To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Jamey L. Dobbs entitled "Community Schools: Planning Space for Democracy and Civic Engagement." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Planning with a major in Planning.

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COMMUNITY SCHOOLS:

PLANNING SPACE FOR DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A Thesis Presented

for the

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my daughters,
Jessica and Caitlin,
who have inspired me to achieve miraculous things.
Let this thesis remind you
that miracles
are within your reach, too.

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ABSTRACT

American society in the twentieth century has been characterized by a decrease in voter turnout, a decline in membership in civic organizations, decreasing volunteerism, and a decline in several other indicators of civic engagement and social capital. Enhancing democratic civic engagement and civic space is worthy issue that has not typically been at the forefront of the agenda of planning. This study investigates the role of community schools as a catalyst for enhancing citizen interaction and community planning, and for creating civic space. While school space represents one of the largest investments of public tax revenue in most municipalities, it is often underutilized while public space needs go unmet.

Community school systems are joint municipal/school partnerships which often operate with staffed agencies to manage the use and programming of school space after school hours for the benefit of the full community. This thesis takes a case study approach to investigate three successful community school systems operating district wide in Bowling Green/Warren County, Kentucky, Greenville/Pitt County, South Carolina, and Birmingham, Alabama. The study documents common factors that increase or enhance 1) civic space, 2) participation in community activities and organizations, and 3) public involvement in local decision making. The research findings indicate that communities with long-lived community school systems increase social networks (social capital) and citizen activity and provide a convenient source of civic space. The concurrence of a

community schools system, and a staffed structure of neighborhood organizations using school spaces, results in the greatest level of civic engagement in public affairs. Planners and citizens are advised to become involved in collaborations to promote the establishment of community school systems.

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INTRODUCTION

"We are helpless to act on cities without learning of the sources of social change, and identifying the political processes underlying urban management." (Castells, 1983)

Americans are grappling with troubling questions about their neighborhoods and schools. In the years from 1998 to 2000, citizens have encountered news stories about unprecedented violence in presumably "safe" community settings. Armed students committed violent attacks on public school campuses in Little Rock, Arkansas, Littleton, Colorado, and other cities (ABC News, 1999). Children and adults were shot at a Jewish community daycare center in Los Angeles, California (Dube and Moss, 1999). A Baptist church in Fort Worth, Texas became the scene of a gunman's killing spree (PBS NewsHour, 1999). The frequency of these events has stirred uneasy conversations around the nation on the breakdowns within families, communities, and society, as people attempt to understand the tragedies and interpret the social meaning. These events have raised the recognition that safe communities are sustained by intangible factors, our social infrastructure of family and community support systems that keep children and adults healthy—both mentally and physically.

The "social infrastructure," meaning support networks, organizations, and relationships, needs to be strengthened at the neighborhood level, and with it the competence of citizens and democratic processes to provide the necessary leadership. A League of Women Voters study (1999) reports that most citizens are willing to work on improving their

neighborhoods and communities, even if they are not currently involved. They want to create caring communities but face multiple constraints. In order to work on community goals they need specific resources: time, flexible arrangements, organizations to work with, and convenient space.

Schools and school spaces are one of the community's valuable resources. The U.S government estimates that over $133.6 billion in taxes was invested nationally in public schools in 1999 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Schools are one of the few conveniently located public facilities left in many residential communities. Neighborhood services such as libraries, fire halls, police precincts, and public parks serve ever-larger districts and are sited further from residents. Because of their location, schools are frequently used as community resources, and a movement for widening that level of use is growing. In some places, schools are open day and night, providing locations for such services as health care and workforce training for adults and youth, or for community social activities such as family reunions, neighborhood barbeques, or dances. This extended use of schools goes by the name community schools.

What is the relationship of schools to planning? It is often forgotten that public schools are places for democratic politics and decision making, as well as education. Voting, the fundamental exercise of democracy, commonly takes place in schools, yet few people appreciate the value of this space when they vote. Schools can and do serve the public interest in other important ways. This study considers schools to be an underutilized public resource that should be more integrated into neighborhood planning and decision

making. Social and political infrastructure is not a subject that planning can relegate to other professions, that is if planners purport to help citizens approach their communities comprehensively. If planners are going to be true stewards of the public's resources, public schools cannot be dismissed from the agenda.

History recalls that planning responds to changing conditions, and this has been the source of many innovations in the profession. Urban sprawl, environmental design, and community mediation—once considered fringe topics in planning—are now accepted and well integrated, into most university planning curricula. As the profession continues to respond to changing physical and social conditions planners must reconsider what factors appropriately belong in the planning realm. This author believes that while public education is a "fringe" topic now in the planning profession, schools will be a focal point for planning in the future. The growing need for community building, grassroots democracy, and human development will demand it.

CHAPTER ONE: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Statement Of The Problem

Some of the most underutilized public-owned assets are our public schools. These valuable resources often sit locked and dormant after school hours while communities struggle with unmet needs and residents grow more isolated from public life. Other than schools, many urban and suburban communities lack convenient, free public space where people can gather to share information and work on common problems. Community centers or social service centers are frequently proposed as solutions, but groups discover that they can be "the most difficult kind of development a community can undertake" (Pittsburgh Community Design Center, 2000). Building one free-standing center of even modest size can require $250,000 to $1 million. Citizens, however, have already paid for their public schools (and will continue to pay throughout their lives); communities need a way to capitalize on this investment for community purposes.

Planners are not routinely involved in decisions about public school use, although schools are one of the largest public investments of any municipality. This was not always true. In the early decades of professional planning, schools were considered to be within the planner's domain and public schools were commonly the focal point in the designs of greenbelt and new town neighborhoods. This development pattern is still evident in neighborhoods around the country. Planners would be wise to re-cultivate an interest in schools as public space and drivers of new development. The evolving visions of public

schools will affect the future of American communities, predicts David Tokofsky, a Los Angeles school board member in the California-based Planning Report:

> "...much of what we will see in schools two or three decades from now will be completely different. Schools will reflect breakthrough technologies; teaching methods that have evolved to meet social, economic and cultural needs and design and construction innovations. But facilities also will reflect a return to what has worked in the past—a return to a time when schools were the center of the community" (May, 1999)

There are obstacles to the shared use of schools by the community. Restrictions on school use result from legitimate concerns of educators, and there is no question that shared use of schools poses unique challenges. From another perspective, however, shared community use of schools has many precedents. School facilities traditionally serve their communities as voting precincts, community forums, open space and parks, emergency shelters, and after-school child care facilities. Schools are public resources. Regularly extending the hours that schools are open optimizes the use of school facilities for multiple purposes and significantly increases the return on taxpayer investment.

Innovative school/community models are demonstrating that school facilities can potentially house or link basic public services like primary health care and mental health, operate as adult learning centers, or function as family resource centers. The early

examples go back almost 100 years. Such schools are typically known under the umbrella term—community schools. Throughout the country, cities have rediscovered community schools that function as true community centers, creating opportunities for community development and improving the quality of life.

School spaces are an overlooked resource for building civic engagement. By expanding the availability of school buildings and spaces, school sites could open the doors to greater participation by people of all ages in civic activities and community organizations. Robert Putnam (2000) and other respected scholars of American public life have detected an erosion of civic life. Identifying ways to alleviate this lack of community engagement, and to effectively build community and citizen capacity, could guide planning practitioners to a new source of civic energy and democratic participation.

Purpose Of The Study

In an attempt to address the lack of proper places for public deliberation, and the relationship of public space to the decline in civic involvement, I will investigate schools as community centers. Through an analysis of a literature review and a case comparison, this study will explore some of the opportunities and challenges of extending the use of public school facilities as community centers across a school district. I will present evidence to determine the extent to which community schools are used as public and civic spaces in three case studies. Finally, I will extrapolate from these cases and present a projection, grounded in practice, of ways that increasing access to community schools

space may potentially impact efforts around the U.S. to increase community involvement and civic engagement.

Research Objective and Areas Of Inquiry

This research will explore the idea that community schools improve community involvement and civic participation by creating new civic spaces. Several questions related to the central thesis will further guide the research:

- Have the proponents of community schools in the case studies intended to address or expand civic participation or community involvement? If so, how?
- What is the relationship between citizenship and civic life and accessible school space? Is school space preferable to other publicly accessible spaces?
- How does the relationship between citizens and community schools affect attitudes and interactions related to participation in the community? How does this relationship affect attitudes toward the participation of citizens in governance? How does it affect willingness to pay taxes to support the infrastructure of schools? How does the relationship between citizens and community schools affect the relationships of citizens and K-12 school system personnel?
- Is there an enhancement in the quality of civic engagement in localities with community schools?
- How is the relationship between civic life and community schools affected by community school programming, policies, organization resources, leadership, role in the community, or the scale of program?

- How do the three community schools programs manage the competing interests of space of the public, with its desire for extended use of the school site, and the school system's primary use of space for the K-12 educational program?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The central theme of this thesis is that public space is essential to the maintenance of democratic civil society and civic engagement. This literature review will first examine the role of civil society in a democracy. It will follow with literature that links public space to democratic civic practices. This literature will be used to evaluate the degree to which community school systems function as democratic institutions which create public spaces. The review continues by summarizing literature concerned with the declining trends in civic engagement and the negative consequences of this decline to society. It then identifies particular characteristics of an engaged society which need to be promoted in order to reverse the decline. The concept of social capital is discussed to provide an additional perspective on the contribution that community schools may make to democratic culture. Community schools are viewed as purveyors of both physical space and social resources that can be called upon to build a more engaged society.

Civil Society and Democracy

Civil society encompasses a range of meanings that describe a "domain of citizens" that operates under democratic governance (Barber, 1998, 65). One meaning of civil society is the ideal state of citizen partnership and ownership of government; civil society can also mean the political practices and social institutions shaped by citizens; or it can refer to the daily observable behavior of citizens engaged in collective public life (Barber, 1998). The ideal of civil society, the socially constructed political concept, shapes each of the other meanings: the practices, the policies, the social institutions and the space they occupy. Therefore, it is worthwhile for citizens and planners to examine the ideal of civil

society—so that citizens can understand why civil society is valued and how systems and spaces can be planned to reflect democratic values and civic virtues. As Barber says, "What we understand as politics is tied to what we want from politics" (p.13).

The Social Dimension of Civic Space: Civic Associations

According to Barber, (1998) the purpose of civil society in a democracy is to maintain our political liberties through civic associations that sit between the private market and big government. Civil society is known as the "third sector" (p.4). In this role, the civil sector mobilizes community resources that government alone cannot—while helping to create additional resources that the market mechanisms cannot. The civil sector is also perceived of as the figurative "space" between the close-knit bonds of family or community and the government (Putnam, 2000). The civil sector, in this sense, allows people to exercise political freedom and to deliberate with others toward positions that are not overwhelmed by government or by family, community, or employer biases, beliefs or obligations (Barber, 1998; Forester, 1999). The civil sector is where "society is civilized and pluralized through the cultivation of educational, philanthropic, religious, and other forms of civic association" (Barber, 1998, p.14). Civic associations present the opportunity for direct democratic participation in which "people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue (Boyte & Evans, 1986, p.17). A community which does not make literal or figurative space for this important sector or its associations is in effect, undercutting its own democratic foundations.

Following this principle, communities should staunchly maintain free, inclusive civic "space"—conceptual public places—where association with others is unrestricted and voluntary. These associations serve the public by creating an unfettered opportunity for discussion, deliberation, learning, and action (Barber, 1998; Gardner, 1996). Associations such as the Kiwanis Club, the League of Women Voters, the Toastmasters, and neighborhood resident associations, potentially create the environments for learning egalitarian democratic behavior and choice making. Without these practices, such groups cannot be considered true civic associations. There is a need for civic groups that operate at every scale, local and national, with organizations that span the boundaries between them. A healthy democracy may need to ensure that these associations are encouraged, and that some distinct and inclusive geographic spaces for deliberation are planned and made available for the community. Neighborhood level associations and appropriately scaled places to encourage their work are reasonable places to begin.

The Physical Dimension of Civic Space

If public space is necessary to promote civic learning and democratic culture, as Barber suggests, what is the character of the public spaces we need to envision and promote? In what ways are public spaces different? If it becomes necessary to create space, what challenges will planners face?

The conceptual forms of public space have been discussed, but the physical dimension is also relevant to the creation of civil society. The physical context of public space is often interpreted as the resources of taxpayer-funded real estate and physical capital that are managed by local government. A community commonly invests in libraries, parks, and

schools, representing billions of dollars in physical assets. Public space can have a more flexible meaning, defined by who uses it, not who owns it (Oldenburg, 1997). This interpretation expands the types of physical spaces that can fall into the accounting. Privately owned spaces are transformed into public space when a setting encourages informal meetings and socializing, as demonstrated by neighborhood bars and restaurants. Public spaces can likewise transform themselves to meet a diversity of community uses. Carr, Riplin, & Stone (1992) illustrate the "multiple personalities" of public space and the need to transform it at times to fit our purposes:

> "We see public space as the common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community, whether in the normal routines of daily life or in periodic festivities. We recognize that in much of the rest of the world, and increasingly in the West, public space is also used for "private" purposes—for buying and selling things, for gardening, for self-improvement..., or for simply finding a place to exist...As public life evolves with the culture, new types of spaces may be needed and old ones discarded or revived. We need to learn how to create and maintain places that are appropriate to their users and context and are well used over time...We propose that good public space should be supportive, democratic, and meaningful" (p.xi).

The shape and scale of public space evolves in response to cultural ideals and control of public resources (Carr, Riplin, & Stone, 1992). In early American history, the social

elite controlled the creation of public space, and their European ideals reflected the shape and character of public parks and boulevards. With the arrival of the twentieth century a broader range of citizens, with an interest in public health and safety, reshaped the types of urban public spaces that were produced. As a result, city parks were constructed on public land to provide open space for cramped children and adult tenement dwellers (although streets were often the preferred public space of tenants). In more recent times, economic development and protection of environmental resources have emerged as reasons for public place-making. In the future, with the evidence for declining civic life prompting public concern, restoring social capital and civic engagement will likely become a driving reason for creating or restoring public spaces. Inevitably, that demand will lead to the public schools as a prime source of flexible public community space.

Trends in Civic Engagement

In a national study of declining civic engagement, Robert Putnam (2000) considered many facets of community change in the United States. Many of his research findings are summarized in the book, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Six findings establish evidence for the present study—sustained, thirty-year declines in measures of voter turnout, interest in public affairs, political expression, and membership in civic associations, a loss of individual civic activity, and significantly, a loss of cooperative civic activity in groups. Research findings from other studies reinforce these results.

Documentation of Community Change: Six Findings From Putnam

First, citizens are showing less interest in voting. The drop in voter turnout over the last four decades is the most widely discussed sign of civic disengagement, although it may not be the most appropriate measure. Voter turnout in national elections dropped from 63 percent in 1960 to 49 percent in 1996, despite the added participation of millions of blacks franchised after the Voting Rights Act of 1964, and despite the introduction of easier "motor voter" registration (Putnam, 2000, p. 31-33). Virtually all of the drop in electoral participation can be attributed to the "baby boom", the generation born following World War II. Younger citizens vote less frequently in each generation. Consequently, as this younger fraction of society replaces their parents' fraction, the average turnout rate drops inexorably. The abandonment of voting, "the most fundamental democratic principle of equality," is considered a powerful, visible signal of changing relations between citizen and political decision making (p. 35).

Second, citizen interest in public affairs has declined over the past three decades. "Political knowledge and interest in public affairs are critical preconditions for more active forms of involvement. If you don't know the rules of the game and the players and don't care about the outcome, you're unlikely to try playing yourself"(p. 35). Documented in three different national survey archives, American's interest in current events and other public affairs fell by roughly 20 percent. The greatest decline of interest appears in adults aged 35 and under. Before the 1970's there was virtually no generation gap in national political knowledge. People who reached adulthood in the 1980's and 1990's, however, are "substantially less knowledgeable about public affairs [than older

adults], despite the proliferation of sources of information" (p. 36). Additionally, the under-35 age group was one-third less likely to follow local political news, read daily newspapers, or watch television news programs.

Third, fewer people, other than elders, are acting on or expressing their political views. For example, the Roper Social and Political Trends Poll data show that between 1973 and 1994, involvement in election campaigns dropped by 50 percent. Citizens running for public office of any kind—school board, town council—declined by 15 percent (p. 42). A more portentous measure may come from outside the election process. Putnam believes that the civic infrastructure depends on face-to-face interactions, our "everyday deliberations that constitute grassroots democracy"(p. 43). After reviewing the archives, Putnam found that people were abandoning common forms of local political involvement: attending public meetings, serving local organizations, and taking part in "good government" groups concerned with civic issues (p. 42-43). "Good government" activities alone drew one-third fewer participants. Other data covering the 1980's to the 1990's showed a 35 percent drop in the frequency with which citizens addressed a public meeting. More citizens are now spectators in civic life.

Fourth, citizens are abandoning voluntary associations and community organizations. Trends in organizations are considered to be a "useful barometer" of civic engagement (p.49). Putnam's research has detected a quantifiable reverse of a sixty-year organization growth trend in America. Americans are known for their affinity for forming and joining voluntary associations; this reputation developed even before the

American Revolution through the writings of Tocqueville (2000). Around the turn of the century in particular, U.S. citizens began building what would become one of the most organized public-serving cultures in the world. Thousands of voluntary associations were created, and numerous organizations grew to national scale, with millions of active members, especially in the post World War II years. In the 1960's, Putnam observes, citizens began disengaging from public associations and their often time-intensive duties. Several data sources contributed to this conclusion. Membership roles in many significant chapter-based public organizations began deteriorating rapidly during the sixties, among them the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Rotary Club, and the American Medical Association (p. 55). National surveys and time diaries tracking thousands of individuals in their organizational activities confirm that participation time, not just membership, was indeed diminishing. On average, by 1994, Americans were spending 50 percent less time on community organizations and clubs than they did in the early 1960's (p. 62). Most of the difference is again attributed to generational effects; older generations continue to be active in associations, but each successive generation devotes less and less time for communal activities. As organizational commitment by citizens is eroding, our civic culture is eroding with it.

Fifth, declining civic involvement is found across different strata of society. A screening of demographic factors to identify differential rates of civic engagement showed no significant differences in comparisons of the population by race, gender, family status, geographic area of the country, level of education, economic status, and inner city, urban

or rural residence. Age was the only significant factor related to differences in civic behavior, observations which will be further discussed in the next section. Level of education is typically a powerful explanation for social differences, but in this case it was not. Examples from the Roper data (p. 46) show that among the college educated population, attendance at meetings fell by one-half (34 to 18 percent). Among those with a high school education, the drop was well over one-half (20 to 8 percent). Since high school educated citizens were less likely to participate in the first place, their loss of participation is considered particularly serious. Surprisingly, "the mysterious disengagement of the last third of the century has affected all echelons of society" (p. 187).

Six, civic life now involves less cooperative effort and more individualistic expression. The communal forms of civic involvement, or those that require working together cooperatively, declined more quickly than the individual, expressive forms such as writing letters from home. Putnam's conclusion is drawn from respected national archives surveying public participation in 12 civic activities including public meeting attendance, serving on a committee, or signing a petition. The data confirm that the average number of citizens attending even just one public meeting on town or school affairs dropped by 40 percent over the two decades from 1973-1994 (p. 42) . Likewise, the number of citizens who served on a committee of any local organization fell by 40 percent. A 50 percent drop in participation is recorded if the numbers of citizens who once served as leaders are included. By 1994, most citizens did not engage in any of twelve surveyed civic activities. Considering that respondents were encouraged to

mention any involvement with any possible types of voluntary organizations—from small to large, old or new—these losses appear even more remarkable. Clearly, fewer people are left to work on organized activities at a community scale that can effectively respond to community or neighborhood issues. Putnam elaborates on what amounts to a retreat from the communal civic sphere:

> "Like battlefield casualties dryly reported from someone else's distant war, these unadorned numbers scarcely convey the decimation of America's community life they represent. In round numbers every single percentage point drop represents two million fewer Americans involved in some aspect of community life every year. So, the numbers imply, we now have sixteen million fewer participants in public meetings about local affairs, eight million fewer committee members, eight million fewer organizational leaders, and three million fewer men and women organized to work for better government than we would have if Americans had stayed as involved in community affairs as we were in the mid-1970's" (p. 42).

Causes and Effects of Declining Civic Engagement

Putnam's investigation into possible sources of the decline in civic engagement reveals major shifts in four broad features of American life: greater pressures of time and money on individuals, the destructive effects on community of increased mobility and sprawl, the sweeping influence of new technology and mass media, and finally inescapable generational changes (Putnam, 2000). Below is an assessment summarized from Putnam:

Pressures of time and money – Putnam estimates that this category figures into only 10 percent of the decline in civic participation (p. 283). Limiting factors in this category include the sense of "pervasive busyness" associated with daily life, overwork and economic hardships, and the pressures associated with two career families (p. 189-203). These factors are commonly thought to be the main reasons for a weakening civil society, but Putnam's research shows only little correlation. His data suggest that average work hours have not increased substantially, and therefore are not impacting leisure time available for organizational work. Few differences appeared in comparisons of family status and the rate of organizational involvement.

Mobility and sprawl—Limiting factors under this heading account for roughly 10 percent of the decline in participation and include: suburbanization, commuting, and the effects of urban sprawl (p.283). These factors diminish an individual's available time, increase social segregation and opportunities for interaction, and contribute to the physical fragmentation of communities, all of which are reported to dampen community involvement to a limited extent (p.204-215).

Technology and Mass Media – An estimated 25 percent of lost civic engagement is attributable to this category which includes electronic entertainment and communications (p.283). The effect is the increasing privatization of leisure time and the preemption of community interaction. Putnam's study specifically implicates television viewing as the cause for social isolation, passivity, and detachment from community—all strong prerequisites for disengagement (p.216-246).

Generational Succession – Generational succession was the most powerful factor in the analysis, and Putnam estimates that it may account for possibly half of the overall civic

decline (p. 283). Generational effects refer to the shared experiences and traits of a generation that cannot be explained by ordinary stages in the life cycle. Putnam surmises that citizens born between 1910 and 1940, as a generation, experienced a surge of unity and patriotism during World War II that fueled their long civic-mindedness. The war stimulated the sense of shared adversity, and government policies arose that oriented the culture to mass volunteerism and organization for the war cause. Putnam's research indicates that the organizational habits are life long. Therefore the data showing drops in civic engagement are, by a large percentage, mirroring "the slow, steady, and ineluctable replacement of the long civic generation by their less involved children and grandchildren" (p.283). The next generations' influences have been less likely to stimulate this degree of civic involvement (p. 247-276).

Contributing Research Findings

Other studies are extending the research outlined by Putnam. Bruce Tonn and Carl Petrich (1998) investigated constraints to civic participation. In contrast to the data presented by Putnam, their summary of recent research shows that demands and hours of work are increasing for most Americans. The authors agree that Americans feel more pressure from work and more need for personal time. Time fragmentation from increasingly irregular work schedules creates major impediments to the encouragement and coordination of citizen initiatives. Corporate downsizing and persistent declines in wages and income are exacerbating other economic pressures, creating an undercurrent of uncertainty which constrains citizens from taking a more active part in their communities (p. 27).

Tonn and Petrich (1998) note that a class-segregated economy is emerging that tends to disable citizen "ability and propensity to participate in civic functions" (p. 51). Growing income stratification and inequality have led to "startling" declines in upward mobility and earnings which drain the effort for community involvement (p. 52). The U.S. now has fewer middle income citizens, who tend to be active in the community. This was not always the case. Before 1973, incomes of people at the bottom fifth of the earnings scale rose faster than those of the top fifth, and more people were moving up into middle income jobs with security and comfort (p.51). This situation is now reversed. Two thirds of the increase in U.S. national income accrued to the top one percent of the income spectrum. The consequences of this widening income gap are predicted to reduce citizen participation and attention to community issues.

One other significant constraint mentioned by Tonn and Petrich, and not by Putnam, is consumerism (p. 37). Consumerism refers to the choice of a lifestyle that increases the pressures to pay for consumer purchases and to build larger incomes. It places high value on individual material consumption and competition with peers, as opposed to the value of community well being and cooperation for mutual gain. It absorbs time for shopping, eating out, driving, watching movies, and increasing income, and displaces what was formerly the time for community activities. The time demands, competition, and frustrations attached to consumerism are distracting to the effort to engage communities.

Social Capital: The Social Foundation of Civic Engagement

Concepts and Definition

Social capital, a concept first articulated in 1916 (Putnam, 2000), has become one of the most important concepts in defining and measuring the changing character of American society. Robert Putnam, one of the most recognized theorists, offers his view of social capital (Putnam, 1995):

> "By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—the core idea of social capital is that social networks have value (p. 18-19)....'Social capital' refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 19).

This study applies social capital concepts to the analysis of civic engagement and community schools. In fact, the term "social capital" was first coined by Lyda Hanifan in 1916 when writing about rural community center schools (Putnam, 2000, Notes, Chapter 1, no.12). Although some authors reserve use of the term strictly for social norms (Uslander, 1995; Fukuyama, 1995), social capital is more commonly understood as personal relationships, small associations, and institutions. All of these permutations are based on the underlying norm of reciprocity—the expectation of mutual benefit that leads to trust. Social capital offers a range of community benefits: sustaining individuals during adversity, shaping morality in children, spreading new information efficiently,

maintaining public safety, and increasing the efficiency of government, all of which help to solidify a community. Social capital operates on a small scale, as in the case of a book club, and on a large scale, as in the case of public education. Its benefits are spread among the entire nation's children, and indirectly throughout the democratic system.

Social capital is also considered to be an accumulation of these impacts, the total stock of the networks and internalized values of individuals and institutions operating in a community (Cortes, 1993; World Bank, 2000). Cortes defines social capital as "a term identifying the value of a community relationships"(p.10). Social capital starts with small interactions and multiplies with the presence of community organizations. Adding them together, a community can be social capital rich or deficient. Cortes describes this cumulative effect:

> "In contrast to human capital, which is locked up in the skills of an individual, social capital is a measure of how much collaborative time and energy people have for each other: how much time parents have for their children, how much attention neighbors will give to each other's families, what kind of relationships people in congregations have with each other, the relationships in organizations like the PTA and scout troops, and the quality of many other potential webs of relationships in a community" (p. 10).

Bridging and Bonding Capital

Social capital operates in two dimensions simultaneously: horizontal (or bonding) and vertical or (bridging) (Putnam 2000, World Bank 2000). Bonding social capital is the cohesion between individuals sharing similar circumstances, and between organizations with similar interests. Putnam pictures bonding capital as a "sociological superglue" (p.23). Bonding capital is what comprises the dense networks often found in ethnic enclaves, organized religions, and extended family. Multiple, horizontal bonds are necessary to give groups or communities a sense of identity and to help them cooperate on common purposes. Within isolated or homogeneous communities or groups, bonding capital can have negative consequences. Gangs or corruption rackets are extreme examples of groups that offer bonds of community but are destructive in an overall sense (World Bank, 2000). It becomes apparent that the positive "strong ties" of bonding capital are an important community resource. A strong community will accumulate more positive bonding capital.

Bridging capital is the complement to the bonding forms. Bridging capital forms "weak ties" or bonds that link people and associations to wider and different circles of interest (Putnam, 2000). Bridging forms of social capital cut across the interests of exclusive groups and generate broader identities and reciprocity. Putnam pictures bridging capital as the "sociological WD-40," helping divergent groups and communities overcome cleavages of religion, ethnicity, and class and to connect to links outside the community (p. 23). This is beneficial for improving information diffusion within diverse communities. Economist Mark Granovetter explains that when people are looking for

jobs or political allies, it is the "weak ties" of bridging capital that link them to people outside of their personal circles (Putnam, 23). Under these circumstances, bridging capital and "weak ties" are actually more valuable than the "strong ties" of family and more intimate social groups. What is necessary, according to social theorists, is the balancing effect of vertical or bridging social capital. It takes both bridging and bonding capital to make a social capital-rich organization or community.

Civic Capital

A healthy democratic civic society raises civic capacity, or civic capital. Civic capital is the subset of social capital that involves citizens engaged in deliberation, decision making, governance, and collective action. Civic capital accumulates in a culture that promotes civic skills and values civic space and organizations. When enough citizens are engaged, civic capital is conducive to a responsive, accountable system of government.

Impact of Social Capital on Civic Life

If a community is rich in social capital, there is general agreement on basic values, as well as trust and reciprocity. These in turn foster the cooperation necessary for the organizations and actions that benefit everyone in a community (Cain, 2000). In the ideal capital-rich community, voluntary associations and informal networks of all sorts abound, bringing people together, engaging them in collective action, or peripherally building bonds with potential for support and sharing. Higher levels of voluntary association are related to improvements in the quality of life. Nicholas Lemann (1996) indicates that small-scale associations create fertile ground for political and economic development, even if the associations are not themselves political or economic. Putnam's earlier

research on government effectiveness in Italy, found that voluntary associational ties, like sports club or singing club memberships, turned out to be critical predictors of the quality and success of the regional governments he was tracking (Talk of the Town, 1998). These observations lead many to believe that social capital is a foundation for civic activity and civic capital.

When social capital is unbalanced or in decline, communities and individuals will lack the ability to cooperate effectively. In turn, the quality of other aspects of life will begin to suffer: "Without connections, it's not just that people don't feel warm and cuddly toward one another. It's that our schools don't work as well . . . that the crime rate gets worse" (Talk of the Town, 1998). The absence of "bridging" capital may have profound effects on levels of social inequality, private sector development, government investment and public welfare (Schiff, 1998; Putnam, 1996; Fukuyama, 1995). But if social capital is eroded or lacking, can it be restored or created? Although Putnam originally theorized that social capital takes centuries to accumulate, evidence is growing that it can be built in shorter spans (Fox, 1996). Communities and their institutions can be strengthened if there are concerted efforts to build and sustain social networks and associations.

Social Capital and Urban Neighborhoods

Social capital and trust are more difficult to develop and sustain in large groups or neighborhoods (Gardner, 1996; World Bank, 2000; La Porta, et al, 1997). Urban areas, with their anonymity and fast pace, may not be conducive to cooperation. Interactions between people are not repeated and therefore there is no incentive to develop reciprocal

relations. People tend to cluster together in small communities and networks of support, but trust and goodwill for those outside immediate groups is minimal. "The most serious problem is fragmentation. Affluent sections are not in communication with impoverished sections...Municipal agencies are often in poor touch with one another...The mayor and city manager are often out of touch with the neighborhood leaders. And non-profit groups that could play a significant knitting-together role are too often rivalrous and territorial"(Gardner, 1996).

All neighborhoods are affected by a loss of social capital, but the effects of social capital decline are more apparent in distressed neighborhoods (Putnam, 2000). It is known that a deficiency of social capital makes low-income communities more vulnerable because they lack the cushioning of other forms of capital. If residents lack human capital in the form of a good education, communities are doubly burdened when levels of social capital are low. Consequently, the impact of community and social capital development is considered to be greater in the inner city.

Community Design: The Physical Foundation of Civic Engagement

Centers of Community

Schools that serve as centers of the community are compatible with principles of good community design. Centering is a familiar strategy in urban spatial planning. A classic pattern followed in hundreds of early American towns was centering buildings inside or around a public square (Kilbourne, Decker, & Romney, 1994). The cluster of institutions in the town centers often included the school, along with a town hall, several churches,

banks, and courthouse. Significantly, the school was often the first building constructed by new settlers in order to provide a public gathering place before the construction of a town square.

The centering of buildings symbolically conveys the importance, power and influence of community institutions in the social, religious, political and economic life of towns and neighborhoods. Before the industrial revolution, the county courthouse, the seat of local government was usually the largest building in a town square (Kilbourne, Decker, & Romney, 1994). The courthouse was usually surrounded by public gathering spaces physically overseeing the church, the bank, and other buildings on the square. The public spaces inside and out hosted community celebrations and public political forums. In these early American towns, the courthouse, the symbol of democratic government, was a central community resource. As residential neighborhoods developed outward from the center of the city, communally important buildings like churches and schools were designed as focal points, impressive in size and architecture. Functionally and symbolically the form of town centers patterned the interaction of people, their institutional relationships, and represented their culture.

Twentieth Century Planned Town Centers

Town centers were prominent in the aftermath of the industrial revolution. Urban designers and city planners of the early twentieth century reform era appropriated small town patterns in the design of the early planned suburbs. Alex Krieger (1991) argues that even the most revered American and European planners of that time, from Lewis

Mumford to Patrick Geddes, respected the scale and spatial organization of the traditional town. Towns were considered "the basic building block for human settlement"(p. 12). In Krieger's view, of all the designs that emerged during this time, Ebenezer Howard's Garden City model was the most visionary. Its town-building principles incorporate the full range of spatial, social and political relationships implicit in effectively functioning towns. In his blueprint for a city, several towns are dispersed around a central core city, networked together by transportation linkages. Each offshoot town duplicates the core structure by focusing its major civic institutions around a central public space. Howard theorized that social and political elements must be embedded in the spatial relationships, and together these elements will act successfully in a complex, interactive way that resembles the workings of a biological cell. Howard's plan illustrates his view that the primary elements of the culture must be represented in the physical-spatial arrangement of a town or neighborhood in order for it to properly function.

In practice, this complex vision was never completely realized. Planners and designers worked from Howard's template in subsequent new town development, but only managed to replicate its physical appearance (Krieger, 1991). The garden cities and greenbelt towns in the U.S. were, in reality, mutations of Howard's Garden City. With the exception of Radburn, the later towns typically reproduced only the basic architecture and landscaping (Birch, 1980). The suburban forms which evolved from them eventually "ceased to attempt to simulate the physical organization of a town, much less to host its social and political structures" (Krieger, 1991, 13). Although the Garden City concept

was diluted, the principles reappeared in the New Urbanist design movement at the end of the twentieth century.

The Neighborhood Unit and the Social Center

The Neighborhood Unit concept, introduced in 1902 by Clarence Perry, was inspired by the Garden City and brought the pattern of a centered community into neighborhood design (Banerjee and Baer, 1984). One of the Neighborhood Unit's central features was a community school. Perry's design standards specified that elementary schools, churches and other public facilities be internally located within a ¼ mile walking radius of all residences, improving their accessibility to the whole community. This centered pattern of school, community services, and open space presumably facilitated public meetings and social interaction. Although the Neighborhood Unit did not produce the ideal self-sufficient socio-political community, it did acknowledge the importance of civic and educational institutions in maintaining the quality of community life.

A review of the historical context helps to explain Perry's concentration on schools. A movement for universal public education had been growing since the early nineteenth century and was a topic of national interest. By the twentieth century, the right to a public education was championed by respected reform-era philosophers such as John Dewey. Public education was promoted as the way to imprint democratic traditions upon the country's rapidly industrializing culture and culturally diverse cities (Boyte, 1989). Social center-type schools, in particular, were seen as agents for democratic renewal and community spirit. Perry was the author of several books and articles promoting social

center community schools during his career, with publications appearing in 1910, 1911, and 1920 (Rogers, 1998). It should be recognized that while the physical efficiency of the neighborhood unit eventually drew the most attention from planners, a stronger civic community was one of the cultural values driving Perry's design.

The planning profession realized that civic and community-oriented policies would improve the effect of the neighborhood unit's physical design guidelines. The American Public Health Association's (APHA) influential planning manual, Planning the Neighborhood (APHA, 1949) became the comprehensive source of these new policies. Extensive study and experimentation with the neighborhood unit and community planning before WWII had shaped these guidelines. The guide reflects the practical awareness that close physical arrangement of homes, by itself, is insufficient to the task of building a sense of community. In this regard, the section entitled "Neighborhood Facilities" was particularly relevant to the goals of the APHA, to create "a physical center of the neighborhood [that] stimulates the growth of community relationships and the acceptance of community responsibilities by the residents" (p. 52).

To achieve this goal, all policies in this section encouraged the multiple-use of facilities in each of the relevant sectors: education, outdoor recreation, indoor social and cultural facilities and health facilities. In effect, Planning the Neighborhood prescribed the creation of a new multipurpose neighborhood institution—a community school. The following passages are typical of the guidelines to which planners were regularly exposed:

"Education: The combination of schools and related facilities for multiple use will affect the design of the neighborhood. Customary combinations may include: Use of elementary school for adult education, indoor social and cultural activities..." (p. 44).

Indoor Social and Cultural Facilities: "Indoor social, cultural, and recreational facilities supplement dwelling facilities and provide opportunities for normal group activity. Services and organizations for which space may be required in a neighborhood include: Social services...Religion...Literature and the Arts...[and] Recreation (p.50)... One means of avoiding duplication of facilities would be to combine the school and small community building into a single community center. School auditoria, playrooms, and classrooms can then be used while office and storage space and special facilities such as a reading room, game room, kitchen and workshop can be provided within the community building. In this case the nursery school and health center may well become a part of the community center" (p. 45).

The residentially segregated housing developments that evolved from Perry's neighborhood unit, however, fell well short of providing the full range of social and political features prescribed in these policies—features that Ebenezer Howard and the planning profession considered necessary to bring about a functional community. Nevertheless, many of neighborhood unit concepts persisted in the planning domain

decades later through the widespread adoption of Planning the Neighborhood as a standard planning manual. This manual was still in regular use by 55 percent of practicing planners as late as 1969 (Banerjee & Baer, 1984, p. 24). But as public schools have come under the jurisdiction of large professionalized and bureaucratized school administrations, planners and their model of neighborhood community schools have been marginalized—at least until recently. The New Urbanism movement is again is reviving an interest in community centers and community schools.

New Urbanism: Revival of the Center

The movement known as New Urbanism, which grew out of the 1980's, is reviving the community center as a design principle in town and neighborhood planning. It is also renewing the view that human, environmental, and spatial relationships of a whole community make up one, mutually reinforcing entity. The movement's recent popularity is a reaction to what the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) describes as "disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge (CNU, 2000). Part of the blame for this disinvestment is placed on planning practices that have neglected community social needs while focusing on physical infrastructure. Led by architect-planners Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Elizabeth Moule, Andres Duany, and Peter Calthorpe, the movement has stimulated new design concepts based on traditional town patterns (McLaughlin, 2000). Its core development model is called Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND).

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

Traditional Neighborhood Development is based on residential patterns that existed before World War II, updated to accommodate modern lifestyles. Its goals are responsive to the public's growing desire for a sense of community, reminiscent of language in Planning the Neighborhood:

> "A complete neighborhood accommodates a variety of building uses and human activity within. There are always a number of places to go and things to do within walking distance of one another. It contains an assortment of residential buildings (i.e., houses, apartments, garages, outbuildings), workplace buildings (i.e., offices, studios, craft shops), commercial buildings (i.e., grocery stores, craft shops, boutiques, salons, rental stores, restaurants, taverns, delicatessens, (bakeries), and public buildings (i.e., schools, churches, libraries, assembly halls). These components are bound together by a well-crafted public realm. Elements such as tree-lined streets, sidewalks, greens, playgrounds, parks, benches, picnic shelters and gazebos define a neighborhood's public spaces and offer valuable community amenities. The unique composition of these components is what characterizes each neighborhood, new or existing (McLaughlin, 2000).

Two major principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development found in the Charter of New Urbanism call for creating an "identifiable neighborhood center" (CNU, 2000). Neighborhood centers are designed to function as hubs of formal civic activity and as

places of informal social gathering for the community. TND principles emphasize that civic buildings such as schools, libraries, museums, assembly halls, places of worship, and day care centers should occupy the most prominent places in the neighborhood. By drawing attention to civic uses and buildings, TND designs reinforce the goal of re-integrating civic and private life:

> "...concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods and districts, not isolated in remote, single-use complexes. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them...Civic buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy. They deserve distinctive form, because their role is different from that of other buildings and places that constitute the fabric of the city" (McLauglin, 2000).

New Urbanist experiments are proliferating, and designers are now beginning experimenting with school facilities. In one example, the school is located in the public-commercial spaces of a TND center, above a storefront. New Urbanist principles favor small schools and particularly those that use the downtown as an extended classroom. Learning academies are another variation whereby half of the school day is spent in traditional school settings and half is spent in spaces downtown; students apply this time to learning practical skills in nearby workplaces. In these designs, the school is more integrated with the community, consistent with the ideal of a true community school.

New Designs for Schools in the Community

Demographic forces are leading to new configurations of schools. Across the nation, rising student enrollment numbers from the baby boom echo will require the construction of an estimated 6000 new schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2000; American School and University, 1998). Most existing school buildings have surpassed or are approaching the end of their 40-year lifespan, and yet districts "face significant problems in finding the resources to renovate and modernize their buildings" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2000, 1). The GAO estimates that $112 billion will be needed to build new schools and bring older ones to a "good overall condition" (p. 2). The desperate shortage of classroom space in some large cities, particularly in Los Angeles, is leading to the siting of schools in non-traditional spaces like office buildings (Congress of New Urbanism, 2000). At the same time, educators and facility designers are turning away from the "factory-model" schools of earlier years—buildings with few windows and fixed-sized classrooms, designed for children and daytime-only use (Bingler, 1999). They are promoting smaller class sizes and flexible classroom spaces.

School facilities designers are sensitive to the trends and are publishing innovative guidelines for the design of multipurpose school spaces (New Schools/Better Neighborhoods, 2000). The U.S. Secretary of Education Riley is a part of the movement, calling for an end to stand-alone schools and the involvement of neighborhood residents in the design of "schools that can be true centers of the community, accessible to all citizens" (American Schools and University, 1998). A report published by the U.S.

Department of Education (2000) predicts the coming adoption of community schools as a national model:

> "The demand has never been greater for building schools that address a broad range of educational needs and, at the same time, serve as centers of their communities. In response to this demand, a wide range of innovative and practical community-based learning environments, developed through educator-architect collaborations, are now being implemented around the country" (p. 2).

Steven Bingler, one of the contributors to the Department of Education report, and an architect/planner in New Orleans is driving new community school designs using the concepts of community-based school planning and space sharing. Under his approach, a 100-person team (or larger) composed of residents, educators, students, and parents collaborate on school planning and design decisions using a participatory approach (American Institute of Architects; Concordia, Inc., 5). Civic spaces and social spaces are typically incorporated into the school designs. Bingler worked with the Tishomingo County, Mississippi community to create a school with a cafeteria which doubles as comfortable community civic meeting space after hours (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2000; Concordia, 2000). Using the community's input, the school auditorium was designed for public community arts performances and the school grounds double as a nature trail and preserve. Modeling TND principles, Bingler also worked with residents of Littleton, New Hampshire to design a high school in the town center that shares the space with a

public performance theatre (Bingler, 2000). Schools have been designed on the site of a public zoo, and within a working museum (Concordia, 2000). These designs recognize the richness of experience and the many mutual benefits of restoring the relationships of the community with the school. At the same time, they reflect the community's need for social and political space. As Bingler's projects demonstrate, the physical reorientation of school spaces for social interaction and civic engagement is already underway.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Public schools can be centers of community life and education and a resource for people in all stages of life. This is the theme of a growing movement for the realignment of schools with their communities, a theme consistent with the goal of building social capital and civic engagement. The concept of the school acting as a center of community life is known as the "community school," and its emergence can be traced to the reform era writings of John Dewey, Jane Addams, and Clarence Perry (Mott, 1993; Dryfoos, 1994, Rogers, 1998). In their 100-year history, community schools have made a significant impact across the nation, in long episodic cycles since the beginning of the 20th century (Rogers, 1998).

The Basics of Community Schools

Today, the term "community school" covers a broad range of approaches that extend the operating hours and services of a traditional public school (Coalition for Community Schools, 2000). Community schools are found throughout the country and include elementary, middle, and high schools. Some community schools emphasize the needs of children attending the school and their families; some approaches make use of after-school hours for community-wide educational programming and recreation; others systems emphasize community development through coalitions of educators, organizations, neighborhoods, or universities. Within each of these approaches, community schools function as a "mediating institution," an organization of people who cultivate linkages between the community and the schools. Community school staff are

responsible for coordinating teams and committees, serving as a training resources, leveraging resources to support community initiatives, building leadership, facilitating joint planning and the development of collaborative agreements, and coordinating evaluations of community initiatives (Cortes, 1993; Coalition for Community Schools, 2000). With their independent public service orientation, a daily presence in the community, and close relationship with public schools, community school organizations have the credibility to work across several bureaucratic boundaries for the benefit of students and public education.

Community school configurations are limited only to the partnerships' imagination and collaborative skills. Joy Dryfoos (1994) describes the wide variety of activities and services that are found in existing community schools: health clinics and dental services, recreational programs, cultural arts instruction (dance, music, etc.), child care, community policing, parent education, mental health services, employment training, substance abuse treatment, team sports, volunteer community service. Other sources (CCS, 2000; CAS, 1997; Mott, 1993) identify tutoring, summer camps, English as Second Language classes, exercise/health clubs, youth summer job development, clubs (book, bridge, etc.), political forums, entrepreneurship classes, family reunions, theater projects, scouting, neighborhood cookouts/dances, neighborhood organizing.

The community school concept is flexible in regard to administration (CCS, 2000; Dryfoos, 1994). A community school may operate as one individual school or as a system of schools. Community schools may be operated under the jurisdiction of the

public school system or under a stable non-profit organization or university through a partnership agreement. City or county governments are sometimes significant sponsors. Most utilize a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Those who study community schools emphasize that there is no single set of staffing or program characteristics in a successful community school. Ideally, a community selects those elements and structure that fit with its needs and culture through a planning process that involves many stakeholder groups, and it continues planning and adapting as priorities or neighborhood conditions change. This is a challenge in practice: "everyone concurs that effective school/community partnerships are time-consuming and require a lot of patience" (Dryfoos, 1998, p. 16).

Community schools share important common characteristics aside from any differences in administration or scale. According to the Coalition for Community Schools (2000), the four common facets of community school systems are:

1. "The places... the publicly-owned real estate, including buildings and equipment, that provide the setting for educational experiences and any community functions and events that require space and equipment.
2. The strategy... by which individuals, educational professionals, businesses, and public and private community organizations mobilize to meet community needs through collaboration, planning, and increased access to the school.
3. The programs and services... an array of programming and neighborhood-based services that strengthen a community.

4. The relationships...in which all stakeholders in the community become partners with school leaders based on shared goals and accountability—recognizing the school leader's primary accountability for the education of young people."

Community Schools in Declining Areas: A Neighborhood Building Strategy

Where urban conditions are deteriorating, where children are exposed to the highest risk, community schools are hailed as the first line of defense against poverty: "The school building has emerged as 'the place,' the one piece of real estate in declining communities that is publicly owned, centrally located, and consistently used, at least by children" ((Dryfoos, 1994,139). With over one in five children living below the poverty line, in environments characterized by unequal educational opportunities, multi-problem families, and rising levels of violence, educators have a difficult time meeting their educational mission (p. 6). Dryfoos and other respected researchers who document the lives of high-risk youth are advocating for full-community intervention at the school site. Dryfoos says squarely, "children are 'at risk' because they live in high-risk environments" (p.6). In many high risk areas, community school partnerships have formed and grouped critical community services in or near the building.

Services and Activities of Community Schools

As federal funding for community services decreases, neighborhood advocates, and professionals in public health, criminal justice, and community development now appreciate the logic of community schools. Schools can co-locate satellite offices of public health and community policing at schools, which some authors contend can make the community school a generator of other positive changes in the community (Dryfoos,

1994). Community development organizations such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in Austin, Texas and the Community Building Network (CBN) recognize public schools as engines of change and organize residents around schools in their campaigns for neighborhood improvement (Cortes, 1996). Residents are trained and directly involved in developing programs such as child care, small business development, senior citizen services, community policing, job training and computer literacy programs that operate in their neighborhood schools (Cortes, 1993). Ernesto Cortes, an IAF organizer, explains that the most important outcome of school-community work is civic engagement. Residents learn civic and political skills in working on neighborhood-based school partnerships and later use them to fight for larger city capital improvements and increased neighborhood investment (Cortes, 1996). A tradition of school-community activism is found in the history of community schools and reveals how community schools encourage the habits of civic engagement.

History

Community school history is linked to the philosophy of universal education and its necessity as a foundation for a democracy society. Although public schooling was common by the late 1800's, it was a locally controlled system with many disparities, based on elite, Old World traditions. Social reformers saw that the system of education was unmatched to the immense challenges facing individuals, families, and cities in the great social disruption following industrialization. (Rogers, 1998). John Dewey, the philosopher and theorist of education and Jane Addams, the founder of the settlement house, represent many of those who rejected elite European educational traditions in

favor of a new system better suited to a plural and participatory democratic society. Education was conceptualized as a force for the full human development of all people. Thus, public education is based historically on a compact with citizens: to deliver the necessary prerequisites of citizenship through education, regardless of social status. Schools were places to equalize opportunity, to perpetuate the values of freedom and justice, and to engage in democratic self-governance (Boyte, 1989). School buildings were envisioned as public space, literally and figuratively, where people of diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas and deliberate together, and in doing so, forge a plural society (Matthews, 1996). One vehicle for attaining this reform was the creation of a new kind of school—a community school.

Three Major Concepts

John Rogers (1998) traced the evolution of community schools and distinguishes three themes around which community schools developed over the past 100 years. Reformers in the early part of the twentieth century envisioned the school as a social center (Rogers, 1998). To make schools responsive to urban social needs and not simply, as John Dewey wrote, "places set apart in which to learn lessons" (p. 8), schools would serve as centers of community activity. School became places to bring a diverse urban community together for socials, arts performances, recreation, social services, adult education, and public dialogue among all age groups. Programming started in the afternoons and went on into the night. The model of the school as a social center reappears at the end of the century and forms the basis for a new national community school movement.

Following the social center concept, two later concepts stimulated the development of community schools. One called for the introduction of a "community curriculum," to provide school students a more relevant education (p. 10). A community-based, experiential education was believed to break down the "wall" between formal schooling and the community by allowing students to apply their education directly to community problems. This kind of dynamic learning experience would develop complex thinking skills and give students a realistic context in which to become engaged citizens. In this version of a community school, learning, and even classroom space, was extended outside of the school walls. The daytime educational mission was emphasized over the after-hours activities.

A third, and more recent, concept of community schooling integrates the separate roles played by the school professionals, community organizations, and local residents. Children, families, and community members receive services in a new kind of school-community institution (Rogers, 2000). This is the ideal of the "full-service community school" model (Dryfoos, 1998; CCS, 2000). Creating a community school acts as the catalyst to merge the distant relationships and separate goals of school professionals, social service providers, residents, and community organizations into a unified force for positive change. The balance of services is determined by a planning process inclusive of all the participants, and includes methods to negotiate the often conflicting values present in the community and in the educational profession. These reforms also challenge the prevailing balance of power between school professionals and the community (Dryfoos, 1994).

100 Years of Community Interest

Public interest in community schools has been long-lived, episodic, and broad-based as measured by public participation in three national community school conferences. In 1911, 400 people gathered in Madison, Wisconsin to share ideas on turning schools into social centers (Rogers, 1998). Participants included industrial relations specialists, socialists, governors and mayors from rival political parties, and members of mainstream churches and spiritualist movements. Sixty years later, in 1971, a politically charged community schools movement gathered senators and governors, the American Bar Association, the Girl Scouts, the NAACP, and the Jaycees to sign a public statement of support for community education. The work of community school advocates resulted in the passage of national community education legislation in 1974 (Ritchie, 2000). Thirty years later, in October 2000, another national conference convened around the theme of "Building the Movement for Community Schools," drawing 525 participants to Kansas City, Kansas. Policymakers, community school program staff, parents, health professionals, superintendents, and one graduate student (this author), shared strategies for expanding a "full service community schools" model as a guiding principle for the reform of public education.

From the earliest days, community schools advocates have worked to develop sources of institutional power to sustain their movements. One successful means has been to create national associations. Another successful strategy has been to capture the commitment of large foundations to fund training and pilot programs (Mott Foundation, 1993). Over a period of sixty years, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation contributed $177.5 million to

community school development (Mott Foundation, 2000). In addition, joining together politically helped to introduce national community schools legislation, which passed successfully in 1974. This helped to scale-up implementation across the country and enabled state governments to promote and coordinate community schools. Much of that momentum was lost when federal funding for the program ended in 1981 (Ritchie, 2000). However, many states still have a residual state-level community education program, and national community school organizations are flourishing. Community schools have demonstrated their value to boost civic engagement at the state and national level.

The trajectories of two national community school initiatives will demonstrate in greater detail how community schools provide a strong foundation for enlarging civic engagement and civic capital. The first is the Community Education movement, which began under the social center model in 1935 in Flint, Michigan. The second is the movement for Full Service Community Schools, which began in 1997 and attempts to incorporate all three themes into a comprehensive 21st century version of a community school system.

The Community Education Movement

Mott Foundation and the "Lighted Schoolhouse"

Several authors have chronicled the Community Education movement developed under the sponsorship of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan (Mott, 1982; Mott, 1993; Rogers, 1998; Krajewski, 1997; Warren, 1997). A Rotary Club meeting during the depression brought together industrialist/philanthropist Charles Stewart Mott

and Charles Manley, a physical education director for the Flint Public Schools. Manley delivered a speech that day calling on Flint schools to open their doors to after school and weekend youth programs. A later meeting between Mott and Manley to discuss the fate of Flint's unengaged young people led to a $6000 grant in 1935 to start after school pilot programs in a few public schools. Their success led to a lifelong partnership and started a national movement that created social center community schools in Flint and eventually in many places throughout the nation.

Flint's "Lighted Schoolhouses" developed into a successful model for providing after-school and weekend youth recreation, educational enrichment, adult basic education, health awareness, and skill-building courses in public schools by day and night. The program was administered separately, outside of the school administrative structure. Manley became the program's administrator, and he, Mott and Ernest Melby of Michigan State University worked to expand the model, and soon a university collaborative was formed. The program's early success was highlighted by a visit from first lady Eleanor Roosevelt who wrote a newspaper column praising Flint's community schools. Her report led to national recognition and replication in several cities across the country by the late 1930's. Training programs were created, and by the late 1950's, it is estimated that 10,000 people had attended Mott-sponsored community education workshops (Mott, 1999, p.6). The following community education principles taught today are still grounded in social center traditions (Mott, 1997):

- "Citizen involvement in community problem-solving and decision making—citizens have a right and a responsibility to be involved in determining community needs and in linking those needs and resources to improve the community;
- Lifelong learning opportunities for learners of all ages, backgrounds and needs;
- Use of community resources in the schooling/education curriculum;
- Opportunities for parents to become involved in the learning process of their children and the life of the school;
- Optimum use of public education facilities by people of all ages;
- Coordination and collaboration among agencies and institutions;
- Partnerships with business, industry, and schools; Everyone shares responsibility for educating all members of the community
- Utilization of volunteers to enhance the delivery of community services" (p. 4).

Scaling-Up to National Importance

Community schools were beginning to appear all over the country. In response to a growing demand for community education-trained administrators, Mott created a year-long graduate fellowship initiative for master-, specialist-, and doctorate-level training (Krajewski, 1997). Staffed with faculty from seven Michigan colleges and universities, this intensive training took place over a ten year period from 1964 to 1974. Ambitious students were recruited from all areas of the country. The Mott Inter-University Clinical Preparation Program invested 5.5 million dollars to prepare close to 700 educators for future positions as superintendents of schools, public policy consultants, community school directors, and community organization directors. In 1974, the Mott Foundation

discontinued its funding for the program after helping to set up regional training centers in colleges around the country.

21st Century Schools Program

The National Center for Community Education (NCCE), which coordinated the Intern program for Mott, then took over a program of continuing six week or less training activities based from Flint, Michigan (Krajewski, 1997). NCCE now trains 500-600 people per year, on- and off-location, and is the major provider of training to the federal government's recent community schools initiative, the 21st Century Schools program. As Jane Quinn (2000) of the Children's Aid Society reported, this major initiative is the fastest growing program in the federal government, growing from $40 million to $453 million from 1997-1999. It is providing substantial incentives for school-community partnerships to develop after school programs across the country (Mott, 2000). After 65 years, the community education legacy is alive and well in career community educators, and its influence will now grow in hundreds of newly trained educators and professionals for the 21st Century Schools program.

Full Service Community Schools

The Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) is the latest organization to build a movement for full service community schools. In the opening speech to the national CCS conference on October 29, 2000, staff director Marty Blank reported that the coalition first started from a small meeting of advocates in a hotel in 1997. More than 150 local, state, and national organizations in both the public and private sectors (including NCCE) are now members (CCS, 2000). It is staffed by the Institute for

Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. It is an organization that "mobilizes the resources and capacity of multiple sectors and institutions to create a unified movement for community schools...The Coalition disseminates information, connects people and resources, and educates the general public"(p. 14).

The model for the Coalition is a full-service community school, which aims to build on the attributes of the earlier models. In practice, many variations of a community school fit into the Coalition framework. However, CCS' vision of well-developed community school is explained as:

> "A community school, operating in a public school building, is open to students, families, and the community before, during, and after school, seven days a week, all year long. It is operated jointly through a partnership between the school system and one or more community agencies.... To achieve their desired results, most community schools over time consciously link activities in the following areas: quality education; positive youth development; family support; family and community engagement in decisionmaking; and community development" (CCS, 2000, pp. 2-3).

The model full service community school includes community service, before and after school programs, a family support center to help families with child rearing, employment, housing and other services. Medical, dental, and mental health services are readily

available. A full time coordinator supervises the delivery of services and encourages the participation of all members of the community.

Few schools actually achieve the standards of the model. With its broad base of institutional representation from all the major national community school organizations, the CCS model is likely begin to drive the creation of new community schools and the reorientation of existing community schools in the future.

Contributions to Civic Life

For almost a hundred years, national and state networks of community schools have built a strong foundation for civic engagement at the neighborhood level. First, they have reinforced the model of schools as centers of community. Second, they teach collaborative decision making skills directly to community leaders in trainings. Third, they disseminate written accounts of community school collaboration for others to emulate. As federal funding has declined and shifted the burden of responsibility to local communities, the art of collaboration is now forced on many local government and community service agencies. Community schools have had longer practice with collaboration than many other agencies, so they are good resources for best practices. As they have demonstrated in the past, community school advocacy organizations will continue to cultivate political action. These benefits make community school organizations and agencies a select resource for building local civic engagement and stimulating the involvement of citizens in school-community planning, neighborhood organizations, voting, and other public civic activities.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research relies on a case study approach to investigate community school systems in three U.S. cities. A system-level study has several advantages over a study of individual community schools. First, it allows a richer set of data from the observation of multiple sites among the three cities. Second, it permits a comparison of the ways that different neighborhoods within a municipality are impacted by community schools.

Case Study Selection

Two of the three case study sites were identified from a webpage of the National Association for Community Education (NCEA, 2000) which profiles district-level community schools systems. The first two sites selected are Bowling Green/Warren County, Kentucky and Birmingham, Alabama. The third site, Greenville/Pitt County, North Carolina, was identified from a presentation at a national conference sponsored by the Parents For Public Schools organization in Charleston, South Carolina, which the author attended in 1999. All three sites are selected from the Southeast region of the U.S., in part to demonstrate the feasibility of community school applications to other southern cities and in part to allow convenient driving distance and affordable access for the researcher. Selection was based on three additional criteria: the program operates in a medium- to large-sized district, at least five schools must offer after-hours public programming, and a staffed agency is assigned to promote the community's use of schools.

Critical Reference Group

In the preliminary stages of the research, the author established a "critical reference group" from Knoxville, Tennessee, a selected group of advisors who represent a stakeholder interest in the research topic area. This stakeholder group included a principal, a school board member, and a community development professional. These individuals provided perspective on the research topic which was grounded in their experience with school use, citizen engagement, or community development. Interviews were conducted during the spring of 2000 with Suzanne Rogers, director of the Center for Neighborhood Development, which provides technical assistance and grants to low- to moderate-income neighborhood associations; Bearden High School principal and member of Leadership Knoxville, Dr. Mary Lou Kanipe; and long-time Knox County school board member, Dr. Paul Kelly. After a brief orientation to the community schools concept, they were asked specifically to comment on a set of preliminary questions for an interview guide. The group's responses helped the author to compose a more relevant interview guide (see Appendix). Research findings will be shared with each participant of this group upon completion of the study.

Interview Strategy

A list of community schools stakeholders was composed to provide a guide to potential interview subjects. The stakeholder categories include the three previously mentioned, principal, school board member, and neighborhood development professional, and added community school director, community school staff person, community organization member or collaborator, school superintendent, and neighborhood organization member.

This list was later categorized into four groups for the purpose of analysis: school personnel, school users, school board, and community organization member. The community schools agencies in each study site were contacted to provide names of appropriate individuals within each category. If the agency staff could not provide a name for a stakeholder category, the author sought names from related agencies or from organization websites. Interviews were arranged in advance and took place over a two day period in each site: Bowling Green/Warren County: May 18-19, 2000; Birmingham: June 8-9, 2000; Pitt County/Greenville: August 24-25, 2000. Follow up interviews were conducted by phone or email. Interviewees were asked questions from the interview guide related to their stakeholder status or their knowledge of a particular question. Responses were recorded in note form and transcribed for later analysis. Additional community data was gathered from publications and websites of the community schools programs.

Analytical Approach and Methods

The analysis was framed by a theoretical perspective of social change which suggests that beliefs or values guide the formation of attitudes in social groups, and that changes in attitudes form the basis of new behavior and ultimately social change. If a new community institution, such as community schools, is representing new values and creating positive conditions that lead to changes in attitude toward civic responsibility and participation in the civic sector, then these values, conditions, and beliefs can be predicted to contribute to the emergence (over time) of changed patterns of individual and group involvement with decision making, agenda setting, and governance. The goal

of this analysis is to examine how community schools are shaping personal attitudes, institutional values, actual organizational activities, and ultimately civic engagement in urbanized areas, as conveyed by the stakeholders interviewed.

The method of analysis involved identifying key indicators or themes: benefits, problems, attitudes, and evidence of civic activity. These themes were coded by color with sub-headings coded by shape. All transcribed interview responses were reviewed and coded twice for accuracy. The responses for each site were collated, analyzed, and summarized to answer the research questions. The analysis relies on criteria from the key indicators and criteria presented in the literature review to evaluate the extent to which community schools are creating new civic space, social capital, civic capital, and increased civic engagement.

Limitations of the Research

This study does not attempt to establish a causal link between the presence of community schools and increased civic participation. It examines this relationship, but it does not test it statistically. The study is based on a qualitative and participatory design, not an experimental design. As a qualitative study, it attempts to systematically explore social relationships in neighborhoods, compare attitudes of citizen leaders, educators, and professional community development staff, and describe activities of residents who interact in "community school" settings. The study is participatory in that it consciously incorporates the experience and perspective of community schools stakeholders in order to focus the research questions on relevant issues.

CHAPTER FIVE:

COMMUNITY SCHOOL SYSTEM CASE STUDIES

Bowling Green/Warren County, Kentucky: Bowling Green/Warren County Community Education

History

The history of the Bowling Green-Warren County Community Education (CE) program demonstrates an enduring commitment to citizen participation and to collaborations of citizens and organizations. The program grew out of a community-wide forum and needs assessment in the early 1970's, one of the activities of Bowling Green's Model Cities program (Butler, 2000). A Community Education program was proposed as the way to meet the identified needs, requiring a four-way partnership of the governments of the City of Bowling Green and Warren County, and the respective city and county school systems. A board was formed and the first director, Dr. Don Butler, was hired in 1973. Butler was a recent graduate of the Mott Intern program in Flint, Michigan with a doctoral degree in adult and community education. As one of his first tasks, Butler began to negotiate the necessary intergovernmental fiscal support of Community Education's program. After eight months, an "Inter-local Agreement" among the County government and schools entities was signed, and it remains one of the essential foundations of Community Education today. In Kentucky, such an agreement is made possible by a state statute passed in 1965-66, the Inter-local Cooperative Act, authorizing joint planning by local governments.

From the beginning, Community Education established operating principles respecting participation and citizen use of schools. The guiding principle for the program was, as Butler (2000) explained: "Public schools are public space, and citizens must be treated as owners of the space, not just taxpayers paying the bills...K-12 education is the primary use and the community education program respects that fact." Butler and the board established the programming offered by CE based on a citizen survey and the board's examination of existing programs and gaps. CE program history from this point is well documented (CE, 3; Butler, 2000). The first classes began in Fall 1973 in three elementary schools, two in the Bowling Green Independent district, one in the Warren County district. The principals and superintendents were reported to be familiar with CE concepts (schools as community centers and extended day programming), and welcoming of support at their schools. Two years later, in 1975, CE had expanded to 13 schools with 1,100 citizens of all ages participating. Butler left in 1976 to develop a graduate program for community and adult education at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, but he remained a board member and statewide advocate. Under new leadership, by 1980-81, CE was active in 31 sites, including some non-school locations, with 623 activities and 28,476 participants (BGCE, 3.). Experienced a decline in enrollment for its enrichment classes after 12 years, but enrollments have increased since that time. The program continued to expand into child care programs and more interagency collaborations. After school child care programs began on-site at schools in 1983, and full day summer care began in 1993.

Community Education built its programs and social networks simultaneously. Advocates for community education in Bowling Green started networking statewide in the early years of the program (Butler, 2000). In partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, CE advocates established a statewide network of speakers, trainers and educators in support of community education concepts. Together, they worked to create a state-level membership organization and an advisory council to state government. Jack Graham, the Bowling Green city school superintendent who welcomed community education to the district in 1973, became a key advisory council leader. Graham was elected to the state board of education in 1979 and worked with Butler and others in districts across the state to promote further adoption and institutional support of community education programs. In the early 1990's, the state of Kentucky passed a referendum to reform its education system which created a statewide system of family/youth resource centers in schools. At this time, the state level community education advisory Council ceased operating and Mott funding of the Council was discontinued.

Don Butler (2000) reports that one of his priorities as a new director was to strategically build relationships with community leaders and citizen constituents by speaking at service clubs, coaching little league and attending any meeting where he could promote community education concepts and partnerships. He became a model of community education values in the community, to "practice what you preach, collaborate, and give more than you receive" (Butler, 2000). As part of his job, Butler wrote grants for his partners, often foregoing support for CE, to demonstrate a collaborative spirit and earn

trust among school officials and the public. In its first year, in addition to school programming, CE initiated the Interagency Advisory Council by inviting a diverse collection of local agencies to share knowledge and form partnerships. In 1979, in conjunction with CE, the Interagency Council launched a volunteer program to serve both schools and the area's non-profit agencies. CE continued to sponsor and promote the value of community collaborations as new directors succeeded Butler.

Administration

The Bowling Green Community Education office operates with an Executive Director, four program coordinators, and office manager (BGCE, 2.). Child care programs are staffed with on-site coordinators and teacher assistants. A Board of Directors provides oversight and consists of representatives from Bowling Green and Warren County school boards and central office, and representatives from the Bowling Green and Warren County community. A Citizens' Advisory Council gives input to the development of programs and services and hears suggestions for improvement.

The use of school facilities is governed by the "Inter-local Agreement," and specifies the order of priority of use (Jordan, 2000). City and county school uses always have first priority, followed by Community Education programs, followed by local government use, and then citizen or community organization use. CE does not coordinate use of the facilities or collection of fees; the application process is an individual school function. CE reserves space for its' own programs with each principal independently. Use of school space is free to residents of that district, however a janitorial fee of $12 is charged

for opening and closing the building and for building supervision during events (Dye, 2000). Spaces available for use by the public include: auditoriums and lecture halls, home economics and vocational classes in high schools, cafeterias, media centers, computer labs, gymnasiums, art and music rooms, lobbies in all schools (Jordan, 2000; Dye, 2000; Smith, 2000). Classrooms are not regularly used during the school term unless by prior special arrangement.

Current Programs

Community Education offers programming and services at all 25 school locations (BGCE, 2.). The current program components include:

Children and Youth: Child care is offered before- and after-school in the elementary schools and is the largest of all CE programs. It is self-supporting and generates revenue for the support of the educational enrichment programs. Middle school programming occurs during any "out of school" time. All-day child care is offered during school holidays and in the summer. 1000 children were being served in 2000. Older youth are offered life skills workshops such as date rape awareness.

Adult Programs: CE coordinates and trains volunteers to work in public schools. CE offers enrichment classes emphasizing lifelong learning, with offerings such as personal finance, computer skills, and crafts. Specialized classes are designed for senior adults. A program called One Church-One School matches adult volunteers who are members of a single church to a particular public school, similar in concept to Adopt-A-School programs targeting businesses.

Professional development: Classes are offered for fellow agencies in topics such as time management, communications, conflict resolution, and making presentations.

Interagency programs: CE is a participant and founder of Vision 2000 (multi-agency coalition), a member of Bowling Green Enterprise Community provider network, participant in Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth as the fiscal agent, a United Way member, a founder and member of Volunteers in Action, member of Community Action agency, and Operation Pride.

Business partnerships: CE connects businesses with schools in mutually beneficial relationships. Schools obtain volunteers and obtain contributions for the schools.

Benefits Analysis

The case study interviews indicate that Community Education successfully builds agency and citizen collaborations across the Bowling Green community. These collaborations mobilize sizeable resources from the community and the federal government. Aside from the Interagency Council and Volunteer Program that CE launched in its early years, collaborations between CE and other agencies have resulted in the spin-off of a rape crisis center, a youth offender program, and a youth community service program (Butler, 2000). As the state sponsored Family Resource Center (FRC) system came into being in the early 1990's, the CE program became an FRC partner. When the FRC program mandated a community collaboration, the Interagency Council renamed itself under the state title, Vision 2000 (Jordan, 2000). The personal networks formed from these interactions continue to provide benefits well past any given initiative.

A recent collaboration sponsored by CE is the Healthy Communities/ Healthy Youth program, for which CE acts as fiscal agent (Smith, 2000; Scruggs, 2000). CE also partners with agencies that "piggyback" onto the after school programs; in some cases CE even collects their fees (Jordan, 2000). CE is a regular participant in community initiatives of other agencies, currently sitting on committees for the Enterprise Community program and the United Way. School collaborations are probably the most essential CE partnership. Anne Scruggs (2000), CE After School Coordinator, reports, "The schools couldn't survive without us. We coordinate so many volunteers for them."

The public schools benefit from CE in many ways. The volunteers recruited by CE help both students and classroom teachers, and CE trains both teachers and volunteers to work effectively together. Schools also benefit from the good public relations CE fosters through its enrichment courses. CE Coordinator Scruggs (2000) notes the effect on parents: "By attending the classes, the community sees the schools are safe. They see what their kids are doing during the day." Community members who do not have children, but attend CE classes, have more incentive to support public education. Ben Smith (2000), a former school board member reports: "The more people are in schools, the more they support them. We've never had a school tax. We explain how important it (CE) is to the community—it's a productive use of facilities." CE coordinates many business partnerships with the schools, which supplements the schools' base funding with contributions of goods and services. "CE is not afraid to go to big companies like General Motors and partner," says Smith, but as he points out, smaller business owners

are just as important to include as collaborators. A local business owner is paying to help construct a new school addition.

CE offers many benefits to area residents and taxpayers. CE keeps the schools in use and available to residents. Residents and families of the area are offered a variety of classes, but can tailor classes to their needs. "If the community wants it, we can probably arrange it," says Jordan (2000). With daily offerings of after-school child care and classes, CE has set the precedent for community use. Dale Brown (2000), Assistant Superintendent of the Warren County Schools confirms that most school spaces are available. "There are no restrictions. If you are looking to use the computer lab, the gym, the cafeteria, it's pretty easy actually. We have a facility use agreement that's very simplistic." Jordan (2000) adds, "You can probably get into a school 24 hours a day."

If potential problems arise in the community, CE is sufficiently flexible to respond to the needs. An example presented by Ben Smith (2000) provides an illustration. A violent storm caused severe damage to the roof of the county high school. This forced the school to shift to an alternative schedule to accommodate the reconstruction. Many employed students lost their jobs. CE was called and immediately made contacts from among its business network to find each student a new job once the school schedule returned to normal. Another community need called CE into action (Jordan, 2000; Smith, 2000). Responding to an influx of immigrant families into the Bowling Green area, the community capitalized on the adaptability of CE to mobilize the teaching of different languages. Director Debi Jordan (2000) explains that "in city schools alone, we now

have 21 languages spoken. While schools teach the "English as a Second Language" classes, Community Education teaches the English speakers." People who come into contact with new residents, particularly those in business and government can now interact in the resident's native language while these residents are making progress toward English proficiency. CE operates as a safety net in the community.

Attitudes

The Community Education agency has contributed to the complementary notions of schools as public spaces and citizens as owners of schools. Debi Jordan (2000) affirms: "Countywide, we've embraced the idea that schools are part of the community. That may not be the case elsewhere, but it certainly is true here." Superintendent John Settles (2000) of the Bowling Green City Schools agrees: "The use of schools is taken for granted here. Citizens expect to use the schools and we welcome it." Former school board member Smith says that extending the use of school space "is an accepted way of doing things...CE is supported. People say they support it and I get a sense they support it by considering the numbers who use it." Support can be measured by the continued financial backing of CE's program. According to Smith (2000), "The city and county are still supportive. They assist with funding and a lot of in-kind [assistance]." Strong evidence for the incorporation of CE values into local policy is that the Inter-local Agreement is still intact (Jordan, 2000). "Residents are never told no" when they want to use the schools, reports Karen Foley (2000), a City neighborhood development staff member. Importantly, citizens, including seniors without children in school, voted in favor of bond issues to renovate Warren Central High School, which included several

improvements that expand community use. This is strong evidence that attitudes toward schools in Bowling Green/Warren County favor generous public access and the use of schools as public space.

Neighborhood Civic Engagement

The City of Bowling Green's Neighborhood Action Office sponsors a citizen education program called Neighborhood Mastery Development Training (Foley, 2000; BGNAP, 2.). The program began in 1998. Participation is required of new neighborhood associations that apply to the small grants program, the Select Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP). The training does not occur at schools, but new neighborhood associations typically meet 50 percent of the time at schools. The training program creates civic capital by helping citizens learn the mechanics of meetings, become familiar with local government and programs and form citizen associations. The program inspires the community into action, much of which is planned in public school spaces.

Karen Foley (2000), the Neighborhood Action Coordinator, believes that citizen training, grants, and involvement with a school improvement project inspired citizen leaders to become involved in "focal point" neighborhood planning and decision making. After receiving the required training, the neighborhood association partnered with an adjoining neighborhood association, the CE-sponsored after school child care staff, the PTA, and school staff, and local businesses to construct a community playground on W. R. McNeil Elementary school property. Mark Boling (2000), the McNeil-area neighborhood association president, says the lessons learned and relationships gained from the

playground project created a strong sense of community among the residents. According to Foley, after several successes with the playground, the association leadership felt confident to address new issues. They went on to conduct a neighborhood-led study and developed an official development plan, assisted by a professional city planner. A physical result of this plan is an altered transportation route around the elementary school and construction of safety fencing and decorative entrances on property across the street. Therefore, a successful collaboration centered on a school created a new outdoor public park and a new sense of empowerment to affect development at the local level.

Problems Identified

Bowling Green/Pitt County Community Education staff discovered that intergovernmental competitiveness can sometimes impede the progress of emerging community school coalitions. To avoid costly delays, Butler (2000) makes it clear that CE administrators must be able to negotiate compromises, build consensus, and get partners to commit funds to the program in advance. Legal issues may arise, but can be overcome. Butler recounts that soon after the Inter-local Agreement was signed between the City of Bowling Green, Pitt County, Bowling Green City Schools, and Pitt County Schools, the County's Judge Executive challenged the legal authority of the City to provide educational services. While agreeing to collaborate, the four partners were holding back funds until a final resolution of the issue. After eight months of deadlock, the threat was resolved (with Butler's intervention) by agreement of the City to legally step out of the partnership, allowing the initiative to move forward. Butler emphasized the need for political insight and negotiation skills, but reports that an administrator also

needs adequate time for organization planning—"With that kind of board, I set out to lay the best foundation for the organization. I worked on the system first, then developed the programs" (Butler, 2000).

Staff occasionally experience space conflicts. Because of the Inter-local Agreement, the City and County schools have priority over the use of space at any time. As a result, "a difficulty is that our classes get displaced often," says Anne Scruggs, the after-school program director. On afternoons when school programs or sponsored programs (like scouts) schedule key spaces, Jordan (2000) reports that CE adjusts, "We go to the playground. We try to find an appropriate location. And, yes, some days are not the most convenient. But if we know ahead of time, say in February if we know the school is having a Mardi Gras celebration, we will arrange a field trip off-site and have parents pick the kids up there," explains Jordan (2000). CE must work around other school schedules. City and County schools are on different calendars; the County is on the "agrarian" calendar, and the City is on an "alternative" schedule (8 weeks of schools followed by 2 weeks off). The intermittent two weeks demand full-time CE child care programming and staffing, set against half-time staffing in other schools. The cleaning schedules create barriers. Scruggs states, "City schools clean during the day, close at 5:30 p.m., and don't reopen until maybe 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.... These times are often too late for classes. The County cleans at night so they are already there." CE is flexible enough to work within the confines of each of these variations and schedules.

As the community evolves, the organization must be able to adapt to changing conditions or risk obsolescence. Debi Jordan (2000), the newest Community Education director, reports that: "When CE started with its enrichment classes, there were no dance studios, karate, or painting classes. Those things have come into being now, for all age groups. Our role is now to fill in the niches...there are a lot of folks working, a lot of single parents, a lot of parents without child care in the evenings...so we have decided to evolve again." CE will be adding evening child care services to allow parents to take classes, and will revise its schedule to create shorter, more intensive classes.

A challenge for the staff is maintaining a balanced relationship with partners. Jordan explains, "Our [board] relationships are strong, but not always easy. It's how you are perceived. Are you lining up with the city or the county, or their schools? It gets a little delicate [during the grant discussions]...I made my position clear that our primary goal was to provide enhancement of education." Similar situations arise in the monthly meetings of the Vision 2000 multi-agency council. Even though it is recognized as an important opportunity to share information about community services, and it allows many agencies to pool their resources for greater impact, there are occasional difficulties. "Yes," says Jordan, "it's well attended, but it's not all sweet and wonderful all the time [during grant periods]. Of an effort to build a church-school partnership to encourage volunteering at an assigned site, Scruggs (2000) says: "We've tried to work with churches in our volunteer efforts, but this hasn't been very successful. They are more internally focused...more within their own church community."

Changing use patterns are an adjustment for school personnel. Principals are accustomed to CE programs and public use of the schools, but when an older urban school facility was upgraded to accommodate community use, the principal encountered an increase in public demand. Warren Central High School, a Bowling Green City school, upgraded the auditorium and added a conservatory-style central corridor. Principal Barry Dye sees more citizens now and finds that "they all want to use the space at the same time." However, he did not perceive this as a burden. Problems reported by teachers who share classroom space with CE are rare, but they are addressed quickly. Ann Scruggs (2000) reported one: "An art teacher had a problem with something moved in her room. We had a meeting with her and then we talked to the night teacher. This solved the problem right away. We work hard to prevent these kinds of problems by setting guidelines with the night class teachers." School personnel are treated with care.

In the experience of Pitt County Schools Assistant Superintendent Dale Brown (2000), there is little demand for school space by the public because of surplus meeting space built in the community. He sees relatively few requests beyond CE activities. Debi Jordan (2000) also reports that surplus space in the community fills the needs of many groups but not all. The types of surplus meeting spaces (restaurants, hotels, churches) may not be the most conducive to good public meetings. Civic organizations may function better with neutral space that promotes democratic, open discussion. Evidence from the neighborhood coordinator Foley (2000) suggests that schools are becoming more important as a source of civic space.

Neighborhood organization members and staff need information on school availability. Because the extended use of space is not coordinated by a central entity like CE, information on space availability is somewhat fragmentary. Professionals or volunteers working outside of the multi-agency council, or anyone whose role is not readily identified with education and social services, may not be aware of schools as a public space resource. One indication of the gap in information is that the City of Bowling Green's Neighborhood Action Coordinator, Karen Foley (2000), who is familiar with the community, was not able to identify a contact source to learn about school availability information or use policies. Foley reports that she receives regular requests from residents to find meeting space, sometimes scheduling from two to three meetings per week, for up to 40 community groups. Fortunately, she is aware of school use policies and independently schedules up to half of the meetings at schools.

Uncovering information about building use policies on a school-by-school basis is time-consuming for most people. Relaying information to residents is also time consuming for principals who must approve school use requests. They are primarily in the business of managing the educational mission, not promoting citizen engagement. Without a coordinator to manage the task of after-hours building management, personal networking is the only conduit for information on use of schools. In the Bowling Green area, a collaboration-rich community in which public use of schools is taken for granted, this decentralized school space management system is not a great impediment. Even so, gaps of information for school availability may diminish the community schools' civic potential.

Analysis

Community Education is creating public civic spaces in schools. CE makes school space accessible to the public by facilitating good relationships with the school systems and principals. Guiding values of CE espoused by staff and board members also promote schools as publicly owned assets. The staff and school board talk publicly about the citizens' ownership of schools and apparently contribute to local norms that schools should be made available to citizens and groups when needed, despite the additional cost or added responsibility. Bowling Green and Warren County citizens are much more likely to view school spaces as part of the public domain after observing or participating in educational enrichment classes, professional development courses, or using neighborhood services such as child care. They demonstrate support of publicly accessible schools by encouraging public spaces in new school construction and by voting to support school revenue bonds.

By bringing citizens and adults into school facilities for programmed activities, neighborhood schools become community centers for social interaction. As a result, CE becomes an important source of social capital. Child care is an important component for children's interaction. Children and adults of all ages meet in enrichment classes. Community involvement is increasing as a result of CE activities that promote volunteerism. Civic community problem solving is more likely where social interaction is valued and levels of social capital are high.

CE is a successful mediating organization that engenders collaboration. It allows competing agencies and governments to share resources and increase the scope of programs. It helps to launch new organizations and adds to the total organizational network. This role multiplies opportunities for civic involvement and creates an expectation of future collaboration success. CE builds the skills of collaboration by teaching courses and modeling effective behavior. By training citizens how to effectively be volunteers, CE directly stimulates increased citizen involvement in schools, community organizations, and public affairs. It is an important source of civic culture and capital.

Civic life is accentuated for residents who are take part in neighborhood organization programs and live near accessible, community-focused schools. As demonstrated, Bowling Green's Neighborhood Action program is building civic capital and social capital alongside of CE. It is stimulating civic engagement through its small grants and citizen training. Space is an important commodity for both. While space in schools is not a necessity for civic organizations, particularly with other types of public space available in the Bowling Green area, school space can be more convenient for neighborhood organizations. The number of neighborhood organizations is growing and they show a preference for meeting in neighborhood schools. These groups, along with Neighborhood Action and the Planning Department, could be incorporated into future partnerships with CE, effectively reinforcing resident-led development strategies and civic engagement.

Greenville/Pitt County North Carolina: Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation

History

The history of community schools in Pitt County, North Carolina is tied to the State government's campaign in the 1970's to increase civic engagement and school involvement. Governor Jim Hunt pushed legislation creating community schools in the belief that school facilities should be used by citizens, and citizens ought to be involved in the schools (Keene, 2000). The North Carolina General Assembly passed the "Community Schools Act" in 1977 offering grant funds to stimulate school districts around the state to create community schools. The stated purpose of the Community Schools Act in Article 7A is:

> (1) "to provide for increased involvement of citizens in their local schools through community schools advisory councils, and
> (2) to assure maximum use of public school facilities by the citizens of each community in this State" (North Carolina General Assembly, 1977).

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) managed the Community School program's development and the matching grants to the districts. Successful school district applicants received three-fourths of their program budget from the State

and the districts were required to raise the remaining one fourth of the budget. Participation in the program required the following structure: a Community Schools Coordinator (preferably full time), an advisory council composed of at least 50 percent parents, and demonstrated interagency participation in program development and implementation. Of the 100 school districts submitting application, 67 obtained grants in 1978. Pitt County was accepted in the first year, with an allocation of $75,000.

The legislation gave considerable latitude to the districts in setting policies and focus, which helped to win superintendent support (Keene, 2000). For example, a school district could designate one school or all schools as community schools. There were three general provisions to be met as defined by the Community Schools Act:

> (1) "develop programs and plans for increased community involvement in the public schools based upon policies and guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education;
> (2) develop programs and plans for increased community use of public school facilities based upon policies and guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education;
> (3) establish rules governing the implementation of such programs and plans in its public schools and submit these rules along with adopted plans to the State Board of Education for approval by the State Board of Education" (North Carolina General Assembly, General Statutes, 1977).

Pitt County Community Schools (PCCS) developed one of the first community school programs in the state. In 1978, Alice Keene was recruited as the PCCS director from her position with the City of Greenville Parks and Recreation Department. She remains in this position today. Keene has a broad vision of education's role in the community, which she believes was shared by Pitt County Board of Education officials. Upon taking the position, she received introductory training in community education from the State's training staff, and later earned an advanced degree in Adult Education at Eastern Carolina University.

The new Community School system allowed the County government and the Pitt Board of Education to collaborate to create new public spaces and opportunities for the benefit of under-served county citizens. The Pitt County Board of Commissioners saw in PCCS a way to extend recreation opportunities throughout the county, and they agreed to provide additional financial support to the program. School Board and County officials officially granted PCCS full authority for programming and management of all school-based facilities in the district after school hours. It was not an easy transition.

As the program was first implemented, Keene reports that principals were fearful for the loss of their authority, and fearful also of having collaborating agency staff working in the building. Agency staff expressed similar fears for being able to work effectively in the schools. It took three to four years to settle into the new roles and working relationships. Keene credits the building of relationships and trust as the prerequisites for the program's later continuation. School principals learned that Community Schools staff

would address any problems at the school sites immediately, no matter what time of day or night. They discovered, as Keene says, that "I'm just as concerned about the building as they are" (Keene, 2000). Collaboration and the emergence of trust led to more progress.

Keene maintains that County Commission and school system support was critical to the program's success, and she worked to maintain strong relationships with both. While operating as a program of the Pitt County School system, program funding increasingly drew from the County, supplemented by the State community education office. The schools always provided necessary in-kind support. While creating enrichment and educational programs throughout the county, PCCS gradually became the provider of recreation programs in the outlying areas of the county, all based at schools. Eventually, in the County's recognition of this role, PCCS name was changed in 1998 to Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation (PCCSR).

Administration

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation is staffed by a Director, an Assistant Director, a Recreation Coordinator, an After School Supervisor, a Secretary and Bookkeeper. There are several site supervisors for child care services. An advisory council with a rotating board provides public input to the program and the percentage of parents serving the board exceeds the 50 percent minimum. The School Board is fiscal agent and the PCCSR staff are positioned as employees of the public schools. Over 90 percent of PCCSR's budget comes from the County; the State community school

contribution is much smaller (Roy, 2000). The County provides building space near the Municipal building which houses the Pitt County Schools.

Spaces used by the community and PSSCR are gyms, foyers, cafeterias, auditorium, media centers (libraries), outdoor facilities, classrooms occasionally, art and music rooms with open spaces, computer labs, high school shops, garage, and home economics class spaces, the activity buses (Keene, 2000; Gaskin, 2000; McNary, 2000). Following hurricane emergencies, all the school spaces are used as shelters, including the hallways.

Written policies welcome public use, exemplified in the Community Use of Facilities policy's opening statement: "...school facilities should be used to the fullest extent for educational, social, cultural, and recreational activities. Such use of facilities should be available not only to school age children, but also to adult citizens of the community" (Pitt County Board of Education, 1994). Use of school facilities is administered through an application to PCCSR. Tentative approval is given, then final approval is given thirty days from the date of the anticipated use of the facility. Applications are approved by both the principal and the Community Schools office. At this stage, fees are assigned and special terms or conditions may be added. All affected school staff are notified, including the school's "energy officer," a staff person who monitors utility use.

Fees are not charged for "community-oriented organizations, civic groups, and private non-profit groups" (Pitt County Board of Education, 1994b). Some charges are assigned for "patrons, parents, and friends of the schools" to cover costs such as utilities ($20/hr.

for each area), supervision if necessary ($12/hr. or time and a half), and use of equipment (stages, piano, etc). "Profit-making business, organizations, or individuals" may use school facilities but must provide security and are charged an additional facility fee . (Pitt County Board of Education, 1994). Use of Auditoriums/Performing Arts Centers costs an additional $75 plus lighting and sound charges. These policies provide for unlimited public and civic use.

Current Programs

The programs of PCCSR are designed to meet the overall mission to: "maximizing the utilization of human, physical, and financial resources with the cooperative efforts of other agencies and organizations in order to impact the quality of life for all citizens of Pitt County" (PCCSR, no.5). In providing public programming, all 33 public schools are utilized, serving urban, suburban, and rural populations of all ages in Pitt County. Pitt County's Community Schools program listings suggest many possible contributions to social capital in Pitt County. The major program and service categories are:

1) Use of facilities: Under this category, the PCCSR brochures list "adult classes, reunions, banquets, sports, concerts, plays, and many other events" (PCCSR, no.2). A listing from the program database for the year 1999-2000 (PCCSR, no.6) includes association meetings and events: the India Association, Association for Retarded Citizens, Migrant Education Program Fiesta, Kiwanis Club, Fireman's Association, SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference). Distinct civic uses included: voting, public hearings, Democratic Party convention, "meet the candidate", women's

commission seminar, and town meetings. In the 1999-2000 program year, 60,400 citizens out of 126,000 used school facilities, up from 45,000 in 1998-99 (PCCSR, 2).

2) Recreation: PCCSR publications list three divisions (PCCSR, no. 2&3): *Youth* - Day camps; specialty camps in sports, computers, outdoor adventure, etc.; sports leagues for basketball (1200 players), soccer (850 players), softball, wrestling, and cheerleading; a mobile recreation van for rural areas;. *Adults and Seniors* - sports leagues, community band, community theater, enrichment classes, Senior Games and Silver Arts (competitive local/ state/ national program); AHOY senior exercise program; Senior Club (2 days/mo.); *Special Populations* - Special Olympics for youth and adults (co-sponsored with Greenville Parks and Recreation); Special Arts Festival; Summer Adolescent Day Program linked to the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Pitt County summer camp (before- and after-care).

3) After-School/Before School Enrichment and Summer Care: This is the largest program for children. The program is run as on-site, elementary-age child care operating in non-school hours. 600-700 children are served per day (PCCSR, no.3).

4) Volunteers Program: For the benefit of the schools, the program offers recruitment, training, placement, recognition for volunteers; training of school personnel in using volunteers; training and placement of sports coaches; youth community service training and placement; coordination of volunteers for capital facilities program. 7900 total volunteers participated in 1999-2000, up from 6300 in the previous year (PCCSR, no. 2).

5) Interagency Networking: This program includes use of staff, facilities, funds for planning or consultation to assist cooperative community programs such as: Odyssey

of the Mind Regional Competition, ElderFair, Pitt Alliance for Youth, Pitt Council on Aging, Healthy Carolinians (partnership of business, non-profits, health related services), Governor's Summit on America's Promise and Volunteerism, Pitt County Boy and Girl Scouts, Pitt Community College, Rails to Trails (Keene, 2000; PCCSR, 2-3)

6) Capital Outlay: Assists local communities in developing recreational facilities on school property with 50/50 match funding and $411,000 total granted (PCCSR, no.3). Funds paid for: playground equipment, fitness trails, ball fields, stages, PA systems, court surfaces, concession stands, and library books. Thousands of hours of citizen labor invested.

7) Special Programs: PCCSR was developer of Stokes Activity Center and Gym (a community facility on elementary school property using Community Development Block Grant funds (PCCSR, no.3); PCCSR was the leader of a collaborative process to create a recreation master plan (completed in 1998) with the Pitt County Planning Director, the Pitt County School Information Officer and East Carolina University faculty and students (East Carolina University, 1998).

Rates of Participation

Rates of participation in PCCSR programs are an indication of the levels of community interaction and civic engagement. Many civic activities are recorded under the Use of Facilities program category, including civic organization meetings and political forums. The Use of Facilities Program category lists 60,000 participants in 1998-1999 (PCCSR, no.2). The Volunteer Program category lists 7900 participants. The combined total of

67,900 participants suggests that PCCSR is an important facilitator of social interaction and civic engagement in Pitt County.

Rates of social interaction are another measure of PCCSR impact. The Recreation Master Plan study conducted by East Carolina State University (1998) documents social interaction in the county. The study assessed levels of social interaction at all county recreation sites. All 33 school sites showed high levels of social interaction (p.87). The master plan also reported rates of participation in recreation programs relative to the total population. These data are based on a county-sponsored 1996 survey of Pitt County residents. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the respondents reported having taken part in a PCCSR recreation activity.

Benefits Analysis

As the program listing demonstrates, Pitt County residents and taxpayers receive valuable services and access to school space through PCCSR. Access to school space is facilitated by PCCSR's centralized system of building management. Many sites are available because the County operates all schools, including those in the City of Greenville. As Nancy Pierson (2000), active in the non-profit community, says, "A plus on our community's side is everybody is able to use the schools...not just kids." PCCSR Director Keene (2000) explains the rationale for extending access to citizens: "Taxes go to build the schools and public education...Those facilities belong to those citizens. They will pay for them all of their lives." Residents hold 50 percent of the seats on the advisory council, and their input guides the delivery of services and programs. By virtue

of PCCSR partnerships, health, mental health, and other public services are accessible to residents in convenient school locations: "We work with the community college, the Cooperative Extension, Mental Health, the Health Department. We can provide services closer to the residents, whether one night or all year long" (Keene, 2000). Nancy Pierson (2000) points to a more intangible benefit—"It gives the community common ground." PCCSR generates resources for community development by fostering collaborations. In Keene's reasoning (2000), "We can't re-create communities without connections. Community schools people need to be connecting agents...ask what we can do together that we can't do independently." Long-time collaborator Pierson (2000) notes that several collaborations began with PCCSR: "Community Schools introduced the America's Promise Initiative, Pitt Alliance for Youth, and Pitt Aging Coalition. It made things possible...like Elder Fair and the Youth Summit." School administrator, Barry Gaskin (2000) confirms that PCCSR helped school staff to welcome community partnerships "We are connecting with other agencies...this wasn't there 20 years ago."

The site visit allowed the opportunity to observe PCCSR in its role as community collaborator. This researcher observed director Keene meeting with the grant coordinator for a community health-oriented collaboration. Keene offered direct development services for the grant (walking trail and playground construction), but in the process she also offered consultation on budgeting, and mentoring on grant strategy to the less experienced coordinator. The success of PCCSR partnerships, say several staff members, can be attributed to Keene's integrity and longevity in the community. Pierson (2000) agrees and points to the good reputation of PCCSR's program staff: "They give time and

staff support to sit on committees. Many give time above and beyond their jobs. It helps to know the pulse of the community." Agency collaboration in Pitt County is more acceptable and successful because of PCCSR.

Community schools are drivers of community development. "People shop for schools first, then their home," instructs Principal Althea McNary (2000), who, with 22 years in the public schools, understands the priorities of parents. This pattern is not always realized among planners or community developers. Barry Gaskin (2000) of Pitt County Schools is well aware: "Schools follow growth, but growth also follows schools. People are making decisions about where to live based on them. We are putting schools in growth areas, but we've also seen development that came up around a school." When public schools are transformed into community centers, for all ages, even stronger attraction is created. The trend in new school construction is that "designs are becoming more conducive to public use"(Gaskin, 2000). Pitt County's newest high school, designed in collaboration with PCCSR and local residents, incorporates a community library, auditorium, and gym. This school will draw newcomers for years to come.

Community schools benefits principals, schools, and public education. Althea McNary (2000), reports that because of community schools, "taxpayers are buying into education. If you bring people into the school, you're still selling them on the school." She adds, "you will see people using our schools on weekends. In one case we have a family that returns every year for their family reunion. This makes for wonderful relations with people." After school hours, the school hosts a seniors travel group, the Girl Scouts, and

adult computer classes. "In the long run it's so much better to be using the school this way," says McNary. School personnel come to rely on PCCSR and trust the staff. Keene (2000) stresses accountability and not interfering with the educational use of the building: "I take stewardship very seriously; we have to take the investment seriously." The result of this is a "win for the schools," with "older adults supporting bond issues to support schools" (Pierson, 2000).

Community schools are linked to greater levels of citizen involvement and better planning. The Community Schools Volunteer program sponsored by PCCSR is a stimulus to civic involvement. Director Keene (2000) explains: "We saw that people want to help, but a lot of people think they don't have a lot to give. You have to reach out to people. We say 'We need you. Can you read?'... We show them they have something to contribute. They feel the joy of doing something for others and see they have something to offer. And that inspires civic involvement and responsibility." Mary Alsentzer (2000), a League of Women Voters member and former city council member, offers another perspective: "We struggle with getting citizens involved. Using the schools definitely helps. For the comprehensive plan, meetings were set up in schools. The use of the school affected the outcome. You can't always use the churches. It isn't always the appropriate place; non-denominational people or those who without a formal religion prefer public space"

Neighborhood and Community-Based Civic Engagement

The Greenville/Pitt County area has active citizens and a successful volunteer program, however neighborhood-based or resident-led community planning is less evident. There is no system of neighborhood organizations in the Greenville/ Pitt County area. The County, with a more rural character, operates without a zoning ordinance and currently works with residents on individual land use problems by request. There are numerous small municipalities that operate within the County boundaries. The City of Greenville Department of Planning and Community Development has no coordinated system of neighborhood organizations but offers neighborhood planning consultation by request (Harris, 2000). The Community Development division staff meets with citizens regularly. Andrew Harris (2000), Department Director, reports that no department meetings occur at schools. Neighborhood meetings are typically scheduled in churches, because "people here feel more comfortable meeting in a church" (Harris, 2000). Harris acknowledged that he lacked adequate information about PCCSR school use policies, and said that knowing more about them would be beneficial.

Attitudes

Attitudes prevalent in Pitt County support the notion that schools should be reserved for the benefit of the public. Attitudes of the director and staff inspire residents to feel welcome and responsible: "We believe these facilities belong to every citizen, not to the principal alone" (Keene, 2000). School system personnel have adopted a similar attitude, reflected in comments by Pitt County's Public Information Officer, Barry Gaskin (2000): "The greatest public relations that public schools have is Community Schools. When it

comes time to support the school referendum, you know more about the school and what it provides." Senior citizens, too, are comfortable gathering in schools. Pierson (2000) reports: "Retired people refer to these as 'our schools.' Some don't feel it, but many do." Residents of all ages find value in PCCSR recreation programs and in continuing use of school space, according to survey data of Pitt County residents from 1996 (East Carolina University, 1998). Seventy two percent of the respondents want the county to increase PCCSR programming, and 89 percent said they would support increased county taxes to pay for the expanded services (p. 89-90).

Problems Identified by Community Schools Stakeholders

For the staff of PCCSR, the struggle for funding is always a constraint. In one example, state funding was threatened in the mid-1990's when the state legislature voted to restructure CE into a block grant (Keene, 2000). The legislature moved committed community schools funds into a block grant to be shared with a popular child nutrition program. Local commissioners were allowed to determine the relative funds to commit to each program. Political pressures to divert funds to nutrition grew, threatening the existence of community school programs around the state. PCCSR was forced to fight for its share. Keene (2000) describes the outcome: "Pitt County was fortunate in that we (PCCSR) have a strong presence in the county...Enough people know what we're doing." Pierson (2000), claims that "Community Schools were saved because of Alice's leadership. Alice got on the phone and called all the people she's worked with to ask for their support, and she got it." Strong political relationships with the county officials, school officials, and residents avoided the diversion of funds.

A mature organization faces different problems than those encountered in its developmental phases. For PCCSR staff, the political effort grows as the program expands. Due to increasing demand for their services in a fast-growing county, PCCSR is projecting a need for new offices and recreational facilities (Keene, 2000). This requires an increased budget allocation from the county. A campaign of this scope demanded a partnership with a university research department to produce a professional master plan for recreation (Bulluck, Bumpass, Hill, Mims, Noles & Pease, 1998). The university research was supplemented by extensive amounts of in-house PCCSR staff support (Roy, 2000). The staff has been challenged to learn new skills to help the director effectively negotiate for a long-term budget increase. PCCSR staff upgraded its knowledge and skills to better document its programs, to become proficient in land and park development; and to give technical presentations. Continuous learning and adaptation is a PCCSR problem-solving strategy.

Resistance from principals and teachers is a common theme. School personnel are initially apprehensive about community school activities interfering with the school's education function. PCCSR Director Alice Keene (2000) reports that in the start up phase: "the principals were not happy when we came to visit. There were a lot of fears, with the thought that we were going to take over their jobs. The [outside] agencies weren't sure they would be allowed to use the schools. It took three to four years to settle into our roles and adjust to how we were going to work together... There's got to be a level of trust." Principals now accept the extended use of their school as a benefit, according to veteran principal Althea McNary (2000), "but it's a headache at times. I

have to explain to people that for every area of the school there is a separate cost and that I need to get someone to work during that time." McNary adds that in spite of the extra demand, "The positives still outweigh the negatives."

Certain conditions may limit a resident's use of schools. One is that children do not always attend school in their neighborhoods because of Pitt County Schools busing policies. "It's harder for these families to get behind the [neighborhood] schools," explains Assistant Director Rita Roy (2000); "Families are not routinely using those schools." Some rural communities are not affected by busing, so these children attend neighborhood schools. Alsentzer (2000) suggests that incorrect public perceptions of the safety of some schools may also limit use by the public. "Parents have an opinion that these [schools] are not in safe areas...The immediate neighbors would think it's OK, but this is not the case with county residents."

From the perspective of community organizations, civic engagement in schools may suffer from a gap in public relations. Mary Alsentzer (2000), former League of Women Voters president and city council member, suggests that "certain groups, civic groups, are well aware of the availability of space. But the general public is not aware...I don't think the word is out well." The Community Schools programs are highly valued, says Alsentzer (2000), but "we struggle with getting citizens involved [in civic life]. It would be great public relations for the schools to market their space to the community." She feels that information sharing is also limited by "working across separate governing bodies: the city, the county, and the school system."

The staff may attend to public relations and community network building—and information may still not reach important constituents, even elected officials. School board member Jill Kamnitz (2000), who lives in the city of Greenville, was fully aware of the recreational and youth programs of PCCSR but could not recall any schools in her district being used for public meetings. She suggested that a surplus of meeting space in Greenville was one reason city schools are not utilized more, along with the competing classes and sports offered by the City Parks and Recreation Department and the university. In rural areas of the county, other convenient meeting places like the fire hall and rescue squad building, may be used by neighborhoods or communities instead of schools. Kamnitz (2000) agreed with Alsentzer that "the other thing we could do a better job of, which is easy to fix, is getting the word out that the facilities are available... it probably means doing a better job of PR. Alice [Keene] probably doesn't give herself enough credit."

Local agencies may be overlooked as potential information/partnership prospects if not oriented toward education, health, or social services. Planning departments or neighborhood development professionals may not be obvious partners, or they may not see themselves as community school resources. Andrew Harris (2000), chief planner with the Greenville City Department of Planning and head of the Neighborhood Services Division did not have a relationship with PCCSR, but demonstrated a desire to be informed:

> "In terms of our community facilities inventory, we need to touch base with all resources for our long-range planning...What spaces are available? What are the rules that govern accessibility? For our neighborhood work, we would like to know when space is available and understand what programming a school is offering. We are interested in helping to increase the availability of programs, for instance in arts and crafts. We have a good arts and crafts program which was recently displaced. Space is so expensive for them."

Continuous community networking is a perpetual challenge to any community schools system, as well as to community development programs.

Analysis

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation creates public spaces in the schools through policies and programs that reserve use of space for citizens. North Carolina's community schools legislation of 1977 created a powerful expectation for schools to be used as public space. This expectation is present and growing stronger in Pitt County in 2000. The Use of Facilities program has been important in preserving the use of school space for public gatherings, and limiting barriers to public use by removing the costs or keeping the costs affordable. Critical to maintaining the public's access to schools in Pitt County are: strong advocacy of public use by the staff; good relationships with public officials; good relationships with the schools by reinforcing the primary educational purpose of schools; and fair, effective management of school facilities.

All of the Community School programs effectively increase community involvement. They invite participation in public service and group activities that increase the experience of working with others. They also generate volunteers for the schools. The large number of reported participants imply that many citizens are learning skills useful in public life. These figures suggest that schools are creating an environment that welcomes public interaction.

Where there are fewer public facilities and space resources other than public schools, the participation in PCCSR activities is higher. According to the Assistant Director Rita Roy (2000) the rural community schools are more likely to be the centers of community life and recreation—and the activities may serve a more important social function than in urban areas. Information gaps exist about CE and programs in more urban areas. Local planners and community development staff could be targeted. A school board member noted a possible gap in programming for non-senior adults.

PCCSR is contributing to civic engagement by hosting civic events in schools. The building use log indicates the presence of active civic organizations. While many citizens are actively involved with the schools through PCCSR, and in community organizations, a gap may exist in neighborhood involvement. No regular, systematic means exists to educate citizens about how government functions and to increase citizen influence in local development issues. There are few neighborhoods formally organized into associations, but there are several small municipalities which may involve their citizens in civic issues. As suggested by some interviewees, citizens and organizations may not

always be well informed of PCCSR rules of access, which could sometimes inhibit their ability to organize and deliberate about development. PCCSR school use policies could make the task of organizing neighborhoods and communities easier. School spaces are already regular venues for democratic deliberation and could become venues for neighborhood organizing and neighborhood-based participatory planning.

Director Keene is a generator of trust and competence that are considered essential to building community partnerships. Values of good service, reliability, public accountability, integrity, and cooperation have become grounded in the organization itself and are radiated outward into the community to build productive relationships and networks. The recreation survey results, together with the numbers of participants in other categories show that significant numbers of resident are participating in community life, some in civic life. Pitt County's partnership in community schools is building constructive bonds between residents, community organizations, and local government.

Birmingham, Alabama: Birmingham Community Education

History

The idea for Birmingham Community Education (CE) began with group visits to the Mott Foundation's Community Education program during 1967-68 (Sparks, 2000). Several factors precipitated the visits, explains former Executive Director, Dr. Peggy Sparks. The local economy was in transition, losing its industrial base and moving toward a services-based economy. Birmingham's leaders were very concerned about the transition and finding ways to propel education improvement and job development. Peggy Swain McDonald with the Greater Birmingham Foundation was one of "driving forces" behind Birmingham's comprehensive campaigns for community improvement and for starting a Community Education program. "Civil rights had a lot to do with it," Dr. Sparks adds. African-American communities in the most impoverished parts of the city were in dire need of reinvestment. Another contribution to community school development was the nearly simultaneous rise of the Neighborhood Movement. This nationwide movement pushed grassroots citizen participation in government and equitable public investment in community development and other services in cities. Birmingham leadership pulled together a planning team and sought the assistance of the Mott Foundation. Two years later, in 1971, the Community Education program began with pilot programs in two west Birmingham elementary schools, staffed by two part-time teachers.

"We needed a crisis to get things motivated, and then we used a systematic plan," explains Dr. Sparks (2000). The schools were selected through a public process, which included a needs assessment and public presentations by neighborhood groups to city council and the school board. The neighborhoods had to show commitment and interest and have people who would "seriously invest." After the schools were selected, a grant from the Greater Birmingham Foundation and the City established a center for Community Education at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In 1973, a resolution was passed by the Birmingham City Council and the Birmingham Board of Education to permanently fund a CE program and to expand it throughout the city and the School district. Forming a contractual partnership, the city agreed to fund two-thirds of the budget out of general funds, and the remaining one-third would come from the Board of Education, mostly as in-kind services. The Board of Education agreed to staff the program. This proportional funding resolution is still in place after 29 years of operation.

The Community Education movement grew in other parts of the state, increasing access to school spaces and stimulating awareness of community schools. Bob Ritchie, (2000), Education Specialist with the State of Alabama's Adult and Community Education Office, outlined the story of state support. Several community schools were in place in Alabama before state allocations were introduced in 1980. State funding provided the incentive for districts to create a community schools coordinator position and the numbers of community schools increased. With support growing, legislation was introduced and passed in 1990, which created an office of Community Education within the Alabama Department of Education. Funding continues through this office and

expands the types of support. Today, 300 schools, or half of all schools in Alabama, have a community education coordinator.

The continued involvement of the state sustains public access to community schools in several ways. State funding of coordinators and staff advocacy has the most impact on the success of community schools according to Ritchie (2000). Keeping coordinators funded increases multiple stakeholder access to schools (passing state legislation has had little impact, he says). Meanwhile, the Department's advocacy influences the sustainability of community schools programs and policies. "CE survives because people like me in state education departments push it" (Ritchie, 2000). Another state contribution is that half of Alabama's state legislators serve on CE advisory councils throughout the state, actively recruited by CE boards (Dismuke, 2000). Finally, community schools and policies are sustained by a state-required memorandum of support for community schools from local governments or school boards that receive funding. This language keeps a changing slate of local officials accountable to the public for maintaining the policies of community schools (Ritchie, 2000). Therefore, several state-level community school mechanisms may help to guarantee public access to school space in Birmingham and elsewhere.

Community Education Structure

One of the values that guided the vision for Community Education and its structure was grassroots citizen participation. CE founders designed the community schools system to be responsive to local neighborhood and community interests and to ensure more

equitable service delivery to the entire city (Sparks, 2000; Dismuke, 2000). With those goals in mind, the Board of Education originally established eleven core community school sites dispersed throughout the city (there are now eight). The core sites are centered in large geographic areas to allow easier access to residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Other schools within these zones are assigned to the core school, so that these facilities can be linked into CE services and programming.

Eight Advisory Councils composed of neighborhood residents, school personnel, and business people "create the nucleus of community education by identifying needs, setting goals, and developing resources" (Sparks, 1996). There were 450 citizens (including youth) serving on councils in 1996. These advisory councils send one representative to a city-wide body called the Birmingham Community Education Advisory Council (BCEAC). BCEAC "exists to guide and direct implementation of the community education programs operated by the Birmingham Public Schools" (Sparks, 1996). This group meets bimonthly and draws in additional members from the ranks of elected officials and representatives from various boards and religious groups. Their charge is to "establish departmental goals and recommend policies, programming ideas, and evaluation techniques" (Sparks, 1996). Through the advisory councils, the value of civic involvement and public accountability permeates the CE governance system.

Administration

Community Education falls under the administrative umbrella of the Parent, Community, and Student Support Programs, directed by Senior Executive Director, Peggy Sparks

(Sparks, 2000). Sparks recently took this position after serving as Director of Community Education for many years. Earlier in her career, she was a community school Coordinator. Present Director Dismuke served as a community school Coordinator for 16 years before assuming his role. Sparks, Dismuke, and the rest of the program staff operate out of a converted elementary school building known as the Davis Center. This building houses the staff of all the associated programs other than the community school coordinators, who work from their base schools. Staff members are employees of the Board of Education.

Community Education uses spaces in all 74 schools and some non-school community spaces. (CE, 3) CE has access to elementary, middle schools, and high schools during after-school times. Access during the school day is granted in high schools if available. Public or community use is coordinated through the Community Education Department. Space is accessed through an application process which requires approval by the community school coordinator of that school, the school principal, the Community Education Director, and the maintenance director (see Appendix). A separate use form is required for any partnerships between CE and other agencies or organizations that result in use of schools space for programs, classes, or special events.

Programs

Community Education in Birmingham is implemented through a combination of programs and activities whose purpose is "to provide lifelong learning opportunities; to cooperate with other community agencies providing health, educational, cultural, and

recreational opportunities; and to involve the community in the educational process" (CE, 1.). Activity areas encompass (CE, 1):

Adult education: For persons 16 years and older who lack literacy skills. Programs include literacy/basic skills/GED preparation, homeless literacy, workplace education, family and intergenerational literacy, and English As a Second Language. These programs are federally funded.

Community schools: "Use of schools is extended to the community. Classes and activities for all ages, from preschoolers to senior citizens, is provided." (CE, 1) This program includes use of space for community functions and organizations (Scouts, United Way, League of Women Voters), neighborhood organization meetings and city neighborhood conference, the National Issues Forum (three times per year), advisory council events (examples: a middle school mixer, senior citizen tribute, parent/youth conference, GED graduation ceremonies), "extended day" before-and-after school program, Camp Birmingham summer day camp/youth employment program, and IDEA summer academic camp for academically talented youth.

Family educational involvement and support: These separately staffed programs include: education training and workshops for parents, adult family members and significant others (family involvement conference, Fathers Only seminar, Back to School seminar); referral services for families and students; individual and group counseling; social services; homework and tutorial services; mental health services; Family Education Resource Centers with books, videos, tapes, available to be checked out; services for expelled male students between age 11-15 including training, referrals, individual and group counseling, tutoring, and mentoring.

Project SOAR dropout prevention: This program serves several populations: in-school youth with basic skill deficiencies; individuals with disabilities, those pregnant or parenting; homeless or runaway youth. This is a federally funded program.

Neighborhood Civic Engagement

Civic engagement in Birmingham is influenced by the City of Birmingham's Citizen Participation Program (CPP). This program and the CE program are active in Birmingham neighborhoods. The history of the CPP was obtained from an unpublished document produced by the Department of Community Development (CPP, no.4). In 1972, while Community Education was in its first year, citizen participation guidelines were given to the City of Birmingham by the local Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office. Under these guidelines, the City Department of Community Development drafted a neighborhood development plan. Lacking adequate community input, the plan met strong opposition among residents and a strong community organization. A public hearing was called, drawing 500 citizens and many suggestions, and a citizen input process began. Workshops and interviews were held throughout the year to gather recommended changes from citizens, and a new plan emerged.

The foundation of the revised plan was a system of more direct democratic participation. The plan provided a new neighborhood-based governance structure. Equally important, the plan conveyed public values endorsed by the community. As a first step toward the new system, neighborhood boundaries were re-mapped using extensive citizen input (CPP, p.4). From this process 86 individual neighborhoods were identified; these

neighborhoods were further grouped into 19 communities. The plan called for all 86 neighborhoods to create Neighborhood Citizen Committees as a means of gaining a voice in planning, in neighborhood decision-making, and in particular, in spending the City's Community Development Block Grant.

In November of 1974, in a high profile campaign, 258 citizens were elected (or under state statute, "selected") to fill Citizen Committee officer positions (CPP, 4). All officers within each of the nineteen communities would later come together to elect representatives to another body called the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). This board was intended to work closely with City Council. In establishing written guidelines, they agreed "to be a collective body concerned with all of Birmingham...to endeavor to work cooperatively with city officials...[and] that all levels of the Citizen Participation Program should not be involved in partisan politics, including the endorsement of candidates"(p. 6).

The newly elected leaders of the 86 neighborhood-based groups began to hold meetings. (CPP, 4.) Significant variations in size, composition, and representation were common in the newly formed organizations, and the first year results were uneven. Some groups accomplished little, but others were involved in "conducting neighborhood surveys, securing information, evaluating data, developing recommendations, making decisions, and representing their neighborhoods as City Council meetings, public hearings, and other events"(p.5). Lobbying for a share of $4 million of CDBG funds "was a difficult and lengthy process for many neighborhoods, but it worked" and a range of projects were

identified and initiated including improvements for recreation, handicapped access, traffic safety, and sanitary sewers (p. 5).

The city remains a partner to the process through the Department of Community Development. The Department's Community Resources division hired Community Resource Officers to provide continuing assistance to the neighborhood organizations (CPP, 4.). In 1981, Community Development changed its approach to "provide the neighborhoods with a higher level of technical assistance and to deal with increasingly complex dynamics of neighborhoods" (p.8). It formed teams from the Community Resource Officers and staff from the Planning Department to work in with designated neighborhoods on neighborhood/ community plans and implementation strategies. There are now eleven Community Resource Officers and 23 neighborhoods. The Department publishes a Citizen Participation Plan handbook that explains the pathways for decision making and the steps for individual involvement (CPP, 1.). This makes the process more transparent and removes the information barrier to involvement.

Bill Conway (2000), Community Resource Officer for the Department of Community Development, describes the current state of the Citizen Participation Program: "It goes in cycles depends on personalities of the participants and the issues. Many neighborhood officers have been presidents since the first election, 24 to 26 years ago." In earlier years, citizens' organizations worked with larger sums of grant money, up to $30,000 per year. As federal funding levels dropped, neighborhood grants fell to $3000. Under the last mayor's long tenure, the power of the Citizens Advisory Board was reportedly stifled

in City Council as political maneuvering took over the decision-making process. A new mayor was recently elected. "The frustration level is high," says Conway (2000). "Many have felt that unless you raise a big ruckus, nothing will happen. People no longer felt they had power. With the new mayor, there seems to be an invigoration among new officers."

Signs of civic engagement and community involvement are still evident. The voting rate in local elections is 30-33 percent, measurably higher than other cities (Conway, 2000). Conway (2000) reports that "participating in the program has inspired and taught five or six neighborhood officers to run for City Council over the years." An annual city-wide neighborhood conference, co-sponsored by CE, trains new officers in collaborative skills of planning, neighborhood organizing and community development. At the grassroots level, Hezekiah Jackson (2000), president of the Citizens Advisory Board, reports that Birmingham neighborhood organizations are still very effective agents of civic involvement:

> "If the neighborhood organization allows an industry to locate in their community, they leverage their power to get resources. The neighborhood organization must sign on to [incentive] offers of the city... For example, Federal Express wanted to build a facility and create 60 jobs in the community...But there were no plans for [protective] landscaping between the community and the facility...The beautification committee had power over the proposal. The

> Neighborhood Committee said they couldn't entertain the proposal until it gets through that committee, and they got the landscaping...We don't twist their arm, but we hold it tightly!"

Neighborhood interactions with schools are sometimes very productive. Jackson (2000) reports that one neighborhood organization urged the School Board to build a community multipurpose room as a part of their new school: "The residents wanted to be able to use the building, and this impacted new construction. They now have playgrounds, a park, and a community center along with the school." In another neighborhood, schools facilities were upgraded that had long been neglected. Jackson (2000) reports that "accountability is being addressed now. This principal didn't turn in the maintenance request for a year, and the conditions of the school were really bad...Citizens finally were listened to and the school was addressed." In spite of possible shortcomings, the Neighborhood Participation program appears to be serving its civic purpose of pushing community decision-making in a more democratic direction.

Benefits Analysis

Public space is created in Birmingham schools because CE promotes citizen ownership of the schools and schools as centers of community. CE staff are spokespersons for public access to the schools. "Ownership of schools is the key," claims Sparks (2000), "Citizens decide if the schools will thrive, so a sense of ownership means the world." Dismuke (2000), the current CE director makes a similar point: "We reinforce the public's trust in

the schools. People are welcome in the school. People haven't always had a positive experience in the schools. Now they notice a welcome atmosphere."

The school staff and the educational mission of schools benefit from CE in many ways. An upgraded building may result from a CE partnership. "The Advisory Council worked with a bank president to help get air conditioning at [for Camp Birmingham] and it brought them all closer to the building," Sparks says of one CE collaboration. CE programs build the reputation of the school and the principal. "We make the principals look great with programs," says Sparks. The school can focus on the day program and leave the after school activities to others. Joyce Tyus (2000), principal at Whatley Elementary, welcomes the assistance. "We depend on CE for any extracurricular things," she says, "If we can bring in more projects, it makes the child more successful." School personnel see CE's after school care and summer care as "an extension of learning." CE also handles parent involvement for the schools, getting parents onto school advisory councils, and even providing child care for PTA meetings. At the high school level, a CE program helps under-achieving students with academic achievement and attendance and focuses on getting the family involved in the child's success.

CE youth programs contribute to community involvement by instilling an ethic of community service in young participants. According to CE Director Dismuke (2000), CE programs give young people experiences in service to others. Service can occur in school by helping with younger children, or out of school by working on projects in the community. Former participants have returned to say they are now active in their

community because they were exposed to community service as participant in Camp Birmingham, or as an employee. Dismuke (2000) describes the value of creating early community service experiences in schools:

> "The youth program functions as leadership development. Look at our students. One of the City Council members was a student worker...A Detroit architect who used to work for us sent one of his young employees to be an assistant here because he thought it was so valuable. We are involved with the Boy Scouts because some of our former employees who are scout leaders now send their thirteen to sixteen year olds to learn volunteerism. Our network with former employees continues to serve as a resource to them and to us."

The Birmingham community benefits from many CE collaborations and its extensive agency, government, and business network. Dismuke (2000) describes CE's interagency involvement: "We give back to the community through our involvement in other organizations. I serve on a United Way allocations committee and I chair a leadership development committee to train their members. We foster inclusiveness among all the organizations." Agencies who want to connect their programs to children contact CE. Dismuke (2000) provides an example: "YMCA's have grants to work with youth, but didn't always have the numbers of kids they would have liked. Now, because of their partnership with Camp Birmingham, they have a captive population and their programs, like dating violence, can affect more children." Agencies from any sector are welcome

to partner. CE collaborates with the U.S. Postal service to provide computer training in school computer labs. In the past, CE partnered as fiscal agent with a community organization to qualify for a federal historic preservation grant (Jackson, 2000).

The clearinghouse function of CE helps to circulate information to individuals and organizations. Dismuke's office handles a wide spectrum of requests: "Ministers call when a problem arises in the neighborhood; newcomers are referred here after calling the city about after school activities; and organizations call wanting to reserve school space" (Dismuke, 2000). When asked about his job description, Dismuke explains that his job is "to refer, collaborate, coordinate, monitor, put out fires, understand how far to go, and who to go to...but his main function is to build partnerships and do referrals" (Dismuke, 2000).

The interviews indicate that the Community Education program and the Citizen Participation Program are mutually beneficial, netting additional gains for both organizations. CE contributes to neighborhood vitality and the Citizen Participation Program benefits the schools. Jackson (2000) reports that the neighborhood association members use schools for neighborhood barbeques and informal dances. Family reunions organized by residents are frequently scheduled at the schools. Neighborhood organizations provide volunteers and use their CPP grant money to purchase items for the schools. Jackson (2000) is president of a neighborhood organization that is actively involved with the school: "We partner with the community schools for things like Jumpstart for Heart, teacher appreciation, the summer reading programs (we provide the

volunteers), and we've bought new lockers for the school." Conway (2000) reports that neighborhood funds have been spent on computers for classrooms, sports and band uniforms, musical instruments, or events like a children's "Fun Day" at the school. "If the PTA can't pay for it, then maybe the neighborhood can," says Conway (2000).

Other synergistic effects of CE and the neighborhood organizations are noted. CE helps the neighborhood organizations communicate with their members and the neighborhoods subsidize the costs of students to attend Camp Birmingham. Jackson (2000) reports that Camp Birmingham and Camp Inglenook [CE summer camps] do community outreach by taking neighborhood newsletters to 1900 households all summer. Campers defray some of their camp expenses by working for the neighborhood organizations. CE sponsors neighborhood cleanup days and children in the after school and summer programs work alongside the neighborhood adults (West, 2000). During the cleanup, CE provides the child care for the young children of adults volunteers. Residents who participate in the neighborhood organizations have a more active civic life, inspired by the interaction of CE and CPP.

Attitudes

After 29 years of Community Education, residents believe that schools belong to the community. They expect that spaces will be available for neighborhood activities. Community access is almost taken for granted (Dismuke, 2000; West, 2000; Jackson, 2000). Sparks (2000) conveys the difference created in Birmingham by this sense of ownership: "When the city was ready to cut our [CE] budget, the neighborhood people would be there [at the city council meeting] at 4 o'clock for a 5 o'clock hearing. Nobody

else could even get in." Whatley Elementary principal, Joyce Tyus (2000), shares her impressions of CE during her first year as principal in the community: "Whatley's neighborhood is thirsty for the Community School...This is an older community. Many grandmothers are now raising kids and single parents. I see devout community involvement here." Dismuke (2000) says senior citizens who attend CE classes in schools or volunteer in schools grow to value public education: "They see it as a grooming process for the younger generation. They vote 3:1 in favor of supporting schools."

Civic Engagement

Citizens Advisory Board president Hezekiah Jackson (2000) believes that CE and citizen access to schools contributes to civic engagement in Birmingham:

> "Use of the schools has had a huge impact! In the average neighborhood, most of the civic activities occur in the schools...we have workshops, forums, candidate elections, town hall meetings...by staying on public facilities, you're on neutral ground. Neutral ground gives you the opportunity for some genuine dialogue...And yes, the Community Education program affects citizenship. It builds citizen consciousness in the neighborhood."

Bill Conway (2000) reports that the experience of being on the Citizens Advisory Board, and learning about the local political process, has encouraged members to become even

more politically active: "The Citizen Participation process is becoming more of stepping stone to public office. If you participate, you start getting a reputation. You get picked for other positions." Together, CE and the CPP reinforce the civic culture of Birmingham.

Problems

Principal and teacher resistance to CE was identified in several interviews (Sparks, 2000; Dismuke, 2000; West, 2000). This resistance was stronger in the expansion stages of the program but is still an on-going challenge as CE works to prevent problems from developing in school relationships. In the early stages, even with the authorization of Community Education by the Birmingham City Council and the School Board, individual principals needed reassurance that the school building and equipment were secure. Negotiations were necessary, but not always comfortable, says Sparks (2000), because "you had to sit down and confront issues. It's still hard." CE discussed policies and agreed to some demands of the principals such as purchasing locks for the school telephones. CE also agreed to purchase classroom computers as incentives to participate. Principals continue to be key partners in the success of CE. Other incentives have helped to overcome resistance to CE over the years, such as the purchase of laptop computers for teachers and the funding of a half-time teacher aide for each schools. Maintaining the good relationship requires effort. Joyce Tyus (2000), principal at Whatley Elementary agrees that "partnerships can be successful, but you must be willing to work at it." She continues that despite the added effort, "Community Education is a good deal, a very good deal."

Community school administrators face several challenges. Along with "coordinating the needs of the community. You deal with hard issues like race" (Sparks, 2000). To succeed, Sparks says that community schools staff need to develop management skills, written and oral communication skills, community development, and youth development skills (Sparks, 2000). "This is not easy," says Sparks. Politics is also a challenge. A firm understanding of intergovernmental relationships is essential to maintaining the support for community school programs. A reputation for reliability is also important. A great deal of Dr. Sparks' time as CE's former director, 60 percent by her account, was spent in the community away from the office. She devoted this time to continuously developing relationships among leaders and residents of the community, keeping ties with school personnel strong, bringing partners together from business, non-profits and neighborhoods, and attending to requests of the city and the school system. Sparks (2000) warns administrators faced with many constituencies and demands to "balance your time. If a meeting is not yielding something, you must move on. It's got to show results."

Site director, Dottie West (2000), reports that on occasion teachers are "afraid of giving their rooms over" to programs which use their classroom space over the summer when the rooms are vacant and cleared of personal belongings. In one recent case, West responded to a reluctant new teacher by meeting with her personally to offer reassurance that her classroom would be safe. West later provided the teacher with a gift of supplies from a gift fund maintained for each community school site. Several CE staff report that as CE directors, who are usually long term employees, become known to the school staff

and when school personnel experience the program's benefits, resistance drops. Low CE director turnover is due to CE salary levels for site supervisors that equate with those of school assistant principals (Sparks, 2000).

Otis Dismuke (2000), the current CE Director, reported that the low-cost after school child care component at first created a sense of competition with other non-profit agencies such as the YMCA after-school programs. Dismuke (2000) reports that "it did cut into church daycare, but not really into the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA. We had 2500 children the first year." The affected agencies, says Dismuke, have found there is more need than can be filled, allowing them to continue to operate successfully. Competitiveness also diminished as agencies discovered that by partnering with CE, a large captive population of students is assembled for which non-profits can share their youth-serving programs. Dismuke (2000) relates that: "Many of those organizations have resources that are made available to the kids in Camp and offer programs that we don't have. Like the YMCA's dating violence program. There are 100 from Camp Birmingham in their program."

In large community school systems, community networks and partnerships may be incomplete or be burdensome to sustain. Impressions gathered from Citizen Advisory Board president Hezekiah Jackson (2000) and Bill Conway (2000), Citizens Participation Program (CPP) coordinator, suggest that neighborhood associations and the CE program could both gain from increased interaction. Staff of the department charged with managing the Citizen Participation Program are not in regular communication with CE.

Both organizations encourage citizen participation, and draw from resident leadership for their respective officers and advisory board members, but they are not linked through any common network. "I don't know how much residents really know about Community Education," Conway (2000) says. Conway reported a willingness to advertise CE events in the resident association newsletters if regularly informed. Jackson (2000) reports that even in the absence of direct communication, resources of CE and resident associations are mutually reinforcing, to the benefit of the schools, the adult residents and their associations, and the children. Potential for strengthening community engagement and capacity could be realized in urban areas with community schools systems by increased networking between community schools programs and neighborhood planning and organizing staff.

Analysis

The Community Education program in Birmingham contributes public space resources to citizens by maintaining liberal public use policies and by substantially limiting the barriers to public access. The financial barrier is removed by removing fees for neighborhood uses after school hours. Information barriers are mitigated in several ways. The program actively promotes community use in its program literature and co-sponsors civic activities with the Citizen Participation Program where community use policies are further explained. As neighborhood organizations members have become familiar with use policies, the information is widely known. Community norms established after 29 years of public school-use influence the expectation that public schools will serve as free public spaces.

Community involvement in the schools is a regular feature of Birmingham Community Education. Non-profit organizations, neighborhood organizations, and private residents interact in CE programs based at the schools social capital is created through these interactions. CE is making an investment in future civic capital by recruiting youth into community service. Many problems have been encountered earlier in the CE program, but are now considered manageable by the experienced staff. There is always a need for more networking and more public participation in the programs.

The synergy of CE and CPP programs increases community involvement and civic engagement in Birmingham. Both programs operate with mandatory citizen advisory boards at multiple levels and thereby recruit hundreds of citizens to serve as board members and decision-makers in the CE program, the CPP neighborhood associations, and local government. Both programs provide skill training necessary to these roles. Both programs sponsor high profile, community wide civic activities like the annual neighborhood conference and the three citizen discussion forums. Volunteerism promoted by CE and by CPP increases the level of community-based interaction. Neighborhood residents are pooling the resources from CPP and CE and leveraging more neighborhood and school improvements than can be obtained by one resource alone. With dual programs, not only are citizens participating in greater numbers, but CE and CPP are reinforcing the norm of citizen involvement within Birmingham.

In summary, Birmingham culture is attuned to civic engagement. It welcomes participation and community involvement in local government, neighborhoods, and

schools. Community schools space, created by the CE program, is one of the catalysts for Birmingham's civic involvement and community action.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

This section returns to the key research questions presented in Chapter Two. The analysis uses the questions to pinpoint elements of community school systems, which, either directly or indirectly, advance citizenship and civic life. Specifically, this analysis reveals untapped resources of space found in every community's public schools that can be called upon in restoring and invigorating a democratic public sphere.

Intention to Address Civic Participation

Community school founders, directors, board members, and staff are intentionally promoting community involvement. Community school leaders in this study spend hours inspiring citizens to take part in community initiatives and volunteering. The intentions of the program founders are clearly revealed in program mission statements. Bowling Green Community Education founders stated: "Having citizens work together through Community Education can help our community address concerns such as ...student achievement... and support for schools" (BGWC, 2). Government legislation enacting community schools in North Carolina states that its purpose is "to provide for increased involvement of citizens in their local schools" (General Assembly of North Carolina, 1977). The published mission of the Birmingham program includes a commitment "to involve the community in the educational process" (BGWC, 2) These community schools programs were explicitly designed to be avenues of citizen participation in public education.

These programs aspire to do more than energize public education. They intend to build community collaborations and the capacity of residents to collectively confront problems within neighborhoods. Pitt County Community School and Recreation's mission statement indicates the broader scope of its efforts: "...to maximize the utilization of human, physical, and financial resources with the cooperative efforts of other agencies and organizations..." (PCCSR, 5). The Birmingham's program mission states that it attempts "to cooperate with other community agencies...and to actively recruit citizens into non-educational community projects" (BCE, 1). Bowling Green/Warren County's mission includes working to address substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and community pride (BGWC, 2). Thus, in all three community school programs, citizen involvement in intended in order to foster a stable community with a strong interagency support system.

Although democratic self-determination is not explicitly stated as a goal in the program literature of these three sites, community school policies and programs directly promote the growth of democratic culture. Mary Alsentzer (2000), in the Pitt County/Greenville area, free access to community schools attracts citizens to participate in civic life. Dr. Don Butler (2000) and Stephen Bingler (2000) describe broad public input processes chosen in regard to planning community structure and facilities. Democratic processes are incorporated not only into planning community schools, but are a part of the regular programming. Birmingham's Public Issue Forums and Neighborhood Conference are prime examples of how community schools are involved in democratic education. Community schools and school-focused organizations around the country are sponsoring leadership development courses, facilitating community-based planning, and teaching

skills necessary to work within the local political system (Cortes, 1993; Gardner, 1996). The reinforcement of democratic culture and education can be an important consequence of community school development.

Accessible Public Space

The community schools systems in this study are creating accessible public spaces and transforming school space into civic space. As described earlier, civic space is a staging area for activities that build civic skills and allow public deliberation and decision making. Interview responses and community school activity logs demonstrate that a variety of such civic activities are taking place in schools. Civic activity exists in the form of candidate forums, constituent meetings, political party meetings, neighborhood planning meetings, and neighborhood conferences. From one-time events (Greenville neighborhood zoning meeting), to seasonal events (Birmingham National Issue Forums), to regularly scheduled monthly meetings (Bowling Green neighborhood association meetings), school spaces are providing the common ground needed for community deliberation and civic action.

This study identified six important mechanisms or strategies that enable more accessible schools space:

1) obtaining legal authority from the municipal government or school system for the use of school space after school hours;
2) drafting explicit policies promoting community use of facilities, with detailed policies concerning applications, accountability, and building management;

3) maintaining regular public programming in schools after hours that encourages citizens to become familiar with local school spaces;
4) speaking about citizen ownership of schools in speeches and informal conversation, perpetuating community norms that schools belong to citizens and their organizations;
5) recruiting respected, committed board members who promote public access; and
6) promoting community collaborations and non-profit organizations that stimulate volunteerism and regular use of the space.

State-level mechanisms were also available to help cultivate accessible civic spaces. All three states represented in this study authorize and fund community schools through state legislation. In addition, community schools offices in each state work to maintain the publics' right to school space in collaboration with legislators. Finally, legislation authorizing intergovernmental cooperation stimulates the necessary school and government partnerships and improves the prospects for collaboration and shared funding.

The design of community school space is proven to be a rich opportunity for increasing neighborhood-based civic engagement. As reported in all three locations, newly constructed schools have been designed for extensive community use. In each case, citizens participated in the school design process and ultimately created a community center. These communities are following a rapidly growing national trend for greater citizen participation in the planning and construction of school spaces (Bingler, 2000).

As centers of the community, these schools are moving toward the integration of school and community as envisioned at the turn of the century, and reintroduced more recently by proponents of the New Urbanism (McLaughlin, 1997).

Comprehensive community schools are being planned in existing neighborhoods and schools, as well as in new schools. Warren Central High School in an older neighborhood in Bowling Green was recently retrofitted, involving parents in planning and design meetings. The surrounding community is now much more active in the school. Smaller redesign projects also provide civic benefits. Several projects to add playgrounds or walking trails to the grounds of existing schools were reported and involved neighborhood collaborations. At least one respondent in every site was sensitive to the economic impact of these school improvements on existing neighborhoods: upgraded schools help to maintain property values and rates of in-migration (Gaskin, 2000; Ritchie, 2000; Boling, 2000). The involvement of community school agencies and citizen planning teams in school development processes can improve the attractiveness of schools and neighborhoods while strengthening civic life.

Schools may not be the preferred spaces for all community events and meetings. Respondents in Bowling Green and Pitt County (Brown, 2000; Foley, 2000; Roy, 2000) suggested that the proximity of other public spaces such as fire halls, libraries, or police precincts, could make them preferable to schools. Elementary schools may not offer adequate seating for adults, and every school may not offer appropriately sized or equipped space, such as a gym or auditorium. Alternative spaces like restaurants, malls,

and other private places frequently cater to civic meetings, and reduce the demand for school space. Yet, as a former League of Women Voters president (Alsentzer, 2000) points out, not all meeting spaces are considered neutral, and therefore conducive to good public deliberation. Accessible neutral space is a critical resource in public decision making.

Participants in this study challenge community schools to be more diligent in promoting the civic use of school space. Public officials, planners, and community organization leaders in Pitt County and Birmingham suggest that if more citizens became aware of community school policies, more of them might participate in civic life (Alsentzer, 2000; Harris, 2000; Conway, 2000). Including other potential civic users such as planning agencies, neighborhood development professionals, and other less traditional partners could encourage these agencies to involve their constituencies. In turn, citizens could be encouraged to choose neutral school settings to undertake neighborhood research and participate more actively and equitably in local land use and planning decisions.

Attitudes Toward Use of Space and Public Participation

Positive attitudes toward the use of school space are shared by community school staff, citizens, and educators in all three sites. Community schools directors influence this perspective by maintaining good relations with school personnel, while at the same time championing a respect for the citizen's right to the space (Jordan, 2000; Dismuke, 2000; Keene, 2000). As this study details, the balanced attitudes and responsiveness of directors leads to a chain of attitude changes in school personnel. When the community

school staff begin to operate, school principals begin to share in real benefits: quick response to problems (Keene, 2000), gifts of computer equipment or supplies (Sparks, 2000), and increased numbers of school volunteers (Butler, 2000). The predictably resistant attitude held by school principals, teachers, board members, and even superintendents eventually gives way, and they become more receptive and cooperative. Citizen attitudes also begin to change. As Bowling Green's Superintendent Settles (2000) explains, continuing access to schools over time has reinforced citizen attitudes that schools are community property. Citizens reportedly feel more welcome in schools than in the early years (Dismuke, 2000). They grow to count on the schools for their meetings, and many have gradually adopted a sense of ownership. With the responsibility of "ownership," citizens begin to support the interests of the schools (Keene, 2000). The converging interests and positive attitudes of schools and citizens leads to fundamental change in the surrounding community: "Where the relationships are strong, there is a greater sense of community" (Roy, 2000).

Additional evidence supports this widespread change in attitudes. Citizens in the study areas have approved bond referenda to pay for school construction and increased the scale of community school programming and services in schools (Keene, 2000; Sparks, 2000; Dye, 2000). As Keene (2000) reports, senior citizens lobby to raise taxes for schools, particularly if they are regular participants in community school programs. This is notable because around the U.S. senior citizens without children in schools are not, as a group, thought to be strong supporters of school spending (Audi & Helms, 1998). Civic leaders in all three sites tend to be enthusiastic about the benefits of community schools

and consider it almost unthinkable that any public schools would close their doors after the school day (Pierson, 2000; Jackson, 2000; Smith, 2000). Although these leaders did express concern that citizens are not involved in schools in higher numbers, that occasionally principals still disregard residents, and citizens are still not considered in all public decisions, no one in this group would leave community schools out of their strategy for building a stronger community.

Social Capital: The Impact on Civic Engagement

Community schools are making a direct contribution to civic engagement, yet as this study suggests, these systems should also be recognized for their contribution to the foundations of civic engagement: social capital. As Putnam (2000) and other social theorists insist, levels of social capital are highly correlated with a good civic environment. The benefits of social connections build the necessary foundation upon which civic capital can grow. All community schools systems in this study are cultivating social capital. One means is through extending resources that strengthen families and communities: after school child care, on-site social services, transportation, and adult education. These resources remove barriers to participation, thus enabling people to build relationships and the community's wealth of social capital, and preparing them to function more readily as citizens.

The community school systems in the analysis develop rich opportunities to build relationships once barriers are overcome. Community school programming attracts hundreds of residents of all ages to public schools space: to meetings, to classes, to social

gatherings. Relationships are made that can last beyond a class period or a meeting. Children and adults interact together in recreational activities and in volunteer projects. As described by Putnam (2000), these interactions are a source of both "bridging" and "bonding" types of social capital; neighbors are drawn closer together, and at the same time, they are connected to the larger spheres within the city. Alice Keene (2000) reports that these experiences often awaken a sense of civic engagement.

While civic skills are taught directly, as demonstrated by Birmingham's National Issues Forums and neighborhood "colleges," programming need not directly promote political activism or civic engagement; attitudes may be shaped instead. Pitt County's Recreation Survey suggests that the social capital contributed by community schools programs reinforces positive attitudes toward government services and even for increasing taxes. In two sites, Birmingham and Pitt County, citizens saw the positive results of their tax investment in community schools and fought successfully to maintain the public funding. These kinds of attitudes lead citizens to cooperate further with local government, and with groups of other citizens, for a better community. As Putnam (2000) writes in Bowling Alone, social capital and public trust is more than a warm feeling; it ultimately means safer streets and better government performance.

Social Capital: Leadership and Trust

Social capital stimulated by community school leaders influences civic engagement. Evidence from interview data confirms that current and former community school leaders in this study are trusted individuals. Leaders such as Debi Jordan, Peggy Sparks, and

Alice Keene are noted for remarkably similar qualities by other interview participants: personal dedication to the job, a reputation for integrity, concern for improving the lives of others, knowledge and resourcefulness in obtaining and protecting funding, and an ability to network and build relationships with power bases in the community. Directors and staff influence the level of trust in the community by sharing their knowledge with partners and by promoting mutual respect among citizens and school staff. They pay close attention to keeping school spaces intact, as well as in keeping the relationships with school staff strong. With school principals and the janitorial team, in particular, they work hard on keeping the lines of communication open. The three sites demonstrate that successful community schools generate cooperative relationships based on mutual trust and accountability.

Directors enable leadership skill to develop in those around them. For example, Alice Keene gives her staff a significant role on high profile projects like the Recreation Master Plan, and provides mentoring to collaborators on successful grantwriting. Through civic organizations meeting in schools, citizens hone their leadership skills in community projects. Community schools staff also teach leadership courses. These successful community schools enhance the effectiveness of other organizations and foster leadership within their communities.

The founders and directors interviewed for this study maintain a focus not only on community schools, but also on a collaborative-rich civic community. Community school programs become powerful mediating and "boundary-spanning" institutions that

promote collaborations. The stories shared by directors Jordan, Keene, Dismuke in the interviews show how this is accomplished. Agencies that agree to partner on projects led by the community schools agency are rewarded with community school resources—they may get a grantwriter or a fiscal agent. Community schools demonstrate the viability of collaboration to others. Using their skills in managing collaborations, they model behavior necessary to overcome typical barriers in meetings. Moreover, they host training in collaborative skills for agencies. They instill the belief that: "We can do more together than we can apart," a favorite theme of Pitt County's Alice Keene. Community schools programs become a living demonstration that a collaborative, civil society is possible and that working from democratic principles benefits everyone.

Social Capital: Community Norms

A notable way that community schools agencies affect the community is by altering community expectations and understanding, or norms. The norms now operating in these three communities, as conveyed by many of those interviewed for this study, are: 1) that schools are public spaces, 2) that citizens belong in public decision making, and 3) that citizens have a responsibility to the community in keeping with their shared privileges. Over time, the three local cultures have apparently adapted to these expectations. In these three places, community school agencies have served an average of 20 years, or over two generations. As documented by participation rates in the program literature of each site, large numbers of their citizens have used school spaces in continuous fashion. People of all ages are participating in community service and volunteerism. Collaboration is talked about and is commonplace. Compared to many communities,

with no similar focal point for citizens, this is not the case. Community norms do appear to have changed as a result of the long attention paid to community involvement.

Improving Accessibility to Schools: Impact of Agencies

This study finds that granting the authority for after-hours management of the school space to a community schools agency improves public accessibility and civic activity—under specific conditions. These conditions require that community school agencies draft policies favoring civic uses and that they maintain a reliable, responsive management system to ensure building security and the principal's trust. These conditions are present in two community schools systems—Birmingham, Alabama and Pitt County/Greenville, North Carolina. Bowling Green's Community Education program does not officially manage school space.

These two districts with long records of managing school space share several common features. The Birmingham City and the Pitt County systems are authorized to manage the space by their respective city and county municipal governments. Under these terms, the schools and school-sponsored activities are guaranteed priority use of space at all times. Although the school and municipal government operate as a partnership, the municipality is the primary annual funder in both cases. The school district contributes its space, a valuable capital asset, and in the case of Birmingham, one-third of the funding.

Birmingham and Pitt County supervise a simple but careful process for citizens and organizations to obtain use of the building. Citizens fill out a form and receive approval

usually in 30 days. These two systems apply building use policies that clearly state the responsibilities of each party. They allow access to community organizations free of charge but give veto power to the principals. This combination of features has proven to be most successful. The secure contract removes many of the barriers and uncertainty that typically limit the citizen's access to schools.

The Bowling Green/Warren County system does not coordinate the use of schools, and therefore is not directly responsible for promoting public use of the buildings. This situation does not allow CE to fully leverage the space for civic use that occurs outside of the enrichment programming schedule. A centralized source of information or centralized reservation service is not in place. Without this, residents who want to hold a meeting must rely on their own knowledge, call from school to school, or call CE. The presence of Community Education in the schools will certainly lead to higher rates of use. Because the CE board includes representatives of the city and county school systems, CE could influence public use policy. Ultimately, any space requests are usually honored. However, the reports of low demand due to surplus private meeting space may, instead be explained by less efficient school space management, promotion, and coordination. Further research would be necessary to explain the low level of demand.

Community Schools and Neighborhood Development Programs: Dual Forces for Civic Engagement

This study finds that civic engagement is strengthened where community schools exist concurrently (if not always in tandem with) community-wide neighborhood development programs. Two sites in this study operate community school systems and neighborhood development programs: Birmingham and Bowling Green. Bowling Green supports the Neighborhood Action Program and Community Education; Birmingham supports the Citizen Participation Program and Community Education. In both of these cities, different sets of professionals interact with roughly the same population and share several of the same goals: to encourage citizen participation, community collaborations, and continuing education. Both programs in both sites make extensive use of the community schools for bringing residents together in dialogue and deliberation. Community schools are transformed from spaces for schooling into shared "common ground," and centers of community.

In Bowling Green, public schools are the primary meeting spaces for neighborhood associations arising from the City of Bowling Green's Neighborhood Action Program. This growing set of neighborhood associations are eligible for neighborhood improvement grants after Association officers attend a civic training course. One of the first associations, the W.R. McNeil Association, wanted a community playground/park based at their community school. In an unprecedented partnership composed of an adjoining neighborhood association, the W.R. McNeil elementary school, the PTA, and

the Community Education after school child care program, the group successfully raised funds for, and completed the project.

Karen Foley (2000) believes that this successful civic experience led to another. Association members, growing in sophistication, wanted more improvements, which led the association to research and write their own "focal point" community plan. The group has greatly expanded its repertoire of knowledge of neighborhood planning, park planning, and transportation. This story illustrates the civic benefit of social capital-building associations and overlapping civic programming. It also supports the notion that a great wealth of civic energy lies untapped unless there is a convenient place for citizens to meet and organize, coupled with a local resource providing practical civic education in participatory planning and development.

The Birmingham case presents the best evidence that community schools and neighborhood development programs serve as civic resources. The city-sponsored Citizen Participation Program redistributes local development powers to citizens through its neighborhood councils, education programs, and small grants programs. When important public decisions are being made, CPP brings the Neighborhood Council presidents to the table. The neighborhood associations are often members of Community Education advisory groups. Citizen involvement and financial resources flow from one program to the other. This is demonstrated by a Birmingham neighborhood association using its grant funds to subsidize tuition for children in Community Education's summer camp; in return, children in the summer camp helped the neighborhood association by

distributing flyers and newsletters door-to-door. Each group benefits from sharing its resources.

Although all three of the study sites promote active community involvement, the evidence suggests that Birmingham's partnership of Community Education with the Citizen Participation Program leads to a greater variety of civic involvement. These two agencies collaborate on training for the annual neighborhood conference, and they both contribute funds to neighborhood activities planned by associations and community school advisory boards. Boards of neighborhood associations and CE advisory boards create on-going civic activity, ranging from social events to public services projects. Citizen training in Birmingham is institutionalized and many meetings are held in schools. Because of the size of the city, and its sheer number of organizations, there are many citizens involved. This study shows a relationship between these programs and the exceptional sense of public ownership of schools in Birmingham. As the number of neighborhood associations grows in Bowling Green, comparable activity could be expected in the future if partnerships are formed with Community Education.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Chapter One of this study addresses the need for proper places for public deliberation, and relates the need for public space to the decline in civic involvement. It identifies community schools as potential sources of civic space. Chapter Two presents a literature review beginning with an exploration of the role of civil society in a democracy and strong evidence for the gradual abandonment of the civic sector in the U.S. Social capital is discussed as a new way of looking at the value of a community's social connections—the precondition for civic interaction. The review continues by building a case for the importance of space as a resource for drawing citizens back into civic life. In Chapter Three community schools are described as a catalyst for the production of civic space and social connections. Community schools that function as full-service community centers reveal great potential to inspire a renaissance of civic activity. In Chapter Four, the historical community school advocates and the present day New Urbanist movement provides many templates for integrating community schools into livable communities. These examples are setting the stage for a more vibrant democratic civic life.

Chapter Five examines three case studies, showing how urban environments with mature community school systems function in the community and how they contribute to the civic sector. The analysis in Chapter Six captures the evidence for a change in attitude,

activities, and overall climate for civic engagement. Social capital in these sites is evaluated for its role in enriching the social connections that feed the emergence of civic activity.

Significance of Research

The analysis confirms that a system of community schools in all three communities has improved the climate and opportunities for civic engagement under a system of community schools. The study provides important examples of how community schools inspire long-term community partnerships, community-focused leadership, and the benefits of flourishing civic environments. The community school agencies are key public assets in several ways. These agencies:

1) increase access to school spaces for civic organizations,
2) instill a sense of citizen ownership and responsibility,
3) build a base of social capital in the surrounding neighborhoods by providing educational and social opportunities for all ages, and
4) create civic capital by teaching civic skills, by involving citizens in dialogue and decision making through advisory councils, by stimulating volunteerism, and by creating opportunities for neighborhood-based planning and development.

This study demonstrates that community schools are dynamic and successful to the extent that they have a set of civic goals, strong leadership, reliable management, strong policies and good relationships with school personnel. A separately funded and staffed program to manage school space after hours results in the most efficient way to encourage the use

of school space for civic purposes. The most productive of all situations for raising civic capital is the mutually beneficial alliance of community schools with neighborhood development programs.

Communities without an active public citizenry are losing their ability to govern themselves and to democratically build better future communities. By altering the relation of citizens to public schools, by restoring citizens to their role as owners and caretakers of schools, community schools reframe the relationship of citizens to local public institutions—citizens are encouraged to be active members of a democratic community, not passive consumers of public services.

The foundations of a civil society must be rebuilt at the neighborhood level, using local space and citizens as partners in all types of regular community decisions. As this study reflects, public space is critical to any strategy of increasing collaboration and civic engagement. Community school systems create new sources of public space and they present abundant opportunities to build social networks and encourage civic associations. Schools are in every community. In the current climate of shrinking federal funding for communities, underutilized schools are a simply a wasted source of community wealth. No school building should sit idle when children are home alone after school, when seniors are isolated, when adults lack job skills, when teenagers have no place to gather, when no place exists for our civil society.

Through local investment in a community school agency, and neighborhood development programs, schools can be returned to their ideal place as the centers of community, and whole neighborhoods of residents can be mobilized for community improvement initiatives, participatory planning and democratic governance. Planners and community leaders must be ready to reserve and build adequate places for the practice of democracy, or civic engagement will continue to erode to dangerous levels. This author concludes that planners can work to increase the supply of public space by vigorously promoting community school systems and systems of neighborhood and community associations.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study left several questions unanswered that are worthy of further research.

1) The research did not address the civic uses occurring during the day in schools. Civic activity is not limited to adults. It would be useful to investigate whether school spaces are civic spaces during the day. Are children more inclined to participate in civic activity after school hours in places with community schools? How well are community school activities integrated into the curriculum?
2) The structure of participation in Birmingham that conceives of neighborhood associations as direct arms of local government may result in different types of civic activity. Further research would be needed to determine if civic activity differs in quality or frequency.
3) The scale of the Birmingham Community Education program is large, with 74 schools in the district and a stable level of base funding. This leads to several

questions: Does scale matter? Does a large program reach a critical mass of influence that allow it to access larger pools of resources. Does a smaller scale program develop more manageable networks? What difference does the wide geographic distribution of community schools have on civic activity? Is there more neighborhood activity in a place with larger number of associations and public places.

4) The internet is perceived of as new civic space. Schools and their computer facilities could link the civic activity of organizations and individuals. In what ways could community schools be further developed as civic space? How could their function as mediating institutions be improved through the use of the internet?

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3. Bowling Green-Warren County Community Education: Historical Highlights. (n.d.) [program timeline from 1973-1997]. Received from Dr. Don Butler, Director, Bowling Green Community Action.

Neighborhood Action Program, City of Bowling Green (BGNAP)

1. Neighborhood Action Coordinator. (n.d.). [webpage]. Retrieved on October 4, 2001 from the World Wide Web: http://www.bgky.org/nac/htm
2. Neighborhood Mastery Development: Course I. (May 16, 2000). [training manual].

Birmingham Community Education (BCE)

1. Community Education Department. (n.d.). [brochure] Received June 8, 2000.
2. Community Education Advisory Councils: People, Partners, and Progress. [event program, 1997 Community Education Advisory Council dinner, The Harbert Center, March 19, 1997].

Community Development Department, City of Birmingham, Department of Community Development (CPP)

1. Citizen Participation Plan. (rev. 1995, June 27). [booklet].
2. Neighborhood Conference, 1999. (1999, May 21-22). [conference program].
3. Neighborhood Associations: The Building Blocks of Birmingham. (n.d.). Received June 8, 2000. [brochure].
4. A Brief History of Citizen Participation in Birmingham, 1972-1988. (n.d.). [unpublished report on program history].

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation (PCCSR)

1. Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation. [webpage]. Retrieved on June 28, 2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.reflector.com/community/groups/PCCSR/Overview.html
2. Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation. (1998-1999; 1999-2000). [brochures].
3. Program Report: Reaching Out to Serve and Connect the Community for 20 Years Since 1978. (1998). [annual report].
4. Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation. (n.d.). [program report]. Received on August 25, 2000.

5. Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation: Presentation for the Pitt County Board of Commissioners. (n.d.). [unpublished presentation notes]. Received on August 25, 2000.
6. Database printout of program activities from July 1999-June 2000. Printed on August 24, 2000.

Site Visits and Interviews Conducted

Bowling Green/Warren County, Kentucky: May 18-19, 2000

Mark Boling, President, McNeil Neighborhood Association
Dale Brown, Superintendent, Warren County Schools
Don Butler, Director, Bowling Green/Warren County Community Action
Barry Dye, Principal, Warren Central High School, Warren County Schools
Karen Foley, Coordinator, Neighborhood Action Program, City of Bowling Green
Debi Jordan, Director, Bowling Green-Warren County Community Education
Anne Scruggs, Coordinator, After School Program, Bowling Green-Warren County Community Education
Ben Smith, Former School Board member, Bowling Green City Schools
Dr. John Settles, Superintendent, Bowling Green City Schools

Birmingham, Alabama: June 8-9, 2000

Bill Conway, Community Resource Officer, Birmingham Community Development Department, City of Birmingham
Otis Dismuke, Director, Birmingham Community Education Department, Birmingham Public Schools
Hezekiah Jackson, President, Birmingham Citizen Advisory Board
Dr. Peggy Sparks, Senior Executive Director, Parent, Community and Support Programs, Birmingham Public Schools
Joyce Tyus, Principal, Whatley Elementary School
Dottie West, Program Coordinator, Camp Birmingham, Birmingham Community Education

Pitt County/Greenville North Carolina: August 24-25, 2000

Mary Alsenzer, former President, League of Women Voters
Barry Gaskin, Public Information Officer, Pitt County Schools
Andrew Harris, Director, City of Greenville Planning and Community Development Department
Jill Kamnitz, Pitt County School Board
Alice Keene, Director, Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation
Althea McNary, Principal, W.H. Robinson Elementary
Nancy Pierson, non-profit consultant
Rita Roy, Assistant Director, Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation

Additional Interviews Conducted

Bingler, Stephen, President, Concordia Planning and Architecture, Inc. Interviewed October 30, 2000 at the Coalition for Community Schools National Conference, Kansas City, MO.

Nielsen, Randall, Public Education Program Director, Kettering Foundation, Dayton, OH Interviewed by telephone on June 15, 2000.

Ritchey, Robert Jr., Education Specialist, State of Alabama, Department of Education, Adult and Community Education Program, Team 2, Capital Planning, Montgomery, Alabama. Interviewed by telephone on October 15, 2000.

Appendices

Interview Guide

Themes: How is it working now? How has it worked in the past? How has it been improved? Where are programs going in the future? Does info technology play a part?

School personnel:

1. What spaces in your school(s) are available for public use?
2. How is the community involved in your school(s)? What non-school services or community activities go on in your building(s)?
3. How is public use of school sites coordinated? Is there a fee charged?
4. In your opinion, what impact has this increased public use of schools had on civic participation in this community?
5. Tell me some of the history of CS in (town). What model did you use for your community school? Why? Who was involved in your partnership?

School users:

6. How has use of the schools benefited your organization? (what extra benefits or symbiosis from working with other organizations come about as a result?)
7. Where were you meeting before? Describe how you operate in the building.
8. How does your work benefit the community?

School board:

9. Where does the money come from?
10. What negative reactions have you had from constituents?
11. What reactions have you had from a political point of view?
12. What have you considered doing that would improve civic engagement within this approach?
13. What would you do differently?
14. What would you advise school districts to do differently in the beginning?

Neighborhood Development Organization:

15. How have your staff (or CBO's) worked to support community schools? How do you make sure that it's not misused, that everyone understands the rules? What do you do to make it easy to connect to services?
16. What's been your experience in using the schools? How have you been able to use the schools? Has this helped you and how?
17. What would you like to see improved?
18. What kind of uses are you aware of? (get at coordination of services in the schools, the public outreach program. Is it widely known throughout the community? Is it hush-hush?
19. Should the school be used for community improvement or private gatherings?
20. How do you prioritize requests?
21. Is there a geographical boundary?
22. Who sets the policies? Local government?

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

REQUEST TO USE SCHOOL FACILITIES

Name of Community School_____Date of Application_____
Applicant (Name of Organization/Club/etc._____
Person in charge of activity_____
Address_____
_____Phone_____

Facility Needed: ___Gym ___Playground ___Classroom ___Lunchroom
___Auditorium Other_____

Activity:_____
Date of Activity:_____Time: From_____to_____
Purpose of Activity:_____
_____
Explain the method to be used to raise the funds (e.g. admission fees, concessions, etc.) _____
_____
Financial Arrangement with the Community School (if applicable)_____
_____

ATTENTION: In signing this application the applicant certifies to the community school and to the Board of Education that:

1. This application is made subject to the rules and regulations of the Birmingham Board of Education.
2. He/she understands that school activities have first priority for the use of all school facilities and equipment and that this agreement may be canceled if a conflict should develop because of the necessity to reschedule school activities.
3. The applicant and/or person listed in charge of the activity will be present at all times during the activity.
4. The group/organization has authorized the person making the request to represent them.
5. The applicant agrees to assume all responsibility for damages or liability of any kind and further agrees to save harmless the Board of Education and its employees from any expense or costs in connection with the use of the school facilities under this agreement.
6. All funds raised from this event will be properly receipted and used for the purpose indicated on this application.

Signature of Person Making Application_____

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	APPROVED	NOT APPROVED
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR_____	_____	_____
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL _____	_____	_____
COMMUNITY EDUCATION DIRECTOR_____	_____	_____
OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR_____	_____	_____

(This application should be submitted in duplicate to the Community Education Director a minimum of two weeks prior to the event.)

Received by School Security_____

BIRMINGHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

AGREEMENT WITH AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Year _____

_____ FALL ____ WINTER ____ SPRING / SUMMER

NAME OF AGENCY / ORGANIZATION: _____

CONTACT PERSON(S): _____ OFFICE PHONE: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP

NAME OF ACTIVITY / TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT: _____

_____

PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY: _____

LOCATION OR FACILITY USED: _____

PERSON RESPONSIBLE AT LOCATION / FOR ACTIVITY: _____

DATE BEGINNING: _____ DATE ENDING: _____

DATE BEGINNING: _____ DATE ENDING: _____

DAYS AND NUMBER OF WEEKS: _____

TIME BEGINNING: _____ TIME ENDING: _____

TIME BEGINNING: _____ TIME ENDING: _____

FEE IF ANY TO BE COLLECTED FROM PARTICIPANTS: _____

(IF APPLICABLE) MINIMUM MUST BE ENROLLED: _____ MAXIMUM NUMBER ACCOMMODATED: _____

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS / CONDITIONS / EQUIPMENT: _____

_____

_____

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT: _____

_____

DATE OF PAYMENT / PAYMENTS DUE: _____

SIGNATURE OF AGENCY / ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE: _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR: _____

DATE: _____

PLEASE RETURN WHITE AND PINK "SIGNED" COPIES TO THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROMPTLY.

YELLOW COPY IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

RETURN TO: _____ COMMUNITY SCHOOL

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL US AT _____ - _____ BETWEEN _____ AM - _____ PM.

BIRMINGHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

19_____

_____ FALL _____ WINTER _____ SPRING _____ SUMMER

NAME _____ SOCIALSECURITY NUMBER _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

_____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ BUSINESS PHONE _____

NAME OF COURSE / ACTIVITY _____ FEE _____

INSTRUCTION WILL INCLUDE _____

_____

_____

LENGTH OF COURSE _____ DAY(S) CLASS MEETS _____

DATE OF FIRST CLASS _____ DATE OF LAST CLASS _____

TIME OF CLASS MEETING _____ UNTIL _____

LOCATION OF CLASS _____

MINIMUM NUMBER
THAT MUST BE ENROLLED _____

MAXIMUM NUMBER
THAT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED _____

MATERIAL OR SUPPLIES TO BE FURNISHED BY THE INSTRUCTOR _____

_____

MATERIAL OR SUPPLIES TO BE FURNISHED BY THE STUDENT _____

MATERIAL, SUPPLIES AND / OR EQUIPMENT TO BE FURNISHED BY THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL _____

_____

SALARY ARRANGEMENT _____

_____

NUMBER OF PAYMENTS _____ DATE OF EACH PAYMENT _____

AGREEMENT DISTRIBUTION:

WHITE COPY – COMMUNITY SCHOOL OFFICE
PINK COPY – CENTRAL OFFICE
YELLOW COPY – INSTRUCTOR

_____ _____
INSTRUCTOR'S SIGNATURE DATE

_____ _____
COORDINATOR'S SIGNATURE DATE

Vita

Jamey L. Dobbs was born August 14, 1958 in Fort Worth, Texas and lived there until 1976. She married that year, moving first to Maine and eventually to California in 1980. From 1983-85, she attended the University of California, Berkeley. At Berkeley, she was introduced to democratic education, and to the work of educator Miles Horton of the Highlander Center in Tennessee, from John Hurst in the College of Education. After moving to Knoxville, Tennessee in 1985 with her husband and new baby, she resumed her education part-time at the University of Tennessee. Following the birth of her second child, she divorced, and then completed a bachelor's degree in Community Development and Family Policy in 1992. During this time, she worked at U.T.'s Energy, Environment, and Resources Center and for Mechanicsville Community Development Corporation.

Jamey worked in the non-profit sector after gaining her degree, in a variety of positions ranging from child care advocacy to social services research to public transportation services. Jamey was remarried to Dr. Gary McCracken in 1997, then entered graduate school to pursue the Master of Planning degree in 1998. While in school, she held a two-year graduate assistantship with the University of Tennessee Community Partnership Center.

She is currently living in Knoxville, Tennessee with her husband and four children, and is pursuing a career in participatory community planning and development.