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# Community Schools in North Carolina

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# Foreword

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In a 2005 article titled *Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform*, (Harvard Educational Review, 75: 2) Mark Warren emphasized the link between school reform and the revitalization of the communities around them. But since the 1960's, community organizations have focused more on housing, safety, and economic development, and less on the educational sphere. Involvement in the school by the community in general, and by the parents in particular, has become less prevalent. Some would suggest that isolation of the school from the community leads to a multitude of negative consequences.

On the other hand, there are many benefits to be found in increasing community involvement in the educational process. Socially, children with community support come to school better motivated toward learning. Financially, community groups are more likely to assist the school if they are more closely involved in its daily activities. And, as an extended family, the community and the educational administration and faculty are more openly accountable to each other. There is a popular African (Kijita or Wajita) proverb that translates "Regardless of a child's parents, its upbringing belongs to the community." Perhaps this is too simplified, as guidance from both the parent and "the village" are important; but without any community involvement, some very necessary factors are missing.

It is to be hoped that there will be a reevaluation of interest in certain programs and experiences that can be shared between school and community. It may not be possible in every case, but where feasible, local school administrators are encouraged to consider such an integration.



Howard N. Lee, Chair  
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## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

The construction and furnishing of a school is an expensive undertaking. There are two ways in which one might “soften the blow” felt by the local board of education and community – utilize the facility for more than public education, or bring in funds from other sources to offset costs of construction and/or maintenance. These can combine into the concept of the “Community School.”

First, let us differentiate between (a) “neighborhood school” or “walkable school,” and (b) “community school.” The former terms address a trait that is mainly a function of geography and urban density; the latter term manifests primarily as a result of a legal / financial agreement between parties, and occurs when community groups are allowed to utilize school facilities. In North Carolina, due to existing characteristics of density and population distribution, it is unusual to find a school to which a majority of the students can walk.<sup>1</sup> The term “community school” will be defined as a school in which other functions besides K-12 education are served (before, during, and after school hours throughout the year) to the benefit both of the community at large and also of the student body.

### I. PURPOSE AND LEGAL FOUNDATION

In 1977, the legislature passed the Community Schools Act (Section 115C-203 through 209.1 of N.C. Law) with the purpose “to encourage greater community involvement in the public schools and greater community use of public school facilities.” The Act permitted (but did not mandate) the creation of “Community Schools Advisory Councils,” comprised of concerned citizens, and the employment of a “Community Schools Coordinator” by the local Board of Education, “to direct maximum use of the public schools and public school facilities as centers for community development.” Also, the Act encouraged "increased community involvement in the public schools and use of public school facilities" through recommending provisions for:

- (1) "The use of public school facilities by governmental, charitable or civic organizations for activities within the community.
- (2) The utilization of the talents and abilities of volunteers within the community for the enhancement of public school programs including tutoring, counseling and cultural programs and projects.
- (3) Increased communications between the staff and faculty of the public schools, other community institutions and agencies, and citizens in the community."

However, state funding for this endeavor was terminated in 1995, and subsequent activity has had to be promoted and funded at the local level.

### II. POSSIBLE SYNERGY

In each “neighborhood,” there may be organizations or groups outside the school which could benefit from association with the school, and likewise bring increased opportunity to the students by joint use of space at appropriate times. Naturally, each Local Education Authority (LEA) will have different opportunities; some possible synergetic alliances are the following:

Public Library	-Increase size of school's collection to serve community
Parks & Rec	-Joint use of play fields, parking, gymnasium, running trails, etc. Possibility of providing more extensive athletic facilities than could be provided by school only.
Health Dept	-Community clinic and School Nurse
Services for the Aging	-Senior Daycare; Meals on Wheels; Tutoring; "Special Grandparents"
City/County Governmental Agencies & Quasi-governmental agency	-Example: Board of Elections; VISTA; any new construction which could share costs of roads, sewer, water service, etc.
Civic Groups	-Example: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts; nonprofits; neighborhood associations
Church	-Example: Fellowship of Christian Athletics; Church services, shared parking on weekend.
Community College or University	-Courses taught for college credit
Industry	-Vocational courses relevant to local job market w/ private funding.

Funding for school construction by bond sales or by increased property taxation has sometimes faced opposition from citizens who have no school-age children. Perhaps this resistance could be ameliorated if the planned school facility were to offer specific benefits to these voters as well, as suggested above.

In order to assess the extent of current implementation of this concept, and to gauge the potential for expanding its utilization, a survey was developed and transmitted to the superintendents of all 115 LEAs. Responses were received from 49 of the LEAs (42.6% response rate) and the results are tabulated herein (See Appendix). All respondents reported that they permit community groups to utilize school facilities outside school hours, while only 15 LEAs (31%) allowed such usage during school hours. Highest usage was reported for Civic Groups (47 LEAs or 96% of respondents), for Church Groups (45 LEAs or 92%), and for Departments of Parks and Recreation (44 LEAs or 90%). Lowest usage rates were reported for Public Libraries (12 LEAs or 24% of respondents) and for Services for the Aging (17 LEAs or 35%). Only about half the LEAs (26) reported use by local Health Departments. These latter three categories of community groups deserve increased opportunity for interaction within the schools.

Public library / school media center seems at first to be an ideal combination, but potential problems do exist (see section IV, below). Benefits will outweigh the costs, however, in that the type of adults using the library or computer facilities are those with the most positive influence on the students – those adults who are literate or who want to be. Perhaps the positive influence of adults in the lives of the students is more beneficial than is the concurrent monetary additions to the school budget. We can imagine groups sponsored by Services for the Aging having the opportunity to interact with school classes: for example, a barbershop quartet or "Sweet Adelines" working with the school's vocal music programs; an adult painters group mentoring members of the school's art classes; even retired individuals reading with children or acting as teaching assistants. Further, especially in areas where the child's access to healthcare is limited, shared facilities with Health Departments or other health care entities would seem especially advantageous.

### III. EXAMPLES; SUCCESS STORIES

The concept of the “Community School” is not a new one, nor is it limited to any specific part of the state. For example, a publication by the School Planning section, Department of Public Instruction, entitled “Making Current Trends in School Design Feasible” (November 2000) (available at [www.schoolclearinghouse.org](http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org)) lists several successful applications of this process, including a shared media center / public library / computer lab at Pamlico County High School, Lake Rim Elementary School & Recreation Center, and several others.

Anecdotal evidence from the survey discussed in Section II, above, reveal more of the same type of relationships. In one LEA, when renovating an old high school building for use as an elementary school, the county recreation department paid for a new wood floor in the gymnasium in exchange for the opportunity to use the gymnasium in the future. In another LEA, a memorandum of understanding exists between the County Parks and Recreation Department and the Board of Education, under which elementary school gymnasiums were enlarged and provided with hardwood floors, and ballfields with lights were constructed, for joint use by the school and community. In another example, the school board and the city are jointly remodeling the local high school auditorium. Another county school board collaborated with the local child development agency for an addition to an elementary school; the agency needed a classroom to serve pre-school handicapped children. The rent for the classroom paid by the agency was set to cover debt service and utilities for that classroom.

Most of the respondents (80%) report a formal agreement with community groups to reimburse the school for maintenance costs, utilities, etc. arising from community use. Some LEAs report an informal understanding about reimbursement, and some have both formal and informal agreements.

Only six of the survey respondents (12%) indicated that they had negotiated with a community group (prior to or during design or construction of a school) for the group to share in the *construction* costs of the part of the facility to be jointly used. This is an opportunity lost; it should be aggressively pursued. In fact, 27 of the respondents (55%) indicated that they were willing to consider such an arrangement, given appropriate legal agreement.

Many examples exist for schools designed and constructed, from the beginning, to be centers of the community. One such facility, recently in the architectural news, is P.S. 156 / I.S. 293 in Brooklyn, New York – a combination of 900 K-6 students and 200 gifted seventh and eighth graders. “Doubling as a community resource center, the building is utilized by most of the local families for performances, sports, and social and educational events.”<sup>2</sup> It is even claimed that “the school has increased property values and encouraged parents to move into the community.”<sup>3</sup> There are many other examples which demonstrate that appropriate school-community interaction is beneficial both to the school and to the community.



*Photo 1: A school media center/community library in joint use after school hours. Some computers (foreground) are designated for community patrons; to the left (background) are computers reserved for students.*

#### IV. POTENTIAL PITFALLS

The formulation of the legal agreement is the most important factor and has the most serious potential for causing failure of community groups' involvement in school operation, construction or renovation. The agreement can be contemplated as a combination pre-nuptial agreement, marriage contract, and divorce agreement; it should cover all three stages of the relationship. A few of the specific topics for concern are...

- Division of costs of construction, operation, repair, maintenance, and replacement
- Responsibility for costs of salary, daily expenses, etc
- Schedule of use; time share; priority of use if not scheduled
- Responsibility for daily operation – open up, lock up, security, etc
- Insurance issues; payment of premiums and receipt of benefits if a loss occurs
- How will additional funds be obtained in case of unforeseen occurrences
- How to amend the agreement
- Division of assets upon termination of the agreement

Another potential problem may be found in the staffing of the facility, where both school personnel and community agency personnel are found. In the Library / Media Center, it is not uncommon for school media personnel to be paid at a different scale than are county library personnel. Could this potentially create a personal conflict? How will such a conflict be resolved? Naturally there is always the possibility for personality clashes in any work environment; resolution of such a situation is a necessary part of the agreement between the school and the community agency.

As in any situation where adults and children interact, the main strength and characteristic of this position (of community involvement) is also its greatest potential for catastrophe.

Liability can never be overlooked. Adult usage of any school facility, while students are in the facility, is naturally a cause for concern and requires careful planning and strict, on-going control. It is *not* a difficult problem at all to design exterior and interior circulation patterns such that adult users and students do not come into contact. It is *not* difficult to design building (and programs) so that any desired contact is tightly controlled and subject to adequate oversight and supervision. As with most other endeavors, the sooner one decides to incorporate this cross-functionality, the easier will be the implementation... and, most likely, the cost will be smaller with earlier decision making.

That there will be costs associated with this duality of usage is not denied. However, the total cost to the school and to the community agency will be less than the sum of the individual costs if each had provided facilities independent of the other.

Specific policies of the local Board of Education will also impact this concept. For example, busing to obtain diversity and equity may cause students to be drawn from a distant community, making parental involvement more difficult, especially for families with limited resources. Local assets should be provided to overcome this drawback.



*Photo 2: A community center (left) owned by the county Parks and Recreation Department, connects to an elementary school (right). There is a shared gymnasium. The community center provides before-school, after-school, and track-out programs.*

## V. AGREEMENTS (Legal / Financial)

As stated elsewhere in this article, it is most important to have an appropriate legal agreement in place, to clearly define the duties and responsibilities of each of the involved parties. This agreement should be drawn at the local level, so that the concerns of all participants may be addressed. There is no "model" agreement prepared at the state level, at this time. Both the purpose and the time-frame of use would impact the details of the agreement.

Preconstruction: A new facility, still in the design phase, has maximum flexibility in accommodating community functions within the school. This is the ideal time to consider and properly prepare for such community use. Patterns of circulation can be arranged as necessary to provide for the appropriate separation or mixing of student body and community participants.

-Existing Facility: Do not forego the incorporation of community services and participations into a school just because the building is already in use. Although there are obvious advantages in designing such a facility "from scratch," only minor modifications might be required to make community involvement possible in your existing structure.

Written legal and financial agreements are necessary in any case. Some situations might include the following...

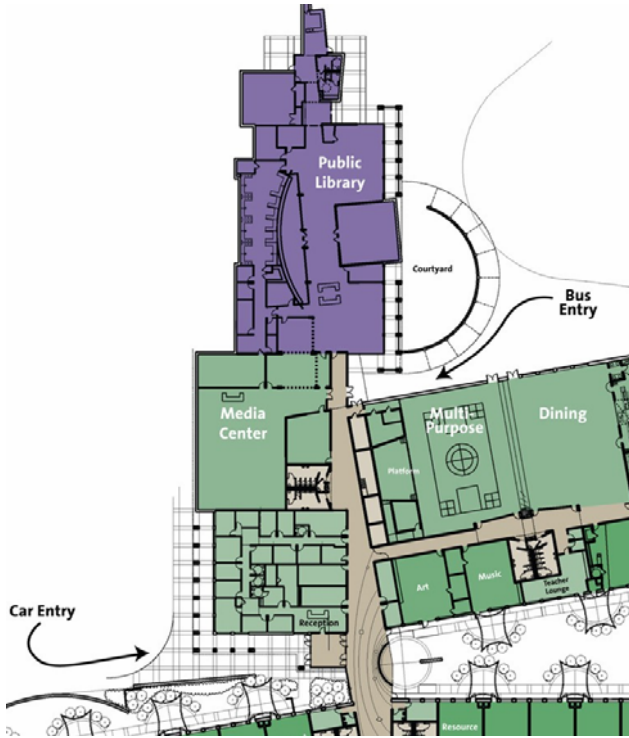
Special purpose: space within the campus is designed solely for use by the community function. (This does not imply that the space can be used for no other purpose, later. For example, a classroom may be designed for an after-school day care program, but it could be easily converted for school use when no longer needed for the community program.) One possible provision of this type of agreement might be that the community group would pay the cost of debt service, maintenance, utilities, and insurance of the (prorated) area used by their program.

Shared purpose: a space is used at designated times by the community group, and at designated times by the school. It is critical that any agreement specify the division of opportunity, and the division of responsibility, which the parties share. For example, a parking lot may be used totally by the school on weekdays and Saturday, but available totally for an adjacent church on Sunday. Agreement of the equitable sharing of risk (i.e. in case of a traffic accident) is important.

Joint usage: the space may be subject to use by the community and the school simultaneously, or in closely-coordinated alternating schedules. For example, a joint-use library may be used by the school from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. and open to the community from 3 p.m. until 10 p.m. Or there may be the possibility, under certain restrictions, for community use during school hours. Many factors impact on such a decision, not the least of which is the grade-level of the school. A joint-use agreement must clearly and completely address the safety of the students.

Lease agreements (Long Term or Short Term): Leases can be used to formalize any of the above arrangements, and others not designated. For example, certain athletic facilities might be "joint use" with the Community Parks and Recreation Department during the school term, and leased to Parks and Rec during the summer.

See the section on "Potential Pitfalls" above, for a suggestion of some of the items to be addressed in legal and financial agreements.



*Western Elementary School in Cumberland County is being constructed with a public library attached (plan; left). The school media center is a separate entity. During the hours of operation of the public library, student traffic is allowed only with teacher supervision. The public facility shares parking and utilities on the school site, and makes it possible to offer this amenity more cost effectively, as well as to encourage community use of both facilities.*

*Plan courtesy of SFL+a Architects,*



*Photo 3: Brier Creek Community Center (left) shares the gymnasium (right) of Brier Creek Elementary School. There is a Joint Use Agreement between the Wake County board of education and the Raleigh parks and recreation department.*



*Photo 4: The community center also uses the cafeteria (far left) for an after-school program from 4:30 to 6:30. Playgrounds, adjacent, are also used jointly. And the gymnasium (at the rear in this photo) is used for church services on Sunday mornings.*

"Daily/Hourly" rental -- Most LEAs have policy concerning use of buildings and facilities for civic, cultural, educational, recreational, and other such activities on a per-day or per-hour basis. That usage is outside the scope of this document.

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Preparation for Disaster Relief: In some locales in the state, schools could be planned and constructed to serve functions of disaster mitigation. For example, a high school in Brunswick County, which recently received extensive renovations and additions, included areas planned in conjunction with local Red Cross officials to serve as a hurricane shelter. In certain areas, windows were specifically designed to resist impact of wind-driven debris, storage areas were provided to receive emergency supplies, and facilities for receiving a mobile generator were planned. In designated offices, additional communication lines were provided, coiled above the ceiling grid, ready for use.

On a larger scale, an elementary school in Onslow County was designed with its Multipurpose Room and Kitchen/Cafeteria in a separate building to facilitate community use and to function as an emergency shelter. The area also housed the Art Classroom, Music Classroom, and toilets. An alternate bid was prepared to enlarge the toilets and to construct separate shower rooms, and a mezzanine for storage of emergency supplies. The building was "hardened" to withstand 200 mph winds. Provisions were made to utilize all spaces as evacuee housing, or as office facilities for the county's emergency staff. The additional costs identified through the alternate bid were to be covered through FEMA, but extensive hurricane activity that year utilized all available federal funding, resulting in the deletion of those emergency features not directly related to the education program. However, a similar venture could be investigated in the future. There are several agencies at the State and Federal level which could utilize school facilities beyond the normal "school day," and which might have funding available for construction costs.

Community shelters to be used during a storm event should be designed and constructed to meet appropriate guidelines; see, for example, FEMA Design Guide 424.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In the absence of the concept of community involvement in schools, the site property line has historically been viewed as a strong (even impenetrable) boundary between "school" and "community." The need to make this boundary porous rather than impermeable can lead to no small degree of concern among educators, administrators, and even law enforcement agencies. In fact, studies are currently underway in the NC Department of Public Instruction to increase the security of school building and school sites against acts of terrorism and other forms of violence. Obviously, the need to ensure the safety of the students and staff takes precedence over the desire of the community to utilize school facilities. However, that is not to suggest that these two goals are mutually exclusive. Adequate planning, early in the design process, is imperative for successful implementation of both.

We can think of this implementation from two viewpoints: from the boundary or edge of the site or the building, inwardly; and from the edge of the site, outwardly into the community.

“Inward” – this viewpoint focuses on the physical aspects of site and building design: control of access to the site, vehicular circulation within the site, juxtaposition of parking areas to appropriate building or sports areas, placement of sidewalks and lobbies and building corridors to control unwanted contact between students and adult users (while facilitating whatever contact is deemed advantageous), location of restrooms for dual service where appropriate, and placement of doors and other security barriers to control access after school hours. Nomenclature notwithstanding, this viewpoint sometimes extends beyond the school site, to consider access roadways, turn lanes, traffic control, etc. as required by local circumstances.

“Outward” – this viewpoint is more philosophical than physical. It requires that connections be made between educational administrators and community leaders *before* needs arise or opportunities present themselves. All parties need to be aware that the others are willing to participate in synergetic relationships for the construction, renovation, and utilization of school facilities. Networking, either informally or through formal organizations (e.g. service clubs, social organizations) provide opportunities for educators to learn of community needs for facilities, and for community leaders to learn of construction plans at schools. The earlier these opportunities are identified, the easier it will be to avoid potential pitfalls.

There is motivation for communities to increase involvement in utilization of school facilities:

- Increased opportunity for education and training leads to increased employment
- Increased social amenities leads to more interaction within the community
- Increased community interaction leads to reduced crime and vandalism
- Increased employment, increased social interaction, and reduced crime and vandalism leads to increased property values, more individual and corporate interest in revitalization, and a “better” environment overall.

Even discounting the financial benefits of community use of schools, this relationship should be seen as imperative for the continued success of both the education process and the life of the community.

Additional resources are listed at the website for Children's Aid Society / Center for Community Schools: <http://www.childrengroups.org/communityschools/resources>.

## VII. RECENT LEGISLATION

One component of the No Child Left Behind Act is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program (21stCCLC). Congress appropriated \$991 million for these after-school programs in 2005, the focus of which is “to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low performing schools.” Additionally,



## CASE STUDY

*JACKSONVILLE COMMONS (Facing Page) is a large-scale project developed as a joint venture among the Architect (Smith Sinnett Architecture, Raleigh, NC), Onslow County, the city of Jacksonville, and the Onslow County Board of Education.*

*The project originated with the need for a site for a new elementary/middle school, and the city's need for a new recreation center. After a successful \$42 Million bond issue, the Architect facilitated an agreement between the county Board of Education and the city of Jacksonville to share land costs and development costs. An agreement also included separate negotiations with a local developer to donate 74 acres of land to the project. The project, totaling 219 acres, contains the following:*

*[1] A 750-student elementary school, completed in 1996, at a cost of \$6.6 Million for 70,000 square feet. This building "drove" the construction of roadways, and water and sewer service. The school board paid for the sewer piping sufficient for the project needs; the city of Jacksonville and the developer provided funds to upsize the service to provide greater capacity.*

*[2] Jacksonville Recreation and Senior Center, completed in 1996, at a cost of \$3 Million for 28,000 square feet. The initial cost estimates, before savings attributed to sharing utility infrastructure with the school, was \$5,600,000.00.*

*[3] A 650-student middle school, completed in 1998, at a cost of \$8.5 Million for 101,500 square feet.*

*[4] Onslow County Emergency Operations Center, completed in 1999, at a cost of \$1.4 Million for 10,648 square feet. This building was sited so that guy wires for its communication tower extend over wetlands, which would be otherwise unusable.*

*[5] A 800-student high school with core capacity for 1200 students was constructed at a cost of \$19.2 Million for 178,000 square feet.*

*The schools and the city recreation facilities share access to softball and baseball fields, basketball courts, soccer fields, and over 1,400 parking spaces. The City used federal Powell Bill funds (rather than local property tax revenue) to construct 2 ½ miles of roadways. The developer who donated land gained road access to property at the rear of this site, and access to municipal water and sewer service, for a development of 700 acres and 2000 families. In addition, the public now enjoys access to this significant recreational facility, and public services – emergency operations, fire, and rescue – have an easily accessed and appropriate new location.*

*Site Plan courtesy of Smith Sinnett Architecture*

the programs provide “youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology

education programs, art, music and recreation programs, counseling and character education to enhance the academic component of the program.”<sup>4</sup>

In May 2007, legislation – the Full Service Community Schools Act -- was introduced jointly in the Senate (S. 1391 by Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb.) and the House (H.R. 2323 by Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Maryland), that would allow the awarding of grants in support of a public elementary or secondary school that “participates in a community-based effort to coordinate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and ... provides access to such services to students, families, and the community.”<sup>5</sup> An authorization of \$200 million would be divided as follows:

- 75% toward partnerships of local school districts and one or more community-based organizations, nonprofits or other public/private entities
- 20% toward partnerships of state education agencies and at least two other state agencies or nonprofit organizations, to plan, coordinate, and expand community schools, and
- 5% toward technical assistance and evaluation.

A recent check of governmental websites indicates the most recent action on the bill has been referral to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on May 15, 2007,<sup>6</sup> and to the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education on July 17, 2007.<sup>7</sup> Subsequent action, if any, is unknown.

#### VIII. NON-FINANCIAL BENEFITS<sup>8</sup>

Is there a reluctance to perceive the value of education, by some students? Discipline problems, disruption, absence, vandalism -- in fact, many of the negative circumstances faced by teachers daily might be traced to (some) students’ low regard for education. School buildings and programs that serve the surrounding community may help students see the value of their school campus and of opportunities to interact within the community, and serve to lessen socialization problems that might otherwise be manifest.

By drawing adults into the school building, increasing the opportunity for positive role models to be visible to the students, and demonstrating to the students that adults value the services available through a community-involved school, it is hoped that students’ positive perception of education will be enhanced.

Schools used to be, if not the center of the community, at least a significant part of it. As schools grew in size, they shrank away from the other elements of society. “Consolidation” became the panacea for all perceived shortcomings; schools became larger and larger, with ever greater student population. Larger enrollment demanded larger sites, which were available only in the suburbs or rural areas. Displacing schools away from population centers (in search of larger sites) demanded bus transportation, which emphasized the separation between the school and the home. This separation, both real (physical) and perceived, lessened the opportunity for involvement by parents or other adults in the educational process. Many studies have professed that large schools

are not in the best educational interest of the students. Without taking the position that community involvement in schools will of itself solve those negative characteristics (i.e. feelings of isolationism in huge schools), we do hold that facilitating community involvement in the school should be one determinant of the school size and location.

On the other hand, there are still many schools that are located in neighborhoods, in towns, and in cities where community participation can be more easily enhanced (than is possible in the mega-schools on rural mega-sites). Large consolidated schools face the same problems as do in-town schools, plus the logistical impediment of transporting parents and community groups to the school facility. Therefore, urban and “semi-urban” schools have a head start over rural or suburban consolidated schools in implementing the tenants of community participation in schools.

When parents and community members engage themselves in the life of the school, they support the process of teaching as well as strengthen the environment conducive to learning. Family and community involvement will

- Reinforce the social context of education so that children come to school more willing to learn
- Transform the culture of schools to better reflect the society around the school
- Build a political constituency that shows support for public education and emphasizes to educators their responsibility for ongoing improvements
- Lead to parental cooperation with (and confidence in) teachers, rather than confrontation
- Increase student achievement (i.e. homework completion) and reduce behavior problems
- Demonstrate to educators that parents specifically, and the adult community at large, are proactive participants in the education process.<sup>9</sup>

The goal is to create a culture where both the parent and the student recognize the value of education in general, and appreciate the advantages to the specific individual who obtains or furthers his/her education.

On the national level, one exemplary school which serves as a center of community is the John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota. The American Architectural Foundation and KnowledgeWorks Foundation have created a video and discussion guide (see [www.archfoundation.org/aaf/aaf/News.15.htm](http://www.archfoundation.org/aaf/aaf/News.15.htm).) spotlighting this school as a means to engage citizens in “a constructive, meaningful dialogue on the importance of good school design and the ways 21<sup>st</sup> century schools can become centers of their communities.”<sup>10</sup> John A. Johnson was a dilapidated and abandoned building in a decaying neighborhood beset by crime, drug use, and economic deterioration, where students were forced to travel significant distance to attend school. In the mid-nineties, the community began a long-term revitalization effort, coinciding with a city-wide school improvement strategy called Achievement Plus. The strategy had two goals:

- to improve the educational context for students by supplementing their core curriculum with social services, extended learning, and family support, and
- to transform the school itself so that it would draw members of the community through an array of services, programs and enrichment opportunities.

To facilitate these goals, Johnson shares its site with a YMCA that provides programs to community members of all ages. It is reported that “test scores have improved significantly. And a formerly loose coalition of neighborhood service providers now has a focus, a growing constituency, and a home.”<sup>11</sup>

We must accept that *school* is a significant part of *society*, and understand that by bringing various elements of the society back into the school (again), we enhance not only a symbiotic financial relationship, but also a cultural permeability that would be otherwise unobtainable.

Let us re-examine the “Pedagogic Creed” of the famous educator John Dewey, who said (in 1897) that...

the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the [human] race, and to use his own powers for social ends.<sup>12</sup>

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In FY 2003-04, approximately 54.7 percent of total public school average daily attendance was transported to school via bus. (Source: DPI website [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) “Statistical Profile” page 64.) The percentage transported by cars is unknown; the percentage of those who live close enough to have walked to school is likewise unknown. However, it is safe to assume that well over half of the pupils could not walk to school.

<sup>2</sup> Architectural Record Review: K-12 Schools; Lessons Learned from Three Neighborhood Schools. McGraw-Hill Companies. April 2006. pg. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pg. 24.

<sup>4</sup> From [www.ed.gov/print/programs/21stcclc/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/print/programs/21stcclc/index.html), last visited on February 10, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> From <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-2323>, last visited on May 14, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> From <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-1391>, last visited on May 14, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> From <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-2323>, last visited on May 14, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> The term “Non-Financial Benefits” in this context is meant to entail all benefits that do not increase the financial position of the school... that is, benefits excluding money for maintenance, money for construction, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from “Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform,” by Mark R. Warren. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 75, No. 2, Summer 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Schools as Centers of Community, Discussion Guide. American Architectural Foundation and KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Washington, DC, Undated. Page ii.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pg 12.

<sup>12</sup> From “The Informal Education Archives,” [www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm](http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm), “My Pedagogic Creed.” Visited March 29, 2006.

School Planning Section  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

## Appendix

### Responses to the Survey

#### “Community Use of School Facilities”

This survey was distributed to the Superintendents of all 115 LEAs on March 13, 2006, and the responses were tabulated on March 31, 2006. The tabulation follows.

**Community Use of School Facilities  
Survey**

March 31, 2006

49 LEAs Responded, out of 115  
42.6% Response Rate

	<u># "YES"</u>	<u>% "YES"</u>
1 Do you permit community groups to utilize school facilities " <u>outside</u> " school hours?	49	100%
2 Do you permit community groups to utilize school facilities " <u>during</u> " school hours?	15	31%
3 Do you have a <u>formal arrangement</u> with a community group to reimburse the school for maintenance costs, etc. arising from such use?	39	80%
4 Do you have an <u>informal understanding</u> with a community group to reimburse the school for maintenance costs, etc. arising from such use?	9	18%
5 Do the fees paid by community users <u>sufficiently reimburse</u> the school system for actual utility, maintenance, and operational costs incurred?	16	33%
If not, please list the approximate percentage of your costs that are reimbursed.	Responses varied from 0% to 90%	
6 Have you negotiated and arranged with a community group (prior to or during design or construction of a school) for the group to <u>share in the construction costs</u> of the part of the facility to be jointly used?	6	12%
7 If the response to question (6) is positive, please provide additional information as applicable.	See text for example of responses to this inquiry.	
8 If the response to question (6) is negative, would you be willing to enter into such an arrangement, given an appropriate legal agreement with the community group(s)?	27	55%
9 Do you have some sort of liability exclusion form, or insurance, for community users?	38	78%

	<u># "YES"</u>	<u>% "YES"</u>
10 What types of groups utilize your facilities? For example.....		
Public Library	12	24%
Services for the Aging	17	35%
Parks and Recreation	44	90%
Health Department	26	53%
Community College	34	69%
City/County Governmental Agencies	38	78%
Church Groups	45	92%
Civic Groups	47	96%
Private Industry	28	57%
Other groups listed:	14	29%

Ex: Dance instruction, Youth Sports Teams, Church Basketball Leagues, Adult Sports Teams, Mental Health Associations, Private Individuals, Homeowners' Associations, Colleges and Universities, including Fraternities & Sororities.