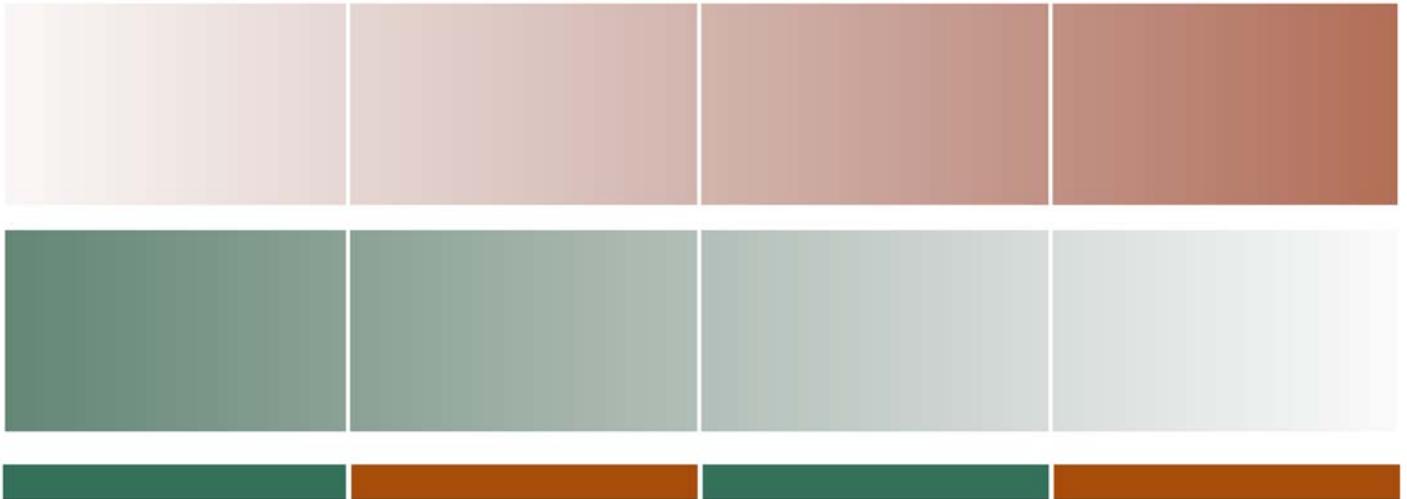# INTEGRATING HIGH QUALITY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTIVE HEALTH, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Key Findings from a Listening Session
Convened by the Center for the Study of Social Policy
for The U.S. Department of Education and
The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative**

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INTEGRATING HIGH QUALITY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
AND SUPPORTIVE HEALTH, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
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February 1, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, ***The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)*** is a collaborative, interagency effort focused on helping local communities obtain "…the tools they need to revitalize neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of opportunity."[1]   Lead agencies in the NRI include the Departments of Education (ED), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (DHHS), Justice (DOJ), and Treasury. Across these agencies, the NRI operates under a "shared theory of change – that an integrated, coordinated effort to increase the quality of a neighborhood's (1) educational and developmental, (2) commercial, (3) recreational, (4) physical, and (5) social assets, sustained by local leadership over an extended period, will improve resident well-being and community quality of life."[2] The Initiative utilizes four key strategies: (1) integrating federal place-based programs in distressed neighborhoods; (2) coordinating peer review and aligning federal program goals and requirements; (3) collaborative planning; and (4) integrated technical assistance. Currently, federal collaboration is focused on several program opportunities: Choice Neighborhoods (HUD), Promise Neighborhoods (ED), Bryne Criminal Justice Innovation (DOJ), and Community Health Centers (DHHS), among others. [3]

On February 1, 2011, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)[4] convened a "Listening Session" to provide a forum for learning and dialogue between federal agencies engaged in the *Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative* and successful community-based initiatives that integrate high quality academic programs, supportive health and social services, and broader neighborhood revitalization (see Appendix A for a list of meeting participants). The meeting was designed to focus on the work of school districts and other educational leaders, as part of broader place-based efforts in their communities. The session was organized around three broad areas of inquiry:

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[1] The White House Revitalization Initiative, background paper.
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid
[4] The Center for the Study of Social Policy is a nonprofit public policy, technical assistance and research organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., whose mission is "to create new ideas and promote public policies that produce equal opportunities and better futures for all children and families, especially those most often left behind."

- What works to achieve successful integration across education, health and human services, and broader neighborhood revitalization? What are the federal barriers to this integration?
- What capacities are needed to design and implement effective, integrated academic programs and health, social service and community/neighborhood supports?
- How can federal policies and programs better facilitate efforts to improve outcomes for children and to link broader neighborhood revitalization efforts?

In preparation for the meeting, participants were asked to provide brief, written responses to questions, similar to those above.

This paper summarizes findings from the meeting. It is organized by the three key areas of discussion, listed above, and draws on participants' presentations and discussion during the meeting as well as the materials sent in advance.

FINDINGS

I. ___What works to achieve successful integration of education, health and social services, and broader neighborhood revitalization? What are the federal barriers to this integration?___

What Works?

Participants shared a rich set of experiences in integrating high quality academic programs, supportive health and social services, and broader neighborhood revitalization.   Among the examples cited:

- In Indiana, the **Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation** (EVSC) has adopted a district-wide, community schools approach, working with multiple service systems and organizations to better align efforts, achieve efficiencies through shared resources (including a shared data warehouse and shared purchasing), engage community residents, and build neighborhoods of opportunity in underserved communities. EVSC has been instrumental in establishing a shared community agenda for children through its School-Community Council – a group of more than 70 community organizations and businesses that help students and their families achieve a healthy and complete education experience. In addition, the school district has reached out to other local agencies to lower administrative and other costs by becoming a cooperative purchasing agent for the city/county government, the community's Catholic schools, community organizations, and other nearby school districts. EVSC buys everything from toilet paper (saving $88,000 per year on bulk purchasing) to office paper. Money saved through joint purchasing and streamlined administration allows EVSC to fund innovative programs (see below) and to address under-resourced needs.

  In much of its work, the school system has partnered with community residents, providing opportunities for residents to voice their concerns and to jointly develop solutions to neighborhood problems. To meet the needs of students living in the high-poverty Glenwood neighborhood, for example, EVSC has made major renovations to the school, including developing a school health center that will serve families and individuals in the community, and building a school library – staffed by the Evansville library system – that is open to the public. In

this way, the school serves as a shared community resource and a foundation for neighborhood revitalization. For the past three years, the school system has been a key partner in the broader Glenwood Community Development Initiative, spearheaded by [Habitat for Humanity](#) of Evansville. This initiative has brought together multiple public and private sector partners along with community residents to "create a model neighborhood valued for its improvements and spirit of community." In addition to major renovations to the school, accomplishments to date include the development of a community garden, and a housing development that will include 19 Habitat homes for low-income families and up to four additional market-rate homes.

These broader community efforts are combined with school-based strategies to transform chronically underperforming schools and to strengthen academic offerings system-wide. For example, EVSC worked with the Evansville Teachers Association to develop its unique *Equity Schools Model*, which focuses on more learning time in underperforming schools – for teachers and for students – adding extra teaching days as well as professional development data days, in which teachers learn to analyze and use data to improve student achievement. In addition, the district offers an Academy for Law and Social Justice – for students interested in post-secondary studies relating to law, social justice, American policy and social values – and will soon offer a Medical Professions Academy. These and other academic initiatives help students stay on track and move toward successful careers in their areas of interest.

- In Rhode Island, the **Providence Public School District** (PPSD) has worked with the Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet to develop a common Results Framework for Strategic Community Partnerships. The framework is intended to help the entire city of Providence to structure community partnerships in which multiple organizations and public agencies work collaboratively to ensure 1) children enter school prepared to succeed, 2) students make successful transitions at critical development stages, 3) students are ready to engage as learners, 4) students are on track to graduate, and 5) young people are ready to enroll in and succeed in post-secondary education—a set of results they believe cannot be achieved by individual sectors alone. The development of the framework was informed by the district's experience working with community partners in the past to collectively improve students' academic success and other indicators of child and youth well-being. These efforts include work with Dorcas Place and other partners to develop a results-driven Full Service Community Schools initiative that braids multiple federal funding streams (e.g., Title I, School Improvement Grants, McKinney-Vento, 21st Century Learning, Child Care Block Grant, Project Launch) and has had early success in dramatically improving third grade reading scores. Another example is PPSD's work with the Providence After-School Alliance (PASA) to better align after-school programs with the school district's core curriculum. Through this process they are changing the culture of how schools relate to after-school programs, and hope to enhance academic outcomes through after-school reinforcement of the school curriculum. In addition to using the Results Framework to guide the development of community partnerships, PPSD is working to align its internal capacity, management structures, and policies in ways that will enable the district to target resources more effectively toward strategies that the best available evidence suggests will help achieve the five results the district is seeking.

- In Michigan, the **Kalamazoo Promise,** a privately funded initiative launched in 2005 to increase school success and college attendance, provides 100% of tuition and mandatory fees for four years at Michigan's public universities and community colleges for Kalamazoo Public School District (KPS) students. All students who have been KPS students four years or more, graduate

KPS, and reside in the district are eligible for the program.[5] As reported in a December 2007 case study by McKinsey & Company, in its first two years, the Kalamazoo Promise not only achieved improved student achievement, but also increased real estate values for the city, with families moving into Kalamazoo from across the state and the nation to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity. A more recent study (June 2010) conducted by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research found that growth in KPS over the last four years has risen by over 20% and that student achievement continues to rise. Working in tandem with the Kalamazoo Promise, the *Kalamazoo Public School District* employs a variety of innovative school initiatives to help students achieve success, including the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Curriculum for pre-school classes (www.pearsonlearning.com/microsites/owl/main.cfm), all-day kindergarten, an alternative learning program for middle school students (www.kalamazoopublicschools.com\schools\middle-schools\alternative-learning-program), significant increases in Advanced Placement participation and a Communities-in-Schools/ Integrated School Services (ISS) approach that brings community resources to students (a model that has been shown to increase graduation rates and decrease drop-out rates).

- In Detroit, **Excellent Schools Detroit** (ESD) established a broad coalition of Detroit's education, government, civic and community, parents and philanthropic leaders to develop a citywide education plan to ensure that all Detroit children receive a great education as well as the supportive services that they need and deserve. ESD is using a number of strategies and approaches to achieve its goals including (1) establishing a Detroit Leadership Academy to provide professional training programs that help leaders open new schools and turn around failing ones; (2) working with community-based organizations to establish programs designed to assist parents in becoming "smart shoppers" and making informed choices about where their child attends school; and (3) partnering with community organizations and city agencies to implement a citywide "community schools" initiative where schools stay open evenings and weekends to offer supportive services for children and families, including health clinics, mental health services, counseling services, adult literacy training, etc.

- In New York City, the **Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ)** works to break the generational cycle of poverty for children living in Central Harlem. To achieve this goal, HCZ has established a coordinated, integrated pipeline of high quality services, supports and schools within a 97-block area that includes two public housing developments owned and operated by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). In one of these developments, St. Nicholas Houses, HCZ, NYC government and private partners are undertaking an ambitious new project that includes building a new school and community center facility, developing a "through street" within the superblock footprint of the development area and beautifying the landscape.

  Ultimately the title to the land with the completed building (after construction completion) will be transferred to the City of New York. HCZ's Charter School, Promise Academy I, will be assured long-term use and occupancy of the facility by a 99-year leaseback arrangement

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[5] Graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) have up to 10 years to complete their degree and the scholarship is graduated, depending on the amount of time that students have been in KPS. They must be in the district for their high school years to be eligible for a generous 65%.

involving both HCZ and Civic Builders (CB), a non-profit charter school facility developer, pending regular renewals of the Promise Academy's charter.

The 136,000 square foot school and community center will provide space for up to 1,300 Kindergarten to 12th grade students, with legal priority given to children who live in St. Nicholas Houses (and the surrounding school district for low income families). The community center, which will be run by HCZ, will operate 7 days a week with full access to all St. Nicholas residents.

What Are the Barriers?

While the communitie*s* represented at the meeting have been able to integrate high quality academics, supportive health and social services, and broader neighborhood revitalization, these efforts are not always well-supported at the federal level. Participants identified several ways in which federal programs and policies present barriers to successful, integrated, school and community revitalization initiatives. Several fundamental barriers were cited across agencies and programs:

- *Funding silos.* Federal funding tends to focus on individual programs in individual systems (e.g., health, education, housing, etc.), with reporting and compliance requirements that are specific to those programs and systems. Often, co-mingling of funds is discouraged or prohibited. Funding silos at the federal level lead to program silos at the state and local levels, discouraging integration and collaboration.

- *A focus on process rather than outcomes.* While quality implementation is important, too often federal grants focus primarily on how programs are implemented rather than on the outcomes they achieve. By stipulating exactly how funds are to be used and requiring extensive compliance reporting, federal guidance can stifle the kind of innovation and creative risk-taking that leads to improved outcomes for children and communities.

- *Limited grant periods.* In many cases, federal grant timeframes – e.g., 2, 3 or even 5 years – are too short for full and successful implementation of complex, community-wide initiatives.

- *Mismatch of need and resources.* The investment needed to turn around schools and communities is often far greater than the funds available at the federal level.

- *Lack of federal alignment in timing release of guidance.* Even when federal funding is available for cross-sector, integrated initiatives, timing issues may hamper communities' ability to fully integrate efforts. For example, the release of guidance for Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Neighborhoods, and School Improvement Grants on different timelines made it difficult to align these initiatives.

- *Labor-intensive and time-consuming grant compliance requirements.* Extensive grant compliance reporting requirements take time and resources away from school districts and other grantees. At the same time, it is unclear how the federal agencies use these data to improve program performance and outcomes for children and communities. Participants asked whether this was the best use of personnel and funds.

- ***Disincentives for collaborative savings and innovations.*** Policies that restrict the ability of school districts and other grantees to redirect savings serve as a disincentive to collaborative cost-cutting and innovation. For example, even when Title I, Title II, or School Lunch Program funds are saved through pooling of resources, collaborative purchasing or other administrative efficiencies, school districts do not have the opportunity to redirect savings to other proven programs or to innovative strategies that could contribute to school success.

- ***The competitive nature of grants gives added weight to cities that already have considerable infrastructure underway.*** This unfairly handicaps some of the urban centers with the highest need.

- ***Federal support tends to focus on demonstrations but not on scaling up what works.*** Funding is needed for expansion of school and other models that "work" and for intermediaries who help accelerate development of new, high performing schools and collaborative community models***.*** By failing to provide funds for scaling up effective models, the federal government misses the opportunity to help schools and communities achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in outcomes for children and for communities.

- ***Variations in states' interpretation of federal requirements***. Uneven interpretation of federal regulations and requirements across the states means that schools and communities across the country may be missing out on opportunities to use funds in innovative ways that could better meet children's needs. In some cases, states seem to base their interpretations on "legacy" funding patterns, rather than on actual provisions in written regulations. In other cases, understaffing can make it difficult for state personnel to stay abreast of changes in program requirements and policies.

In addition to the cross-cutting barriers cited above, participants also noted barriers related to specific programs or policies, including:

- ***Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)[6]***. Two sets of Title I barriers were cited. (1) A requirement that 85% of Title I funds need to stay in the school setting from one year to the next for schools under corrective action limits school districts' ability to target resources in ways that could make a greater impact for students at the school. (2) A requirement that schools must have 40% of children qualifying for reduced lunch program in order to qualify for Title I school-wide funding means that poor children in other schools do not get the benefits of the school-wide approach, even though their needs may be as great as peers in qualifying schools***.*** These requirements penalize mixed-income schools.

- ***The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) and the Family Educational Rights & Policy Act (FERPA).*** Privacy regulations in both of these acts create barriers to collaboration within the school setting and beyond***.*** As school systems seek to align their work with other services for children, HIPPA and FERPA privacy regulations become a barrier to sharing information that can alert classroom teachers, other school staff and partners to the

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[6] Discussion regarding the use of Title I funds in particular reflect differing interpretations among the states therefore reinforcing the need for further federal clarification.

health needs of individual children, and can enlist the support of school personnel and partners in addressing those needs. In addition, as community revitalization initiatives move to common results frameworks and start to monitor progress toward common outcomes, these same privacy regulations make it difficult – if not impossible – to include health-related data in shared data warehouses.

II. **_What capacities are needed to design and implement effective, integrated academic programs and health, social service and community/neighborhood supports?_**

Examples of Capacity Building Approaches

Participants shared their experiences and insights regarding capacity building in schools and in communities and how the two intersect.

- In New York City and nationwide, **_Turn Around for Children_** (TFC) uses an "inside-out" strategy, focusing on the internal re-design of schools to ensure that they have the capacities they need to address the direct effects of poverty on learning, teaching and school culture, and the ability to integrate with external, child-serving community-based systems. This approach produces widespread systemic change within the educational setting. The approach starts with the recognition that in low-performing, high poverty schools there is a big gap between student needs and school capacities. TFC builds on seminal studies indicating that highly effective, high-poverty schools share five "essential elements" or capacities: high levels of accountability, impactful leadership, effective teaching, a positive learning culture, and service capacity and integration. Building on this understanding, TFC provides its high-poverty school partners with highly skilled, pro-active team of educators and social workers who work intensively with school principals and staff over a 3-5 year period. Together, they establish systems within schools to address poverty-related academic and social barriers to student success, focusing on: achieving a positive culture and climate, classroom efficacy, teacher proficiency, student proficiency and school-wide strategies for behavioral and academic support. The results to date have been very positive. An external evaluation conducted by the American Institutes for Research concluded that, "At the school level, results for schools that participated in the Safe Schools(Bronx Middle Schools)Initiative were overwhelmingly positive. Both quantitative and qualitative data showed that schools that had been is states of profound crisis were functioning better across multiple outcomes." [7]

- The New York City-based **_Children's Aid Society – National Center for Community Schools_** (NCCS) provides technical assistance to schools, school districts, and community-based organizations, focusing on the "how" of integration and coordination. The organization places particular emphasis on the intersections between core instructional capacities, social and cultural enrichment/expanded learning opportunities and school climate, and services that decrease barriers to learning. In its written response, CAS notes that "…schools featuring

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[7] Kendziora, Kimberly, et al. *Safe Schools, Successful Students Initiative: Draft of Final Report to the United Way*. New York, N.Y.: American Institutes for Research and Turnaround for Children, 2008.

excellent instruction, extended learning time, frequent assessment, academic rigor, and high expectations will allow *most* students to overcome the achievement gap. But when these elements are combined with a system of school-based and community-based service supports for children and families that remove obstacles to learning, we can create schools where *all* students can achieve." To this end, NCCS works with schools to achieve 5 core capacities of systemic community schools initiatives: (1) shared vision and results framework, (2) supportive policy and innovative financing, (3) effective leadership, (4) broad community support, and (5) stable and flexible systems. NCCS works with schools and other partners to enhance these capacities, and also to increase the effective use of data, and cites the importance of working on integration at the school level, at the intermediary level, and at the systemic level as necessary for any successful initiative.

- In Houston, TX, **Neighborhood Center, Inc. utilizes an "outside-in" approach, focusing** on comprehensive neighborhood revitalization to support success for students, families and neighborhoods. From its capacity-building efforts, it offers the following lessons regarding what's needed: (1) To revitalize neighborhoods, work with neighborhoods: ask what's right. Identify strengths. (2) Neighborhood revitalization can't be accomplished by just one organization: a focused and coordinated effort is needed. (3) Participation is needed at the leadership level of organizations and agencies. (*4) S*omeone needs to take charge and drive change. (5) The initiative needs to be data driven.

- In Virginia, **Richmond Public Schools (RPS)**, the city of Richmond and the community have come together to focus on assuring children arrive at school re*ady* to learn. Community leaders focus on the transition from early learning (0-3) to PreK-3rd grade. The Richmond team has identified 7 core capacities needed to support these transitions: programs to facilitate transition to public school; complementary standards, assessments and expectations; a governance structure and community partnerships that encourage agencies to work together; communication and common definitions; data collection systems; professional development and high teacher and administrator quality – both within childcare and public schools; and aligned funding that supports a smooth continuum of comprehensive services.

Discussion Highlights

While some of the participating communities and organizations focus primarily on changes inside the school system (including bringing health and other services into the school setting), others start with a focus on broader neighborhood and community change. Ultimately, a combined approach likely will provide the best opportunity for sustained improvements for students and communities.

In their discussions, participants stressed the importance of working toward systemic change, with several noting the strategy of building on "pockets of excellence" to develop "systems of excellence." The need for leadership, shared vision and results, flexibility and innovation, capacity-building inside of schools, community engagement, and data-driven monitoring and improvement were also consistently cited throughout the discussion.

The role of "intermediaries" was also highlighted; that is, organizations that provide technical assistance to help schools and communities make necessary systems level changes. As described by the Coalition for Community Schools (CCS), intermediaries can assist with development of results frameworks, data and evaluation capacity, aligning resources, policy development, financing strategies, professional

development, and community engagement. While it is possible for each community to develop these capacities on its own, intermediary organizations can assist with spread and scaling of effective systems change across multiple organizations/agencies, systems, and communities.

Guiding Principles for Building and Using Core Capacities

Guiding principles and core capacities go hand-in-hand: guiding principles provide the foundation and direction for using core capacities to effect change. While participants each described their own approaches and experiences, it is clear that a similar set of guiding principles has been embraced across communities and programs represented at the meeting, including the following:

- *Focus on results/outcomes for children*.
- *Recognize that schools can't do it alone* – schools need to partner with other services and organizations, and with the broader community.
- *Focus on systems change* – build on "pockets of success" to develop a community-wide "system of success."
- *Recognize that internal school capacity-building is essential to successful systems change*.
- *Integrate or align services vertically* – that is, within sectors (i.e., early childhood, education, health, justice, housing and urban development).
- *Integrate or align horizontally* – that is, across sectors.
- *Embrace flexibility, innovation and risk*.
- *Transition from a focus on filling gaps to a focus on systems working together to free up and align resources for services*

Core Capacities

There is remarkable consistency in the core capacities participants identified as necessary to develop and sustain successful, integrated, place-based initiatives to revitalize schools and communities. Nine core capacities were highlighted in the discussion:

- *Shared results framework* – to keep the focus on children's outcomes and to develop shared ownership of those outcomes
- *Leadership* – to drive and embrace change.
- *Strategic partnerships* – including partnerships with the business community, health and other service systems, community-based organizations, neighborhood residents, and more.
- *Active engagement of community residents* – through community forums and other activities.
- *Clear, accountable governance structure for joint decision-making* – in the form of school community councils, mayor's task forces, children's cabinets, etc.
- *Joint strategic planning* – to align activities and better reach shared outcomes.
- *Shared data and analytic capacity* – to identify need, track change and adjust strategies for improved outcomes.
- *Management to outcomes* – to help all partners become more successful. This requires enhanced data capacity and sharing.
- *Allocation of financial resources to a shared results framework and established priorities* – to assure that funding is aligned with results.

Resourcing Core Capacities

There was general agreement that core capacities such as those listed above need to be resourced, and that often funding for building and sustaining this kind of cross-sector capacity is not readily available. It was noted that while it may be more difficult to "make the case" for cross-sector or multi-sector capacity building, it is possible to develop metrics around this kind of capacity, using a quality improvement model that links capacity for collaboration and integration to improvements for children. This is an approach that the Children's Aid Society's National Center for Community Schools has used successfully to obtain funding from private foundations in support of capacity-building for community schools.

With regard to core capacities, two sets of funding needs emerged from discussions:

- For communities that have not yet developed or demonstrated core capacities for multi-sector, integrated, place-based initiatives, there is a need for capacity-building resources – i.e., funding and technical assistance – to develop those capacities.

- For communities that have demonstrated capacity for integrated, multi-sector work, there is a need for continued funding to sustain strategic partnerships, governance structure, community engagement, shared data, etc. Equally important, these communities want flexible program funding that allows them to braid resources in order to best meet local needs. These communities want to be held accountable for outcomes, but want the flexibility to continue to innovate and develop community-specific approaches to reaching agreed upon outcomes.

III. *How can federal policies and programs better facilitate efforts to improve outcomes for children and to link to broader neighborhood revitalization efforts?*

Guiding Principles

In their written response, Kalamazoo Public Schools and the *Kalamazoo Promise* summed up the kind of guiding principles needed at the federal level to better facilitate integrated, place-based efforts to improve outcomes for children and communities:[8]

- Understand that large-scale social change requires cross-sector coordination and a collective approach to improving outcomes for student achievement and family support.
- Acknowledge that the process for large-scale social change is complex, long-term, messy, and requires leadership at all levels of the community.
- See that the federal system (and most others) is set up to be "project-driven" and has worked primarily toward isolated results.
- Create and sustain a process for collective funding and long-term investment that is based upon accountability, common agendas and goals, common outcomes, community leadership and cross sector collaboration.
- Accept innovations for problems that do not yet have a solution but where communities accept accountability and progress reporting toward those solutions.

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[8] This list draws on the work of John Kania and Mark Kramer in their article "Collective Impact", published in the *Stanford Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

- Take a leadership role in removing regulatory barriers that impair the ability to have a collective impact.

Meeting participants added to this list during the discussion, making the following suggestions for federal agencies:

- Shift from a focus on process (compliance) to outcomes.
- Shift to a systems framework, away from a focus primarily on individual programs.
- See schools as places where there is an opportunity to bring multiple systems together to improve child outcomes.
- Balance innovation, evidence and results, and reward what works.
- Move to a focus on capacity-building for collective impact.
- Incentivize and reward collaborative planning and action.
- Ensure that resources and regulations have the flexibility to meet needs in varying contexts, and particularly in high poverty districts/communities.
- Work toward horizontal alignment across agencies – remove silos at the federal level.
- Work toward seamless alignment of policies and programs throughout a child's/young person's development, with particular attention paid to transition points i.e., from 0-3 to PK to K-12 to college/career.
- Assure that state interpretations of federal policies are consistent and accurate.
- Continue to refine the understanding of what place-based initiatives look like, recognizing that this work will vary in different community contexts.

Specific Recommendations for a More Supportive Federal Role

In addition to the more general guiding principles, participants also provided recommendations for specific actions to be taken at the federal level. This list can be seen as a starting point for moving from NRI theory to practice:

- *To incentivize collective planning and action and to build core capacities in communities:*
    - In grant application reviews give additional points, or a competitive priority, to communities that can document shared planning, a shared results framework, and other core capacities needed for successful collective impact.
    - In grant guidance, require cross-agency/cross-system collaboration.
    - Provide funding for technical assistance from intermediaries for capacity-building.
    - Provide funding to develop an active community/resident voice.
    - Pool resources across federal agencies for cross-sector capacity building at the local level.

- *To improve outcomes through shared data and analytic capacity:*
    - Re-design restrictions on FERPA/HIPPA with the goal of creating integrated data systems that promote student success without compromising student/family privacy.

- *To promote savings and more effective use of resources:*
  - Allow communities to redirect savings – from Title I, Title II, etc. – to under-resourced school and district improvement strategies[9].
  - Review compliance reporting requirements with an eye toward dramatically reducing the number of requirements and focusing primarily on elements that are actually being used to track and improve success.

- *To better support cross-sector, innovative solutions to complex problems:*
  - Develop a pooled, "federal innovation fund" that leverages best practices identified across multiple federal agencies.

- *For schools and communities with a proven track record:*
  - Develop a grant structure that allows communities/school districts to submit their integrated plans for approval, and once approved, to receive funding that allows flexibility in use of funds, but holds grantees accountable for agreed upon outcomes. Renewed or continued block grant funding would be contingent upon progress in achieving results.

- *For high poverty communities – those with the greatest needs:*
  - Develop a portfolio of federal funding opportunities that help communities move along a continuum – from less capacity to greater capacity for innovative, integrated, place-based work.
  - Change Title I eligibility requirements so that high poverty districts are eligible district-wide.

- *For low-achieving schools in high-poverty communities:*
  - Work with communities and programs across the country to develop a shared understanding of what capacities are needed for highly effective schools and then incentivize toward those capacities, through weighted formulas, grant guidance, etc.

- *To promote success – and smooth transitions – from cradle to career:*
  - Develop and strengthen systemic links at the federal level between HHS and Education (as well as other agencies), with attention to linkages across programs and services such as primary care, Home Visiting, Child Welfare, Early Head Start, Head Start, K12, school-based health centers and post-secondary education and training.
  - Work with states and communities to map out how these links can be strengthened at the community level.

- *To assure consistent and accurate interpretation of federal rules and regulations across states:*
  - Provide training and technical assistance to state agencies regarding interpretation of federal policies, regulations, and guidelines.
  - Develop and widely disseminate "myth busters" documents to clarify interpretations of federal rules, regulations, and guidance for states and communities.

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[9] Schools/school districts can save Title I funds, for example, by connecting students to quality afterschool programs run by privately financed organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, thereby reducing the total number of students needing afterschool programs funded through Title I.

- *To move the federal focus from process (and compliance) to outcomes*
    - Work with states and communities to reduce the number of process measures and to develop a common set of outcome metrics (for child, family and community well-being) across federal agencies – including a set of required metrics and a menu of promising metrics. In moving to an outcomes orientation, federal agencies can still include accountability requirements for appropriate expenditures of funds; for example, through caps on overhead.

CONCLUSION

The Listening Session provided much food for thought for participating communities and programs as well as for federal partners. Participants welcomed the opportunity for dialogue, for sharing assessments of barriers and opportunities, and for collective thinking on how best to move forward to revitalize schools and communities. Next steps for the NRI include holding parallel sessions focused on community perspectives related to housing, health and human services, and justice; and the development of a policy brief based on funding and recommendations across the meetings.

APPENDIX A

Center for the Study of Social Policy

The Integration of High Quality Academic Programs and Supportive Health and Social Services:
A Listening Session

Tuesday, February 1, 2011
9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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