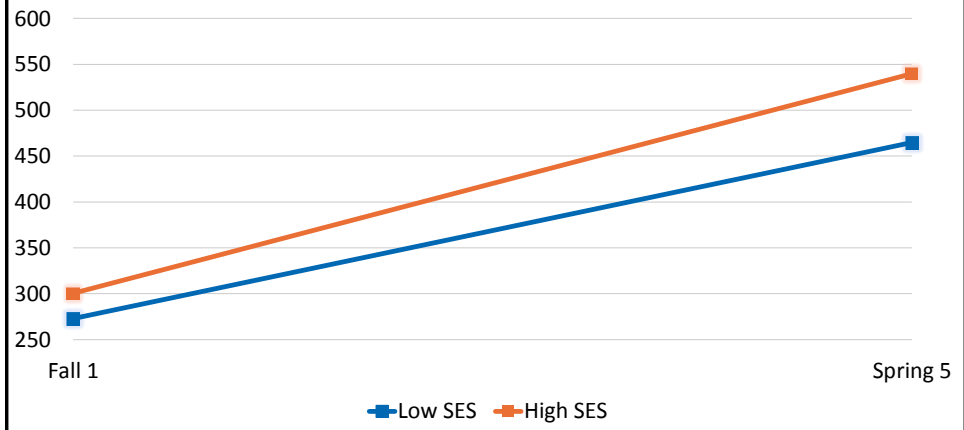
- ◆ Whole Child Developmental Approach
- ◆ Needs Assessment & Resource Allocation
- ◆ Asset-based, High-quality Program Development

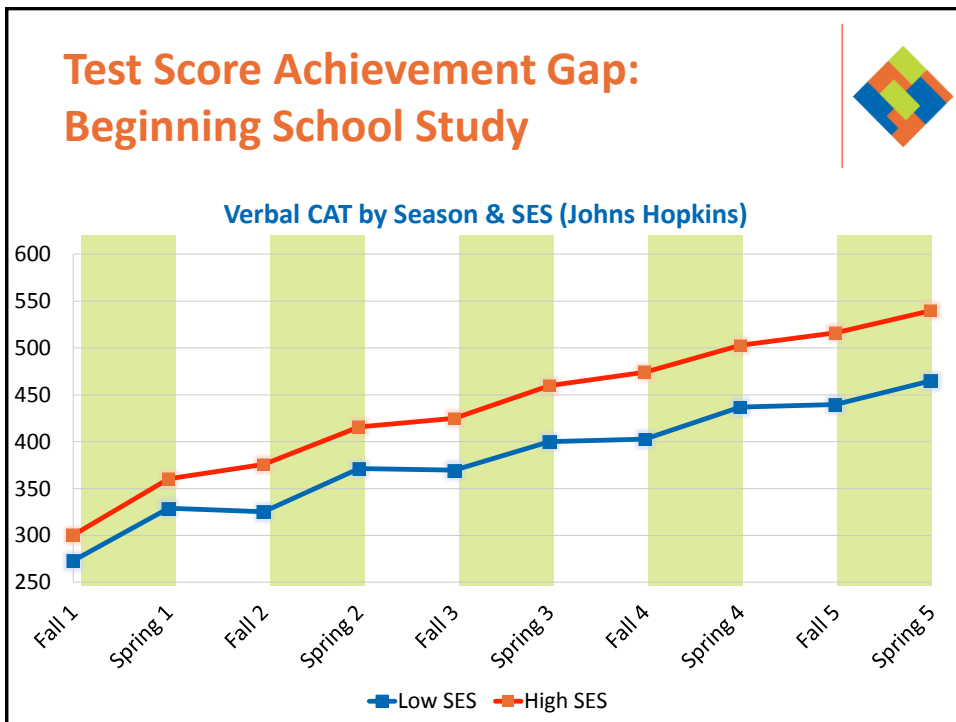


Test Score Achievement Gap: Beginning School Study



Verbal CAT by Season & SES (Johns Hopkins)





2. Collaboration

All stakeholders are involved in meaningful, permanent roles – including educators, parents, students, funders, community members, providers, policymakers

- ◆ Engagement
- ◆ Partnership Development
- ◆ Shared Leadership

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“Collaboration has been defined as an unnatural act between non-consenting adults. We all say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is that we want to continue doing things as we have always done them, while others change to fit what we are doing.”

Jocelyn Elders
Former US Surgeon General

Collaboration - What is it?



- ◆ Collaboration is the highest form of partnership
- ◆ It entails multiple partners who care about a community or an issue
- ◆ Partners come together and examine their own systems and interrelationships while learning from each other's views



3. Coherence



Activities and programs are coordinated and integrated with effective management and accountability

- ◆ Program Integration and Oversight
- ◆ School/Partner Relationships
- ◆ Coordination

Chronic Early Absence



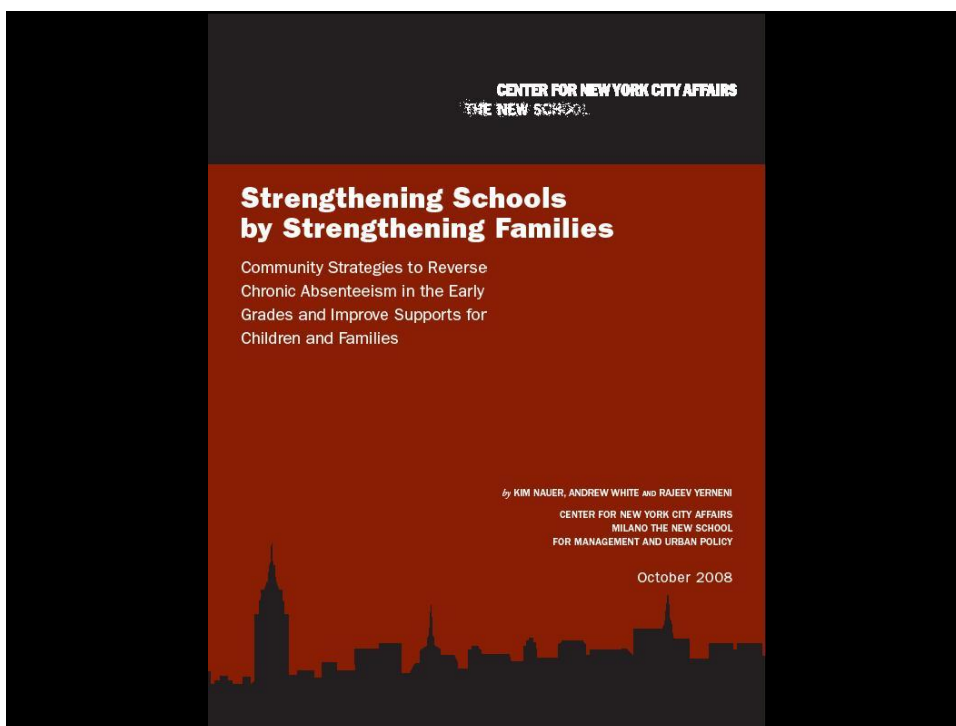
- ◆ Chronic early absence occurs when K-3rd graders miss 10% or more days (nearly a month) in a school year including excused and unexcused absences.
- ◆ National research found that this level of school absence was associated with lower academic performance, truancy, dropping out, delinquency and substance abuse.

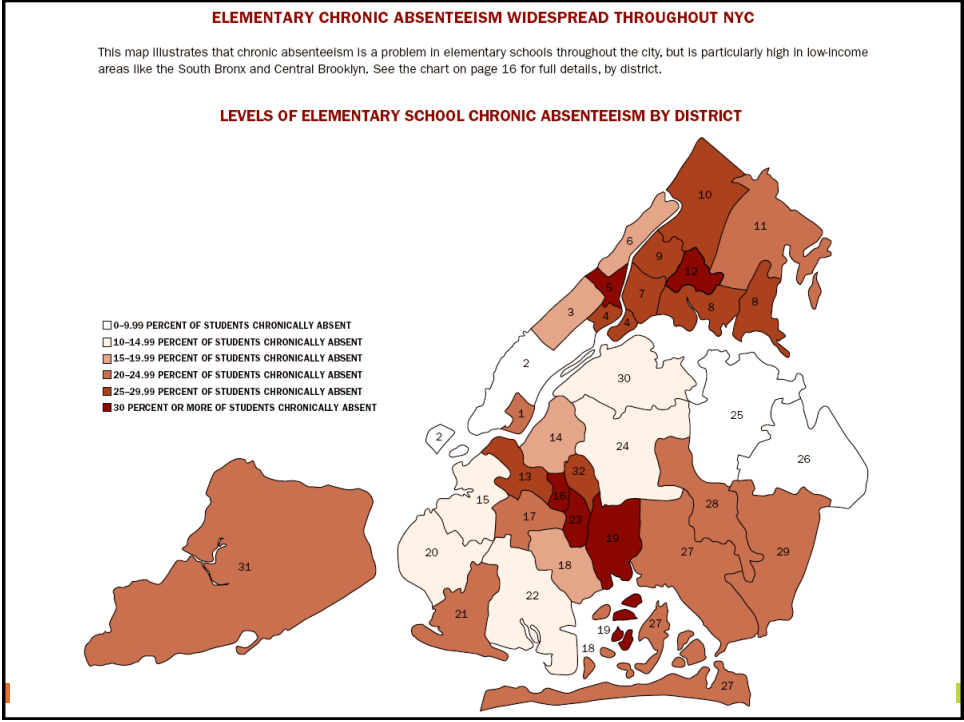
Hedy Chang

Why is it Overlooked?



- ◆ Communities may be less concerned that young children (as opposed middle or high school students) will cause trouble if they miss school.
- ◆ It lies hidden within typically high elementary school attendance rates.
- ◆ Typically schools only track data on attendance and truancy (unexcused absence).
- ◆ School data systems may underestimate prevalence of chronic absence when they do not electronically track absences for individual children.





ELEMENTARY CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT NYC

This map illustrates that chronic absenteeism is a problem in elementary schools throughout the city, but is particularly high in low-income areas like the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn. See the chart on page 16 for full details, by district.

LEVELS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM BY DISTRICT

- ◆ More than 90,000 children in grades K to 5 (20% total enrollment) missed at least a month of school during the 2007–08 school year
- ◆ In 12 of New York City's 32 school districts, well over 25 percent of primary school children were chronically absent from school, missing more than 10 percent of the school year.
- ◆ In 5 of these districts, fully 30 percent of primary school children, kindergarten through fifth grade, were chronically absent.
- ◆ In 6 of these districts, between 8 and 11 percent of primary school children missed 38 or more days of school.
- ◆ And in 123 individual New York City primary schools, at least 30 percent of the children were chronically absent.

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Recommendations

- ◆ Rates of chronic absenteeism should be one of the measures by which schools are judged in the city's annual "school progress reports."
- ◆ The Department of Education should assign its attendance teachers to tighter geographic areas.
- ◆ Schools should offer teachers and other staff more extensive training in how to deal with cases of suspected abuse or neglect.
- ◆ The city should continue to pursue tighter coordination of existing services for children and families.
- ◆ Identify 50 to 100 schools with high rates of chronic absenteeism in high-poverty districts, and establish executive-level partnerships with outside organizations to put solutions into action (community schools).

4. Commitment



Sustainability planning activities are employed from the start

- ◆ Shared Vision and Results Framework
- ◆ Building Public Will and Participation
- ◆ Strategic Financing
- ◆ Evaluation and Capacity-Building



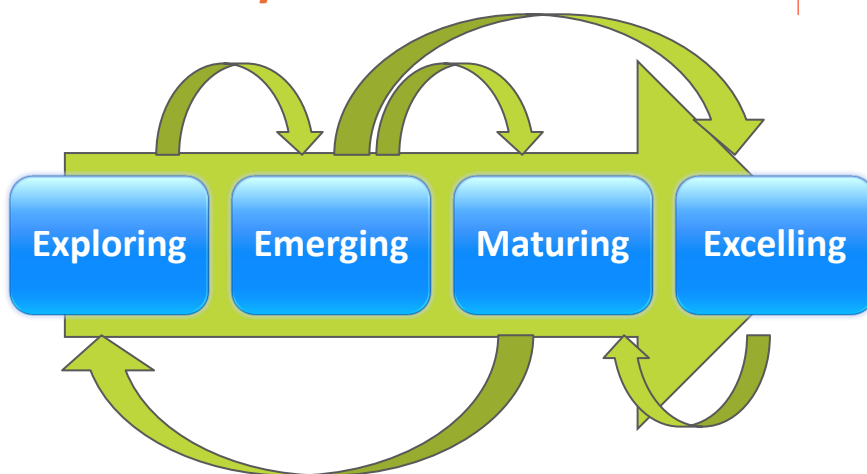
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Lessons about Leverage



- ◆ Non-education dollars from multiple sources can be leveraged to add value to the work of schools, in schools
- ◆ CS can add both human and financial resources to schools
- ◆ U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls CS “the most highly leveraged dollars I spent in Chicago”

Stages of Development in a Community School



Our Three Mantras



- ◆ It's all about relationships
- ◆ Everything has to be negotiated—all the time
- ◆ For community schools to work, the partners have to have the word "yes" written in their hearts



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