



# Charting the Course for Successful Community Schools

Using Data and Human Capital to Advance Implementation in West Contra Costa Unified

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On behalf of the West Contra Costa Unified School District Community Engagement Team

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## Executive Summary

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West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is a primarily low-income urban school district with over 30,000 students, headquartered in Richmond, CA. In 2012, the WCCUSD Board of Education adopted a resolution in support of district-wide Full Service Community Schools. A community school educates the “whole child” by providing integrated services to support student success. This project addresses two key questions:

- 1) What is the **current implementation status** of the WCCUSD community schools initiative?
- 2) How can **data** and **human capital** advance implementation of community schools programming at the **school site** and **district** level?

### Findings

A review of community schools research revealed that **the community schools approach can positively impact student academic achievement**, as well as nonacademic outcomes such as behavior and parental involvement—but **only if the model is fully implemented**. In addition, successful community school initiatives have **community school coordinators at each site** to manage wraparound service provision. This is a key role, with real decision-making power, and in most cases cannot be fully filled by existing site staff. There **are four stages of community schools implementation: Currently WCCUSD as a whole is in between the first two stages**. In order to advance implementation, the district and its partners will need to adopt a needs assessment process and use data in a systematic manner.



A **needs assessment** was developed and piloted at two Richmond high schools: Kennedy and Richmond. Information was collected via interviews with school administrators and staff (n=10), focus groups with students and parents (n=5 groups) and teacher surveys at one site (n=15). As **strengths**, both schools have a **collaborative and caring staff** and a **Health Center and College & Career Center** that provide a variety of valuable supports to students.

As **needs**, teachers and students at both schools seek **more authentic, real world learning opportunities** such as project-based learning, as well as **comprehensive afterschool programming**. Another concern was **student mindset/behavior**, which could be addressed through teacher behavior management training and student mentoring programs. This process yielded the following insights for future replication:

### Lessons Learned

- Time intensive process
- Required complex analysis
- Concepts unfamiliar to school staff

### Key Strategies

- School site coordinator
- Regular training/support from central office
- Expand to other pilot sites before requiring district-wide

**District partners** (including nonprofit service providers and city government officials) participated in **data interviews** (n=9). Partners reported that they were **willing to collaborate on data-driven work**, including sharing data with the district. They expressed **concerns about capacity** to collect, analyze and share data (for both the district and its partners), which raised a **question of whether expert help would be needed** moving forward. Finally, partners wanted **better access to localized data** at the school site or student level (within the bounds of confidentiality/privacy restrictions), to help inform program planning and improve impact.

### Recommendations

**Joint** (*West Contra Costa Unified, City of Richmond and Healthy Richmond nonprofit hub*):<sup>1</sup>

- 1) **Collectively invest financial and staff resources to support planning, collaboration and data usage.** Effective community schools work is truly a community undertaking. The impact of these agencies together will be greater than any one agency alone.
- 2) **Data Support.** Investigate options for shared data platforms and analytic support from UC Berkeley or other partners. There may be opportunities with the expansion of the Richmond Bay campus.

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<sup>1</sup> This project was undertaken in partnership with the UC Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools. The joint recommendations were developed in collaboration with graduate student fellows working with the City of Richmond and Healthy Richmond.

- 3) **Community Engagement.** Collectively attend trainings and share engagement strategies among partner agencies. All three stakeholders would benefit from sharing resources.

***West Contra Costa Unified:***

- 1) **Community School Coordinators.** Invest in school site coordinators to ensure community schools programming at all sites. Prioritize high-needs sites first, and consider interim options such as compensating teachers for help with coordination or recruiting AmeriCorps volunteers. Also look into shared funding and Teacher on Special Assignment positions.
- 2) **Data Transparency.** Provide better access to school-site level data (e.g., attendance, academic outcomes) and program information through the district website or fact sheets for each school site.
- 3) **Shared Indicators.** Identify shared measures of program impact (e.g., attendance or suspension rates) through a collaborative process with district partners serving on the community schools advisory committee. Start with low visibility testing at current community school pilot sites.

Implement these recommendations through a **gradual phase-in process** over the course of the next three years, with the understanding that moving ahead hastily could result in poor implementation and might end up alienating key stakeholders. This pace should be sufficient provided that there is clear communication regarding planned action.



## Introduction

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The community schools movement—which strives to educate the “whole child” by providing integrated social services at school sites in order to support academic achievement and successful life outcomes for students and their families—has grown in popularity in recent years. In the Bay Area alone, school districts in San Francisco, the East Bay and the Peninsula have all made a commitment to support community schools, particularly in high-needs communities. In West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), the Cities of Richmond and San Pablo offered early support for establishing community schools. For example, the City of San Pablo built a state-of-the-art community center on the Helms Middle School campus.<sup>2</sup>

The success of these early experiments culminated in a 2012 WCCUSD Board of Education resolution to “create the policy and practice environment that supports collaboration with county, city, community based and faith based organizations...with the ultimate goal of becoming a Full Service Community Schools district.”<sup>3</sup> Since that time, school district administrators have been working to translate the Board of Education vision to reality.

### Policy Question

The West Contra Costa Unified Community Engagement Team, in conjunction with the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools, wanted to take stock of progress to date on the WCCUSD community schools initiative, and determine next steps. As a result, this report addresses two key questions, using a combination of expert opinions, case studies, local interviews and current data sources. Those questions are:

1. *What is the current **implementation status** of the WCCUSD community schools initiative?*
2. *How can **data** and **human capital** further advance implementation of community schools programming at the **school site** and **district** level?*

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<sup>2</sup> “The City of San Pablo Community Schools Initiative: Where Community Supports Education and Education Supports Community,” *City of San Pablo*. Retrieved from: <http://sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1525>

<sup>3</sup> “WCCUSD Resolution 27-1213: Full Service Community Schools,” *West Contra Costa Unified School District*. Retrieved from: <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Final%20WCCUSD%20FSCS%20Resolution.pdf>

## Road Map for the Reader

This report will argue that West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) has arrived at a key crossroads in its community schools work. It is time to move from planning to implementing community school programs and policies that have a real impact on children and families throughout the district. The district has made good progress during the 2014-15 academic year with the formation of a WCCUSD community schools Leadership Advisory Committee comprised of district partners, as well as the introduction of a centralized onboarding process for service providers working at school sites. Both of these actions represent important first steps in making the shift from planning to implementation.

However, in order to advance the community schools work, district staff and partners will also need to acknowledge that collaborative, data-driven service delivery takes time and money. WCCUSD and its partners have yet to fully address from where these resources will come, and in turn, how that will impact the distribution of decision-making power. For example, if district partners contribute staff time and money to assist with collaboration, they may anticipate a more formal decision-making role moving forward. This paper will not argue that there is one correct model of collaboration that should be adopted, but rather, that this matter needs to be discussed among all stakeholders—and resolved—before implementation of the community schools initiative can move forward.

The remainder of the report will delve more deeply into each of these assertions. First, the sections that immediately follow will provide background information on WCCUSD, as well as on the district's partnership with the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools. Readers who are already familiar with the context of this work may wish to proceed directly to "How a Community School Should Function—and Why it Matters" (p. 16), or "School Site Level: Needs Assessment" (p. 24). The next section of the paper will present results from interviews with district partners on the topic of data use, as well as promising data practices (see "District Level: Data Sharing and Indicators on p. 34). The final section will present recommendations to further advance the WCCUSD community schools initiative (see "Recommendations" on p. 43).



## Background Information

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This section will present background information on West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), including the formation of the community schools initiative, and the district's partnership with the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools.

### West Contra Costa Unified School District

West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is a mid-size urban district (30,000 students) with a troubled financial history. In 1991 the district went bankrupt due to a \$29 million budget deficit.<sup>4</sup> Faced with the possibility of district schools shutting down entirely, current Mayor of Richmond Tom Butt sued the State of California, demanding that the state step in. In a landmark decision in *Butt v. State of California*, the California Supreme Court ruled that the state was obligated to provide an education to students in the case that a district failed.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the State of California offered a loan, making WCCUSD the first district in the state to enter into a receivership arrangement. Over the course of 21 years, the district paid back the loan for a total cost of \$47 million.<sup>6</sup>

Although the 21 years of state receivership underscore a history of serious managerial missteps, the situation has improved significantly in recent years. With steady leadership at the top and improved fiscal management, WCCUSD was able to pay off its loan nearly six years early with a final payment in 2012 of \$8.1 million drawn from a long-term debt fund.<sup>7</sup> The State Superintendent of Education subsequently returned local control to the West Contra Costa Board of Education in 2012.

Currently, WCCUSD has 54 schools spanning five cities and six unincorporated areas in Contra Costa County. The municipalities represented by the district vary greatly in terms of size,

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<sup>4</sup> Tucker, Jill. "West Contra Costa School District Pays Off Debt." *San Francisco Chronicle* 2 Jun. 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/West-Contra-Costa-school-district-pays-off-debt-3603036.php>

<sup>5</sup> Burress, Charles. "School District Paid \$19 Million in Interest Alone on State Loan." *El Cerrito Patch* 1 Jun. 2012. Retrieved from: <http://patch.com/california/elcerrito/school-district-paid-19-million-in-just-interest-on-state-loan>

<sup>6</sup> Murphy, Katy. "West County schools, free from state control after 20 years." *Oakland Tribune* 2 Jun. 2012. Retrieved from: [http://www.contracostatimes.com/richmond/ci\\_20762962/west-county-schools-free-from-state-control-after](http://www.contracostatimes.com/richmond/ci_20762962/west-county-schools-free-from-state-control-after)

<sup>7</sup> Melendez, Lyanne. "School District Pays Off 20-Year Debt Early." *KGO-TV* 2 Jun. 2012. Retrieved from: [http://abclocal.go.com/story?section=news/local/east\\_bay&id=8685984](http://abclocal.go.com/story?section=news/local/east_bay&id=8685984)

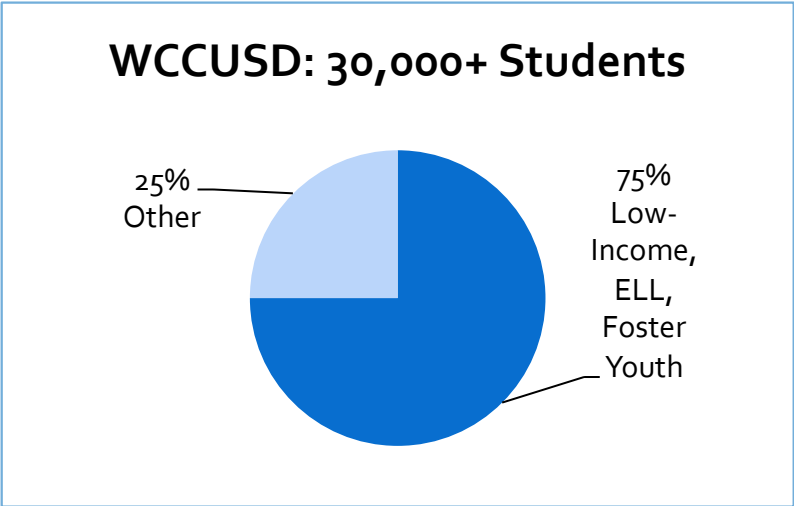
affluence and demographics, making a “one-size-fits-all” approach to district policymaking unrealistic (see Figure 1 for an example of this variation). In addition, dealing with multiple local government structures adds a complicated layer to planning or implementing district-wide initiatives that should not be underestimated. Different municipal stakeholders may have varied perspectives and needs, and it can be difficult to satisfy everyone simultaneously.

**Figure 1: Comparison of Two Municipalities in WCCUSD<sup>8</sup>**

	Hercules, CA	Richmond, CA
<b>Population</b>	24,060	103,701
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$96,750	\$54,589
<b>Percent Below Federal Poverty Line</b>	6%	18.5%

WCCUSD as a whole serves a high-needs population (see Figure 2 for an unduplicated count, meaning that students who fall into more than one category are only represented once.).

**Figure 2: Student Demographics**



Like many high-needs urban school districts, WCCUSD has historically underperformed on testing in comparison to average results for the state of California. The district’s performance matches or lags slightly behind two other districts of comparable size and demographics—Lodi

<sup>8</sup> United States Census Bureau / American FactFinder. 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey.

Unified in San Joaquin County and Twin Rivers Unified in Sacramento County (see Figures 3 and 4). These results are especially troubling given the low proficiency rates for the state as a whole.

Figure 3: Math Performance Compared with Similar Districts and State Average

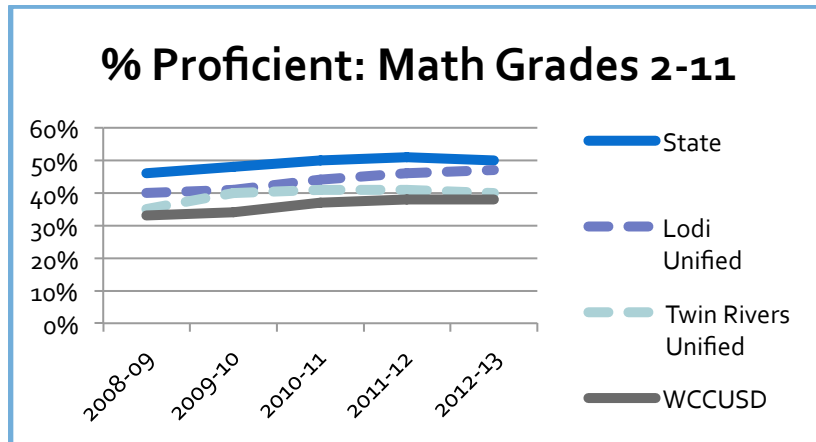
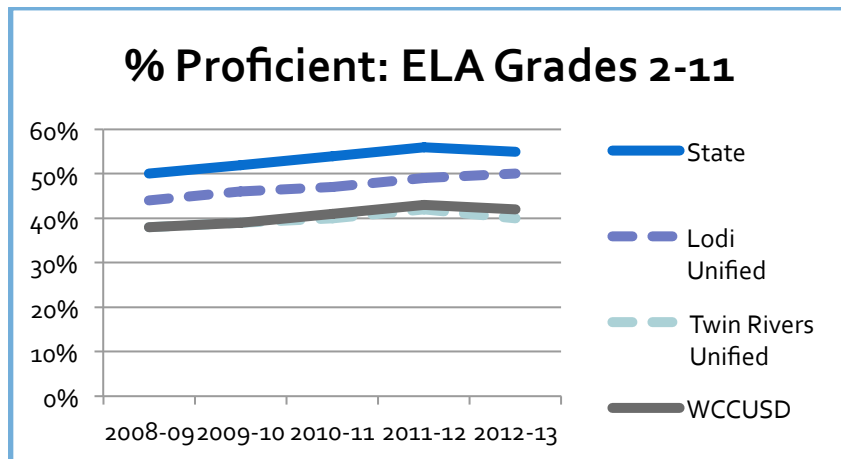


Figure 4: English Proficiency Compared with Similar Districts and State Average



District officials acknowledge the educational and environmental challenges in WCCUSD—and the need for change—in the 2014-19 Strategic Plan titled “Whole Child, Whole Community.” However, in his introduction, Superintendent Bruce Harter also notes that the district has made real progress in recent years. Paying off the state receivership debt in 2012 freed up an additional \$1.4 million per year for reduced class sizes and other classroom expenses.<sup>9</sup> Student achievement has also increased in recent years. In addition to the gains in reading and math

<sup>9</sup> Melendez, Lyanne. *op. cit.*, p. 8

observed in Figures 3 and 4, graduation and dropout rates have also improved recently (see Figures 5 and 6 below).

Figure 5: Graduation Rates

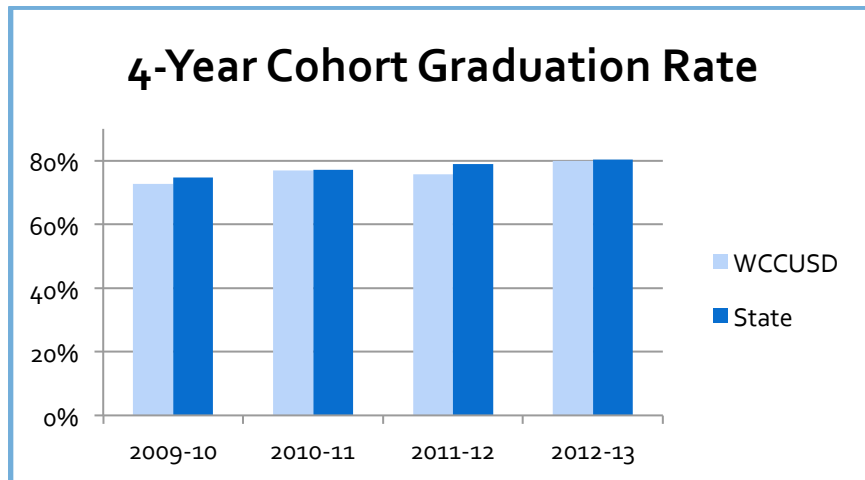
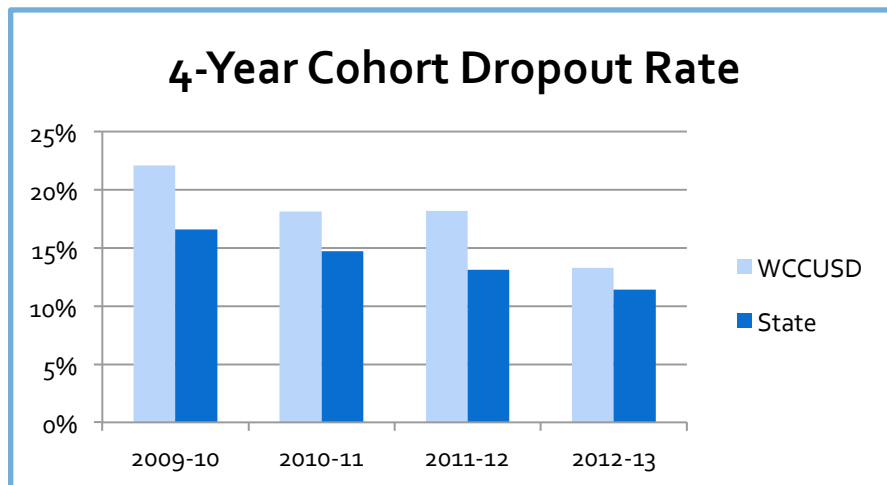


Figure 6: Dropout Rates



As evidenced by the Board of Education community schools resolution and the emphasis on “investing in the whole child” in the strategic plan, WCCUSD administrators view the community schools approach as a key way to continue to improve achievement and help students and families succeed.

The following section will detail how the district's partnership with the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools has helped to lay the groundwork for community schools in WCCUSD.

### Why Community Schools?

This approach can make a real difference in improving student outcomes, especially in low-income communities.

According to a national research synthesis performed by the Coalition for Community Schools, this strategy can:

- **Improve academic performance** (reading and math)
- **Increase attendance** and **decrease dropout** rates
- **Improve behavior and youth development** (including reductions in suspensions, expulsions and delinquent behaviors, as well as improved self-esteem and career aspirations)
- **Increase parental involvement** (including higher rates of attendance at parent-teacher conferences)
- **Provide community benefits** such as adult education and space for community events.

Together, these benefits can make a real difference in the lives of students, families and members of the local community.

Source: "Community Schools Research Brief" (2009) *Coalition for Community Schools*. Retrieved from: <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CCS%20Research%20Report2009.pdf>

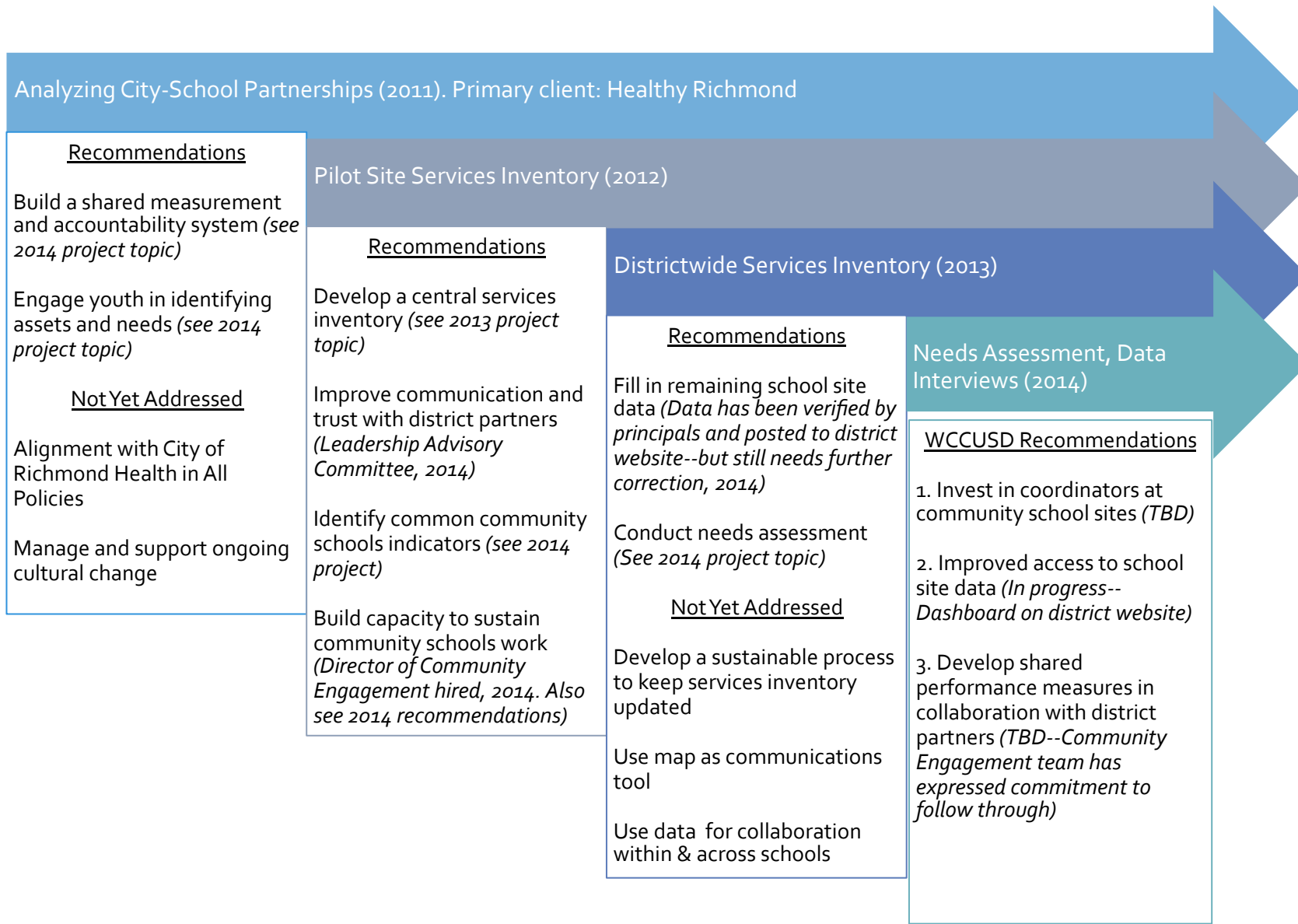
## UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools Partnership

The UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools PLUS program places graduate student fellows with local partners working at the intersection of public education and housing, transportation, health and wellness, and other cross-sector issues. West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) has partnered with the PLUS program for four consecutive years, including the current project. A summary of WCCUSD PLUS projects over the years demonstrates how each successive project has built upon work from prior years (see Figure 7 on next page, and Appendix D for more detail).

The need for shared measurement and accountability was first discussed in the 2011 PLUS project, which focused on the district's partnerships with community based organizations in Richmond. The primary client was the Healthy Richmond hub of local nonprofit service providers working at district sites. The 2012 report echoed the call to identify common community school indicators. This project history has no doubt contributed to the WCCUSD Community Engagement team's expressed willingness to follow through with the recommendations regarding shared indicators in this report (see "Recommendations" on p. 43). The 2013 project, which entailed conducting a district-wide inventory of services available at school sites, grew directly out of the 2012 project, which piloted the services inventory at schools in the City of Richmond. The current project is strongly rooted in the call for needs assessment expressed in the 2013 project. The PLUS partnership has the potential to continue to support the WCCUSD community schools initiative in years to come.



Figure 7: Inventory of WCCUSD Center for Cities & Schools PLUS Projects



## How a Community School Should Function—and Why it Matters

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This section identifies promising practices that the West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) community schools initiative should adopt, and provides evidence that if the community schools approach is implemented correctly, it *can* positively impact academic and life outcomes for students.

### What Makes a “Good” Community School?

According to the Coalition for Community Schools, a community school is *“both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources, [with an] integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement.”*<sup>10</sup> The school building itself becomes a resource for community members, remaining open after hours for events. Partnerships between the school site/district, local government agencies and nonprofits form a set of cohesive services to provide “wraparound” support to meet the academic, physical and mental health, and social needs of students and families. The underlying theory of a community school is that no entity alone can reduce the opportunity gap experienced by students in high-needs communities. Without strong collaboration, wraparound service provision will not be effective.

#### What Does Collaboration Look Like in a Community School?

At Community School 61, a public K-5 school in the South Bronx, collaboration means:

- **Shared data system** that allows school staff and Children’s Aid Society staff (the lead agency partnering with the school) to analyze real-time data (e.g., attendance, student achievement).
- **Instructional program aligned between daytime and afterschool.** Children’s Aid Society staff teach the final period of the school-day, freeing up teachers for planning and intervention.
- **Professional development for staff** including joint yearly retreats for school and lead agency, and trainings from Harvard University.

Source: “Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action.” National Center for Community Schools/Children’s Aid Society.

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<sup>10</sup> “What is a Community School?” Coalition for Community Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CCS%20Research%20Report2009.pdf> (20 Apr. 2015).

Jane Quinn, Vice President of the Children’s Aid Society and Director of the National Center for Community Schools, highlights four key components to operate successful community schools.

1. **Education is the first priority.** A well-functioning community school removes barriers to student learning, and maintains student success—academic and social emotional—as the top priority. One reason why the WCCUSD Board of Education endorsed the community schools initiative is to address persistent low test scores.
2. **Lead agency as full-time on-site partner (both during the day and after school), not just a tenant.** It is important for a community school to partner with a lead agency that oversees supplemental services and programming, and helps to coordinate other agencies operating at the site. This should be a true partnership, with frequent communication and collaboration. WCCUSD has a head start on this model with its school-based health center partnerships at each high school in the district.
3. **Joint planning, especially between the principal and the community school coordinator.** A community school should have an on-site coordinator, either affiliated with the lead agency or staffed through the district. The coordinator should engage in joint planning with school staff, and oversee subsequent recruitment and management of partners. Having a coordinator helps to ensure that everyone working at the school site is on the same page. Currently, WCCUSD does *not* have community school coordinators in place at school sites.

#### Why is Coordination Important?

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center initiative provides federal funds for afterschool programs in high-poverty schools. Students receive academic enrichment, supplemental services such as violence prevention or art/music activities and family literacy support. A major evaluation found that elementary school students who were randomly assigned to attend the program were **not more likely to have higher academic achievement** and were **more likely to misbehave in class** relative to control students. **One possible reason: Lack of coordination between the school and afterschool/supplemental service providers.**

*Source:* James-Burdumy, Susanne et al. (2005). “When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program: Final Report.” U.S. Department of Education.

4. **Integration of community school staff into governance and decision-making bodies at school.** The community school coordinator and lead agency manager(s) are key members of the school leadership team, and should have adequate decision-making power to fulfill their roles effectively. Similarly, staff providing services at the school site should be viewed as part of the team, and have a say in decisions at that site. Although WCCUSD service providers reported good communication with school administrators and staff (see “District Level: Data Sharing and Indicators” on p. 34), there is room for improvement in terms of truly integrated decision-making. Similarly, at the district level, partner agencies are gathering on a monthly basis through the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings, but the LAC does not have a clear role in governance or decision-making.

#### **What Does It Look Like When All the Pieces Are in Place?**

In Tulsa, OK, 26 schools operate in partnership with district leaders and community partners. **Each school has a coordinator** to implement and manage activities, events, programs and services. **Family engagement programs** range from training parents on how to support vocabulary development in their young children, to providing bilingual volunteers to ensure translation services are available at school events. **Expanded learning opportunities** include afterschool clubs ranging from drama to yoga, as well as academic support outside of the regular school day. **Health and social services** include health screenings, prevention activities and mental health support. **Child nutrition** programming ensures access to healthy, nutritious meals. **Early childhood** partners offer free developmental screenings and parent support for birth to age 8. **Attendance** programs ensure that children are in school, and **climate and culture programs** help children be successful members of the classroom community.

In addition to the many programs at school sites, the central **Resource Center** has five employees that **support community school sites directly**, and offer services ranging from **external communications, professional development** for school staff members, **community capacity building** including training and support for community school coordinators and service providers, support for **data collection and analysis** and **financial support** including fundraising and grant management.

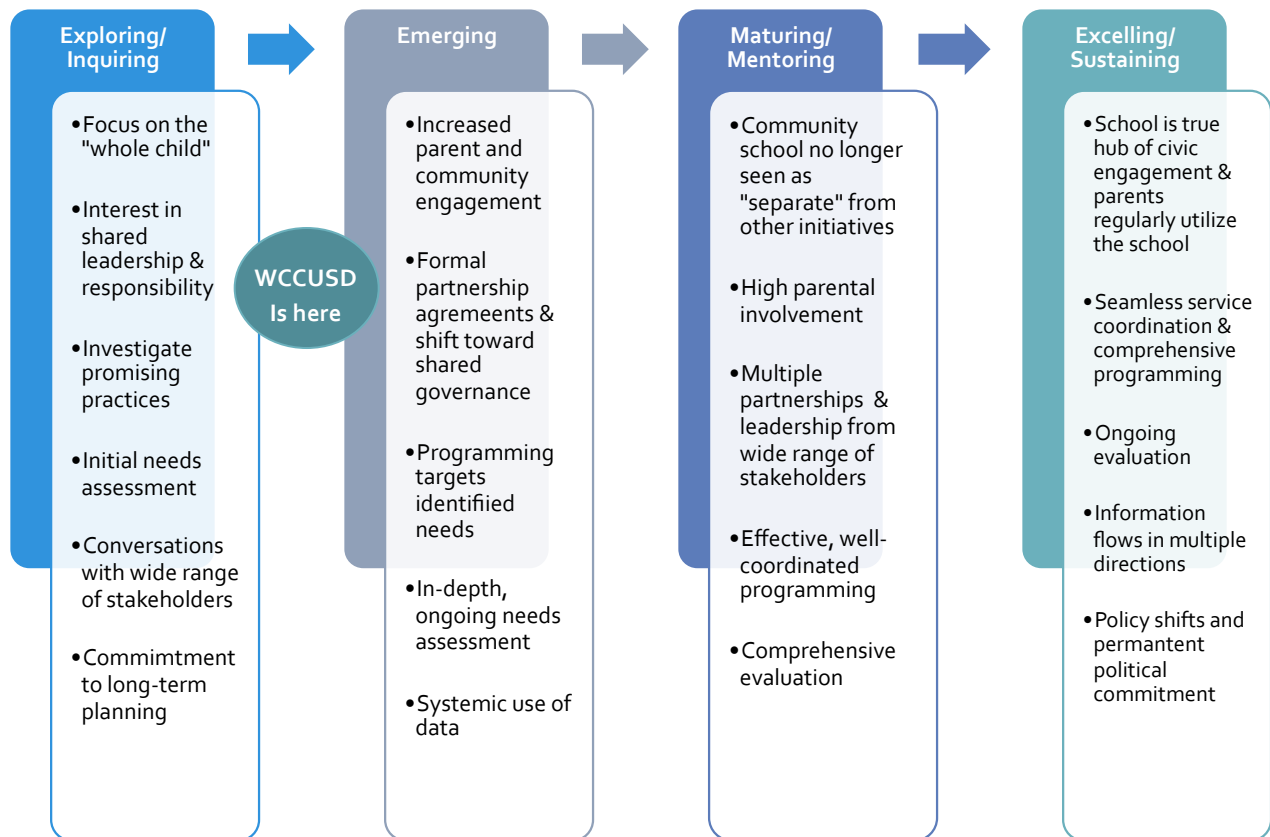
There is also a **management team** consisting of superintendents, public education leaders and university leaders, and a **steering committee** consisting of education and community leaders as well as current partners.

*Source:* TACSI: Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (2014). Retrieved from: [www.tacsi.org](http://www.tacsi.org).

## How Far Has WCCUSD Progressed in Implementing “Good” Community Schools?

There are many moving parts associated with developing high quality community schools programming. Neither an individual school site nor a larger system such as a school district can implement all the pieces right away. In recognition of the complexity of this approach, experts have developed a continuum showing the stages of development that a community school undergoes: 1) *Exploring/Inquiring*, 2) *Emerging*, 3) *Maturing/Mentoring*, and 4) *Excelling/Sustaining* (see Figure 8).<sup>11,12</sup>

Figure 8: Stages of Community School Development



West Contra Costa Unified is currently in between the Exploring/Inquiring stage and the Emerging stage, with a handful of schools fully in the emerging stage thanks to help from the City of Richmond and the City of San Pablo. For example, the City of Richmond has supported a community schools pilot with Chavez and Peres Elementary Schools that includes a school

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Community Schools/Children’s Aid Society *op. cit.*, p. 14

<sup>12</sup> TACSI: Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative *op. cit.*, p. 16

garden program, summer day camps and a dental clinic. The Board of Education community schools resolution formally recognized the importance of focusing on educating the “whole child,” and the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan made a long-term commitment to planning for a district-wide community schools approach. In addition, the district has partnered with PLUS fellows to investigate promising practices and plan for an initial needs assessment (see “School Site Level: Needs Assessment” on p. 24), and—in partnership with the UC Davis Resourcing Excellence in Education Center—has convened community partners for monthly community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings, thus initiating conversation with a broad range of stakeholders.

Some aspects of the second Emerging phase are well underway. For example, a formal “partnership agreement” (or memorandum of understanding) process has recently been introduced, and the district has hired a Director of Community Engagement. Other aspects of the Emerging phase need more attention than they are currently receiving. In particular, the WCCUSD community schools initiative does not have an in-depth, ongoing needs assessment process, and the LAC is not currently using data in a systematic manner to inform its work. This report attempts to address some of these challenges, in order to help the district move more fully into the next phase of implementation.

### Why Implementation Matters

These developmental phases are not just a theoretical model of organizational behavior: we know from community schools research that **the degree of implementation determines whether this approach will result in improved student achievement**. A 2010 evaluation of the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI) examined academic achievement outcomes for 18 community schools versus outcomes for 18 comparable non-community schools. When comparing student math and reading scores between the types of school, no significant differences emerged. The average TACSI student performed slightly below the



average non-TACSI student, but this difference was eliminated when student poverty status was accounted for.<sup>13</sup>

However, a very large difference emerged when accounting for the development of the community school model. Students in TACSI schools that were at the Maturing/Mentoring or Excelling/Sustaining levels of development significantly outperformed all other students in the sample. In fact, those students (who were almost all low-income) significantly outperformed low-income students at top performing schools in the district. It appears that the community schools approach is particularly effective in addressing the needs of low-income students.

Similar results were found in a national evaluation of Communities in Schools (CIS), comparing 90 schools to 90 matched non-CIS schools. Fully implemented CIS sites increased high school graduation rates by 8.6% over the course of three years, a net difference of 4.8% above comparison sites. Partially implemented CIS sites experienced a smaller improvement in graduation rates, but still saw a net difference of 2.5% above comparison sites.<sup>14</sup>

#### Communities in Schools: Coordination in Action

Communities in Schools (CIS) is comprised of 187 state and local affiliates, serving over 300 districts, **2,000 sites** and 1.3 million students. CiS places a **coordinator at each school site** in order to “bring local resources inside the public school setting, where they are accessible, coordinated and accountable.” The site coordinator plays a key role in **connecting students and families with community partners and programs** that address academic and nonacademic needs. The coordinator also **forms relationships with social service agencies, health care providers, local businesses and volunteers**, with a particular focus on bringing resources to students at risk of dropping out.

Communities in Schools is both **cost-efficient** (they provide a comprehensive range of community services for less than \$200 per student annually) and **effective**. In addition to the **improvement in graduation rates** discussed above, CiS schools experienced **small but consistent gains in math achievement and attendance rates**—but again, **schools that implemented the CiS model with fidelity experienced greater effects** for both math and reading.

*Source:* Communities in Schools (2015). Retrieved from: <http://www.communitiesinschools.org/>

<sup>13</sup> Adams, Curt M. (2010). “The Community School Effect: Evidence from an Evaluation of the Tulsa Area Community School Initiative. University of Oklahoma, The Oklahoma Center for Educational Policy. Prepared on behalf of TACSI.

<sup>14</sup> “Communities in Schools National Evaluation: Five Year Summary” (2010). Prepared by ICF on behalf of Communities in Schools. Retrieved from: [http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/files/Communities\\_In\\_Schools\\_National\\_Evaluation\\_Five\\_Year\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/files/Communities_In_Schools_National_Evaluation_Five_Year_Summary_Report.pdf)

This evidence strongly suggests that the WCCUSD community schools initiative will *not* be effective unless adequate time and resources are devoted to proper implementation. This is common sense: Even well designed and appropriately targeted programs will not be effective if they are not carried out correctly. This bears attention. WCCUSD is at an exciting crossroads, with the formal documentation in place and many community partners on board to support the next phase of community schools implementation. Investing in key resources at this time may well determine the difference between a transformational approach to education in the district and another failed reform.

### Why Community Input Matters

Finally, it is important to note that one of the main features that sets apart a community schools approach is the importance of community input. An extensive review of school-community partnerships throughout the United States revealed four types of partnership:<sup>15</sup>

- 1) *Family and interagency collaboration* (Coordinated service delivery that primarily occurs off-site)
- 2) *Full Service schools* (Coordinated service delivery at the school site)
- 3) *Full Service Community Schools* (Coordinated, site-based services that are grounded in democratic input from the school community)
- 4) *Community development* (Overall community transformation)

West Contra Costa Unified has clearly committed to the notion of becoming a Full Service *Community School* district, thus indicating the importance of community input (inclusive of students, parents, teachers and neighborhood residents) while planning for program implementation at school sites.

There are **two key opportunities for input** in the district's current community schools work. At the **school site level**, the district can develop a **needs assessment** to gather input from members of the school community to help inform planning for academic support, extended

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<sup>15</sup> Valli, Linda et al. (2014). "Typologizing School-Community Partnerships: A Framework for Analysis and Action." Urban Education (1-29).

learning opportunities and service provision. At the **district level**, the district can identify **shared indicators** in conjunction with community partners, and engage in **data sharing** to assist with transparent communication and collaborative planning. The following sections will explore each of these opportunities in greater depth.

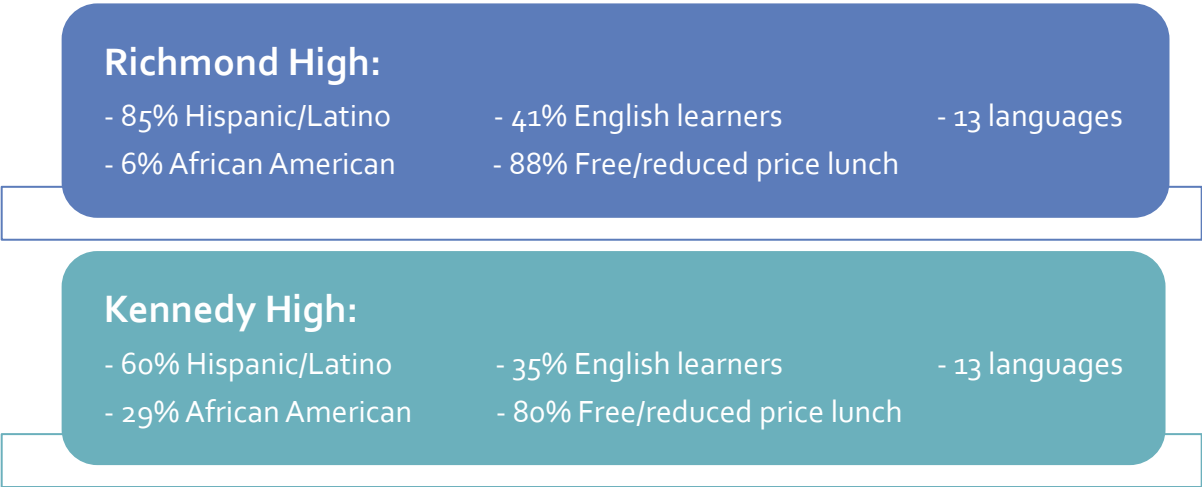
# School Site Level: Needs Assessment

The promising practices reviewed in the prior section indicate that establishing an in-depth, ongoing needs assessment process can lead to appropriately targeted services at community school sites. This section will examine an attempt to pilot such a needs assessment at two high schools in the district: Richmond and Kennedy. The first subsection will present background information on the two high schools and discuss the needs assessment methodology, the second subsection will present the results, and the third subsection will discuss lessons learned from the process.

## Background and Methodology

Richmond High and Kennedy High are located in low-income neighborhoods in Richmond, CA (see Figure 9). Both schools have shown improvement in safety in recent years, but still have significant challenges in terms of high dropout rates, lack of instructional rigor and low parental involvement. The prototype needs assessment took place at just two schools in the district because the primary goal was to determine what would be feasible and most useful for future iterations of the needs assessment process. Results were shared with the principal and school community at both school sites.

Figure 9: Comparison of Student Demographics at the Two Pilot Sites<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest 2013-14.

The needs assessment design was based on a community schools needs assessment that took place at West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) schools in the City of San Pablo, conducted by Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates on behalf of the Youth Services Department.<sup>17</sup> While the San Pablo process was quite long and involved, the WCCUSD adaptation was designed to be more streamlined, due to the recognition that most school sites lack a community school coordinator and thus will have limited capacity to conduct a needs assessment.

The prototype needs assessment consisted of two main components:

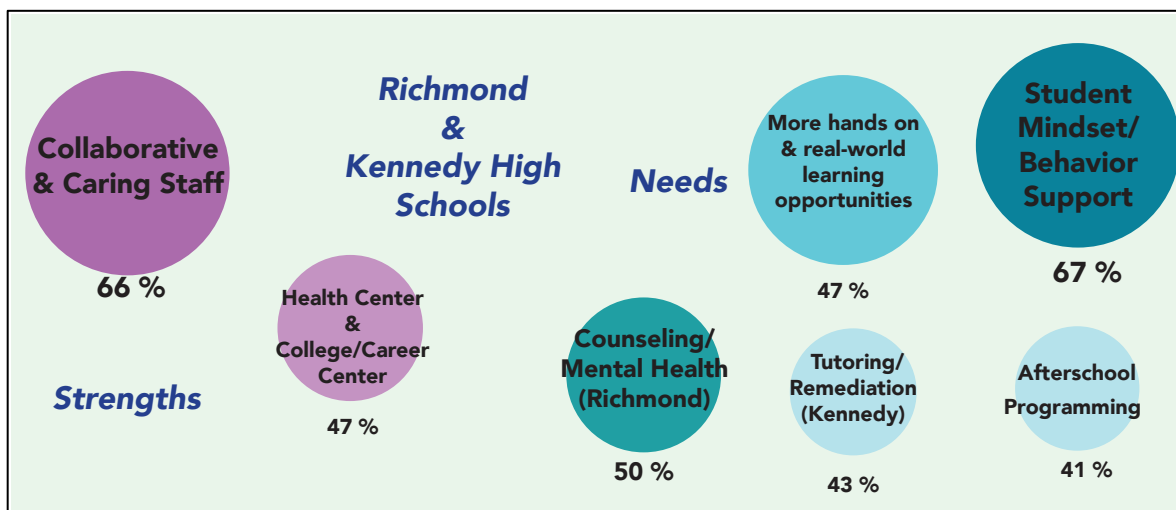
- 1) *Interviews* (including the principal, the health center coordinator, the community/school outreach worker and a CBO provider at each site)
- 2) *Focus Groups* (including students, parents and teachers)<sup>18</sup>

See Appendix A for the question protocol used for each interview and focus group.

## Results

Strengths and areas of need included the following (see Figure 10):

**Figure 10: Needs Assessment Findings**



<sup>17</sup> Heaton, Kendall (2014). "San Pablo Community Schools Needs Assessment Report." Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates on behalf of the City of San Pablo.

<sup>18</sup> The attempt to organize a teacher focus group at each pilot site was unsuccessful due to logistical challenges. Instead, a teacher participated in a one-on-one interview at one site, and at the other site a group of teachers returned written surveys (n=15). In both cases, the questions were drawn from the focus group protocol designed for teachers.

## Strengths

- 1) Overall, two-thirds (66%) of parents, students, administrators and staff at both schools reported that

**collaborative and caring staff**

**members** provide a strong support system for students and families. At Kennedy High, 57% of respondents mentioned staff as a strength of the school, and used words such as *motivated*, *responsive* and *collaborative* to describe them. Similarly, at Richmond High 75% of respondents mentioned *caring*, *supportive*, *collaborative* and *tight knit* staff.

“Staff are passionate and want to see students succeed. It’s motivating for outside service providers coming to the site.”

- 2) Similarly the **Health Center and College & Career Center** at each site was mentioned as a strength by nearly half of all respondents (47%). At Kennedy High, 43% of

“Services are well-coordinated between the health center, teachers, and other areas of the school. We have the ability to see an issue or challenge and connect the student quickly to resources or services.”

respondents mentioned resources such as counseling, conflict mediation and afterschool activities that are made available through these centers. At Richmond High, 50% of respondents described an environment with a variety of well-coordinated resources such as college counseling, support groups, and health services.

## Needs

1. Altogether, two-thirds of respondents (67%) described a need for **student mindset and behavior support**. At Kennedy High, 71% of respondents—including students themselves—described negative peer influence and disruptive behavior in class as a concern. At Richmond High, 63% of respondents—again, including students themselves—identified a lack of motivation and disruptive behavior in class as a concern. Respondents at both sites mentioned that it is hard for students to maintain a long-term vision of educational success when there are very few adults in their lives who can model this type of success. In terms of programs and services, teachers at both sites expressed a need for greater training and support around



effective behavior management—and students agreed that teachers could learn how to better deescalate situations. Respondents also discussed additional approaches for working with students directly such as stronger mentorship programs and behavior support groups or coaching.

2. Overall, nearly half (47%) of respondents at both sites expressed a desire for **more hands-on and real world learning opportunities to increase student engagement**. At Kennedy High, 43% of respondents discussed the need to better engage students through strong internship opportunities (especially for those

“Core classes lack authentic project-based learning—students still learn core subjects as stand-alone, not connected to the real world.”

who may not be headed directly to college), connecting the curriculum to students’ interests and making classes more fun by incorporating activities and games. At Richmond High, 50% of respondents mentioned lack of academic engagement as a barrier to student learning, and proposed solutions such as field trips, linking career academy classes to real-world job opportunities, connecting student activities more directly to college, and providing an appropriate level of academic challenge.

“We need more afterschool activities—sports, tutoring, food—to keep students engaged and on campus. Like a second home that is safe. We used to have a stronger program but the funding went away.”

3. Altogether, 40% of respondents at both sites expressed a need for **more comprehensive and engaging afterschool programming**. At Kennedy High, 43% of respondents picked afterschool programming as the top priority for next year, especially given the loss of funding for an afterschool program that students described as *fun* and *helpful with academics*. At Richmond High, 38% of respondents picked afterschool programming as the top priority for next year, describing the need for a *safe place* where students can come to their *homework* and *have fun*. Afterschool programming is important—the number of hours kids spend unsupervised is a better predictor of school failure than race or class.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Kirp, David. Kids First: Five Big Ideas for Transforming Children’s Lives and America’s Future. New York: Public Affairs, 2011. Print.

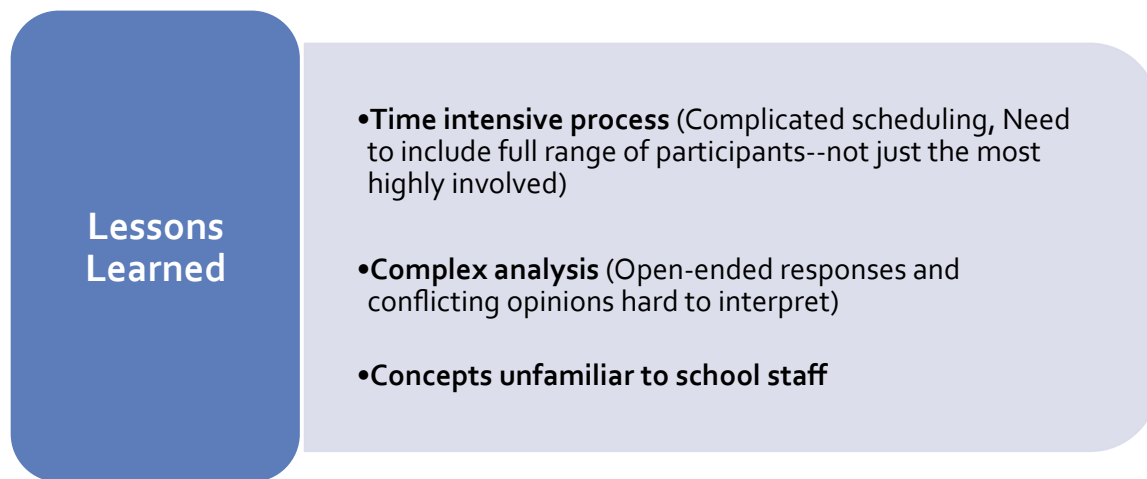
4. Although both high schools offer **counseling and mental health services** through their school-based health centers, capacity is a major issue—the Richmond health center, in particular, has a backlog of mental health referrals that was mentioned by 50% of interviewees. This is important given the trauma that many students experience outside of school.

5. At Kennedy, **academic tutoring and remediation** services were identified as a need by 43% of respondents. Stakeholders discussed a need to help students who are reading far below grade level, improve the tutoring options on campus, and offer academic case management to make sure that students who are struggling do not slip through the cracks.

## Lessons Learned

From this process, the following lessons emerged:

**Figure 11: Lessons Learned from the Needs Assessment Pilot**



1. ***This is a time intensive process.*** Scheduling was complicated, since each group of stakeholders (staff, students, parents, etc.) had a different point of contact at the school, and there was no central contact list or point person to work with. Administrators at both sites were helpful, but did not have the capacity to get overly involved with scheduling. Some groups of stakeholders took more effort to include than others. For example, students were fairly easy to reach since they are required to be at school, but parents and teachers were more difficult to reach. Rather than participating in a focus group, a selection of teachers at one site

filled out written surveys, and at the other site one teacher was interviewed. This issue is symptomatic of the challenge the WCCUSD community schools initiative faces: without meaningful participation from all members of the school community, little will change. It is essential that the district find ways to include parents and teachers in the process.

It was also time consuming to ensure that a wide variety of school community members participated in the process. For example, students were interviewed from both the student government leadership class as well as Saturday detention at one site, in order to gather a full range of opinions. However, most of the parents who participated in the process are those who are already engaged with the school. Reaching out to the disengaged parents is a major challenge at both sites, and not one that this process solved.

2. ***Analysis is complex.*** Responses were open-ended, and there were a lot of them, so the analysis process was complicated and involved an element of subjective judgment. It would be very difficult to attempt this task without training and experience. In addition, there was a disconnect between student and adult feedback at times—the two groups answered some questions with opposite responses. While it is unreasonable to expect a diverse group of stakeholders to agree on everything, this disconnect underscores the importance of planning grounded in feedback from all members of the school community, and not just the authority figures at the site. It can be challenging to figure out how to make programmatic decisions based on conflicting feedback. Ultimately, this process attempts to locate the points of most common agreement, but there will always be an element of judgment involved for those making decisions based on the information. Regardless, consumers of the needs assessment can use the data to confirm or refute assumptions about what the school needs, and plan services accordingly.

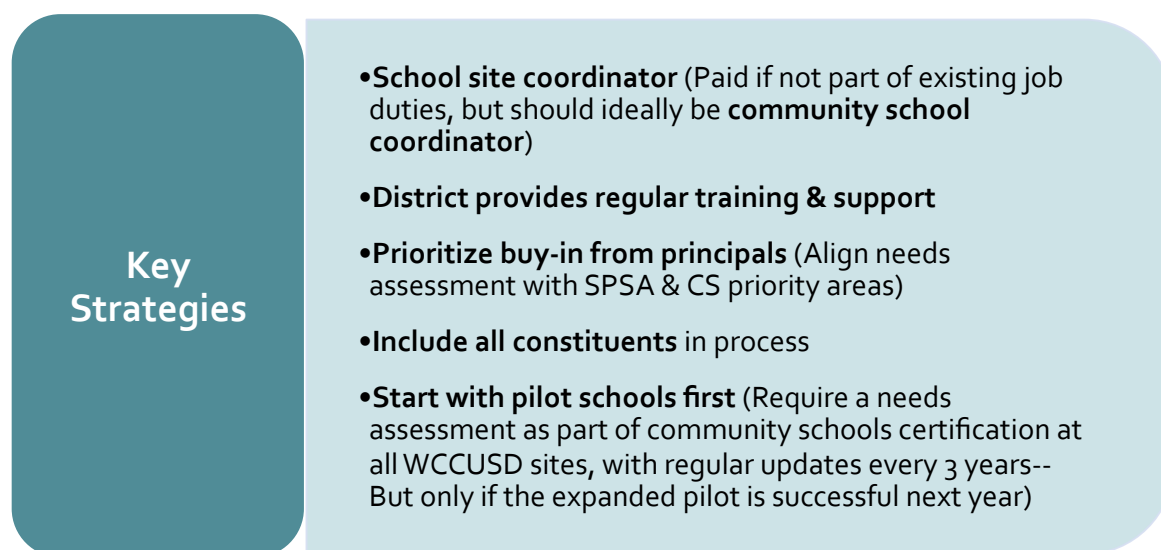
3. ***The concept is unfamiliar to school staff.*** Despite careful and repeated attempts to explain what was happening, several respondents struggled to grasp exactly what we were doing, and why. While some of this may have been a communication flaw on our part, it also indicated the complexity of the work, and the lack of a data-driven culture in terms of current service provision. The concept of a “focus group” was also new to many of the school site staff.

If the needs assessment process is expanded to other sites in the district, school employees will have to be in charge of data collection and analysis. However, school employees are unlikely to have technical knowledge of how to conduct interviews or focus groups, and how to interpret the data. Thus, they will require significant training and support in order to carry out this process properly.

## Needs Assessment Recommendations

Based on lessons learned from the needs assessment pilot, the following strategies are recommended for future efforts (see Figure 12):

**Figure 12: Key Strategies for Future Needs Assessment Efforts**



1. **School site coordinator for needs assessment.** The Community Engagement Team does not have the staffing power to conduct a needs assessment at each school. It is also inefficient for central office staff to do so when they lack key contacts and relationships. The best approach is to identify a staff member at each site who can serve as the point person for the needs assessment, provided that they receive adequate support (see below). It is essential that the coordinator stresses the anonymity of the process, and provides a “safe space” for students, parents and staff to answer questions with full candor. Otherwise, the participants may not be fully honest in their responses.

**This role should be filled by the community school coordinator at each school site.** This is the standard model observed in community school initiatives elsewhere. **However, the reality is that most WCCUSD sites do not currently have a community school coordinator.** Each high school has a partnership with a lead agency running the school-based health center, but the nature of that partnership varies by site. At some high schools it may be appropriate for the health center coordinator to oversee this process, but at others it may not. This should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Most schools do have school/community outreach workers, but their job duties vary widely at different sites, and the reality is that they do not necessarily have the time or the expertise needed to carry out this role successfully.

**In cases where there is not a formal coordinator role, a staff member at the site should be recruited to fulfill the role, and they should be compensated for their time.** It is not reasonable to ask for the additional time commitment involved without offering compensation (a minimum of 5 hours a week for 2-3 months, based on the pilot, plus time for training).

**2. District should provide regular training and support.** School staff should receive extensive training and support on how to carry out and use the needs assessment. While staff at the two pilot sites certainly possess the dedication and the relationships necessary for successful implementation, they do not currently have the needed technical expertise. Without proper training and support, this process will not unfold properly, and the results will most likely not be useful. It is not worth investing the time and resources without appropriate support in place. Needs assessment coordinators should be trained at each stage of the process (planning, data collection, evaluation), and should have access to a central office point person to provide support and answer questions throughout the process. The analysis, in particular, would benefit from a collaborative approach (e.g., coordinators bring the data and work together in pairs or small groups to apply analysis strategies provided during the course of the training).

**3. Prioritize buy-in from principals.** This is a resource intensive process, so principals will need to understand the importance of the needs assessment and be committed to using the results. Many will require support from their own supervisors in order to understand how and why the needs assessment is important. If the message is not communicated from the top down that

this is a district priority, then the process will likely not receive the resources it needs, given how many demands are already placed on staff at school sites. In return, the district should ensure that the process is well supported (see above) and the results are useful. Without administrative buy-in, it will be difficult for the needs assessment coordinator to access all constituents at the school site (particularly teachers).

One approach to increase principal buy-in is to ensure that the needs assessment process yields useful results. A good way to accomplish this is to align the needs assessment interview and focus group protocols with key district documents, such as the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and community school priority areas.

**4. *Include all constituents in process.*** Given the differences in opinions we heard from adults and students in the process, it is important to ensure as many viewpoints as possible are represented. There are many dedicated and excellent educators at the school sites, but it is all too easy to fall into the rut of assuming that the authority figures know everything. It is important to include student voice in this process as well, and remember that they may see things differently. Ultimately, they are the consumers who should be served well by their school sites! The principal and other decision-makers should be responsive to student feedback—even when it may contradict some of their own conceptions about the school. This isn't to say that all student feedback should be immediately implemented, but rather that it is essential to show students that their opinions have been considered, and to make changes based on student experience whenever possible.

**5. *Start with pilot schools first.*** Next year, the six community school pilot sites that have already been identified should test out the needs assessment process on their own, with close support and supervision from district staff. Since these sites are further along with implementing a community schools model, they should be most prepared to undertake this process. This will provide an excellent test case to see if school staff can successfully replicate this process, especially without the presence of a community schools coordinator (the current reality at almost all WCCUSD school sites).

Ultimately, any school that receives certification as a community school site via a process currently in development by the Community Engagement Team should have undergone an initial needs assessment. This needs assessment should be revisited on an annual basis through a convening with representatives of all constituent groups. A full needs assessment is recommended every 3 years, or as needed. However, given the many roadblocks encountered in the initial pilot, the needs assessment protocols should be refined and tested by district staff at the pilot sites before making the decision to scale up to the district level.

## Conclusion

This work provides an exciting opportunity to engage and empower all members of the school community defining what it means for their school to be a “community school.” This process may confirm what many know from their own experience, but there may also be surprises when different viewpoints are considered in unison. Furthermore, the central office can provide much more effective support if there is a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of different sites. Carrying out a needs assessment process on a regular will contribute to establishing a data-driven culture, and help WCCUSD to advance from the “Exploring/Inquiring” to the “Emerging” phase of community schools implementation.

## District Level: Data Sharing and Indicators

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The stages of community school implementation (see Figure 8 on p.19) highlight the importance of adopting a data-driven approach in order to develop thoughtful community schools programming. Each school is different, and the model should be grounded in local strengths and needs rather than any particular program. A high functioning community school uses data in a systematic manner to inform planning and evaluate program success, and information flows in multiple directions so that all stakeholders can have a clear understanding about what is working and what remains challenging. In order to better understand how data can be used to advance collaborative work, this section will provide a theoretical framework for achieving and evaluating collective impact, examine evidence of data use in successful community school systems, and provide feedback from local interviews with district partners regarding the use of data in community schools.

### Collective Impact: A Model of How to Work Together Effectively

Collective impact theory provides a useful framework for the work that West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) and its partners have taken on. Collective impact is “the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem, in order to create lasting solutions to social problems.”<sup>20</sup> The underlying idea is that certain problems are too big for one organization to solve on its own, no matter how large or well funded it may be. Having strong organizations in place is important in creating social change, but without shared goals, actions and measurement, strong organizations alone will not suffice. In the case of WCCUSD, the district alone cannot address the challenges faced by its students and families—in order to meet the needs of the “whole child,” nonprofit, city and county partners need to join in to help alleviate the impacts of poverty and violence in the communities surrounding many WCCUSD schools.

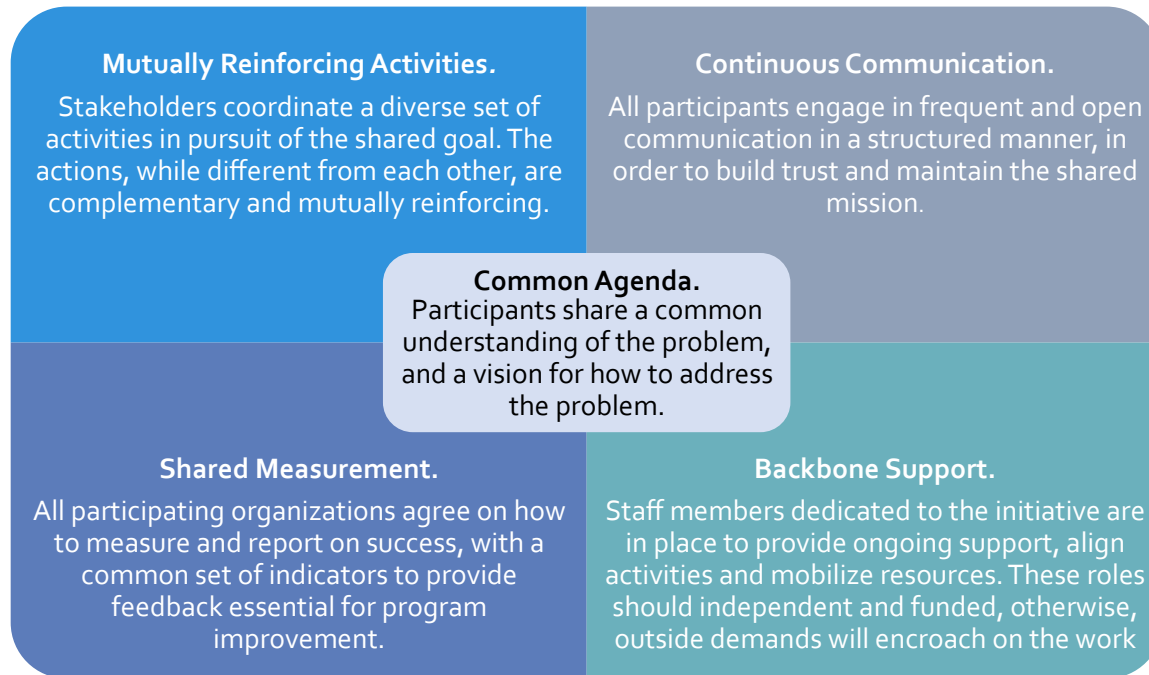
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<sup>20</sup> “What is Collective Impact?” FSG. Retrieved from: <http://www.fsg.org/OurApproach/WhatIsCollectiveImpact.aspx> (18 Apr. 2015).



The five conditions that need to be in place in order for a collective impact approach to be successful are as follows (see Figure 13):<sup>21</sup>

Figure 13: Elements of Collective Impact



By convening a community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) that has representatives from nonprofits, local government, advocacy firms and foundations, WCCUSD is beginning to set in motion the structure necessary for a collective impact approach. The group is meeting regularly, and beginning to form a shared vision of the work that lies ahead. However, **there are two key elements that have yet to be fully addressed: 1) Shared measurement, and 2) Backbone support.** In order to act upon the shared vision in a mutually reinforcing manner, the group will need to agree on how to measure and report on success. Putting this agreement into action will take time and resources, and thus, one or more of the organizations involved must contribute backbone support to the work. The school district has certainly taken on this function in many ways, but there has yet to be a clear discussion about how each organization can—and should—contribute to the backbone support.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

As WCCUSD staff and district partners consider how to use data and evaluation to support community schools, it is useful to examine what experts have learned from attempts to evaluate collective impact efforts in recent years. It is also important to understand that this work cannot be evaluated in a traditional manner. For political and ethical reasons, it is not possible to randomly assign some people to get services and refuse other people services just for the sake of research. But without random assignment, it is difficult to make claims that the services were the cause of any positive outcomes that are observed.

Furthermore, there are multiple players involved, acting simultaneously and constantly fine-tuning their approach. This makes it impossible to determine the extent to which an individual program may have contributed to successful outcomes. The upshot is that collective impact evaluation will never fit the traditional “gold standard” of randomized control trials, but can still be useful for tracking progress toward shared goals and shedding light on areas in need of improvement or increased attention.

A review of lessons learned from expert evaluators reveals the following principles for consideration, which are instructive when thinking about how to use data and evaluation practices to support the collective community schools work in WCCUSD:

1. ***Emphasize measures that focus on progress rather than long-term outcomes, especially at first.*** Focusing on measures that gather feedback on program improvement rather than just measures designed to assess program impact supports continued learning. This is particularly important in the early stages of collaboration, when strategies and partnerships are not fully formed.
2. ***Allow enough time to see results.*** It can take several years just to get collective impact work up and running. It might seem like a three year evaluation allows for plenty of time, for example, but it may be that the conditions for success are only established toward the end of year three. By attempting to evaluate too soon, measures that judge program success may appear to indicate failure when they are truly capturing slow implementation. Furthermore, some measures such as the dropout rate are much slower to change than others, such as attendance. And finally, if interventions are

targeted at younger students, it can take years to see the ultimate results, as in the case of college attendance rates. For this reason, it is useful to identify interim measures that are likely show a more immediate intervention effect (e.g., attendance), in addition to long-term measures such as increasing the high school graduation rate.

3. **Take a varied approach to evaluation.** Because there are diverse stakeholders involved in collective impact work, different evaluation approaches will need to be employed for different needs. For example, nonprofit partners need feedback about how to improve their programming, while most funders require feedback on program success (or at least, intermediary indicators that are hypothesized to lead to successful outcomes).
4. **Be wary of shared performance indicators.** Although shared measurement is identified as one of the key conditions for collective impact success, the reality in the field may play out differently. The advice here is not to abandon shared measurement entirely, but rather to adopt what is useful and discard any aspect that is holding back progress. Mark Cabaj, who has worked on numerous large-scale collective impact evaluations, shared an example of one group that spent so long trying to agree upon the right set of shared indicators that it delayed the start of mutually reinforcing activities. Another area where this work often gets hung up is the technical demands of sharing data. Although cutting-edge software or expensive consultants can be useful, the heart of the concept is to get on the same page about what the collaboration is striving to achieve, and how to measure success on a very basic level. Any added sophistication is nice, but not necessary for the work to progress. Excel can be just fine to start out with!

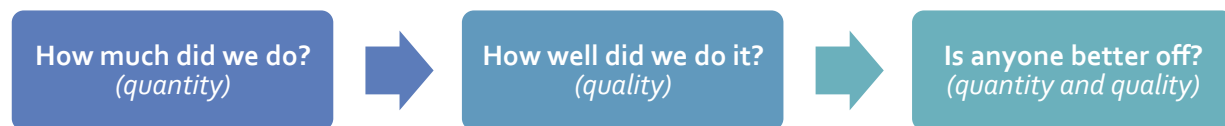
### Results-Based Accountability: A Data-Driven Process for Collective Work

Given the importance of developing shared indicators through a collaborative process between collective impact partners, the West Contra Costa Unified community schools initiative would benefit from a strong communication process to help ground partners in a joint approach to measurement. In the framework of Results-Based Accountability (RBA), Mark Friedman expands on the notion of how to develop shared indicators. The RBA framework is commonly used in a collective impact context. Friedman is careful to note that RBA is not intended to

evaluate whether a program succeeded or failed, but rather aims to make use of evaluation findings to manage services, track performance, report to stakeholders and improve programming.

The evaluation questions at the heart of RBA are below (see Figure 14):

**Figure 14: Key Questions for Results-Based Accountability**



It is also important to differentiate between *population level indicators* (the change we want to see in everyone belonging to a group or community, regardless of whether they are receiving services—no one agency is responsible for this) versus *program level performance measures* (specific information about how well the program is serving clients—agency managers are responsible for this). For WCCUSD, the first order of business will be selecting indicators to track progress of the community schools initiative.

When adopting an RBA approach, Friedman recommends to start small and adopt low visibility tactics until it is possible to clearly demonstrate the usefulness of this approach. See Appendix B for additional resources on Results-Based Accountability, and suggestions for how the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee could employ this framework to identify shared indicators.

### National Context: Expert Input

Conversations with a variety of experts, from local Bay Area organizations that are at a more advanced phase of community schools work, to representatives of national technical

#### How Do We Measure Success?

Think about the **activities** that happen in a community school (e.g., health clinic services), and the **outputs**, or direct products, of what took place (e.g., students' physical development is supported). There are **short-term results** of that output that involve knowledge/behavior change (e.g., students attend school consistently) and can be measured (e.g., attendance, tardiness, truancy). There are also **long-term results** of that output that focus on the big picture and take longer to manifest (e.g., students succeed academically). These, too, can be measured (e.g., test scores, graduation rates).

**See Appendix B for a sample community school logic model and more examples of indicators**

assistance providers, revealed several common themes:

1. **Ground indicators in a theory of action.** Measures should be mutually agreed upon and grounded in the context of the local community, but it is still important to link indicators back to a theory of action that translates how the shared vision will result in specific activities that are expected to produce the desired change.

2. **Develop formal data sharing agreements.** WCCUSD is on the right track with the centralized partnership agreement (essentially a memorandum of understanding) they are developing. This paperwork should include a formal agreement around data sharing—the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford has examples of what these agreements can look like, and WCCUSD already has a few data sharing agreements in place that may serve as an example.

3. **Start small, possibly with attendance.** Evaluation is about asking good questions, developing mechanisms for gathering feedback, and figuring out how to use the data to inform decisions. It is possible to learn how to do this using a relatively simple indicator such as attendance, which the district already tracks closely, and which can be reasonably expected to relate to student health and academic success. Experimenting with data sharing in this simple context can lay the groundwork for more sophisticated questions, and more extensive data sharing, down the road

#### Why Attendance?

Research shows that attendance is closely related to academic achievement. Students who are chronically absent are:

- Likely to experience a long-term negative impact on academic achievement (effects are most severe for low-income children!)
- At risk for continued chronic absence in later grades
- Retained more often
- More likely to be identified as needing special education
- At risk of dropping out

Source: "Student Achievement Starts with Attendance" (2012) Attendance Works.

4. **Figure out what data you already have.** Many school districts are drowning in data. The problem is not lack of data, but figuring out what is already available and how to use it

effectively. Avoid collecting new data until a new evaluation question arises that is vital to the work and cannot be answered by existing data sources.

5. **Relationships matter.** Having the right paperwork in place is important, but at the end of the day, communication and trust are at the heart of this work. In order to develop good evaluation questions, answer them effectively, and use the answers to drive change and improve outcomes, all stakeholders must be on the same page about the vision the work plan.

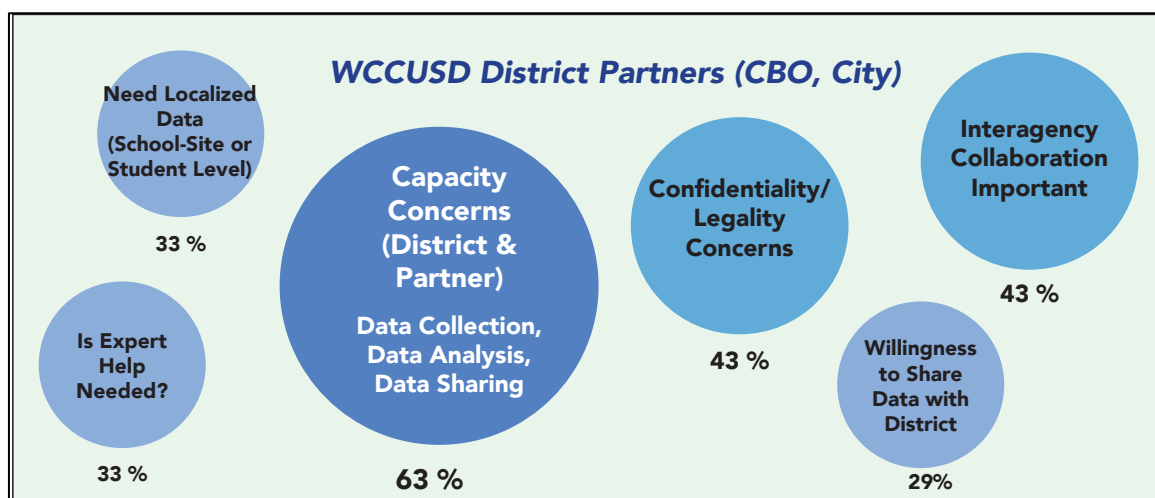
The next section will consider these ideas in the local context of WCCUSD.

### Local Context: District Partner Interviews

While it is helpful to learn about promising practices from experts in other places, it is also important to understand the local context of the work. Members of the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) were given an opportunity to discuss the use of data in community schools work through one-on-one interviews. They were also given the option to refer a colleague for an interview, if they thought there was someone else whose viewpoint should be included. Nine interviews were completed. The interviewees represent a good range of stakeholders participating in the LAC, including municipal government employees, advocates, grant makers and nonprofit service providers.

The following themes emerged from these interviews (See Figure 15):

Figure 15: Data Interview Findings



1.

1. **Willingness to collaborate on data-driven work.** Overall, the tone of the interviews was positive and productive. Many respondents expressed an appreciation for the importance of using data to measure progress and help inform decisions, and reported using data in that manner within their own organizations. Nearly half of respondents (43%) endorsed the importance of **interagency collaboration**. More than a quarter of respondents (29%) were willing to move forward in **sharing data with WCCUSD**.
2. **Questions about capacity.** Nearly two-thirds of district partners (63%) expressed an understanding that in order for the district to engage in more data sharing, there would be a **need for adequate staffing within the Data and Accountability team**. More than one respondent, without being asked, brought up the possibility of contributing to a jointly funded position that would focus on making data more accessible.  
  
In addition, respondents noted **concerns about the capacity of district partners to collect and analyze data**. For one-third of respondents (33%), this brought up the question of if—and when—expert help might be needed. When determining shared indicators, it is important to be realistic about what types of data the district and its partners will be able to access, and to determine the extent to which data can be analyzed and used effectively without expert help.
3. **Confidentiality/Legality Concerns.** Almost half of respondents (43%) acknowledged **that protecting student privacy would be a potential challenge** in data sharing. While **legality is an important concern**, as long as student-level data does not contain any names or groups small enough to guess who is being referred to (e.g., less than ten), data sharing is generally legal. In addition, recent revisions to FERPA make it clear that agencies providing education services within a formal school district partnership, or those conducting research, are allowed to access district data (see Appendix C for more detailed information).
4. **Need for school-site level data.** One third of interviewees (33%) emphasized that in order to use data to improve their own work with the district, they **need access to more localized data** than they can currently get. Many measures are reported in aggregate

at the district level, or are not broken down to the level of detail needed for service providers at specific school sites (e.g, by race or ethnicity, income level, grade level, etc.). Interviewees requested data at the **school level**, or even the **student level** (within the bounds of privacy laws).

In addition, **ease of access to currently available data could be improved**. Only one interviewee reported having a data sharing agreement in place between their organization and the district. Almost all respondents noted that if they needed information, they would draw upon a personal relationship to get it. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, any steps that the district can take to make data more easily available would be beneficial to collaborative work.



## Recommendations

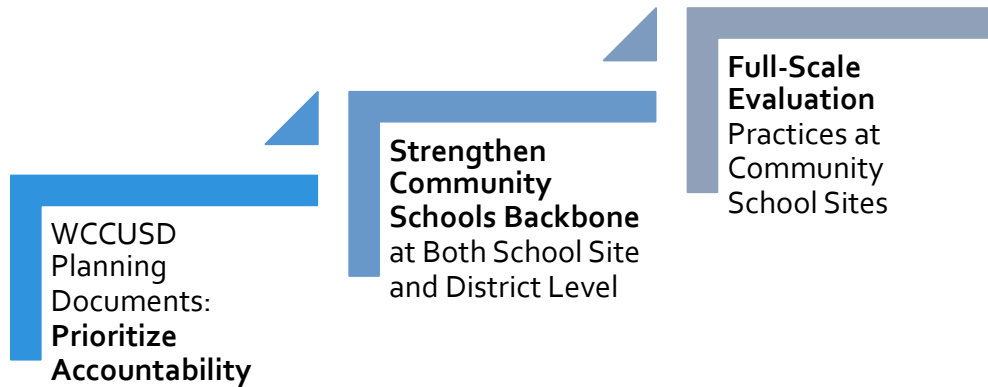
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It is clear that in order to see a real impact on student achievement from the West Contra Costa Unified (WCCUSD) community schools initiative, implementation matters. Just saying that the district is committed to community schools is not enough—WCCUSD and its partners need to commit the time and resources necessary to achieve a high level of implementation. A large part of this work is already underway through the partnership with UC Davis, but an important aspect of the remaining work lies with adopting a data-driven approach to collaboration.

The good news is that the WCCUSD 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, as well as the district’s 2014-15 Local Control Accountability Plan (a document that lays out goals, indicators and associated program spending to document what is happening with money coming from the state to the district level), both highlight the importance of this work. The strategic plan describes a “prioritize accountability” approach that would build trust through transparency, data sharing and communication practice. There is also mention of improving data collection and management systems. The Local Control Accountability Plan, which is strongly grounded in the strategic plan, devotes \$1.4 million to fully implement and report on the Local Control plan itself, build a 2-way communication plan and share data publicly.

Taking the next step in community schools implementation—incorporating data-driven practices—is very much aligned with broader district priorities. However, doing so will require an investment in financial and staff resources at both the school level (e.g., community school coordinators at as many sites as possible) and the district level (e.g., adequate capacity to support district partners and staff at school sites). It is heartening that district partners see a need for these resources, and are willing to explore how they can contribute. Ultimately, in order to apply district-level accountability goals to the community schools context, we need to make sure the capacity is there before we try to enact specific evaluation practices such as a needs assessment at all school sites or extensive data sharing at the district level (see Figure 16 on next page).

Figure 16: Steps Toward Community Schools Evaluation



With this stipulation in mind, recommendations are as follows (see Figure 17 for summary):

Figure 17: Recommendations

**Joint Recommendations:\***

- *Collectively invest financial & staff resources* to support planning, collaboration and data usage
- *Data Support:* Investigate options for shared data platforms & analytic support from UC Berkeley
- *Community Engagement:* Collectively attend trainings and share engagement strategies

**WCCUSD:**  
*Community School Coordinators*

Invest in coordination at **all** sites (prioritize high-needs first)

How?

- Shared funding
- Teachers on Special Assignment
- Classroom teacher stipends (*Interim Only*)
- AmeriCorps VISTA (*Interim Only*)

**WCCUSD:**  
*Data Transparency*

Make **school-level performance measures** (e.g., attendance, academic outcomes) and **program information** available through:

- District website
- School-site flyers

**WCCUSD:**  
*Shared Performance Measures*

(e.g., attendance, academic outcomes)

- Identify in collaboration with district partners
- Start with low visibility pilot testing

## Joint Recommendations

The following recommendations were jointly developed and endorsed by the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools PLUS fellows working with the City of Richmond and Healthy Richmond HUB. All three PLUS client organizations (West Contra Costa Unified, City of Richmond and Healthy Richmond) received these recommendations.

1. **Collectively invest financial and staff resources to support planning, collaboration and data usage** among WCCUSD, Cities of Richmond & San Pablo, Healthy Richmond, Contra Costa County and other partners. Effective community schools work is a true community undertaking. The impact of these agencies together will be greater than that of any one agency working alone.
2. **Data Support:** Investigate options for shared data platforms and analytic support from UC Berkeley or other partners. Especially with the UC Berkeley expansion into the new Richmond Bay campus, there may be exciting opportunities for collaboration around research and data support. The partnership between the John Gardner Center at Stanford University and Redwood City Unified School District provides an excellent model for this type of collaboration.
3. **Community Engagement:** Collectively attend trainings and share engagement strategies among partner agencies. The City of Richmond and Healthy Richmond member organizations have a long history of meaningful community engagement, and this is an exciting area of growth for the district. All three stakeholders would benefit from sharing resources.

## WCCUSD Recommendations

1. **Community School Coordinators.** Invest in school site coordinators to ensure that community schools programming is happening at all sites. This has been a common theme throughout the report, because it is a common theme in successful community schools initiatives. The right people need to be in place at school sites, and there should be enough of them to do the job properly.

Obviously the district will not be able to staff community school coordinators at every site right away, but there should be a process in place working toward this goal. Next year (2015-16), it makes sense to focus on the community school pilot schools that have emerged. In future years, the community schools initiative should prioritize the highest need schools as well as those that are the most ready (although there may well be overlap at times).

There are opportunities to get creative with funding to make district-wide community schools coordinators a reality, such as:

- ***Shared funding with other partner agencies.*** The City of San Pablo is subsidizing the cost of community school coordinators at WCCUSD sites within the city limits. This type of arrangement could be expanded to other cities or partner agencies.
- ***Assigning "Teachers on Special Assignment" (TOSAs) to coordinate community school efforts.*** A TOSA is a credentialed teacher who has been placed in a non-classroom assignment. This option could be effective in that it allows greater flexibility of funding (community school coordinator positions could be paid for through both classified—or credentialed—and non-classified funding streams, rather than just non-classified funding streams). A TOSA would presumably have strong familiarity of the community in which they taught, as well as existing relationships with students, parents and staff. It is essential for a community school coordinator to have real administrative decision-making power, so this could provide a great leadership opportunity for teachers who are interested in advancing their careers. The downside is that a credentialed teacher might not have the management or data collection and analysis skills needed to perform the full coordinator job duties, and this option is still fairly expensive.
- ***Interim option: Classroom teacher stipends.*** There may also be a possibility of paying teachers to take on some of the coordination duties outside of their normal work hours and responsibilities. This model is currently being piloted at Dover

Elementary—if successful, it should be considered for expansion. As discussed previously, this could be a good option in that teachers who take on this role would presumably know the school and surrounding community well, and have the necessary organizational skills. Also, this option is affordable. **Again, this is not a substitute for a full-time community school coordinator.** Teachers have limited availability, and therefore would not be able to fulfill all the duties of this role, which truly is a full-time job. Also, the coordinator should have real administrative decision-making power, which is different from the typical influence that teachers have. **This option should be considered on an interim basis only.**

- **Interim option: AmeriCorps VISTA.** AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers are college educated and intended for capacity building duties, rather than direct service—and they are low-cost employees. Los Angeles Unified has had over 55 VISTA members support over 100 schools and offices across the district since 2011, with a focus on family and community engagement, resource development and increasing attendance rates at participating schools.<sup>22</sup> This type of work could fit in well with the job duties of a community school coordinator. However, VISTA positions are only yearlong and are therefore **not substitutes for permanent community school coordinators.** In addition, VISTA volunteers are often young and inexperienced. They may lack the skills needed to do this job effectively, and they are unlikely to have deep relationships with the school community. **This option should be considered on an interim basis only.**

2. **Data Transparency.** In order to establish a data-driven culture for the Leadership Advisory Committee and the collaborative work between school site staff and partner staff at individual sites, data will need to be readily available. The **district website** has the potential to become a key resource. In particular, district partners want access to basic **school-level measures** that can be broken down in different ways (e.g., grade, race or ethnicity, etc.) to

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<sup>22</sup> "LAUSD VISTA Community Partnership Program." Los Angeles Unified School District. Retrieved from: [http://home.lausd.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=180399&type=d&pREC\\_ID=375378](http://home.lausd.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=180399&type=d&pREC_ID=375378) (30 Apr. 2015).

help inform program planning and assessment. The advantage to posting this data online is that stakeholders can access it at anytime, and it underscores the district's commitment to transparency. As long as individual student data is not posted publicly, and student subgroup data is not presented for groups of ten or smaller students (since it may be possible to identify individual students if the group is small enough), this practice should not violate data privacy laws (see Appendix C for more information on protecting student data).

WCCUSD has done an excellent job producing infographic flyers to show how state money is being spent at school sites. A similar approach could be employed for sharing community schools data (e.g., a **flyer for each school site with baseline indicators and information about available services**). The potential downside to this approach is that school staff may feel demoralized if this information paints a negative picture. While it is important to acknowledge the reality that a school faces, this strategy should be handled with care so as to avoid a sense of public humiliation. The purpose is not to blame anyone, but rather to paint an honest picture of where the school is, and what type of support may be needed. In order to avoid the wrong tone, it would be helpful to get input from principals on the LAC (and possibly from all administrators in attendance at a monthly principal meeting) regarding how to implement this recommendation.

3. **Shared Indicators.** WCCUSD staff should **identify shared community school indicators (e.g., attendance) through a collaborative Results-Based Accountability process with district partners** serving on the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (see p. 37 for a brief discussion, and Appendix B for an example of what this collaborative process would entail, including a sample logic model and associated measures). The LAC provides a perfect venue for this work, since teams are already divided up into different focus areas such as Health and Wellness or College and Career Readiness. Members of each team should be invited to participate in identifying 1-2 community school indicators for their issue area. If all LAC members are invited to participate, then those who do not will have little grounds for complaint regarding the selected performance measures.

This process may also be useful to help school site teams in setting goals and identifying performance measures to track progress towards those goals, particularly after completion of a needs assessment. Finally, the WCCUSD Community Engagement team itself may want to use this process to help clarify goals and performance measures for the LAC and other collaborative initiatives.

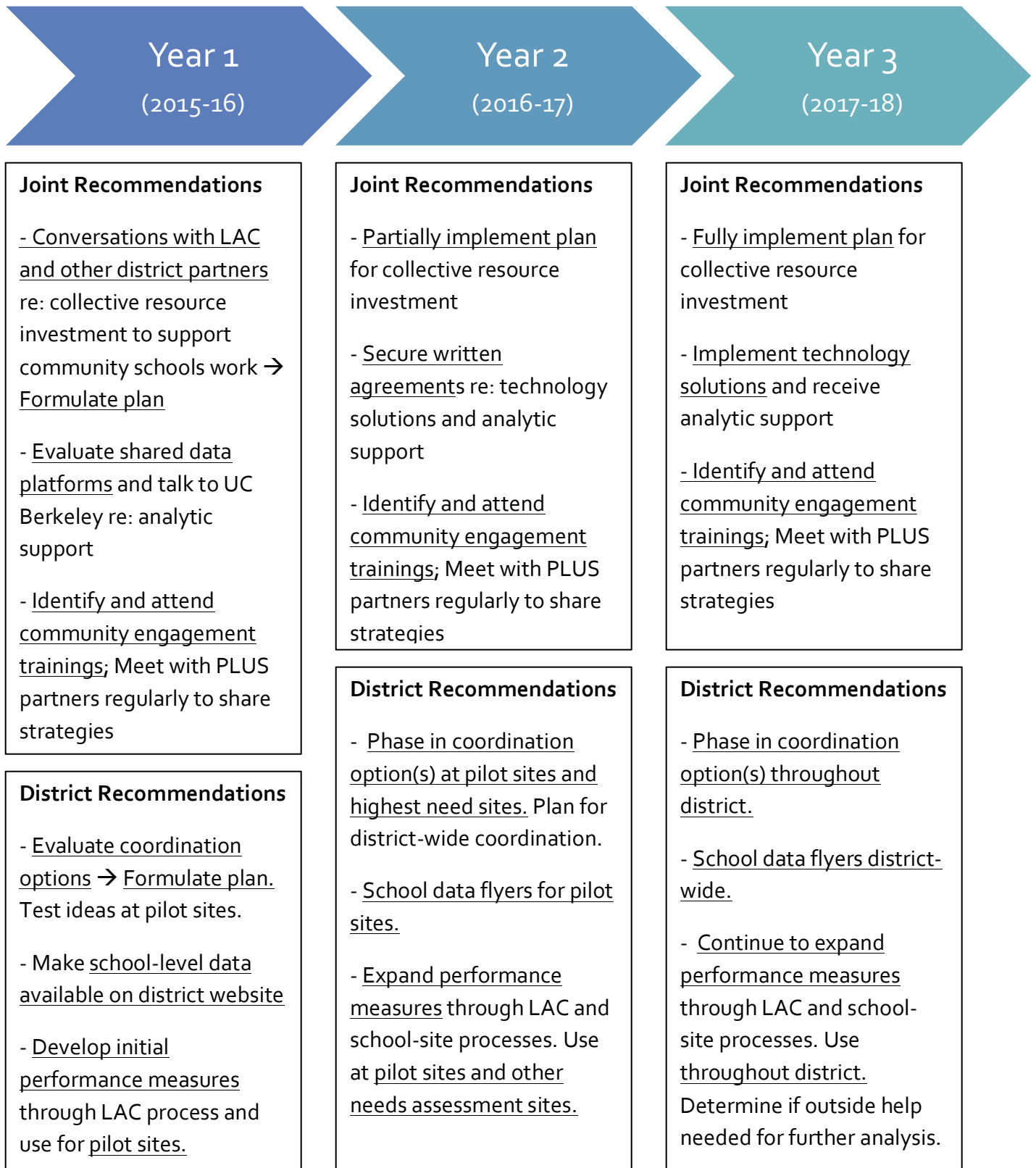
4. Once performance measures have been selected, **the initial focus should be on collecting, sharing and analyzing data for the community school pilot sites, rather than the district as a whole.** Data sharing will pose challenges, both in terms of confidentiality/legality as well as potential technological roadblocks (see Appendix C for a more detailed discussion). By starting off with a small pilot, these roadblocks may prove to be less overwhelming.

Another upside of starting small is having an opportunity to prove the value of the work to funders. For example, if the pilot process helps to improve collaboration and program planning, but also reveals a need for additional staff capacity to manage the data sharing process, WCCUSD and district partners can make a strong ask to funders by approaching them collectively, rather than individually.

### Timeline for Implementation of Recommendations

Many of the recommendations discussed here can be phased in over time, or in stages. See Figure 18 on the following page for a suggested plan. In general, Year 1 (2015-16) should involve planning and piloting, Year 2 (2016-17) expansion, and Year 3 (2017-18) full implementation. While it may seem frustrating to phase in full implementation slowly when the WCCUSD community schools initiative has already taken several years to get off the ground, it would be a mistake to skip the pilot testing phase. The community schools initiative will only be truly successful with buy-in from school staff, students, parents and district partners—and **moving ahead hastily could result in poor implementation and could end up alienating key stakeholders.** This pace should be sufficient provided that there is **clear communication regarding planned action.**

Figure 18: Implementation Timeline





## Conclusion

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The West Contra Costa Unified community schools initiative has gained exciting momentum in the past year. With the hiring of a Director of Community Engagement, the formation of the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee comprised of district partners and the development of a centralized “partnership agreement” or memorandum of understanding, WCCUSD is well on its way to moving fully into the next phase of community schools implementation (the “emerging” phase).

However, there is still important work left to do. In order to advance toward full implementation—and reap the potential rewards of improved student outcomes—the district will need to double down on its commitment to providing financial and staff resources to support community schools. The phase-in process for carrying out the recommendations in this report is not intended to slow down the pace of implementation, but rather to ensure that the next steps are manageable, well-planned and effective.

West Contra Costa Unified has arrived at an important crossroads. District partners are ready and willing to collaborate on a data-driven approach to community schools work. School staff, students and parents have important insights to contribute. It will be exciting to see what happens next with the district-wide community schools initiative, and how the UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools can continue to support this work. Ultimately, it is the students and parents of WCCUSD that will benefit from full implementation of community schools.

## Appendix A: Focus Group and Interview Protocols

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### Interviews (Abridged for Brevity)

#### *Core Questions*

1. How long have you worked at/been a part of this school? (Probe: Tell me a little about your role in the school)
2. What do you see as the greatest strengths of this school?
3. What are some of the strengths of the students at this school? What are some of the strengths of their families?
4. What do you see as the school's single greatest challenge?
5. What does the school currently offer that helps the students learn and succeed? (Probe: How are students identified as needing services and referred to support programs? As principal, how do you view your role in overseeing support services?)
6. What gets in the way of students learning and succeeding here?
7. What do you think would help? (Probe: What kinds of supports and services could the school offer to help students learn better? i.e., after-school programs, summer enrichment programs, sports teams, other extra-curricular activities, academic support, health services, mental health services)
8. If you were going to designate one priority for support providers at the school next year (e.g., parental involvement, student behavior support, afterschool activities, etc.), what would it be?
9. What do neighborhood residents or community members think about this school? (Probe: What are some words they might use to describe this school? To what extent does the health center build relationships with neighborhood residents or community members?)
10. What are the major changes you have seen at this school over the past 5 years (if applicable)?

11. What are some major changes you would like to see at this school in the next 5 years?  
What resources would it take to achieve these changes?

### *Supplemental Questions*

1. What opportunities do you have to share ideas and opinions about what's working and not working at this school? *(Everyone except principal)*
2. What opportunities do you have to share ideas and opinions about what's working and not working at this school? *(Everyone except principal)*
3. What do you think the students like best and least about this school? *(Principal, Health Center Coordinator only)*
4. Who is the person that a CBO would contact at the school site if they were interested in providing services to students at the school? Who is your current contact at the school site, designated as the "point person" to coordinate services (SCOW, principal, etc.)? (Probe: How easy/difficult is it to get in touch with your contact?) *(CBO Provider only)*
5. How motivated are the students at this school about their own learning? (Probe: How much do they complete homework assignments, participate in class discussions, participate in out- of-school learning?) *(Principal only)*
6. How involved are parents at this school in their children's education? (Probe: What activities are they involved in? What role do they have in decision-making at the school?) *(Everyone except CBO Provider)*
7. What do you think this school could do to increase parent involvement? *(Everyone except CBO Provider)*

## Focus Groups (Abridged for Brevity)

### *Core Questions*

1. What do you see as the greatest strengths of this school? (Probe: Strengths of students and families?)
2. What gets in the way of students learning and succeeding here?
3. What do you think would help? (Probe: What kinds of supports and services could the school offer to help students learn better? i.e., after-school programs, summer enrichment programs, sports teams, other extra-curricular activities, academic support, health services, mental health services)
4. Do you feel like you have a clear understanding of what services are currently available at this site? Probe: What would be the most helpful way to share information about services (Printed booklet, website, app, etc.)?
5. If you were going to designate one priority for support providers at the school next year (e.g., parental involvement, student behavior support, afterschool activities, etc.), what would it be?

Note: An alternative way to ask this question is: If you were to choose the most important service for the school to provide students and families, what would it be?

### *Supplemental Questions*

1. What opportunities currently exist for parents to get involved at your school? (Probe: How do you communicate with parents of students in your class? What system(s) does the school/district use to keep parents informed of their child's academic performance and progress at school (automated calls, calls from teacher, letters, etc.)? *(Parent and Teacher only)*)
2. What do you think this school could do to increase parent involvement? In what ways would you like to see parents involved in making decisions about services at the school? *(Parent and Teacher only)*

3. If a student or parent comes to you with a problem, is there a clear process for assessing what services are available to help them, and referring the student to the appropriate service provider? What processes could be put in place to help you more effectively connect students and families with the appropriate services at your school site? *(Teacher Only)*
4. In what ways would you like to see teachers and staff involved in making decisions about services at the school? *(Teacher Only)*
5. If you needed help of some kind (e.g., academic, health related, housing, etc.), who would you talk to at this school? *(Student Only)*
6. What do you think this school could do to improve communication with students? Probe: What system(s) does the school/district use to keep you informed about what's happening at your school (automated calls, calls from teacher, letters, etc.)? *(Student Only)*
7. What are good ways we can get input from you and other students in your school/community in the future? Probe: Was this focus group an effective way for the school to get your input? Probe: In what ways would you like to see students involved in making decisions about services at the school? *(Student Only)*
8. What opportunities currently exist for parents to get involved at your child's school? (Probe: What activities are you involved in? What role do you have in decision-making at the school, particularly in terms of services that are available? What role would you like to have?) *(Parent Only)*
9. What do you think this school could do to increase parent involvement? (Probe: What do you think it would take to get more parents interested in being involved at the school?) *(Parent Only)*
10. What system(s) does the school/district use to keep parents informed of their child's academic performance and progress at school (automated calls, calls from teacher, letters, etc.)? What do you think this school could do to improve communication with parents? *(Parent Only)*

## Appendix B: Results-Based Accountability Process

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### **Protocol to be used with community schools Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) to determine shared indicators**

(Note: This can also be adapted for use at school sites or with central office staff)

*All ideas adapted from Mark Friedman's Results-Based Accountability Work (Retrieved from: <http://raguide.org/>)*

#### **Session 1: Population Results Accountability and Decision Making Group Process**

*Note: This is an introductory session that would be beneficial to use with the whole LAC, even if you intend to recruit volunteers to build out a full set of indicators later. This may take two sessions depending on how long the conversations last. This section may require some pre-work for Part Three, depending on how you plan to proceed with it.*

#### **Part One (15 min):**

- Results-based decision making is about the wellbeing of a population in a given geographic area (e.g., West Contra Costa County). This can either be *all* the people in that area or a subpopulation (e.g., children and their families). We are *not* talking about clients of a particular program or service system—we'll get to that later.
- We are going to identify some results for this population by asking the following questions:
  - *What do we want for the children and families of West County?*
  - *What do they want for themselves?*

This is not about data or services yet, we're thinking about conditions of wellbeing—the ends, not the means (although there may be an exception if the most specific result we can come up with has to do with "receiving a needed service." Think about how you would experience healthy children in your day to day lives—what you would see, hear feel and observe as you walked around the community.

- Now, we will brainstorm a list of potential results—there is no right or wrong, but we want all of our ideas to pass the “not data” and “ends, not means” tests (e.g., children are healthy). The list we come up with will probably be rough and have some overlap between ideas. That’s ok, we can refine it later.
- *Brainstorm for 10 minutes, or longer if needed. Note: See Coalition for Community Schools Logic model at end of section for potential results to provide to group. You can also skip Part One and proceed directly to Part Two by choosing from the list of results provided in the logic model in order to save time.*

**Part Two (20 min):**

- Great, now let’s pick one result from the list (e.g., West County children are healthy) and develop indicators for it (e.g., vaccination rates, asthma hospitalization rates, school attendance rates). We will now brainstorm a list of potential indicators. For each indicator, we will assign a rating of High, Medium or Low for the following:
  - *Communication Power:* Will the public understand what we mean when we use this data statement?
  - *Proxy Power:* Does this data say something important about the result we are trying to measure? (Nothing is perfect, but we’re looking for the most accurate measure we can find)
  - *Data Power:* Do we have high quality data on this indicator that is readily available? (High = At least one LAC member can go back to their office and open a report containing this data, Medium = We don’t have a report containing the data, but we should be able to compile it pretty easily, Low = This data is not readily available)
- *Brainstorm for 10-15 minutes, or longer if needed. Note: See Coalition for Community Schools tables at end of section for potential short-term and long-term indicators to provide to the group. You can also skip Part Two and proceed directly to Part Three by choosing from the list of indicators provided in the tables in order to save time.*

- Identify the indicators that rate high (or highest) on all three criteria. These are the headline indicators. One of these will be chosen for Part Three. Also, any indicators that rate high on communication and proxy, but low on data, should be added to a “data development” list.

**Part Three (45 min):**

- Ok, we have our list of results and indicators for the children and families of Contra Costa County. Let’s pick some indicators—we’re going to work in teams to practice “turning the curve” on these indicators.
  - *If you skipped Part Two and are starting with Part Three, you should select up to 4 indicators to focus on and prepare baseline measures before the session, e.g., current vaccination rates, asthma hospitalization rates and school attendance rates for children in West County)*
  - *If you did NOT skip Part Two, it may not be possible to prepare baseline measures ahead of time. An option here is to poll the group to identify an indicator of particular concern at the moment, and create your own baseline estimate as follows:*
    - *On a piece of chart paper, draw x/y axes. Label the middle of the x-axis “now,” and the y-value with whatever scale makes sense (percent, numbers, etc.). Ask the group the following.*
      - *What do you estimate is the current value of this indicator? (Plot this point above the word “now”)*
      - *Has the indicator been getting better or worse for the last few years? (This tell you the direction of the historical part of the baseline—increasing or decreasing)*
      - *How fast has the indicator been changing? (This tells you the steepness of the historical part of the baseline—increasing or decreasing) → Now you can plot the line from the starting point to the current value on the x-axis*



- *Where do you think this indicator will go in the next few years if we don't change anything that we're currently doing? → Use this answer to plot the rest of your line, this is your baseline forecast for the future*
- We know that results-based accountability work involves more than one organization or agency. So let's figure out what partners have something to contribute to making a difference on this curve.
  - *Brainstorm a list of potential partners on a piece of chart paper (e.g., churches, schools, government agencies, police, nonprofits, media, businesses, etc.)*
- Divide into small groups (5-7 people). Remind everyone that this is just practice, and there won't be enough time to do it "right," so just have fun with it.
- Each group needs to do the following:
  - Pick a time keeper and reporter
  - Figure out "who you are" for this exercise: Your *geographic area* and your "two hats" (each person should assume their everyday role and a role from the list of potential partners—only one person per role)
  - This should take 5 min.
- Pick a curve to work on from those presented. If necessary, use the baseline estimation method presented earlier. *Note: Groups will need to estimate if they are choosing an indicator without a provided baseline.*
  - Discuss the baseline and present at least one forecast of the path you are on if nothing changes. Ask yourself "Is this OK?" (If it is, pick another curve to focus on)
  - This should take 5 min.
- Determine the story behind the curve. What's going on here? Why does the baseline look the way it does? What are the causes? What forces are at work?
  - Generate a list of questions you have as you go through this discussion → This is your "information agenda"
  - This should take 15 min.

- Brainstorm what would work to turn the curve. What do you think would work in this community to turn this curve? Think about what each partner could contribute. Make sure the ideas are clearly defined and specific. There should be at least one no cost or low cost idea.
  - This should take 20 min.
- Prepare to report. Choose the three best “what works” ideas to report (one should be for the lead agency if one is identified). At least one should be no cost or low cost. Also identify the funniest or most “of the wall” idea.
  - This should take 5 min.
- Report out. Each group should answer the following questions:
  - What place did you choose to be?
  - What are the three most important aspects of the story behind the curve?  
(Causes/Information that you didn’t have) *Optional*
  - What are your three best ideas about how to turn the curve? Be specific! Who would do what, when, where, how...
  - This should take 5 min. (it’s a quick report out!)
- Debrief. Possible questions include:
  - How many people think that at least one idea from their group could actually be done and would make a difference?
  - What did you learn from this? What was the hardest or most frustrating part of the work, and why?
  - Was this a useful way to work, and would you like to have the opportunity to work this way in the future? *Note: This is a great time to discuss the opportunity to volunteer with helping to select indicators, if that is the plan. Also find out what information would be helpful to have on hand during subsequent meetings (e.g., LCAP goals, strategic plan, etc.)*
  - Next steps: What is something each person could do, or could ask someone else to do, in order to advance this work?

- What were the similar ideas that emerged? What implications does this have for elements that might be crafted into a real action agenda? (Remind participants that this activity was not designed to yield a coherent strategy—yet)

## **Session 2: Step-by-Step Process for Identifying, Selecting and Using Performance**

### **Measures**

*Note: This exercise is intended to apply to a particular program (e.g., a school, or a nonprofit service provider). It may not be useful to use with the whole LAC—unless you want to walk LAC members through this exercise using a specific program as an example.*

### **Part One (25 min)**

- Draw four quadrants on a piece of chart paper.
- How much we do (Upper left quadrant)
  - Starting in the upper left quadrant, write “# of Clients Served.” Ask if there are more specific ways to break down subcategories of clients that we should consider (e.g., age, geography, condition). List those in the quadrant as well.
  - Next, ask what activities are performed by the program in question. Convert each activity into a measure (e.g., # people trained, # miles road repaired, etc.). Add this to the upper left quadrant as well. Do your best to capture major activities, but the list will not be comprehensive.
- How well we do it (Upper right quadrant)
  - Ask people to consider the standard measures that usually apply to this quadrant (e.g., client staff ratio, workload ratio, staff turnover rate, staff morale, % staff fully trained, % satisfied customers, % clients seen in their own language, worker safety, unit cost, etc.). Write each answer in the upper right quadrant.
  - Next, take each activity listed in the upper left quadrant and consider measures that tell whether that activity was performed well (e.g., timeliness, accuracy,

etc.). Convert each answer into a measure and be specific (e.g., % case reviews completed within 30 days of opening, % responses in less than 24 hours, etc.)

- Is anyone better off? (Lower left and lower right quadrants)
  - Ask in what ways clients are better off as a result of getting this service. How would we know that they are better off in measurable terms?
  - Create pairs of measures (# and %) for each answer (e.g., # and % of clients who get jobs above the minimum wage).
  - # answers go in the lower left quadrant, % answers go in the lower right quadrant.
  - Note: There are both *point in time* measures (e.g., % children with good attendance during this report card period) and *improvement over time* measures (e.g., % children who attendance improved since the last report card period)
  - This is the most interesting and challenging part of the process—be creative. Think about different ways people can be better off: *Skills/knowledge, attitude, behavior* and *circumstance*. Also consider the questions: “If your service was terrible, how would it show up in the lives of your clients?”
  - Consider data that is already collected—that should be top priority! But be creative about what could/should be counted and the ways in which that data could be generated (e.g., sampling, one-time studies, pre/post testing, self-report surveys)
- **Headline measures.**
  - Identify the measures in the upper right and lower right quadrants for which there is good data (i.e., available today or can be produced with little effort). Circle each one of these measures and ask: “If you had to choose just one of the available measures to talk about your program in a public setting, which one would it be? What would be your second choice? Third choice?”
  - You should choose no more than 3-4 measures, and they should be a mix of upper right and lower right quadrant measures. This is your working list of headline measures for the program.

- Data development agenda.
  - Ask: “If you could buy one measure for which you don’t currently have data, which would it be? What would be your second purchase? Third purchase?” (Remember: Data collection takes money and employee time)
  - List 3-4 measures. This is the start of your data development agenda in priority of order.

***Part Two (35 min)***

- How are we doing on the most important of these measures?
  - Create a baseline forecast for one or more of the headline performance measures (include historical data if you have it—preferably 3-5 years). Predict what will happen to your performance if you stay on the current course (it’s OK to generate two or three scenarios).
  - Describe the story behind each baseline, or the set of baselines. What factors account for where you’ve been, and what did you base your predictions on for the baseline forecast?
  - Add any outstanding questions to your “information and research agenda.”
- Who are the partners with a potential lead role in impacting the indicator?
  - Brainstorm a list of public and private sector partners.
- What works, and what could work to do better than the baseline?
  - Describe best practices or hunches you have about what would work to improve performance over the baseline.
  - Be sure to consider the actions of partners outside of your organization, as well as any no cost or low cost options you can think of.
  - Add any outstanding questions to your “information and research agenda.”
- What do we propose to do?
  - Using the ideas from the previous step, take what works and use that to build a multi-year action plan and budget. “If we were serious about improving performance, what would we do over the next year? What about over the next two to ten years? Identify your top three ideas to share out.

## **Next Steps**

At this point you should have determined which LAC members (if any) want to volunteer to refine the results and indicators (and possibly performance measures) that were identified during the first two activities. This work can be done by one team with from different issue areas (e.g, Health and Wellness or School Climate and Culture), or can be divided into different teams according to issue area.

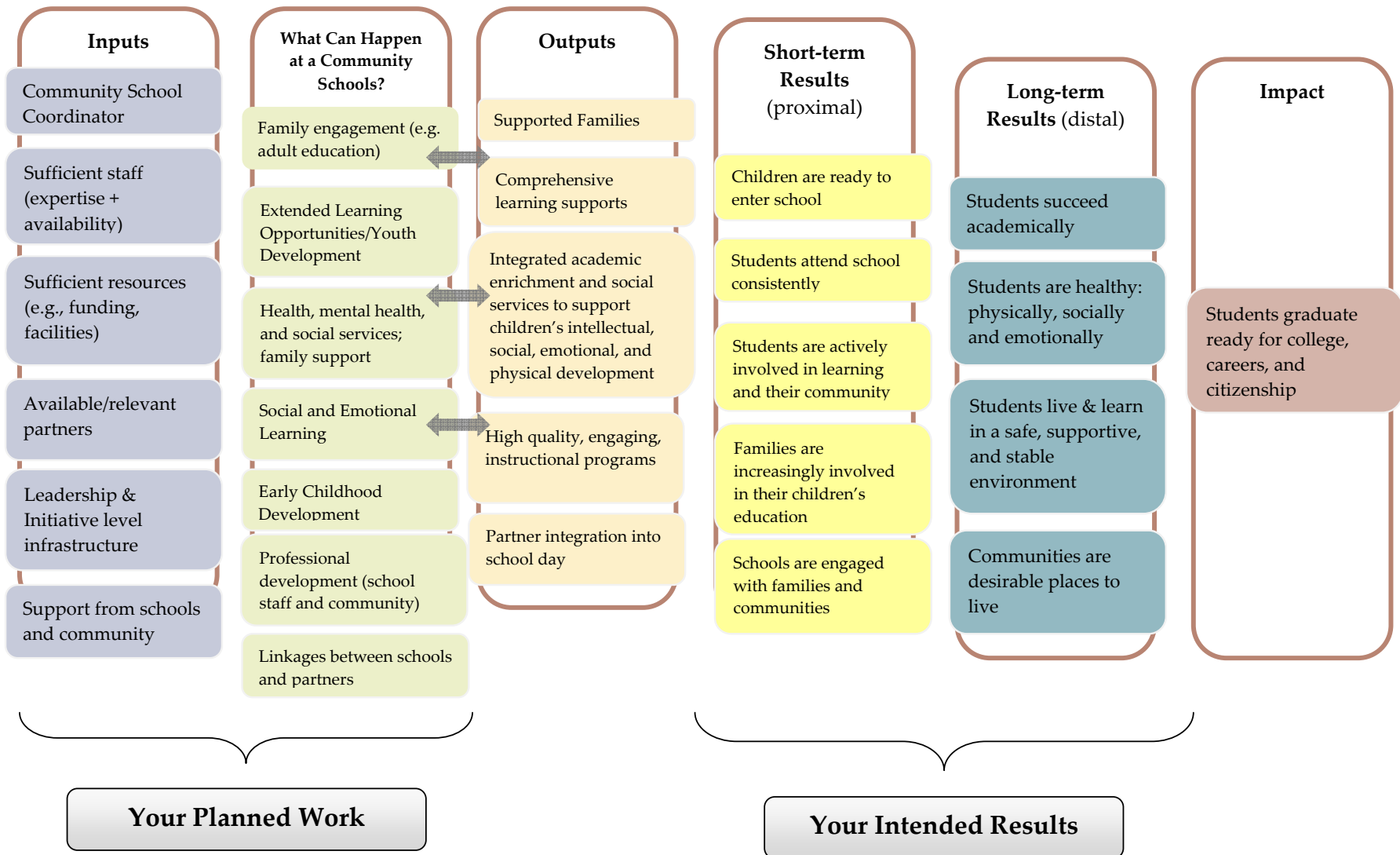
If the “turn the curve” exercises did not provide a specific starting point for subsequent refinement, follow the Coalition for Community Schools Evaluation Toolkit (highlights on next page, see [http://www.communityschools.org/resources/community\\_schools\\_evaluation\\_toolkit.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/community_schools_evaluation_toolkit.aspx) for full toolkit).

You will need to:

- 1) Consider your readiness.
  - a. Do you have the resources you need?
    - i. People to collect/analyze data
    - ii. Time to devote to planning and analysis
    - iii. Secure way to store data)
- 2) Review the logic model on p. 66 and make any necessary revisions.
- 3) Select your results.
  - a. Based on the logic model (and any changes you have made)—what are the 1-2 results you would like to focus on initially? Prioritize results that can be accomplished sooner rather than later and are relevant to the largest number of district partners.
  - b. Consider both short-term and long-term results
  - c. Be strategic—think about how current activities fit into the logic model. Focus on results related to those areas of emphasis.
  - d. Decide whether you want to collect data on the whole school population or just a specific group of students/families

- 4) Develop evaluation questions
  - a. Process: How is the program operating?
  - b. Results: Has the program accomplished its intended results?
- 5) Figure out what indicators you will need to collect in order to determine if you have achieved your intended results (refer to tables on following pages for ideas)
  - a. Think about both student/family level indicators and school/system level indicators.
  - b. What is your data collection plan? (Existing data—district or partner agency, Surveys, Focus Groups, Online databases)
- 6) Your Evaluation Workplan should include:
  - a. Key results from the logic model that you want to focus on, and associated indicators
  - b. Evaluation questions
  - c. Indicators and data sources
  - d. List of partners and their role in the process
  - e. Plans for sharing results
  - f. Detailed timeline

**Table A. Community Schools Logic Model**



[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)  
[www.iel.org](http://www.iel.org)



**Table B: Results and Corresponding Indicators**

RESULTS	INDICATORS THAT ALIGN WITH EACH RESULT
<b>SHORT-TERM RESULTS</b>	
Children are ready to enter school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immunizations</li> <li>▪ More children with health insurance<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Children in expected height and weight range for their age<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Availability of early childhood education programs</li> <li>▪ Attendance at early childhood education programs</li> <li>▪ Parents read to children<sup>5</sup></li> <li>▪ Vision, hearing, and dental status</li> </ul>
Students attend school consistently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily attendance</li> <li>▪ Early chronic absenteeism</li> <li>▪ Tardiness</li> <li>▪ Truancy</li> </ul>
Students are actively involved in learning and their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students feel they belong in school</li> <li>▪ Availability of in-school and after-school programs</li> <li>▪ Students feel competent</li> <li>▪ Schools are open to community</li> <li>▪ Attendance at before and after-school programs</li> <li>▪ Partnerships for service learning in the school/community</li> <li>▪ Post-secondary plans</li> </ul>
Schools are engaged with families and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust between faculty and families</li> <li>▪ Teacher attendance and turnover</li> <li>▪ Faculty believe they are an effective and competent team</li> <li>▪ Community-school partnerships</li> </ul>
Families are actively involved in their children’s education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Families support students’ education at home</li> <li>▪ Family attendance at school-wide events and parent-teacher conferences</li> <li>▪ Family experiences with school-wide events and classes</li> <li>▪ Family participation in school decision-making</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Schorr, Lisbeth B. and Vicky Marchand. *Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade*. Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2007. <http://www.cssp.org/uploadFiles/3RD%20GRADE%20PATHWAY%20PDF%2009-07.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

RESULTS	INDICATORS THAT ALIGN WITH EACH RESULT
<b>LONG-TERM RESULTS</b>	
Students succeed academically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardized test scores</li> <li>▪ Teachers support students</li> <li>▪ Grades</li> <li>▪ Teachers take positive approach to learning and teaching</li> <li>▪ Graduation rates</li> <li>▪ Dropout rates</li> <li>▪ Reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade</li> </ul>
Students are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asthma control</li> <li>▪ Vision, hearing, and dental status</li> <li>▪ Physical fitness</li> <li>▪ Nutritional habits</li> <li>▪ Positive adult relationships</li> <li>▪ Positive peer relationships</li> </ul>
Students live and learn in stable and supportive environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students, staff, and families feel safe</li> <li>▪ Schools are clean</li> <li>▪ Families provide basic needs</li> <li>▪ Incidents of bullying</li> <li>▪ Reports of violence or weapons</li> </ul>
Communities are desirable places to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment and employability of residents and families served by the school</li> <li>▪ Student and families with health insurance</li> <li>▪ Community mobility and stability</li> <li>▪ Juvenile Crime</li> </ul>

Review the original Rationale Results Framework from the Coalition for Community Schools here:

[http://www.communityschools.org/resources/community\\_school\\_evaluation\\_toolkit\\_resources.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/community_school_evaluation_toolkit_resources.aspx).

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## Appendix C: Protecting Student Data

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Benefits of data sharing include:<sup>23</sup>

- Developing programs targeted according to student needs
- Program improvement
- Increased alignment between supplemental service providers and instructional curriculum of school
- Ability to assess supplemental program impact.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has been a long-standing and misunderstood obstacle for systemic data-sharing between schools and partner agencies.

### What is FERPA?

- Federal law protecting the confidentiality of individual student-level information and records. This includes address, social security number, grades, behavior referrals and any other uniquely identifiable information.
- FERPA applies to all school districts that receive federal funds
- Requires written parental consent to disclose any information from student records
- Exceptions exist for research and evaluation, audits, compliance with court ordered mandates and school transfer.

*Source:* US Department of Education

In January 2012, FERPA was revised to address longstanding ambiguities and barriers to data-sharing among educational agencies. The amendments broadened the definition of an “authorized representative” and “education program” and further clarified that an educational authority share data for research purposes. Therefore, **district partners have two key strategies for accessing data legally without written parental consent:**

- 1) Qualify as an “authorized representative” of a contracted education program** (including early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, job training, career and technical education—but not programs that lack a specific academic focus)
- 2) Conduct studies in partnership with schools** (see cited document for more detail)

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<sup>23</sup> “Data-Sharing: Federal Rules and Best Practices to Improve Out-of-School Time Programs and Student Outcomes” (2012) Partnership for Children and Youth. Accessed from: [http://www.partnerforchildren.org/storage/documents/downloads/after\\_school\\_downloads/ost\\_data-sharing\\_and\\_ferpa.pdf](http://www.partnerforchildren.org/storage/documents/downloads/after_school_downloads/ost_data-sharing_and_ferpa.pdf)

# Appendix D: Summary of WCCUSD PLUS Projects (2011-2014)

Fellow and Year	Project	Recommendations	Outcomes
Roza Do, 2011	<p><i>Aligning the Healthy Richmond HUB project with WCCUSD</i></p> <p>Analyzed how city-school partnerships in the City of Richmond connected to the school site, community, city, district and county</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start with parent networks and school-based health centers as anchors to build out shared community schools strategy</li> <li>2. Align academic initiatives with City of Richmond’s Health in All Policies approach</li> <li>3. Build a system of shared measurement and accountability</li> <li>4. Manage and support on-going cultural change process</li> <li>5. Engage youth in identifying assets and needs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has not been fully addressed. School-based health centers are successful, but still somewhat disconnected from the district community schools initiative.</li> <li>2. Has not been fully addressed</li> <li>3. In progress. See 2014 PLUS project (data interviews)</li> <li>4. Has not been fully addressed</li> <li>5. In progress. See 2014 PLUS project (needs assessment), as well as the district's partnership with the Center for Cities &amp; Schools Y-PLAN initiative.</li> </ol>

Fellow and Year	Project	Recommendations	Outcomes
Roza Do, 2012	<p><i>Toward a Full-Service Community School District in WCCUSD</i></p> <p>Inventoried existing partnerships, programs &amp; services at community school pilot sites within the Richmond and Kennedy Families in WCCUSD</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a central services inventory and process to systematically assess assets and needs across the district</li> <li>2. Develop clear and consistent processes for communication and collaborative engagement with district partners (e.g., website, monthly newsletter)</li> <li>3. Build central-office and school-site capacity to sustain FSCS work through professional development and adequate staffing (e.g., FSCS Director/Coordinator)</li> <li>4. Identify common indicators to track FSCS process and outcome measures at the institution, parent and student levels</li> <li>5. Focus on relationship building through group problem-solving, open and honest discussion of challenges, and celebration of short-term wins.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In progress. See 2013 PLUS project.</li> <li>2. In progress. Monthly meetings with district partners participating in community schools Leadership Advisory Committee. There is also a community schools website (<a href="http://www.westcountyfscs.org">www.westcountyfscs.org</a>)</li> <li>3. In progress. Director of Community Engagement has been hired to oversee community schools work in WCCUSD. However, there is a continued need for coordination at school sites (see 2014 PLUS project).</li> <li>4. In progress. See 2014 PLUS project.</li> <li>5. In progress. Monthly meetings with district partners participating in community schools Leadership Advisory Committee.</li> </ol>

Fellow and Year	Project	Recommendations	Outcomes
Maura Baldiga & Anna Maier, 2013	<p data-bbox="435 258 721 359"><i>Mapping for Alignment: Inventorying School-Based Services in WCCUSD</i></p> <p data-bbox="435 411 721 548">Inventoried existing partnerships, programs &amp; services at school sites throughout WCCUSD</p>	<ol data-bbox="773 258 1065 1192" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a “deep dive” to fill in remaining data from school sites.</li> <li>2. Develop a sustainable process to keep services map updated.</li> <li>3. Use the map as a communications tool to promote the FSCS strategy.</li> <li>4. Conduct a district-wide needs assessment to better understand community perspectives.</li> <li>5. Use the data to drive horizontal collaboration across and vertical collaboration within families.</li> </ol>	<ol data-bbox="1097 258 1424 1213" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In progress. Data has been verified by principals and posted to the community schools website (<a href="http://www.westcountyfscs.org">www.westcountyfscs.org</a>). However, there are still complaints of inaccuracies and missing data.</li> <li>2. Has not been fully addressed.</li> <li>3. Has not been fully addressed.</li> <li>4. In progress. See 2014 PLUS project.</li> <li>5. Has not been fully addressed.</li> </ol>

Fellow and Year	Project	Recommendations	Outcomes
Anna Maier, 2014	<p data-bbox="410 258 760 325"><i>Charting the Course for Successful Community Schools</i></p> <p data-bbox="410 367 760 735">Assessed the current implementation status of the WCCUSD community schools initiative, developed a prototype needs assessment process at two pilot school sites in Richmond, and interviewed district partners to better understand their needs around data sharing</p>	<p data-bbox="768 258 1076 399"><u>Joint Recommendations</u> (endorsed by WCCUSD, Healthy Richmond and City of Richmond PLUS fellows)</p> <ol data-bbox="768 441 1076 1039" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collectively invest financial and staff resources to support planning, collaboration and data usage among WCCUSD and key partners</li> <li>2. Investigate options for shared data platforms &amp; analytic support from UC Berkeley</li> <li>3. Collectively attend trainings and share engagement strategies among partner agencies.</li> </ol> <p data-bbox="768 1081 1076 1144"><u>WCCUSD Recommendations</u></p> <ol data-bbox="768 1186 1076 1816" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest in community schools coordinators to support implementation at school sites.</li> <li>2. Improve data transparency through improved website access to site level data, and consider school fact sheets</li> <li>3. Develop shared performance measures in collaboration with district partners through a Results-Based Accountability process</li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1084 258 1432 399"><u>Joint Recommendations</u> (endorsed by WCCUSD, Healthy Richmond and City of Richmond PLUS fellows)</p> <p data-bbox="1084 472 1432 504">1-3 TBD</p> <p data-bbox="1084 546 1432 766">All PLUS clients (WCCUSD, Healthy Richmond and City of Richmond) have expressed enthusiasm for moving forward with the joint recommendations</p> <p data-bbox="1084 1144 1432 1176"><u>WCCUSD Recommendations</u></p> <ol data-bbox="1084 1218 1432 1816" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TBD</li> <li>2. In progress. WCCUSD is working on a data portal for the district website.</li> <li>3. TBD, but Community Engagement team has expressed a commitment to following through with this process through the community schools Leadership Advisory Committee.</li> </ol>