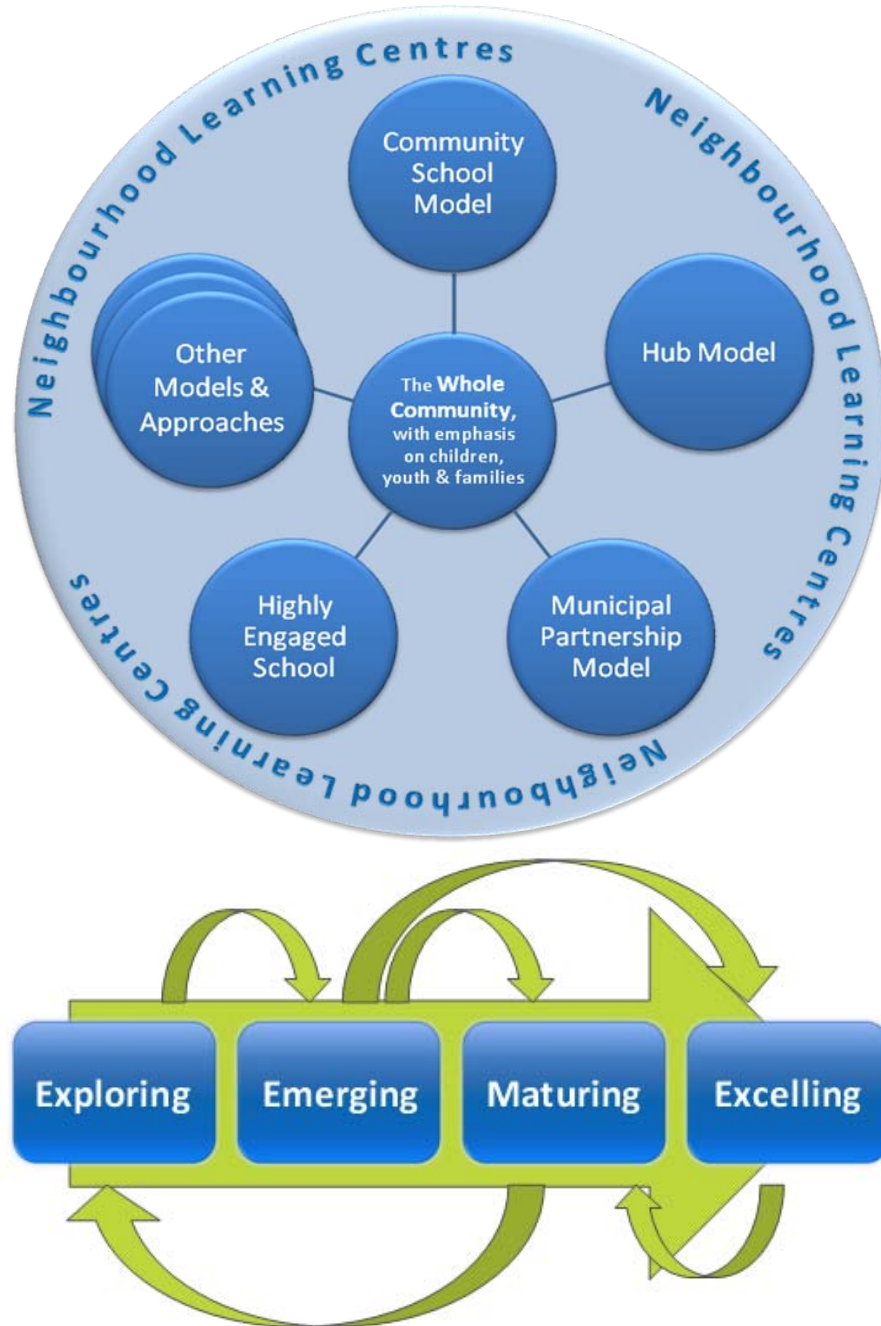


Neighbourhood Learning Centres in British Columbia:

Models, Elements, and Stages of Development of Schools with Community Engagement



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1. Introduction

Purpose

This document has been written by members of the board of the Association of Community Education in British Columbia. The purpose of this document is multifaceted, and it can be used for information, discussion, planning processes for a new school, or assessment of an existing school. The three main concepts are divided into sections, each with its own graphics: four models, nine elements, and four stages of development of a community-engaged school. These sections can be used together and are directly correlated, or you may choose to pull them out separately, depending on your purposes. Graphics and summaries can be used on their own and are also backed up by deeper information and analysis.

Models

The first part of this report describes four models of schools that demonstrate high levels of community engagement. We have researched the concepts under discussion from an international perspective, and an Internet search reveals a variety of terms used for these schools.

In Canada, the US, and the United Kingdom these schools may be called Community Schools, Extended Schools, Community- Engaged Schools, Full Service Schools, Community Learning Centres, Communities in Schools, Family Resource Centres, 21st-Century Community Learning Centres, Integrated Hub Models, and Neighbourhood Learning Centres. All of these designations reflect deeper-level, two-way interactions between a school and its community. In the context of evolving educational practices and technology, *community* has become an inclusive concept that may even be global in scope.

Schools with high levels of community engagement typically have partnerships with community agencies and provide community and family programs and services in the school facility on a year-round basis. These schools usually enrich educational opportunities by integrating the school curriculum and community resources, and they contribute to community development by addressing the interests of all members of the community.

Elements

The second part of this report describes a framework for nine elements of programs and services in a community-engaged school. The elements can be useful in planning processes, in assessment (how are we doing in each element?), or in communities' consideration of what they want to create through community engagement (which elements should we start with?).

Stages of Development

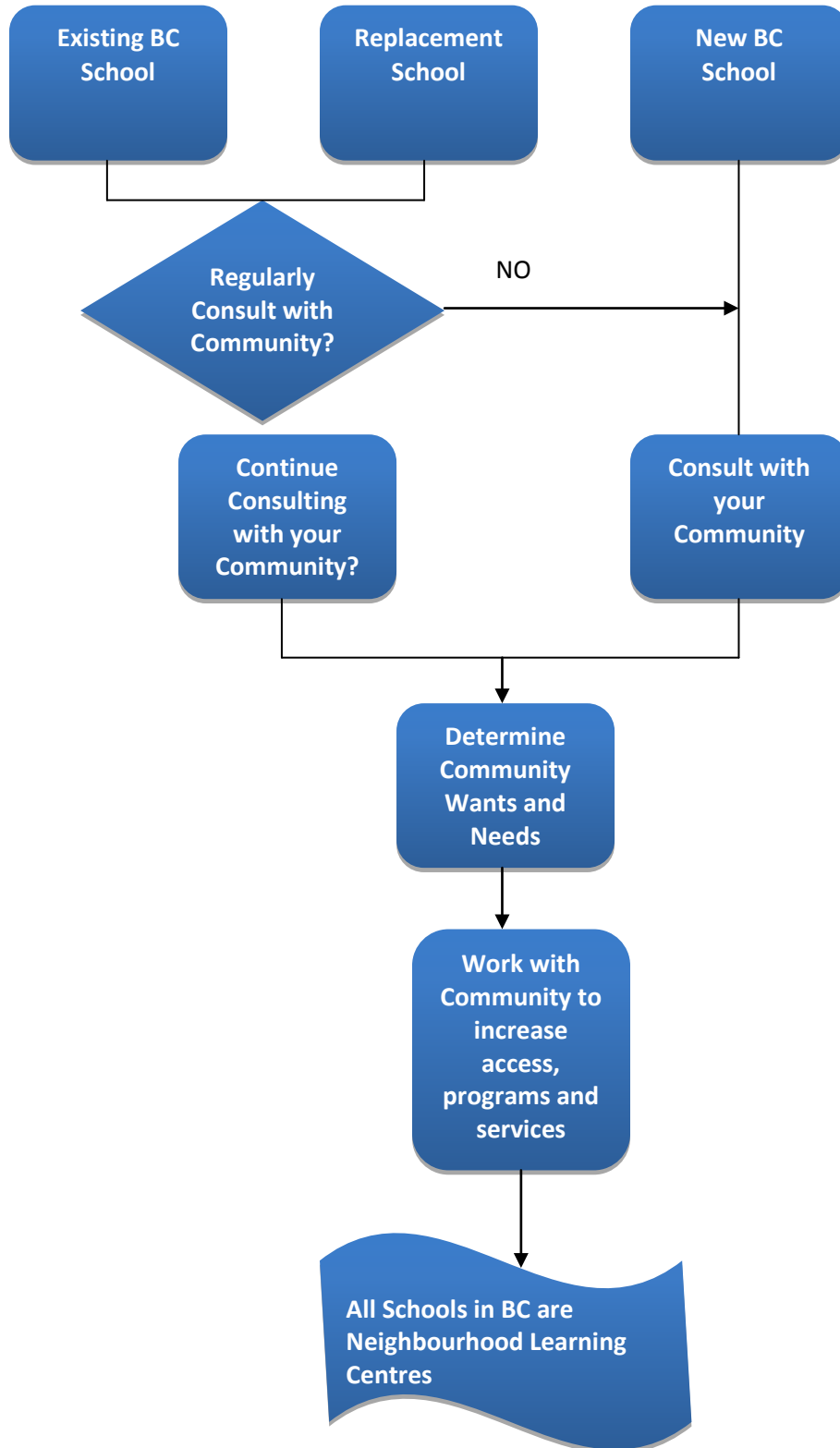
The third part of this report sets out a framework for analyzing schools as they progress through four stages of development toward increasingly high levels of community engagement from **exploring** through to **excelling**. These stages of development and the suggestions for applying the results to a specific school are based on the work of the Children's Aid Society of New York. We have modified their work, with permission, to better fit the BC school setting.

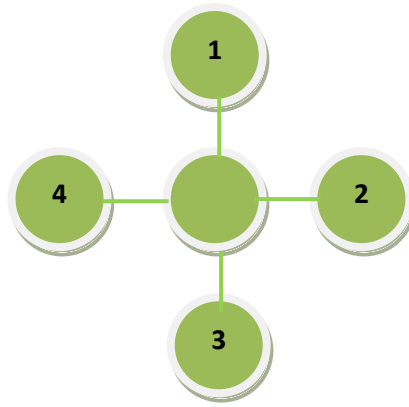
2. Neighbourhood Learning Centres

The Planned Development of Neighbourhood Learning Centres in British Columbia

For the most current information on Neighbourhood Learning Centres go to the website

<http://www.neighbourhoodlearningcentres.gov.bc.ca/>





3. A Summary of Four Models of BC Schools with High Community Engagement

Neighbourhood Learning Centre is an overarching term for schools that offer educational programs and reach out to engage their communities on a year-round basis in many other programs and services. Many schools across the province can be described as Neighbourhood Learning Centres, and some have operated with high levels of community engagement and year-round services for decades.

It is recognized that all schools in the province have unique characteristics that have evolved to meet local community needs and interests and that there are varying levels of engagement between schools and their communities. In addition to the models that have operated for years throughout the province, there are new approaches to community engagement and delivery of programs and services that fit the Neighbourhood Learning Centres concept.

There are four generic models that are useful to understand the range and complexity of NLCs. Do not be limited by these four models, consider a fifth model that could be a combination of elements from the first four models. As well, it could be an entirely different model, such as significant working relationship with the local Aboriginal community or a local non-profit agency.

Model 1: Community Schools

This model is based on the community school concept that was developed by the Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan, in the 1930s and first implemented in BC in 1971. Typically, a full-time coordinator is deeply connected with community programs and services for children, youth, and families at one school. Family, community, and student engagement and support are central, with relationships being the key. The school facility is used for a wide variety of purposes after school hours, on weekends, and during school breaks throughout the year. Some activities and programs are integrated with regular day-school academic programs, whereas other programs meet a wide range of community needs and interests for all age levels.

Model 2: Hub Community Schools

Like model 1, the underlying principles of this model are very similar and also based on the original community school concept that was developed in Flint, Michigan, in the 1930s and first implemented in BC in 1971. The key difference is that the coordinators are far reaching and work with more than one school, often in geographic proximity, and may have a team of assistants or program support staff with specific expertise.

Model 3: Municipality/Community School Partnerships

This model uses the school facility for a wide variety of programs after school hours, on weekends, and during school breaks throughout the year. Programming for all age levels is based on community interests and needs. Municipal bodies and regional districts are typical funding partners. Compared with models 1 and 2, and particularly if there is no designated staff, this model will generally have less integration between the regular day school programs and the programs that operate beyond the school day. The findings showed that with designated staff the degree of integration was higher.

Model 4: Community Engaged Schools

Most one-room rural schools of years past had strong community involvement and were key facilities where people came together. The US literature on community schools refers to these “little red schoolhouses” as the basis of modern community schools. Today, some schools across BC reach beyond their academic mandate to develop strong interactive relationships with their communities. The leadership may come from parents, agencies, school staff or administrators, or, typically, a combination of sources. One strong personality may be a driving force behind new initiatives. These schools may have no formal designation or staffing but function with a high level of community involvement. It is also important to recognize that there are unique and emerging approaches to educational practices and school-community engagement that may not yet be clearly articulated.

4. Key Features of Each Model

Model 1: Community School	
Programs & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model 1 schools offer regular academic programs to day students and operate additional programs and services year round. • Integration of the regular day-school programs and community programs may become nearly seamless. • Programs may be funded by multiple partners and benefit not just the school community, but also the community at large. They are based on needs and priorities identified by both the school and the broader community. Key components are capacity building and a community-development approach. • Academic, recreational, cultural, and family support services and many other programs and services are offered for all age levels in the community.
Management & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance typically includes an advisory group, council, or nonprofit society that has representation beyond parents and school staff/unions, with a wide range of community people as well as local or regional service providers. Ideally, the society has charitable tax status, which allows access to a wide range of funding opportunities.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to regular school staff, there are typically a full-time coordinator who is part of the leadership team in the school and one or more assistants. • The coordinator may have a background in teaching, social work, youth and child care work, community development, etc. Coordinators have strong skills to collaborate with school staff, the community, and municipal bodies. The coordinator has the capability to develop, evaluate, and supervise programs and demonstrates strong administrative abilities.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services are offered, located, and scheduled in response to input from the users of the program, school staff, and all relevant partner service providers. • Formal and informal agreements on joint program planning, funding, and evaluation are in place. • Community-wide coordination of programs and services is an established practice.

Model 1: Community School

Engagement of parents, students, and community in community schools is meaningful and based on the common principles of authentic involvement, respect, inclusiveness, mutual reciprocity, and leadership development. Everyone who has a stake in the process is represented, at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure that everyone benefits from the involvement.

<p>Parent Engagement</p>	<p>Parent engagement :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act as advocates for student learning and well-being • participate in the visioning, planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services, especially those directly relevant to parents • volunteer or are paid to instruct in the school or at other program locations • are involved in the governance body at either a board or committee level and assist with fundraising • become partners in education to support their children’s learning at home
<p>Student Engagement</p>	<p>Student engagement in ‘real’ ways, based on ages and skill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer feedback to administration and staff on programs and services • participate in the visioning, planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services, especially those directly relevant to themselves • volunteer or are paid to become leaders in the school or at other program locations • are involved in the governance body at either a board or committee level and assist with fundraising
<p>Community Engagement</p>	<p>Community member engagement, including individuals, businesses, other nonprofits, and service providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocate for lifelong learning and social support for all ages • offer feedback to all staff on programs and services • participate in the planning and evaluation of programs and services • volunteer or are paid to instruct in the school or at other program locations • are involved in the governance body at either a board or committee level and assist with fundraising
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This model serves all ages; the partners include early childhood staff and parents; elementary, middle, and senior secondary school staff, students, and parents; community individuals; seniors; businesses; other nonprofits; and service providers and funders. Postsecondary institutions and other larger educational or social support agencies including various government ministries and several departments within each ministry may be also included in the list of partners.

Model 1: Community School	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting evidence of success in a community school is essential. The process involves samples of all programs and services and all participants, including funding partners. • Evidence will be based on both hard data and stories of success. • Ministry of Education CommunityLINKS funding and much of the outside funding are moving towards the development and use of a Logic Model of assessment of the effectiveness of money designated to support children and families with high vulnerability. The programs and services in these schools can be seen as contributing to the success of children and youth.
Sustainability is the process of securing community and organizational support and funding for the long-term continuation of programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building sustainability requires significant staff and community leadership and time. Community schools develop broad-based public support, diverse funding, evidence of student and family success, and strong leadership, with ongoing capacity building at all levels. Sustainability means much more than just funding. • Funding is typically a combination of tax-based support from the local school district and municipal or regional bodies, along with grants from foundations, gaming authorities, etc. User fees may also provide significant funding. • Leveraging of tax-based funds is common, often as up to \$3.00 generated from every tax dollar spent for a community school operation. • Community schools over the past three decades have been funded and shaped by funding from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Social Equity branch, municipal governments, CommunityLINKS, gaming, foundations, and local partnerships. • The vision for funding is multi-ministerial sustainable investment in addition to various local partnerships.

Model 1: Community School	
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Community Schools: Burnaby School District has seven community schools. Coordinators are certified teachers. The school district has a longstanding shared funding agreement with the City of Burnaby and in addition has strong partnerships with a variety of community agencies. • Rural and Remote Rural Community Schools: Many school districts have maintained this model over the past two decades. Community schools can be found on the Sunshine Coast and in Powell River, Comox Valley, Port Alberni, Bowen Island (West Vancouver District), Cariboo-Chilcotin, Kootenay Lake, and Kootenay-Columbia. Edward Milne Community School in Sooke School District is a secondary model. A unique example of a rural community school is Blueberry Creek in Castlegar. The regular day-school closed some years ago because of low enrolment, but the school district and community have supported a wide range of early childhood, literacy, and other community programs in this facility for several years. • The Family Model of Community Schools: School District 68 Nanaimo offers two examples: the Harewood Family of Community Schools and the Cedar Community Schools; each school in the family has a coordinator. A Family of Community Schools is a partnership among a group of schools that includes at least one elementary and one secondary school and covers a specific geographical area. Students benefit from the lifelong learning community education approach that runs from Strong Start/kindergarten to Grade 12 graduation and beyond. Community school staff collaborate on programming for all ages and utilize all schools to maximize the learning, social, recreational, and community-development opportunities.

Model 2: Hub Model of Community Schools	
Programs & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools provide regular academic programs to day students and operate additional programs beyond the school day and school year for all ages. • Programs/services related to areas of recreation/leisure, social/personal growth, and future educational opportunities may be offered, often with a focus on vulnerable students. • Integration of the regular day-school programs and community programs may become nearly seamless.

Model 2: Hub Model of Community Schools	
Management & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school coordinators are school district employees who are accountable to the Ministry CommunityLINKS through district and school administration; the school district provides human resources/accounting services. • Generally school districts have Letters of Understanding with major partnership agencies involved in community schools. • School district-wide steering committees frequently exist with representatives from major partnership agencies or businesses who meet to determine whether programs and services are achieving the intended goals. • Each hub of schools will work within their geographical area to meet locally with representatives from community school staff team, senior administration, parents, agencies and other representative from the community. Meeting regularly, the group provides direction on local needs and ideas, as well as feedback.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinators, support staff, and programmers are assigned to a hub school but work with additional schools so that most or all schools in the district can have an expectation of some support. A variety of criteria are used to allocate support and run programs in particular schools. • Coordinators may have a background in social work, youth and child care work, community development, etc. They must have strong skills to collaborate with school staff, the community, and municipal bodies, as well as the ability to develop, evaluate, and supervise programs and demonstrate good overall administrative abilities. • Staff team members may have specialized skills; for example, teachers with specialized learning expertise and programmers with a recreation background may be part of the team.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major agencies may be integrated at the school-district governance level. This could include city, school district, Mental Health, RCMP, Ministry of Children and Family Development, United Way and others. At each hub site local agencies are invited to be part of community school programming and provide services and opportunities to the children and families of that hub site. • Community schools/agencies determine how to weave together an array of local services for children, youth and families. • School staff are informed re services and programs that agencies bring to the school. Agency staff is viewed as part of the school enabling holistic support for children and families.
<p>Engagement of parents, students, and community in the hub models of community schools is based on the common principles of authentic involvement, respect, mutual reciprocity, leadership development, and the inclusion of everyone who has a stake in the process at all levels as appropriate.</p>	

Model 2: Hub Model of Community Schools	
Parent Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are involved through formal methods, asset mapping, and informal methods; personal conversations; and parent meetings. • Parents are connected with a variety of services that community schools and/or various partner agencies offer. Information is provided to meet the needs of and desires for services and programs through a variety of methods: newsletters, e-mails, posters.
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often hubs create a leadership model by training high school students, who then use their new skills to work with elementary school students within the hub e.g. tutoring and assisting with various recreation programs and events • Students at all levels are consulted regarding programs, delivery and improvements. • Senior students often have the opportunity to design and deliver programs to elementary school childrens.
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each community school hub is designed to meet community needs and build a sense of community. • Each hub works with partners in the area to assess needs; determine strengths, resources, and services; and identify service gaps to aid in the development of programs and resources to be utilized to serve the school families and the larger community. • Schools in each hub act as the middle agency to bring information and resources into the schools so that families have easy access to opportunities in the areas of recreation/leisure, social/personal growth, and future educational opportunities. • Community members, including seniors and postsecondary students, are viewed as community assets and invited to be part of the programming.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This model involves working with partners to determine the school's and community's needs and who/how to meet these needs best. • Partners include nonprofit agencies, public agencies, private donors, and businesses (see Integration). Community schools provide space and connections with families. Agencies provide programs and resources to meet the needs of families and help schools to reach their goals. • Partnerships are mutually beneficial. Community school staff may sit on boards of partner agencies to build partnership capacity.

Model 2: Hub Model of Community Schools	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific evaluation processes vary within each school district and among hubs within a school district. On both a formal and an informal basis, staff continually evaluate all programs to determine their quality and ensure that the program goals are met. For example, in Vancouver and Surrey the evaluation of 10%–20% of all programs involves pre- and post-testing to determine whether the intended impacts have been achieved. • Year-end reports for Ministry of Education CommunityLINKS are moving to the use of outcome data to demonstrate the impacts that lead to positive change.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is typically a combination of public funds through Ministry of Education, CommunityLINKS from the local school district, local community, municipal or regional bodies, along with grants from foundations, gaming authorities, etc. User fees may also provide significant funding. Leveraging of tax-based funds is common. • Vancouver has over 200 funding partnerships, and Surrey has key partnerships with the Cities of Surrey and White Rock, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, and multiple Surrey-based organizations.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hub model was first implemented in Vancouver School District in 2004, and then in Surrey in 2007. • In Vancouver the Windermere model is representative of the more recent type of community school model. • BC’s most well-known and comprehensive community school is Britannia Community Centre, built in the 1970s, which now as part of the HUB model encompasses six elementary and one high school, as well as three city community centres, and offers services to all families in that geographic area. Operating as a society, its board of directors includes representatives of all partners and 14 elected community members who meet monthly to plan and provide direction.

Model 3: Municipal/Community Schools	
Programs & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This model includes three key components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the regular school programs with varying degrees of enhancement through the Community School coordinator • the “after regular school” hours Community School programs • the “after regular school” hours municipal programs • Afterschool, weekend, and summer programs are offered by the Community School staff of the School and/or the municipal staff. • The focus of the municipal programs is primarily recreational. • The focus of the Community School programs covers all areas: educational, recreational, and social support services

Model 3: Municipal/Community Schools	
Management & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Use Agreements are in place between the school district and the municipality that clearly detail the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization and its staff. • There may be a volunteer advisory board with representation from the district, the school staff, the municipality, students, parents, and the broader community.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff may be housed full time in the school building or may work there after regular school hours to provide programming for students and the broader community. • If the site has a community school coordinator, his or her work is performed under the day-to-day supervision of the school principal and the advisory board and in accordance with the Joint Use Agreement between the school district and the municipality. • One of the coordinator's key roles is to work with the municipal staff to encourage joint planning for and provision of programs and services.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the school has a community school coordinator on site, there may be a higher level of integration within and between the school program, the municipal programs, and the broader community. • When the staff person is off site during the school day, the degree of integration between the school and the municipality will depend on the work of the municipal staff, principal, and school staff. • The long-term vision is to have a fluid program with the municipality providing the services and strongly supporting the needs of the students and families within the school community as well as the needs of the broader community.
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in the regular school curriculum and extracurricular activities • Participate in the services and programs that both the municipal staff and/or the Community School coordinator provides • May sit on the steering committee/advisory board or provide input to programs and services through informal conversations or surveys
Parent Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in the school planning councils and parent advisory council as in all schools • Volunteer and participate in the school or services provided through the Community School coordinator • May also be engaged in their own educational upgrading if that is offered through the Community School programs • Participate in the programs offered through the municipality • May sit on the volunteer steering committee/advisory board • Provide feedback during evaluation process

Model 3: Municipal/Community Schools	
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the regular curriculum through the work of either the school staff or the Community School coordinator or both. • The level of involvement in the community will be high because the municipal programs and/or community school programs will be open to community members as well as students. • Offer, volunteer, and participate in programs that are offered through the Community School coordinator. • May sit on the volunteer steering committee/advisory board • Provide feedback during evaluation process
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main partnership is between the school district and the municipality, with extended partnerships with individuals and other agencies and organizations through the coordinator.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation of the regular or community school program is carried out according to District policy. • The Municipal programs have their own evaluation process to assess their programs. • The long term goal is to have an evaluation process that assesses the effectiveness of the joint provision of programs and services.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support of the municipality and existence of Joint Use Agreements between the school district and the municipality are key components in the long-term stability of this model.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promontory Heights, Chilliwack School District • Bowen Island, West Vancouver School District

Model 4: Community-Engaged Schools may have no formal designation or staffing but function with a high level of community involvement

<p>Programs & Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect and respond to the needs of its community: its uniqueness and cultural diversity—isolated and remote, urban inner city, socioeconomics. • Are driven by a particular need and/or combination of circumstances within the school, district, and community and bring added value to the children and community • Or community engagement may arise from declining enrolment, unused space, or the need to upgrade or replace a facility. • Are designed intentionally to be offered through the partnership groups to best include and support students, families, and the community at large; agencies bring existing services into the school. • May have school programs offered in one area of the building and community programs in another, with varying levels of overlap and integration; or it may be housed in a multipurpose building with multiple partnerships and a regular or alternate school program with fluid student, family, and community access. • Enables families through the school and partnerships, but does not provide everything.
<p>Management & Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the district level are Memorandums of Understanding signed by all partners within the building that clearly outline who is responsible for all aspects of the facility and the services provided. • At the facility level, the principal and the head administrative staff of the various agencies work together on a daily basis to address issues that arise. • Involvement at the school level of the PAC • Involvement at the community level with a neighbourhood steering committee or association • Involvement at the level of partnerships with a committee to oversee logistics

Model 4: Community-Engaged Schools may have no formal designation or staffing but function with a high level of community involvement	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school program is staffed according to district policy. Postings for school staff contain language to reflect the unique expectations and setting of the position. • School staff and administration are committed to not carrying on in a typical way; students' and the community's needs come first; teamwork is heightened. The principal models deliberate openness and visibility to build relationships. • Likely no paid staff beyond regular school staff; an exception may be inner-city staffing. The bulk of the extra work involved from having multiple partners within the building falls primarily to the principal. Any additional coordinating staff is usually part time, based on grants or staffing from community agencies. • Community members may initiate the process of securing additional grants and work with the principal to submit the proposals. • Partner agencies have their own staffing and unions. • Agreed-upon policies for custodian support for the community use area of the building as are established
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varying levels of integration amongst the programs, with some facilities developing a well-accepted degree of coordination and integration of services
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are engaged in the regular school program and its extracurricular activities and participate in appropriate services provided by the other partners in the building.
Parent Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a welcoming place with school staff visible, parents congregate and readily participate in the school. • Parents are involved in the regular school program as in other schools and also in offering and participating in the services provided by the other partners in the building. Trust and connection develop. • Parent Advisory Committee and individual parents initiate programs and events. • Parents may also be engaged in their own educational upgrading, depending on the partner services in the building. • Interest and engagement in the school, with additional staff support, could increase.
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high level of community engagement within the building, with varying levels of community involvement directly within the delivery of the school curriculum • Community members with a specific area of interest may initiate program and funding proposals and work directly with the principal. • Opening the school to the community has often promoted strong community relations and improved the reputation of the school. People see what a great school it is and want to participate.

Model 4: Community-Engaged Schools may have no formal designation or staffing but function with a high level of community involvement	
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships expand within the building, resulting in a strong wraparound support system for students and their families. • Participating partners communicate regularly about the work and responsibilities of each service provider and create strong working agreements with the common goal of supporting children and families.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regular or alternative school program is evaluated according to district policy. • The process to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and services and their benefit to the students is more challenging to create, because measurement of that impact is less precise. • Documentation and “making learning visible” to the community with displays of pictures and stories may be an initial step in demonstrating success.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programs may have greater sustainability and support at the district level if they are created or directed by the district to address a specific need identified in a school community. • On the other hand, there are concerns about the sustainability of schools with small populations when districts have multiple responsibilities and priorities and limited funding. • Securing additional funding from outside opportunities usually depends on collaboration between the community members or partners and the principal. • Strong community capacity, involvement and advocacy are contributing factors to sustainability
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Clements Elementary, Haida Gwaii School District • Robron Center, Campbell River School District • The HIVE, Eric Langton Elementary, Maple Ridge School District • Grandview/ḷuuqinak’uuh Elementary, Vancouver School District • Byrne Creek Secondary School, Burnaby School District

5. Elements of a Community-Engaged School

The **Elements of a Community-Engaged School** provide a framework for the program and service components of a school that is engaged with its community. This is distinct from the process that a school community uses to offer these programs and services, which involves the practices of community development, inclusiveness, and response to the uniqueness of the community. The list is not meant to be all inclusive, but to create excitement about the wonderful possibilities at varying levels in all models. These ideas were gathered from conversations with people involved in community engagement around the province.

The elements can be useful in planning processes and prioritized as communities consider the following examples of questions:

- What do we want to create within the context of our community?
- Where shall we start?
- What might be the top three most important elements as we develop community engagement?
- Which elements can wait until later opportunities develop?

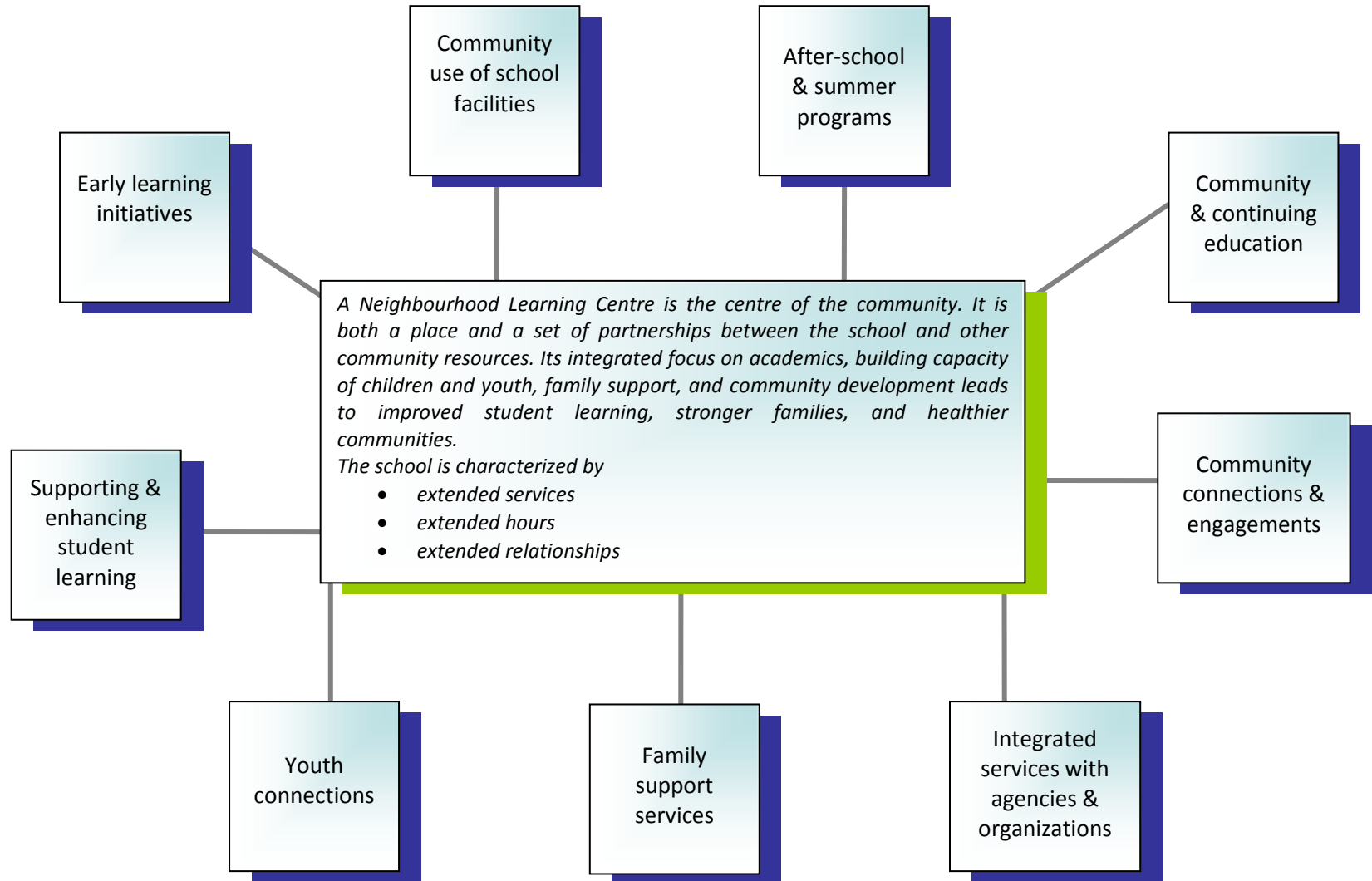


Figure 1. Key Elements of a Community School (adapted and used with permission from Burnaby School District, 2008).

Community Use of Facilities

To expand the use of the school and other neighbourhood facilities effectively for community programs and services suited to the unique and diverse needs of all members of the community.

- Dedicated community rooms and welcoming entrances or lobbies with a home-like atmosphere
- A wing for community use (e.g., early learning hub, program space, or office space for one-stop services delivery)
- Dedicated office space for partners and agencies
- Meeting and storage space for community groups
- Recreational use of school space, indoor and out, for all ages
- Gymnasium use for physical activities, community celebrations, and large community meetings
- Specialized rooms (e.g., theatre, shops, libraries, kitchens, computer access)
- Community garden and compost centre
- Community café
- Emergency Social Services reception site
- Use of neighbourhood facilities within proximity of the school to enrich opportunities

Afterschool & Summer Programs

To provide accessible programs to meet the needs of school age children and youth outside regular school operation.

Active Programs and Sports

- Basketball, volleyball, floor hockey, badminton, soccer, gymnastics, circus arts, mountain biking, rock climbing, climbing wall, swimming, skating, wilderness survival, drop-in gym

Fine Arts and Cultural Programs

- Performing arts: dance and drama, visual arts, woodcarving, felting, photography
- Music: community choirs, drumming circles, bands

Social, Leadership, and Homework Programs

- Cooking, science clubs, board games, reading programs, tutoring, fossil hunting, boys' clubs, girls' clubs, leadership programs, babysitting courses

Family Programs

- Open gym, dinner clubs, bingo, board games, potlucks

Child Care

- Licensed out-of-school care

Summer Programs

- Day camps, specialty camps, Rec 'n' Read, drop-in programs

Community and Continuing Education

To provide a variety of learning opportunities for adults that meet the needs of the community:

- Computer classes; high school completion; adult upgrading; online university classes; exam invigilation; life skills literacy, financial literacy, health literacy and planning; emotional health management planning; career counselling; general interest classes—gardening, music appreciation, languages, travel programs, yoga, belly dancing, drawing, felting, pilates, yoga, ballroom dancing; job shop; computer-access site; Food Safe; First Aid; power boat licensing; Young Drivers of Canada; Elder college

Community Connections and Engagement

To create a process for the school, families, and the community to work together actively to co-create a school and community climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful. School and community issues are identified, and those who care come together to build upon assets:

- Celebrations and town hall meetings—Halloween fireworks, pumpkin carving, Christmas carolling, carnivals, community picnics, Easter egg hunts, celebrations and cultural events important to the community (e.g., Chinese New Year and Duwali), all-candidates meetings.
- Individuals with specific skill sets
- Businesses and food suppliers
- Service groups
- Neighbourhood associations
- Non-profit organizations
- Regional libraries
- Recreation centres
- Colleges/universities
- First Nations councils
- Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and Neighbourhood Houses
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Health networks and practitioners
- Seniors organizations
- Preschool and child care
- Curricular support

Integrated Services with Agencies and Organizations

To support and facilitate collaboration with community agencies to coordinate and create partnerships for the provision of services and programs that may be housed in the school or community:

- Social Workers from Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Health clinics and practitioners
- Dental clinics, fluoride treatment for young children, dental screening
- Seniors organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Parks, recreation, and cultural services
- Nonprofits': Conservancy, Water Stewardship, Recycling
- Neighbourhood Houses, Boys and Girls Clubs
- Community counsellors and outreach workers, drug and alcohol, John Howard Society

Family Engagement and Support Services

To provide and connect families with local community supports and services with the goal of continuing to build individual and community capacity:

- Social workers
- Family counsellors
- Addiction counsellors
- Clothing exchanges, clothing rooms
- Toy exchanges
- Subsidies for programs, Kidsport, recreation subsidies, support for child care subsidy applications
- Parenting education/support programs
- Hot lunch and breakfast programs
- Community Kitchen
- Community meals, seniors meals
- Potluck suppers
- Emergency food cupboards, Food Bank, food recovery programs
- Parent-teen mediation and transition groups
- Youth street workers, early childhood outreach workers

Youth Connections

To provide informal and formal neighbourhood-based programming and support for youth that encourages youth involvement, social responsibility, and leadership:

- Mentorship programs
- Leadership development
- Employment centres
- Youth drop-ins
- Secondary school transition opportunities

Supporting and Enhancing Student Learning

To support and promote the school goals developed by the School Planning Councils with programs and initiatives that enhance the school curriculum and social responsibility through greater involvement and use of community resources.

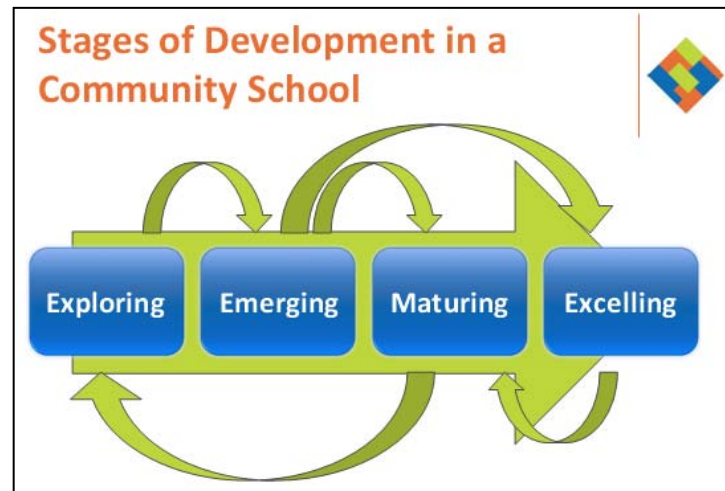
- Enriched curriculum with programs, volunteers and resources that contribute skills and knowledge for students and teachers (e.g., artists in residence, living history projects, athletic skills, personalized learning)

Early Learning Initiatives

To provide a number of options to address the play and learning needs of families with young children:

- StrongStart programs
- Healthy Babies programs
- Parent/tot drop-ins, parent/tot gym time, pre-school library time
- Preschools
- Child care
- Ready Set Learn events and programs
- Mother Goose, Nobody's Perfect
- Parenting programs and parenting coaching
- Guests for special events

6. Stages of Development of Schools with High Community Engagement in BC

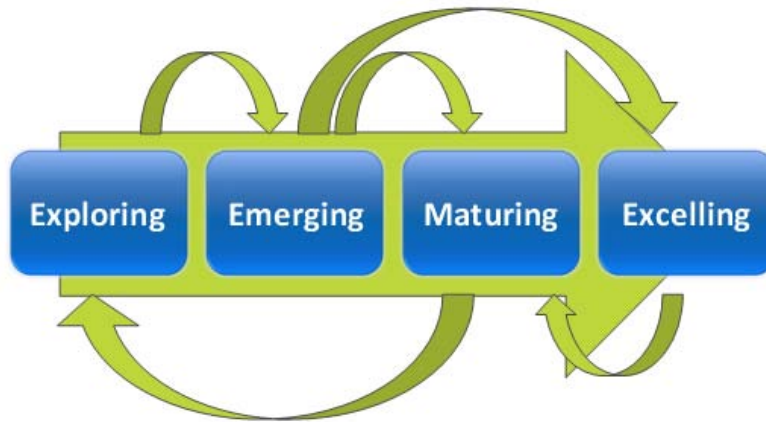


(From a presentation by Abe Fernandez, Surrey, BC, Oct. 22, 2010. Used with permission)

Figure 3. Stages of Development in a Community School (adapted and used with permission from Children’s Aid Society, New York, n.d.).

NLCs develop over time, the NLC Stages of Development framework sets out a concept for schools to visualize their progress through four stages of development toward increasingly high levels of community engagement from **exploring** through to **excelling**. These stages of development and the suggestions for applying the results to a specific school are based on the work of the [Children’s Aid Society of New York](#). They are modified, with permission, to fit the BC school setting.

It is critical to note that, in practice, the four stages are not generally linear; various elements of the criteria may be at different stages at any given time. Furthermore, as circumstances change, a pattern of advance and retreat occurs. We might think of this as “two steps forward, one step back.” See illustration below:



Note: BC is not evaluating schools based on this criteria. The intent of the material is to assist in transforming schools to NLCs

Internet research and direct communication reveal that the Children’s Aid Society of New York is the original source of various documents that identify four stages in the development of community schools. References to the Children’s Aid Society’s stages of development appear in a variety of their text and PowerPoint documents. In addition, various other organizations (e.g., Coalition for Community Schools and the John W. Gardner Center at University of California, Davis) refer to the four stages developed by the Children’s Aid Society rather than creating other frameworks.

For the purposes of this project, the authors are satisfied that these stages adequately reflect the continuum of growth of schools with high community engagement in the BC setting. The tables on the following pages set out the four stages and nine key development criteria. We feel that these stages of development can be applied to Neighbourhood Learning Centres as they are implemented over the next few years. It is important to note that considerable research and analysis of community schools in BC is already available, particularly the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports by Talbot and Associates (ACEbc, 2004, 2005).

Stages of Development of Schools with High Community Engagement in British Columbia (ACEbc, 2011)

Based on Children’s Aid Society, New York (www.childrensaidsociety.org)

Revised with permission



Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
Summary of key features of each stage	<p>This stage is marked by discontent with the ways that schools operate and by very grandiose thinking, tremendous optimism, and magical thinking that “if only” X were in place, things would be significantly different.</p> <p>This should be encouraged, because out of these dreams and desires will emerge a shared vision.</p>	<p>This period is marked by a commitment to jump in and do something. A decision has been made to commence the transformation by introducing some level of services, securing some funding, and beginning to develop partnerships. Programs are designed in a strengths-based paradigm based on data from a formal or informal needs assessment. This period is like a roller coaster ride, marked by highs and lows, progress and frustration. Success in this stage requires a commitment to the shared vision, clear goals, good communication processes, clarity of roles and responsibilities, responsiveness to the needs, and regular celebration. This period lasts for about 2 years.</p>	<p>This period is marked by steady, intentional progress and the realization that this work requires a tremendous amount of effort. The vision becomes clearer to all; consequently, there is likely to be broader support for it. Service utilization increases as interventions become timelier, more relevant, and of higher quality. Relationships between community based organizations and the school are deepened. Administrative and program integration becomes more natural, and community-based organizations may become involved in joint planning and funding. Success in this stage requires keeping the vision and programs fresh, tending to relationships, increasing the partnerships, continuing to demonstrate added value, and attending to sustainability.</p>	<p>Quality programs are implemented that are fully integrated into the fabric of the school. The school culture focuses on addressing the needs of the whole child. Increased parent involvement empowers parents and school staff to become advocates of quality education. Strong relationships are established within the school, community, and school district. The school values the coordinator and community program support staff as committed partners and leaders. Success in this stage requires involvement in innovative programming, the development of youth leadership, and the use of staff, parents, and students to teach others to do this work.</p>

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Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Programs and Services</p> <p>The array of activities and services offered to augment, enrich, and increase the capacity of all members of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of the gaps in services that schools and the community provide and of what is needed to make students, families, and the community successful. <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas abound about programs and services that could make a positive difference in the lives of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Services are introduced in a staggered fashion and may reach only a small portion of the school. They may include after-school programs, parent involvement, wellness services, family activities, and adult education. <input type="checkbox"/> An effort to ensure that programming reflects community-development and youth-development principles and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional efforts to ground programs in best practice and current research. <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on issues that impact quality such as frequency and intensity, timely delivery, and impact. <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary programs are developed and shared. <input type="checkbox"/> Program and services change to respond to the current needs or best practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Data are collected to inform programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Quality, innovative, programs and services that impact the child, family, and community. <input type="checkbox"/> Widespread awareness of where to access community resources and services. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff members are able to speak in an informed manner regarding programs, target groups, operations, and impact. <input type="checkbox"/> Broader menu of services offered.
<p>Management and Governance</p> <p>The structure and process through which decisions are made and executed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection on the type of leadership and processes needed for decision making. <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness that there needs to be different or enhanced processes in the administration and governance of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A decision is made that the school district, school, and/or a community-based organization will work together to lead the initiative. <input type="checkbox"/> Criteria for this community-based organization are developed, along with a selection process. <input type="checkbox"/> The council or advisory board takes an active role in working with the school, community-based organization, and community to create a shared vision and strategic plan, establish decision-making and communication processes, and define roles and responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> This council or advisory board is included in key leadership structures in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The council or advisory board works closely with the school's leadership to jointly establish service priorities and target groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Operational issues such as space, services, hours of operation, etc., are established but are revisited periodically. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular meetings between the principal and the coordinator or team that is coordinating the programs and services being offered are critical during early implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> The community organization, council, or advisory board and school negotiate and adjust to the differences in their organizational cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong and regular communication required between the principal and the staff person or team that is coordinating the programs and services being offered to maintain gains and proactively respond to the emerging needs of the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly scheduled meetings to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Many in the school and community know the governance structure and processes.

Note: BC is not evaluating schools based on this criteria. The intent of the material is to assist in transforming schools to NLCs

Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Staffing</p> <p>The voluntary and paid personnel used to accomplish the tasks and activities. Staff include principal, teachers, agency personnel, coordinator, and assistants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of some of the technical and soft skills required, as well as the roles and responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> May even be a sense of existing school staff or others who would be perfect for specific positions. <input type="checkbox"/> Some thought is given to operational costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> At least one staff, a coordinator, is on board at the school. <input type="checkbox"/> S/he remains very visible and accessible to the school staff, parents, students, and community. <input type="checkbox"/> Key activities include ensuring effective, clear communications regarding the vision, garnering public support, establishing credibility and trust by delivering on commitments, providing quality services, and responding to concerns in a timely manner. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to coordinate services in school under one umbrella; create opportunities to celebrate the incremental gains and successes of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Move towards full complement of staff. <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in staffing may be needed as the demands of the various positions make clearer the skill sets needed to be most effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff can become overextended, and everyone needs to stay focused on the vision. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff includes parents, volunteers, and school personnel whose roles may be very different from what they are during the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Full complement of competent, dedicated staff. Their work is more consistent with their position description. <input type="checkbox"/> Capable assistant to the coordinator runs the program and addresses student, parent, school, and staff concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinator develops partnerships and focuses more on “big picture” developmental and administrative issues. <input type="checkbox"/> All personnel are more attentive and responsive to implications of policy decisions on their work. <input type="checkbox"/> More seasoned staff have strong relationships within the school and community and are able to discern and influence changes in school culture and attitudes at early stages.

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Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Integration</p> <p>The process of making diverse and separate programs or activities into a coherent, congruent whole</p> <p>These separate programs share one or more core purposes or practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It might be beneficial for all of the programs and services to work together for children and families. <input type="checkbox"/> Various programs operate in a parallel relationship, without the benefits of collaboration or integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The challenge of integration begins. This may include integrating the culture and staff of the school with the service providers from multiple organizations. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing communication and operational protocols and procedures that promote collaborative, productive relationships but still allow each organization to maintain its integrity of purpose is critical. <input type="checkbox"/> Key staff address maximization of space, flexibility in service delivery, and maximization of services formally and informally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A certain level of operational mastery at this point. <input type="checkbox"/> Strong alignment between school goals and the needs of children and families. <input type="checkbox"/> The luxury of revisiting sticky issues of integration that compromise optimal functioning. <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional efforts to integrate the day- and after-school curriculum in a complementary way. <input type="checkbox"/> To the extent possible, social support services are delivered through existing or parallel structures within the school, such as school-based and interagency teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A seamless alignment between family and community services and the targets established for the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Clear goals, objectives, and outcomes towards which all partners are working. <input type="checkbox"/> Day-school and community program personnel work collaboratively to secure services that address unattended priorities and urgent needs in the school. <input type="checkbox"/> The school utilizes these services because it sees congruence between the needs of students, their families, and the services.

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Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Parent Involvement</p> <p>The underlying philosophy that parents are key to student success and can be included in school life at all levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of the ways that parents have been disengaged from or do not contribute to the school and exploration of ways to expand or develop the latter. <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations from parents are sometimes solicited, but, typically, the discussions on how to become more engaged with the community are held with selected parent leaders with regard to ways to improve the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parents become more engaged as key partners and are included in the planning and the governance structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Strong outreach to engage parents as advocates of quality education and services for their children, the school, and the community. <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible space dedicated to community use, staffed by a skilled parent (not necessarily formally trained) or other professional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parents feel more connected and invested in the school and create their own network of supports. <input type="checkbox"/> School embraces parents as key partners in education <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged efforts to empower parent leaders and expand the cadre of leaders. <input type="checkbox"/> Parents' voices in school as volunteers or employees with respect for policy and guidelines. <input type="checkbox"/> The school becomes the engine of change that many parents embrace to improve their quality of life and that of their children through quality education and community development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement is at a very advanced level, and parents initiate many activities and have a strong presence in the school. <input type="checkbox"/> The community council and/or other parent bodies work closely with the school-to keep parents and the community informed and engaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Selected parents make presentations at site visits and other forums to laud and advocate for services. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple parent and community leaders in the school work together seamlessly.
<p>Student Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students request programs outside of regular school hours. <input type="checkbox"/> Students suggest that it would be beneficial to have certain services within the school building. <input type="checkbox"/> Students participate in fund raising, which benefits the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities expand for student involvement in programs and services. <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development courses are offered. <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to lead programs for children exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students are involved in visioning, planning, and implementing programs and services to promote their well-being. <input type="checkbox"/> Youth leaders have mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer and paid positions are available to youth <input type="checkbox"/> Youth are invited to participate on the board and at committee levels.

Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Community Involvement Community acts as guardian, advocate, supporter, partner, recipient of services, and the body that holds schools accountable for student success.</p> <p>Community engagement builds stronger and more vibrant communities and schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In some cases the community needs to be involved and can benefit from a high level of engagement with the school. <input type="checkbox"/> These ideas can be grandiose if there is no history of real community involvement. This thinking will evolve into more realistic expectations and goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Overall, the sense is that the school can increase student success and make the community proud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The very critical step is taken early on in the initiative to engage key stakeholders such as local government, other public-serving entities, nonprofits, and informal community leaders. <input type="checkbox"/> This early inclusion generates a strong sense of good will and ownership of the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Very strategic activities increase community knowledge about and interest in the school. <input type="checkbox"/> It becomes evident that the community too has much to gain from involvement with the school, individually and collectively. <input type="checkbox"/> Community inclusion in the needs-assessment process (asset mapping), community invitations to school open houses, and attendance of school-based personnel at community meetings all build a sense of school-community collaboration. <input type="checkbox"/> Increasingly transparent processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School personnel attend community meetings and stay abreast of community policy and cultural changes that could affect the school. <input type="checkbox"/> The school develops and manages relationships with powerful organizations and continues to maintain good relations with local groups. <input type="checkbox"/> The school encourages parent and youth leaders to become change agents in the community through membership in various organizations. <input type="checkbox"/> The school opens events and celebrations to the public or commits a percentage of services to the community. <input type="checkbox"/> Community residents and agencies become essential members of the advisory council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school is perceived as an important player that delivers quality service and for whom the well-being of families and the whole community is a priority. <input type="checkbox"/> Community relationships and changing leadership require ongoing attention. <input type="checkbox"/> The school joins in community efforts aligned with school goals and priorities that benefit students, families, and the community at large. This may include co-sponsoring health events, co-writing grant applications, participating in political advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> The school strategically maintains high levels of visibility and partnerships and sees these relationships as reciprocal.

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Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>The coming together of two or more organizations with a shared vision and resources to serve the target group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It would be beneficial to have established, well-resourced institutions with whom to partner and ways to incorporate agency services more directly into the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals, school staff, or agencies may identify organizations that are visible and reputable as potential partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Critical work here is to deepen the understanding of and relationship with key influencers in the school system, community, and local government and to identify areas of alignment between priorities. <input type="checkbox"/> Equally critical is the development of an open, authentic relationship among the school leadership, staff, and parents. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to formalize partnerships & agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining a stable, reciprocal relationship among all components of the school is key. <input type="checkbox"/> The community program personnel and agencies respond to arising needs in the school, produce quick wins, and solidify their value as partners. <input type="checkbox"/> Needed services are provided through relevant partnerships. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular meetings address issues of space utilization, collaboration, service enhancement and duplication, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Formalized partnerships and agreements are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong partnership able to withstand differences of opinion and philosophy, but able to refocus on the vision of meeting the needs of students and families. <input type="checkbox"/> The principal includes the coordinator more in discussing issues and mandates from the district office. This dialogue begins at earlier stages and reflects the depth of trust and co-ownership of the challenges.
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Assessment of the process and impact of programs and partnerships on the target population.</p> <p>Includes the systematic collection, analysis, and use of data in programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The desired impact of the various programs and services must be determined. The potential of prevention-based programs to improve instructional outcomes and community well-being are widely discussed. <input type="checkbox"/> There is usually a strong sense that if solid evidence-based data were gathered, funding would be accessible and sustainable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to capturing the process of becoming a school with high community engagement in a formative/ process evaluation. Possibly even an ambition to have an outcome evaluation. <input type="checkbox"/> Criteria for evaluator and parameters of the evaluation are established. The design is structured to focus on areas perceived as strengths, as well as to provide new data. <input type="checkbox"/> Some effort to collect data to determine the correlation between programs and student success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> At minimum, the systematic collection of data such as attendance, service utilization, and other baseline information is required. <input type="checkbox"/> It is critical to move towards a formal evaluation and to discuss the design and length of evaluation, as well as its budget. Developing a hypothesis is helpful to clarify the desired findings. <input type="checkbox"/> It is imperative that the evaluation of the program components includes the synthesis and integration of multiple programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Formative evaluation completed and outcome evaluation begun. <input type="checkbox"/> Early data are used to influence programs, policies, and procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant data are shared with the school and community on an ongoing basis to inform and interpret what is occurring in the school.

Feature	Stage 1: Exploring	Stage 2: Emerging	Stage 3: Maturing	Stage 4: Excelling
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>The process of securing community and organizational support and funding for the long-term continuation of programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness that programs will require money and a strong sense that money will be found to pay for this idea. <input type="checkbox"/> The more compelling thought, however, is that, because this is about children and school success, it can be underwritten. <input type="checkbox"/> Optimism prevails in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding identified to ensure 3-5 years of development in a highly community-engaged school. <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability will always be an issue; the question is more about urgency and building on successes. <input type="checkbox"/> Attentiveness to funding patterns is required, which might point to areas in which future programs might more readily expand. <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogues with the school and the Board of Education about directing funds to the school are essential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A strong public-engagement campaign is important to inform and create awareness about the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability involves fundraising, the building of a strong constituency, and advocates who can speak compellingly about the program. <input type="checkbox"/> It is important to begin to look into how existing funding streams can be used to fund some programs. <input type="checkbox"/> The key activity is determining how partners might be able to secure funding for programs by tapping into specialized funding or targeting nonprofits with their expertise and interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive strategy to maintain and expand programs is developed and implemented. <input type="checkbox"/> A part-time grant writer is considered and engaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Networking for sustainability is ongoing, with site visits for funders, public-education opportunities at conferences, and local and regional meetings or events. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple sources of funding have been secured.

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7. Checklist to Assess the Stages of Development

To apply the Stages of Development tables as a self-assessment, refer back to the stages of development and read through each of the nine categories, starting with Programs & Services, and rank your school accordingly for each bulleted item. Begin with the Exploring Stage, and work across the page to the Excelling Stage, checking off the boxes for each statement that is true for your school. When completed, tally your checks in the grid below.

This grid can be used to assess the stage of development of a particular school according to the nine categories. This evaluation will give an informal snapshot of areas of strengths and weakness and can give direction as to areas for future focus. In interpreting the results of the tally, be sure to review the graphic at right and the discussion earlier in this report of the possible mix of stages and the forward and back characteristics that are usually evident in a particular school.



A school with a high level of community engagement is one that has extended hours, extended services, and extended relationships. It operates a variety of programs 12 months a year for all age levels in the community. They are traditionally referred to as “community schools” in Canada and the US, but there is now a wide range of terminology used across the globe.

Stages of Development Grid to tally results of the self assessment				
Key Features of the Four Stages	Exploring	Emerging	Maturing	Excelling
Programs & Services	/2	/2	/5	/4
Management & Governance	/2	/4	/4	/3
Staffing	/3	/4	/4	/5
Integration	/2	/3	/5	/4
Parent Engagement	/2	/3	/5	/4
Student Engagement	/3	/3	/2	/2
Community Engagement	/3	/6	/5	/4
Partnerships	/2	/3	/5	/2
Evaluation	/2	/3	/3	/3
Sustainability	/3	/4	/4	/4
Totals	/24	/35	/42	/35

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This document was prepared in completion of an agreement between the Directorate of Agencies for School Health (DASH) BC and the Association for Community Education in British Columbia (ACEbc) by Don Reimer and Janey Talbot, with assistance from April Lewis, Carolyn Iles, Elizabeth Shannon, and Bill Preston and feedback from the ACEbc Board Committee, the staff from the Ministry of Education, Neighbourhood Learning Centres and DASH.

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