

Analysis of the Joint Use of Public School Facilities

Report to the Legislature



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ANALYSIS OF THE JOINT USE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

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Executive Summary

Assignment

Capital budget bill ESHB 1216 (Chapter 497, 2009 Laws PV), Section 5012 (4) directs OSPI to do the following:

"Convene a definitions work group on the joint use of public school facilities. The work group must report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by January 1, 2010."

The Joint Legislative Task Force on School Construction Funding Recommendation, Status Report, September 1, 2009 stated:

"Remove future funding penalties for school districts that accommodate cooperative partnerships and/or joint uses of public-school facilities. The intent of this recommendation is to eliminate penalties schools currently incur during subsequent calculations of usable space; the intent is not to provide state K-12 capital funding assistance for space constructed for general community purposes. Examples of partners include – but are not limited to – skills centers, youth activity organizations, nonprofit organizations, health clinics, social service providers, and early-learning providers. The product of this work group is expected to 1) provide legislators with clarity about the specific circumstances in which this recommendation can or should apply, 2) curtail potential unintended consequences of insufficiently-specific language in amending RCWs, and 3) guide development of potential legislation in the 2010 session."

Work Group and Engagement

As directed by the legislative proviso, a work group was formed to provide a detailed discussion of what joint use is, respond to questions concerning how joint use is accommodated within the school construction assistance program, respond to other questions pertaining to joint use, offer options to accommodate joint use within existing rules pertaining to the school construction assistance program and to offer alternative ways to accommodate cooperative partnerships and/or joint uses of public school facilities.

Basis of Analysis

In beginning this analysis, it is important to clarify two questions in relationship to the analysis: 1) What is the state's role in funding school facilities in relation to its "paramount duty . . . to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders"? 2) What choices do the local communities have, or what choices should they have in participating in the use of school facilities?

The current School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) is designed to provide construction funding assistance for basic instructional and support space for the process of education to take place. WAC 392-343-019 defines

instructional space as the gross amount of square footage calculated in accordance with the *American Institute of Architects, Document D101, The Architectural Area and Volume of Buildings*, latest edition, for a school facility utilized by a school district for the purpose of instructing students; it excludes areas such as exterior covered walkways, porches, loading platforms, areas located above instructional spaces which are vacant or primarily used to house mechanical equipment, space used by central administrative personnel, grandstands, garages, free-standing warehouse space, portable facilities and other square footage unrelated to direct instruction. The portion(s) of space made as a gift to a school district by a private or public entity which is dedicated by the written terms of the grant or joint use by the school district for educational purposes and by the general public for community activities for the useful life of the space and has been accepted by the school district board of directors, is also excluded.

A recent trend in the educational process explores the concept of “community schools.” This term has a variety of meanings which will be elaborated later in this report. The information in this report is intended to assist the legislature’s understanding of the current and changing relationship of schools and communities and what the state’s role might be.

Findings

➤ Joint Use Agreements

‘Joint Use’ is a negotiated agreement between a district and another public or private entity where facilities, land, utilities, or other common elements are shared between two or more parties on site. Common examples of this are the joint use of fields and gyms by the district and the local Parks and Recreation Department, or the joint use of a multipurpose room by the district and a YMCA after school program. However, joint use is a flexible term and each locality’s concept of it can vary. How joint use is defined or described can have an impact on how a joint use program or facility is funded or administered.

➤ Legislative Activities

Activities concerning the joint use of school facilities indicate that legislators may be seeking ways to expand or incentivize multiple-use of schools outside of the state’s construction assistance program, by making grants available for developing cooperative partnerships for community use of facilities or other methods of promoting community schools.

➤ School Construction Assistance Program

- Within the state’s school construction assistance program, it was found that if the per student space allocation were increased, more school districts in Washington would have additional capacity that could be used for joint use.

- Some provisions are made for not counting spaces on the district's instructional inventory. When this additional space is not counted on the inventory, school districts may have greater capacity in designing schools to accommodate joint use.
 1. WAC 392-343-410 and WAC 392-343-420 concern the removal of instructional space from OSPI's inventory, which, in turn, affects the school district's eligibility for new or modernized space when applying for state funding assistance. Since many spaces on the instructional inventory are being used by other entities (joint use), changing these WAC's to be less restrictive would allow the school district to manage its inventory more efficiently.
 2. WAC 392-343-415 concerns the removal of instructional space that is sold or long-termed leased. A long-termed lease is defined as a lease of 40 years. A lease of 40 years is onerous to many community organizations and it may penalize the district's eligibility for state assistance.
 3. The spaces that have been constructed for educational and community activities from grants received from other public and private entities shall be excluded from the school district's permanent inventory. (RCW28A.525.055)

- Small Elementary and/or K-8 school districts typically require many of the core spaces that larger schools have, such as a library, gymnasium, kitchen, vocational, special education and office space. Assuming that a K-8 school district has 100 students enrolled, it would be eligible for 10,176 square feet under the state's basic formula (88 students x 96 square feet plus 12 special needs students x 144 square feet.) If 25 students were placed in each classroom, 9,600 square feet would be consumed with 576 square feet of eligibility remaining. However, the space needed for special education services would be 1728 square feet (12 students x 144 square feet); therefore, the district would be short 1152 square feet of eligibility. This scenario does not take into consideration that the school would need space for a library, a gymnasium for physical education, kitchen and cafeteria space, office space and vocational education space.
 1. Small Elementary and/or K-8 school districts also serve as the "hub" of its community. These districts serve the needs of the community when space is limited for community functions such as community meetings, adult education, recreational activities and other uses. Larger communities can more readily offer community spaces in addition to what the schools can offer for these functions. The Technical Advisory Committee for OSPI, concerning school organization and facilities, recognizes these needs as critical to the educational process in small school districts.

2. WAC 392-343-035 provides a prescribed space allowance for state funding assistance purposes to districts with senior or four-year high schools with fewer than four hundred students. This space allowance is computed in accordance with a formula that recognizes a maximum state funding assistance percentage area per facility in relationship to the number of students enrolled. Similarly, a small elementary and/or K-8 school district provided with a formula that recognizes a maximum state funding assistance percentage area in relationship to the number of students enrolled, would contribute to the education process for its students.
- Joint use is recognized as a component in the scoring process to achieve WSSP Certification, which is acceptable as meeting the requirements of SB 5509, the Washington State's High Performance Public Buildings Legislation enacted as of July 14, 2005, that requires public buildings to be built using high-performance green building standards.

Recommendations

1. Increase per student space allocations within the school construction assistance program - Increasing the allocations would reduce the "over-housed student conditions when counting permanent inventory in school districts," thereby increasing a district's eligibility for more capacity (i.e. new, additional space). If the student space allocation were increased, many of the school districts in Washington would have additional capacity that could be used for joint-use.
2. Change WAC 392-343-410 – Removal from instructional inventory – Demolition:

WAC 392-343-410 states that a school facility shall be removed from OSPI's instructional inventory five years after it has been demolished if it is at least 40 years old and is determined to be surplus to the needs of the district by the local board. Consider allowing a district to remove a facility from inventory immediately upon demolition and not requiring waiting 5 years.

3. Change WAC 392-343-420 – Removal from instructional inventory – Conversion:

WAC 392-343-420 states that instructional space shall be removed from OSPI's inventory five years after it has been converted from instructional use if it is determined to be surplus and is not needed for instructional use by a neighboring district. Consider allowing a district to remove a facility from inventory immediately if it is determined to be surplus and is not needed for instructional use by a neighboring district and not requiring waiting 5 years.

4. Change WAC 392-343-415 – Removal from instructional space inventory-sale or long-term leasing:

Change the Definition of Long-term Lease from 40 years to 5 years

WAC 392-343-415 states that a school facility will be removed from inventory five years after it has been sold or long-term leased, however, it further defines a long-term lease as having a term of no less than forty years. It is recommended that this definition of a long-term lease be changed from a term of no less than forty years to a term of no less than five years, provided that the facility is 40 years old. Changing WAC 392-343-415 would also make it more consistent with WAC 392-343-410. A lease of 40 years is onerous for many community organizations.

Making the above changes to the existing WACs would enable school districts to manage inventory more efficiently and could provide more opportunities for the joint use of space with other entities.

5. Form a task force to further investigate the concept of developing a formula for small elementary and/or K-8 schools that would be similar to the formula used for four-year high schools as found in WAC 392-343-035 (3).
6. Provide capital grant funds, separate from the school construction assistance program, for the development of community schools and to convert empty school buildings into community facilities. The grants could be used for joint planning, siting and co-location of community schools. (i.e. Substitute House Bill 3291)
7. Form a task force to further investigate the concept of 'community schools' to seek solutions and methodologies to incentivize community partnerships, through collaborative efforts by the service providers, including school districts, to deliver comprehensive and connected

services that are mutually beneficial to accomplishing the mission of all organizations utilizing the schools. The goal and result is to enhance the educational outcomes and build stronger communities. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the state's school construction assistance program should or should not participate in this process as school facilities are constructed or modified with public funds. An understanding needs to be established as to whether SCAP capital funds should be used to assist in the construction of non-instructional community spaces.

I. Introduction

Chapter 28A.620 RCW provides for community education programs. The following purposes are identified: (1) provides educational, recreational, cultural, and other community services and programs through the establishment of the concept of community education with the community school serving as the center for such activity; (2) promote a more efficient and expanded use of existing school buildings and equipment; (3) help provide personnel to work with schools, citizens and with other agencies and groups; (4) provide a wide range of opportunities for all citizens including programs, if resources are available, to promote parenting skills and promote awareness of the problem of child abuse; (5) in part, defines “parenting skills” to include preserving and nurturing the family unit; (6) to help develop a sense of community in which the citizens cooperate with the public schools and community agencies to resolve their school and community concerns and to recognize that the schools are available for use by the community day and night, year-round or any time when the programming will not interfere with the pre-school through grade twelve program.

Joint use of school facilities is happening in cities throughout Washington and across the nation. In fact, the concept of “joint use” is not new. Schools have shared their land and facilities for community use for over 200 years. Most school districts, including those in Washington State, have policies to make facilities open to the public. School boards subscribe to the belief that public schools are owned and operated by and for its patrons. The public is encouraged to use school facilities but is expected to reimburse districts for such use to insure that funds intended for education are not used for other purposes. Traditionally, indoor and outdoor spaces like gymnasiums, athletic fields and playgrounds are used by community groups. Procedures for use of school facilities including rental rates, supervisory requirements, restrictions, and security are developed and, typically, school districts develop “Facility Use” agreements with the community groups that outline the specifics of the use.

A number of school districts have built schools to serve as the center of the community so that facilities are used not only as a school but also as a place to house other community services, such as community recreational centers, community resource centers, and performing arts activities(See Appendices A and B). In these situations, the school becomes a central resource for the entire community, garnering greater support and playing an important role in the community’s health (See Appendix C). The community has more of a stake in the success and upkeep of these facilities. A “joint use agreement” between the district and another public or private entity where facilities, land, utilities, or other common elements are shared between two or more parties on site, is developed to outline the specific roles and responsibilities of each party.

The concept of “community schools” is a collaborative effort by service providers (including the school district) to deliver comprehensive and connected

services that are mutually beneficial to accomplishing, each organization's mission for utilizing the schools. The goal and result is building a stronger community.

House Majority Leader, Steny H. Hoyer (MD), addressed community schools as follows: "Community schools are designed to remove roadblocks to academic success. They work with local organizations and the private sector to coordinate a wide range of services for students and families—services that help prepare children to learn and help prepare families to support learning. At a full-service community school, you might find health clinics or dental care, mental health counseling, English lessons for parents, adult courses, nutrition education, career advice, or childcare before and after school. Many of these services already exist in high-need communities—but there are few places more welcoming to house them than in a neighborhood school, and few places where they can be accessed and run more efficiently. Schools like these stay open long after school hours and on weekends, too. They are places for neighbors to learn together, work together, and—crucially—places for parents to participate in their children's education. Schools like these quickly become the hearts of their communities." Community schools may serve as a fundamental paradigm shift designed to meet non-academic needs of poverty, mental health, social issues, etc. through agency partnerships, thereby alleviating teachers from this responsibility so that they can focus on academics.

Prime Minister Blair says that England is investing in "human capital" by transitioning to a nationwide community school system. By the end of 2010, all schools in England will be "extended schools"—what England calls community schools.

Education Secretary Arnie Duncan said there was initial reluctance from principals and parents when he oversaw the expansion of a community schools program as CEO of Chicago Public Schools. Principals didn't like giving up control of their schools, and parents were not quick to accept extended school days. But "because the results were so dramatic...in just two or three years we created a huge amount of demand," he said. Community schools in Chicago, St. Paul, and New York have all improved student success, school attendance, and parent involvement through community partnerships.

Previous legislative activities in our state concerning the joint use of school facilities indicate that legislators may be seeking ways to expand or incentivize multiple-use of schools outside of the state's construction assistance program, such as making grants available for developing cooperative partnerships for joint use of facilities or other methods of promoting joint use of community schools:

HB 3291 – Community Schools Act of 2008 – if it had passed, would have provided capital grant funds for the development of community schools and convert empty school buildings into community facilities. The legislature found that cooperative partnerships and joint use of facilities between public schools, local governments, early learning providers,

health and social service providers and postsecondary institutions can result in the effective use of federal, state, local and community resources.

Capital budget bill ESHB 1216 (Chapter 497, 2009 Laws PV), Section 5012 (4) directs OSPI to “Convene a definitions work group on the joint use of public school facilities.” Eligible applicants include local governments, nonprofit organizations, nonprofit early learning providers, and tribal governments. Only the following surplus schools from the Seattle Public Schools may be eligible for grant funding under this section: Allen School, Crown Hill School, Fauntleroy School, University Heights School, Martin Luther King Elementary School and Lincoln High School North Wing.

SB 5509 – The Washington State’s High Performance Public Buildings Legislation enacted as of July 14, 2005 - makes portions of the school building or grounds available for either shared or dedicated use by community and other appropriate organizations, part of the scoring system for its certification process. One point is given if the space is "shared" use and an additional point (total of two points) if the space is dedicated for use by the community and other appropriate organizations.

Legislators hear, anecdotally, that school districts would like to build larger spaces than they actually need in order to accommodate community partners, because – from a community-wide perspective – it’s more efficient to share space. But, they also hear that districts subsequently experience the downside when the districts square footage is deemed adequate for its student enrollment and, therefore, does not receive state assistance for additional space for construction projects that can be used for community purposes. Legislators are seeking a clearer picture of exactly what would be affected if they were to amend statute to lift the current perceived “penalty” for accommodating community use of school facility space. The following questions help to guide this discussion:

- How is eligible space determined?
- If a school district builds additional space for community use, i.e., adds space to an elementary gym for community use, then the space is added to the district's inventory and when the district applies for state assistance at a future date, does this added space count against the district?
- Is there a “penalty” in statute for accommodating community use of school facilities?
- Are there any exceptions made for allowing additional space for community use of schools?
- How would decisions about allowing further exceptions be made for allowing additional space for community use?
- What policy changes would be needed if exceptions were available?
- What kinds of uses are permitted for joint use?
- How would the joint-space be financed?

These legislative activities suggest that legislators are seeking ways to provide incentives to school districts to expand multiple-use of their facilities and to remove penalties.

II. Process

This report provides a detailed discussion of what joint use is, responds to the legislative questions concerning how joint use is accommodated within the school construction assistance program and other questions pertaining to joint use, and offers other perspectives concerning “Community Schools.”

As ‘joint use’ was researched, it became evident that the term ‘joint use’ is a formal contract between entities including, but not limited to, public schools, local governments, and non-profit agencies. It defines the responsibilities, questions and concerns when these entities partner with an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, and youth and community development within a community school. Therefore, a discussion of the ‘community school’ concept is included within this report.

Definitions

➤ Joint Use

Joint use is an agreement between a district and another public or private entity where facilities, land, utilities, or other common elements are shared between two or more parties on site. However, joint use is a flexible term and each locality’s concept of it can vary. How joint use is defined or described can have an impact on how a joint use program or facility is funded or administered. Local entities pursue joint use partnerships for a variety of reasons including the availability of state-level joint use funding, realizing construction or operational cost savings, and school board philosophy or direction.

- Facility Use

School boards subscribe to the belief that public schools are owned and operated by and for its patrons. The public is encouraged to use school facilities but is expected to reimburse districts for such use to insure that funds intended for education are not used for other purposes. Procedures for use of school facilities including rental rates, supervisory requirements, restrictions, and security are developed. Those using school facilities maintain insurance for accident and liability covering persons using the district's facilities under the sponsorship of the organization. Community athletics programs that use district facilities cannot discriminate against any person on the basis of sex in the operation, conduct or administration of their programs. For rental rate purposes, organizations seeking the use of school facilities have been divided into three categories: school or child-related groups or other government agencies; nonprofit groups including organizations which might use school facilities for lectures, promotional activities, entertainment or other activities for which public halls or commercial facilities are generally rented; and commercial enterprises which include profit-making organizations and business-related enterprises.

- Shared use

A number of school districts have built schools to serve as the center of the community so that facilities are used not only as a school but also as a place to house other community services, such as community recreational centers, community resource centers, and performing arts activities. (See Appendix B) In those situations, the school becomes a central resource for the entire community, garnering greater support and playing an important role in the community's health. An assumption could be made that the community has more of a stake in the success and upkeep of these facilities. On the other hand, school and community leaders have to address potential issues of safety and security, upkeep, operational costs, and coordination when school facilities are shared spaces. In addition, districts need more information about how to fund, structure and administer partnerships to maximize the benefit to their schools and communities.

- Community Schools

"Community school" means both a place and a set of partnerships between entities including, but not limited to, public schools, postsecondary institutions, local governments, nonprofit early learning providers, and other nonprofit community resources with an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. (Substitute House Bill 3291 – 2008 Regular Session)

John Podesta, President of the Center for American Progress, defined community schools as schools that stay open for extended hours, offer students and families access to important social and health services, and seek to become centers of community life by promoting parent and community investment in the school.

➤ Joint Use Program Types

Schools have traditionally provided services and space beyond the basic school day to surrounding communities (Testa 2000). U.S. schools have provided local communities with public assembly spaces as well as space for community programs and services including adult education/recreation programs and after-school/summer recreation programs (Reeve 2000). There are numerous examples of joint use partnerships that illustrate the broad applicability of joint use and the spectrum of joint use programming that exists. The following table offers a window into the variety of joint use types.

Exhibit 1: Joint Use Examples

Use	Examples
Community event/ programming takes place on school grounds using existing facilities	City sponsored youth and/or adult basketball league uses a school’s gymnasium during non-school hours for league activities Weekly farmers' market held on school property
School facilities open to the public during non-school hours	School playgrounds unlocked during non-school hours for general public recreational use
A portion of school property is open for public use during school hours AND non-school hours	A library built on school grounds allows separate student/general public use of the facility (physical design features are employed to keep populations, i.e. convicted felons, separate during school hours) A portion of a school's grounds is used as a community garden, open to the general public
A segment of school site or a facility on school grounds that is jointly funded, owned, and/or programmed by an outside entity	A school district builds a child-care facility on land owned by the local community college district. The facility offers child- care to local community members as well as child care observation and training for both community college and high school students

These joint use categories are not mutually exclusive. Joint use facilities can host joint use programming: one type of joint use may exist alongside other types of joint use on the same site or within the same school district. For instance, a school district may develop joint use programming on existing school grounds with a local recreation and parks department and simultaneously partner with the local county library system to plan, build, and operate a joint use library on school-owned property. In addition, if successful, a new joint use program on school grounds may encourage expanded joint use programming and/or new joint use facilities in the future.

➤ Administering Joint Use

Joint use partnerships and agreements can be administered in a number of different ways. The variability associated with administering different joint use programs is significant and depends on how the school district and its partner(s) negotiate their roles in a joint use partnership. Depending on a program’s structure, the facilities involved, the funding mechanisms and the philosophy of the overseeing/responsible body, a joint use program can exist with varying levels of oversight and attention from partners during the planning, operating, and implementation phases. In addition, varying approaches to oversight can exist within the same school district for different joint use programs.

Creating Effective Joint Use School Partnerships: Lessons Learned

Joint use of school facilities is not a new practice in California; its public policy has supported this concept for nearly a century. Yet with the recent infusion of state funds (close to \$190 million) towards building joint use facilities, accompanied by tightening of local government and school district budgets, and a decrease in available land in many urbanized areas, this practice is quickly gaining momentum. The lessons learned in California drawn from research and case studies may be relevant in Washington:

- Lesson 1: Build Trusting and Sustainable Relationships
“Development of cooperative relationships” is an essential strategic practice when developing an effective joint use project (Testa 2000). Joint use partnerships are no simple matter. Once a relationship/partnership is established, in addition to ensuring communication between partners regarding existing joint use projects, new joint use programs and facilities can be added to a locale’s joint use palette.
- Lesson 2: Liability Concerns are Surmountable
Contrary to concerns raised by many community and school district representatives who are interested in joint use partnerships, liability is a surmountable element of a joint use agreement. It may be the concern over liability that is the barrier, more than actual liability issues. Successful joint use partnerships have structured sound liability coverage that effectively meets the needs of all partners.
- Lesson 3: Leadership Must Craft Joint Use Partnerships that Address Explicit Local Needs
Joint use partnerships, agreements, and facilities can vary significantly from one location to another. Different school districts and their partners structure their partnerships differently, make different contributions, share different types of uses and achieve different goals.

Creating Joint Use Partnerships – Recommendations from the Field

While there are many unique issues and concerns in crafting joint use policies and practices between entities and school districts, there are also many essential elements common to all partnerships. This section provides seven recommended points to consider in developing joint use partnerships and agreements:

- 1. Identify a local need that a joint use partnership might address.** Two elements of joint use programming that need to be considered include identifying the best program type and how best to administer the partnership.
- 2. Identify essential joint use partners.** A wide range of agencies or civic entities might be interested in participating in joint projects.

3. Develop a positive, trusting relationship with partners. According to existing research and a number of joint use practitioners interviewed for this report, strong relationships between joint use partners is an essential pre-condition to developing a joint use agreement. Since joint use is first and foremost an approach to sharing space, decisions regarding liability, maintenance, access, and other important issues will need to be made.

4. Build political support.

5. Build a joint use partnership within the context of the local community. Consider incentives that may convince others to collaborate and/or support your efforts. Invite multiple viewpoints (Testa 2000, CASBO 1997) and anticipate obstacles so that they may be addressed in the process of developing a joint use agreement. Clearly outline what joint use means in the context of the locale as well as the proposed program/project/ facility. Who is responsible for maintenance? Who is liable for damages or injury? Who will inspect the site? Who will lock and unlock the site? Who pays for utilities? Draft (and implement) a joint use agreement that is specific to the needs and concerns of the parties involved. Ensure that agreements are specific regarding each party's roles and responsibilities.

6. Formalize the partnership. Draft and formally adopt a joint use agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other formal contract that defines the partnership and program, specifies each partner's responsibilities, and discusses how disputes will be addressed. While these documents should be flexible, it is important that all responsibilities, questions, and concerns be addressed in writing so they can be referred to if there is any question about which entity is responsible for what.

7. Foster ongoing communication and monitor the progress and impact of the joint use agreement/program once it is implemented. Existing research (Testa 2000, CASBO 1997) and practitioners interviewed for this report emphasize the importance of ongoing communication between those implementing joint use programs. Once a project is implemented, all parties involved (including on-site staff) must have opportunities to communicate concerns that arise.

Source: CC&S and PHLP: Joint Use School Partnerships in California. 8/24/2009.

Note: In researching for this report, a few more points should be considered:

- 1. A school/community board might be appointed to determine which types of joint use may or may not be appropriate for a school setting.*
- 2. If space is not currently available what funding mechanisms might be accessed to provide the needed space?*
- 3. Rental fees need to be structured to represent real cost. If "Quid Pro Quo" is established then economic balance between agencies needs to be considered.*
- 4. Use of facilities during school hours might have conflicting laws that could prohibit use. For example, if there are felons with crimes against children, then a clear separation of school use of space and community activities would need to be part of the design. This could have a cost impact.*

III. Questions and Responses about Washington State’s School Construction Assistance Program and Joint Use

How is eligible space determined?

Eligible space is calculated by using projected enrollment by grade span: i.e., grades K-6, 7-8, 9-12, the current district inventory by square feet and the current Student Space Allocation. There are two types of eligible space: one for new construction (unhoused) and one for modernization or new-in-lieu of modernization.

(1) The eligible area for new (unhoused eligibility) construction projects is calculated as follows:

- (Projected enrollment) multiplied (by the per student square foot allocation) **minus** (the district’s existing instructional inventory). If the result of this calculation is a positive number, the district has ‘unhoused’ students and is eligible for state funding assistance. If the result is a negative number, the district is ‘overhoused’ and is not eligible for state funding assistance.

(2) The eligible area for modernization or new-in-lieu of modernization is calculated as follows:

- (Projected enrollment) multiplied (by the per student space allocation) **minus** (the district’s existing instructional inventory of improved space). Improved spaces are spaces that have been modernized or built new in the last 20 years according to SCAP guidelines. If the result of this calculation is a positive number, the district has remaining inventory that can be improved and is eligible for state funding assistance. Conversely, if it is a negative number, the district does not have remaining inventory that is eligible to be improved using state funding assistance.

If a school district builds additional space for joint use, such as adding space to an elementary gym for joint use, then the space is added to the district's instructional inventory, and, when the district applies for state assistance at a future date, does this added space count against the district?

The added space does count on the district’s instructional inventory. Any time a district builds instructional space, whether or not it is beyond what is eligible for state funding assistance, the space is counted as inventory for the district with one exception which is when it is added as “gifted space.” WAC 392-343-019 (10) states that the portion(s) of any space(s) constructed from grants made as a gift to a school district by a private entity or a public entity which: (a) Is dedicated by the written terms of the grant to joint use by the school district for educational purposes and by the general public for community activities for the useful life of the space(s); and (b) The school district board of directors has accepted the gift

in accordance with the joint use terms of the grant (provided that this exception does not apply to space(s) jointly financed by two or more school districts.) Counting these spaces is done because the basic funding formula depends on the total district instructional inventory in determining eligibility. Although a district may lose opportunity for 'unhoused' eligibility, this new space may become eligible to modernize with state assistance at a future date. The SCAP is designed to provide construction assistance for basic instructional and support space for the educational process. It does not fund non-instructional or non-instructional support spaces such as district administrative offices, stadiums, central kitchens, transportation facilities, or other like places. These spaces are also not included in the instruction space inventory when determining eligibility for state assistance. Non-instructional space would include community school space which is not used for instructional use. Funding community spaces would be a departure from current practice.

Note: The following response was provided by Spokane Public Schools.

Spokane Public Schools did build several elementary school gyms and community rooms (art rooms) larger to reflect a past practice carried over from the prototypical school plans built in the 1980s. Back then, the Spokane City Parks Department contributed funds to assist in paying for these gyms to be larger on the first 13 built for the Park's adult recreational league activities. In subsequent years, the district continued to build elementary school gyms larger than those typically built for this age group, with some exceptions (Holmes...maybe others) and without this assistance from the City. School districts with an abundant amount of surplus space could see their state match be reduced if they have a lot of these types of spaces that exceed program requirements. Spokane does not perceive this to be a problem in its school district and it hasn't been an issue to date because the current total district building square footage at these facilities does not represent surplus space above the student space allocation formula. This may be an isolated problem within the Seattle SD, due to their abundance of low enrollment elementary schools.

In order to track this, OSPI would have to set standards for spaces within the school to determine if in fact the gym is larger than it needs to be. (*OSPI did request funds for an in-depth study to establish square footage standards, but funds were not available.*) Greg Brown, Director of Capital Projects, served on the work group that explored this matter and it was determined that current state standards of this detail were neither practical nor desirable by most districts. Our state is too diverse to mandate a "one size fits all" educational specification.

Is there a “penalty” in statute for accommodating joint use of school facilities?

There is not a penalty in statute for accommodating joint use of school facilities. The perceived “penalty” is that the space that the community is using is most likely counted as part of the school district’s permanent ‘instructional inventory’. Because the district’s existing ‘Instructional inventory’ is used to calculate eligibility for new construction, the additional space may create an ‘overhoused’ circumstance for the district. Conversely, the additional space, if it has not been improved in the last 20 years, may be eligible for state assistance for modernization or new-in-lieu.

What if school districts were mandated to provide joint use spaces?

There is a potential penalty if the districts are mandated to provide “Joint Use” spaces that may not be part of the district’s educational specifications, such as larger gyms, libraries, separate entrances, and health clinics: there is a capital cost and an operational cost. As long as it’s voluntary, then the district can weigh the costs and make a decision at the local level.

Are there any exceptions made for allowing additional space for joint use of schools?

Yes, there is an exception made for allowing additional space for community use of schools, although it is rarely used.

The portion of any space constructed from grants made as a gift to a school district by a private entity or public entity is not included on the school district’s permanent inventory. (This space is not included in any calculation of instructional space and does not appear on the district’s inventory.)

“Space dedicated by the written terms of the grant **to joint use by the school district for educational purposes and by the general public for community use** for the useful life of the space does not appear on the district’s inventory. The district board of directors has accepted the gift in accordance with the joint use terms of the grant. Note: If this space is jointly financed by two or more school districts, this exception does not apply” (WAC 392-343-019).

How would decisions about allowing further exceptions be made for allowing additional space for joint use?

A clear legislative mandate for a change of direction would be needed, which would shift the emphasis of providing construction funding assistance for basic instructional space for the educational process to take place, to funding of joint spaces that might facilitate a better learning environment. In addition, use of funds from the Common School Construction account for anything other than K-12 education may be a violation of the intent for the use of this account.

RCW 28A.525 does provide that the Superintendent of Public Instruction, considering policy recommendations from the school facilities citizen advisory panel, shall have the power and duty (1) to prescribe rules governing the administration, control, terms, conditions, and disbursements of allotments to school districts to assist them in providing school plant facilities.

An in depth study of the areas in the SCAP that would be affected by adding exceptions to the instructional space eligibility would need to be convened in order to address such issues as the following:

- Changes to the funding formula
- Changes to inventory tracking
- Changes to eligibility calculations
- Changes to the funding of basic instructional space
- Possible inequities between large and small districts
- Acceptable partnerships
- Etc.

What policy changes would be needed if exceptions were available?

If exceptions were made available for joint use of school facilities, existing RCWs and WACs would need to be reviewed and revised as needed.

- The provisions of chapter 28A.525 RCW are currently applicable to state assistance for school facilities. (RCW28A.525.030, 28A.525.040, 28A.525.050 and 28A.525.162 through 28A.525.178).
- Chapter 392-341 WAC through 392-345 and 392-347 WAC are applicable to the state's school construction assistance program.

What kinds of uses are permitted for joint use?

- Joint uses typically include early childhood education services; programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy; child care services; primary health and dental care; mental health prevention and treatment services; and other related services. (Center for Cities & Schools – Vincent)
- Typical eligible entities include local governments, nonprofit organizations, nonprofit early learning providers, and tribal governments.

How would the joint-space be financed?

Funding to support programming of joint use school spaces may come from a variety of sources, separate from the school construction assistance program:

- The state could provide capital grant funds for the development of community schools.
- Local partners could provide funds for joint use – A school district enters into joint venture relationships that result in school facilities construction.

- The governing board of a school district could issue “for sale” revenue bonds to finance the construction of joint occupancy facilities as approved by the electorate.
- A school district could enter into leases and agreements relating to real property and buildings to be used jointly by the district and another entity.

IV. Recommendations

1. Increase per student space allocations within the school construction assistance program

Increasing the allocations would reduce the “over-housed student conditions when counting permanent inventory in school districts,” thereby increasing a district’s eligibility for more capacity (i.e. new, additional space). If the student space allocation were increased, many of the school districts in Washington would have additional capacity and fewer circumstances where school districts add spaces without state assistance, and thus, create more spaces available for shared or community use.

2. Change WAC 392-343-410 – Removal from instructional inventory – Demolition:

WAC 392-343-410 states that a school facility shall be removed from OSPI’s instructional inventory five years after it has been demolished, if it is at least 40 years old and is determined to be surplus to the needs of the district by the local board. Consider allowing a district to remove a facility from inventory immediately upon demolition and not requiring waiting 5 years.

3. Change WAC 392-343-420 – Removal from instructional inventory – Conversion:

WAC 392-343-420 states that instructional space shall be removed from OSPI’s inventory five years after it has been converted from instructional use, if it is determined to be surplus and is not needed for instructional use by a neighboring district. Consider allowing a district to remove a facility from inventory immediately if it is determined to be surplus and is not needed for instructional use by a neighboring district and not requiring waiting 5 years.

4. Change WAC 392-343-415 – Removal from instructional space inventory – Sale or long-term leasing

➤ Change the Definition of Long-term Lease from 40 years to 5 years

WAC 392-343-415 states that a school facility will be removed from inventory five years after it has been sold or long-term leased, however, it further defines a long-term lease as having a term of no less than forty years. It is recommended that this definition of a long-term lease be changed from a term of no less than forty years to a term of no less than five years, provided that the facility is 40 years old. Changing WAC 392-343-415 would also make it more consistent with WAC 392-343-410. A lease of 40 years is onerous for many community organizations.

Making the above changes to the existing WACs would enable school districts to manage inventory more efficiently and could provide more opportunities for joint use of space with other entities.

5. Form a task force to further investigate the concept of developing a formula for small elementary and/or K-8 schools that would be similar to the formula used for four-year high schools as found in WAC 392-343-035 (3).
6. Provide capital grant funds, separate from the school construction assistance program, for the development of community schools and to convert empty school buildings into community facilities. The grants could be used for joint planning, siting and co-location of community schools. (i.e., Substitute House Bill 3291)
7. Form a task force to further investigate the concept of 'community schools' to seek solutions and methodologies to incentivize community partnerships, through collaborative efforts by the service providers, including school districts, to deliver comprehensive and connected services that are mutually beneficial to accomplishing the mission of all organizations utilizing the schools. The goal-and-result is to enhance the educational outcomes and build stronger communities. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the state's school construction assistance program should or should not participate in this process, as school facilities are constructed or modified with public funds. An understanding needs to be established as to whether SCAP capital funds should be used to assist in the construction of non-instructional community spaces.

V. Conclusion

Joint Use

Traditionally, joint use of school facilities happens in cities throughout Washington and across the nation. Most school districts, including those in Washington State, have policies to make facilities open to the public through a Facility Use Agreement, which is defined differently than Joint Use Agreements.

Some school districts are now building schools to serve as the center of the community, so that facilities are used not only as a school, but to house other community services such as community recreational centers, community resource centers, and performing arts centers. In these situations, the school becomes a central resource for the entire community, garnering greater support and playing an important role in the community's health.

Joint use can be defined as an agreement between a district and another public or private entity where facilities, land, utilities, or other common elements are shared between two or more parties on site. However, joint use is a flexible term and each locality's concept of it can vary. How joint use is defined or described can have an impact on how a joint use program or facility is funded or administered. Local entities pursue joint use partnerships for a variety of reasons including the availability of state-level joint use funding, realizing construction or operational cost savings, and school board philosophy or direction.

School Construction Assistance Program

The current School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) is designed to provide construction funding assistance for basic instructional and support space for the process of education to take place.

If the per student space allocations were increased, it would reduce the "over-housed student conditions when counting permanent inventory in school districts," thereby increasing a district's eligibility for more capacity (i.e., new, additional space). The result would be that many of the school districts in Washington would have additional capacity and fewer circumstances where school districts add spaces without state assistance, thereby creating more spaces available for shared or community use.

If WAC 392-343-410, WAC 392-343-415 and WAC 392-343-420 were changed to enable school districts to manage inventory more efficiently, it could provide more opportunities for joint use of space with other entities.

OSPI Work Group Comments on Task Force Recommendations (Berk & Associates. 2009) recommended the development of legislation that encourages/incentivizes cooperative partnerships/joint use of facilities with early learning providers, social service providers, skills centers, community and technical colleges, and public baccalaureate institutions and to use HB 3291/SB

(2008 session), an act relating to community schools, as an initial discussion document. The Work Group cautioned that expansion of the community schools concept could potentially have unintended consequences – siphoning off scarce resources from capital projects to lower priority projects.

Community Schools

The concept of “community schools” is a collaborative effort by service providers (including the school district) to deliver comprehensive and connected services that are mutually beneficial to accomplishing the mission of each (all) organizations utilizing the schools. The goal-and-result is building a stronger community. “No matter the circumstances in which [kids] have been brought up...we should give them the ability to be the most that they can be through the power of education,” said former Prime Minister Tony Blair at the Center for American Progress. Blair, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and a panel of education experts joined the Center for American Progress to discuss community schools—schools that aim to increase academic success by partnering with community organizations to provide students with a range of health and youth development services.

According to a [report](#) released at the event by CAP Education Policy Analyst Saba Bireda, children living in poverty face obstacles that can limit their potential in school. Community schools bridge the gap between education and antipoverty services, by partnering with nonprofits and local agencies to invest in the care of the whole child. Among other services, local partners provide health care, academic enrichment, and mental and behavioral health services.

Adding to the conversation, Rep. Hoyer explained that “we have the chance to re-imagine our schools” as the places where communities come together. Rep. Hoyer pointed out that people often unite on the playing field and in auditoriums, but more community building is possible. He echoed Duncan’s belief that schools should open their doors to adults. Duncan explained that adult education, GED, and English as a Second Language classes should be offered to try to overcome generations of poor education. In addition to providing students with developmental resources, community schools can serve as the place where all community members go to enhance their quality of life. Duncan and Hoyer agreed that community schools are economically efficient as well. Duncan said that instead of spending money on the “bricks and mortar” to build more Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs and YMCAs, schools should partner with community programs to use resources, such as libraries and classrooms, that schools already have. Hoyer said that partnerships capitalize on schools’ physical spaces to provide children with a central location for essential services. In his district, \$80 to \$100 million is spent to build a school; and therefore, “it would be short-sighted to limit [the school’s] use,” he said.

Jane Quinn, assistant executive director for community schools for The Children's Aid Society in New York, explained that community schools are also time efficient. "Additional resources free teachers to teach" so that teachers don't have to worry about the factors outside of the classroom that affect learning such as family problems.

Related quotes

*Schools by themselves cannot-and should not be expected to – solve the nation's most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. However, schools could provide a critical facility in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people.*¹

*Creating community schools involves more than letting adults use the gym at night. It involves starting the planning of new or remodeled buildings with the question, "what is this school's place in the community?" What are the services the community needs that can be satisfied in the school? What existing community assets can be used by the school? The planning committee needs to consider the synergies that can be developed when school and community work together.*²

Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Through these partnerships, the following results can be achieved:

- *Children are ready to learn when they enter school and every day thereafter. All students learn and achieve to high standards.*
- *Young people are well prepared for adult roles in the workplace, as parents and as citizens.*
- *Families and neighborhoods are safe, supportive and engaged.*
- *Parents and community members are involved with the school and their own life-long learning.*³

Future Considerations

Due to our current local and national economic challenges, school districts, local governments and the communities they serve are faced with difficult decisions and obstacles centered on maintaining programs and facilities. Proposed bonds and levies are carefully scrutinized by school districts before being presented to communities and, in turn, are scrutinized by the people during the election process. The best chance of progressing in a positive direction may be to identify mutual benefits that can be experienced for people and entities within the community, i.e. the concept of "community schools." Barriers may include a lack of understanding by school and community officials and a process of how community schools can be formed to enhance and support education and strengthen communities. This common understanding could alleviate other

barriers, such as poverty, mobility, and the lack of support for family health and welfare. One of Vancouver Public Schools' strategic goals is to create a network of family-community resource centers at targeted elementary school sites. Spokane Public Schools believe its efforts to publically announce its commitment to provide community spaces in its new schools helped in the passage of its 2003 and 2009 bond issues.

The questions remain: 1) What is the state's role in funding school facilities in relation to its "paramount duty . . . to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders"? 2) What choices do the local communities have, or what choices should they have, in participating in the use of school facilities?

It is well to remember that the "paramount duty . . . to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders" and that by infusing other entities into the educational process could obscure the legislatures duty to fund "basic education" by funding "joint ventures."

While it is understandable that moving social services into the school setting increases the use of those services, both by students and adults, attention also needs to focus on the potential challenges that could be encountered: such as decisions regarding the types of services that should be allowed.

Where programs such as mental health centers, preschool centers, and parenting support may be more accessible through schools, is the door opened for other programs that might not be an acceptable fit such as Planned Parenthood, Needle Exchanges, Drug Rehab, or low income housing? School districts have found that by opening school libraries to the general public, they more frequently encounter issues regarding restrictions on internet use and the types of books in the collection. Public libraries require fewer restrictions on adult content than school districts.

Another area that needs careful thought is that of security. In recent years security has increased dramatically with some schools using metal detectors and other extreme measures to make the educational environment safer. By adding services into schools, more adults will be added to the environment, and the school could become more of an open campus than a secure campus.

Although conceptually and in preliminary piloting programs there have been successes, care should be taken through thoughtful planning to mitigate that unintended consequences.

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VII. Appendix A



Executive Summary Family-Community Resource Centers Initiative Vancouver Public Schools

Background

America's Vancouver is an urban community of 162,400 residents. Vancouver Public Schools serves a diverse student population of 22,500. More than 50 percent of our families fall below federal poverty guidelines and therefore qualify for subsidized meals. Our students speak 77 languages. Family poverty and in-out migration are significant issues throughout the district but are a special concern in our core, inner-city elementary schools. At these sites, poverty levels typically exceed 70 percent with annual in-out migration in excess of 100 percent.

The school district recently completed a yearlong strategic planning process that generated 2,000 sets of stakeholder input and involved more than 400 direct participants. The purpose of this effort was to establish long-range goals to guide the direction of the district for five to 10 years. One strategic goal is to create a network of family-community resource centers at targeted elementary school sites. These centers will be modeled on a highly successful prototype currently operating within the district: Fruit Valley Community Learning Center. In 2005, the Fruit Valley center received the Richard Riley Award (Schools as Centers of Community for the 21st Century) from the Knowledge Works Foundation and the American Architectural Foundation.

The Fruit Valley Model

Students and families in Vancouver's Fruit Valley neighborhood have benefited greatly from a family-community resource center. The center allows all community support efforts to be concentrated in one central location and provides a knowledgeable family resource coordinator who arranges help for families with food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical and family counseling. The Fruit Valley center has forged alliances with dozens of community and business partners within the Vancouver metro area that offer services and assistance to its students and families. An advisory committee of service providers meets regularly to address current needs. Since the opening of the Fruit Valley center in 2001, the many positive and dramatic results have included a decrease in student mobility, an increase in student achievement, an improvement in daily attendance, and an increase in readiness for students entering kindergarten.

The Plan to Expand Family-Community Resource Centers

The strategic vision of Vancouver Public Schools calls for a network of family-community resources centers located at elementary school sites that serve high-need neighborhoods. The network will be expanded one site at a time. In each case, agency and non-profit partners that help address the needs of the targeted neighborhood will be identified and invited to combine their resources and efforts. A task force composed of public and private stakeholders is developing a plan with a timeline for implementation. The first step is to design and construct an additional center based on the Fruit Valley Model. This collaborative planning process will serve as the template for establishing other centers in disadvantaged areas.

The mission of the Family-Community Resource Centers is to support and empower our children, families and neighborhoods through dynamic partnerships with public and private stakeholders so that all students are safe, ready to learn, and able to achieve their full potential.

Although many neighborhoods in Vancouver are similar to Fruit Valley demographically, the most compelling challenges are evident in the Rose Village neighborhood. Many families who live in the Rose Village area have acute problems related to basic human needs; the majority is financially disadvantaged. Health care, nutrition, shelter, domestic violence, family dissolution, substance abuse, and illiteracy are common problems. These problems translate into unstable home environments for children and create significant barriers to learning. The Rose Village neighborhood is located within the service area of Vancouver Public Schools. Children there attend Washington Elementary School, which is located at 2908 "S" Street in the heart of Rose Village.

A groundswell of interest and support is building among local faith-based organizations, the Rose Village Neighborhood Association and other prospective partners such as Southwest Washington Childcare Consortium, Education Opportunities for Children and Families, City of Vancouver, Clark County, Department of Social and Health Services, Vancouver Housing Authority and local non-profit entities. Last spring, approximately 80 stakeholders participated in a two-day symposium to develop a shared vision for a family-community resource center at Washington Elementary using the nationally recognized Fruit Valley Community Learning Center as a model.

Vancouver Public Schools, with financial assistance from the Vancouver School District Foundation, hired a full-time family resource coordinator to begin assisting families and to pave the way for successful implementation of a fully operational center. Over the past several months, the coordinator has worked with teachers and staff to encourage parents of children enrolled at Washington Elementary to expand their involvement in school activities and the education of their children. Parents have been invited to workshops designed to enhance parenting and home management skills. Once the center is established, this parental support program will be refined and expanded. The overarching goal of this program is to advance the wellbeing of families and establish stable home

environments that equip children to learn and foster the willingness of children to learn.

Through partnership agreements, arrangements will be made for service agencies and non-profit organizations to post staff at the center on a regularly scheduled periodic basis. Family members will be invited to visit the center and meet with partner representatives to learn about economic, social and health programs that are available to address their needs and how to access them. Services may include childcare, health care, food and clothing dispensaries, nutrition education, housing assistance, employment opportunities and job training, literacy training, substance abuse treatment and legal aid.

Currently, no dedicated space exists at Washington Elementary to house family advocacy services and to sustain them over the long term. The facility must be large enough to accommodate an expanding range of services to an increasing number of poverty-impacted families who reside in the Rose Village community. An estimated \$3-4 million in capital construction funds will be needed to build the center.

Once the center is established, funding will be needed to sustain program operations and to ensure that the center will grow its outreach and effectiveness. Although the school district is dedicated to advancing the family community resource model, it lacks the resources necessary to establish a network of sustainable centers.

Appendix B



Case Studies for Vancouver Public Schools Family- Community Resource Centers

Fruit Valley Early Learning Center

➤ Location

The Fruit Valley Community Learning Center is in the heart of the small Fruit Valley neighborhood near Vancouver's industrial center.

Student Population: **246**

➤ Demographics

- 85% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 22% English Language Learners
- 21% Special Education
- 54% White
- 27% Hispanic
- 5% Black
- 2% American Indian

➤ Background

The name Fruit Valley Community Learning Center says that this is no ordinary elementary school. Partnerships with other community agencies made the vision of a community center a reality when the new building opened in 2002.

➤ Programs and Services

Fruit Valley Community Learning Center provides before and after school programs, Head Start and child care for infants through school-aged children, Kids First, Math Club and Chess Club. Through an Early Learning Grant, preschoolers attain school readiness skills. Members of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library come to Fruit Valley once a week to read and play with students. The grant is through a partnership with Educational Service District 112. Full day kindergarten is provided through a Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) grant. It is a full-day kindergarten pilot program for incoming kindergarteners. A Family-Community Resource Center Coordinator works with all Fruit Valley families to provide guidance and support to help families meet basic needs. A Family Services Coordinator works to provide support to Fruit Valley students whose behaviors often inhibit their students from learning.

➤ Partnerships

The agencies that are the most important to the programs currently offered at the Fruit Valley Community Learning Center are: Vancouver School District Foundation, Educational Service District 112 (early childhood programs) and the Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium (Licensed Child Care), Fort Vancouver Regional Library, Vancouver Parks & Recreation (Kids First and Summer Recreational Programs), Educational Opportunities for Children and Families (Head Start), and, the Vancouver Housing Authority. Over 48 additional public agency and civic groups, including faith-based organizations and private firms provide funding and other resources to support center functions.

➤ Results

Since the opening of the Fruit Valley Center in 2002, many positive and dramatic results have occurred. They include a decrease in mobility, improvement in daily attendance increased student achievement, and an increase in readiness for students entering kindergarten. For example, in 2006-2007, the mobility rate was 39 percent, in 2008-2009 decreased to 35 percent. Student daily attendance rates have improved from 89 percent in 2005-2006, to 92 percent in 2008. Students reading achievement on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning has improved incrementally each year since 2006-2007. In 2008, 60 percent of students met the standard in reading compared to 72 percent in the rest of the Washington state. Incoming kindergarten student's readiness has increased from 15 percent in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 to 41 percent (average for the last two years) as indicated by Dynamic Indicators Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. Finally, student suspensions have gone down from 6 percent in 2006-2007, to 3 percent in 2007-2008.

Hough Elementary

➤ Location

Hough Elementary School is a small school located in revitalized, downtown Vancouver. In this transitioning neighborhood of refurbished older homes, Hough Elementary is the hub of the community.

Student Population: **289**

➤ Demographics

- 51% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 7% English Language Learners
- 72% White
- 15% Hispanic
- 5% Black
- 3% Asian

➤ Background

The Hough Foundation, established in 1992 by Hough alum Paul Christenson, supports programs and projects that enhance the school community. A full time director manages the Hough Volunteer Center.

➤ Programs and Services

Hough extends family learning with bi- monthly learning nights that include games, computers, stories and activities. Hough Elementary provides a full-day kindergarten program through the support of the Hough Foundation. Hough is one the sites for Vancouver Public School's Transitional First (T-1) Grade Program, serving children who are not ready for first grade but advanced for kindergarten. Building Blocks preschool literacy programs are provided once per week through a partnership with the Fort Vancouver Regional Library. Licensed daycare is provided on site. The Hough Foundation sponsors two student choirs at Hough. The choirs practice after school and perform in the community. The Hough Foundation owns and operates the Hough Pool, constructed adjacent to Hough school, where students are provided swimming lessons and families find exercise and recreation after school hours. The pool is open to the public year-round. The Hough Foundation provides funding for Volunteer Coordinator for Hough Elementary. This role serves as a point person for all Hough volunteers and Lunch Buddies, in addition to helping connect families to services and helping to providing basic needs to Hough families. A Family Services Coordinator helps to provide support to Hough students and families, particularly children in crisis and exhibiting behaviors that interfere with learning.

➤ Partnerships

In addition to the Hough Foundation, additional partnerships include: Vancouver/Clark Parks & Recreation, Children's Center, Compass Church, New Heights Church, Uptown Village Merchants Association, YWCA, Vancouver Rotary and other non-profit and business organizations that provide the resources necessary to implement programs and services for the children and families at Hough.

➤ Results

Hough has experienced a variety of improved outcomes since the neighborhood has been revitalized and the Family - Community Resource Center has been established. They include decreased low income enrollment, improved daily attendance and increased student achievement. Hough has consistently had 64 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, in 2008-2009 this declined to 51 percent. Student daily attendance rates have remained stable for the past two years at 92 percent, up from previous years. Student's reading achievement on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning has improved each year since 2006-2007. In 2008, 68

percent of third and fifth grade students met the standard on the reading portion of the assessment. Mental health referrals have increased from 9 percent in 2007-2008, to 11 percent in 2008-2009, however the percentage of those families following through with services from the initial referral has increased from 71 percent to 91 percent. This is attributed to the work the Family Service Coordinator has done with follow up with families regarding services. From 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 the numbers of homeless students have declined from 16 percent to 9 percent.

Washington Elementary

➤ **Location**

Washington Elementary School is a small, neighborhood school. In fact, it has the distinction of being the only school in the district where all of the students live within walking distance.

Student Population: **374**

➤ **Demographics**

- 86% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 23% English Language Learners
- 52% White
- 28% Hispanic
- 6% Black
- 2% Asian

➤ **Background**

Washington Elementary established a Family – Community Resource Center in 2008-2009 with support from the Vancouver School District Foundation. The Foundation fully funded a FCRC site coordinator to help meet the basic needs of families, coordinating programs and early learning program partnerships. Plans are currently underway to establish an off- site facility for the center to accommodate a variety of partners and services.

➤ **Programs and Services**

Washington Elementary provides an on-site preschool program, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in partnership with Educational Service District 112. Licensed Child Care is provided by the Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium. Full day kindergarten is provided through a Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) grant. It is a pilot program for incoming kindergarteners. Washington Elementary has implemented a school wide policy for behavior, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Program. This program helps to teach explicit behavior expectations and reinforces desired behaviors building-wide by teaching expectations using common vocabulary.

The Washington FCRC pioneered a Walking School Bus program, run by volunteers, to help students reach school safely and on time each day.

Additionally, a Family Community Resource Center Coordinator works with all Washington families to provide guidance and support to help families meet basic needs.

➤ Partnerships

The agencies that are the most important to the programs currently offered at the Washington Family- Community Resource Center include: Vancouver School District Foundation, Educational Service District 112 (early childhood programs) and the Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium (Licensed Child Care), Fort Vancouver Regional Library, Vancouver Parks & Recreation (Kids First and Summer Playground Programs). Over 25 additional public agency and civic groups, including faith-based organizations and private firms provide funding and other resources to support center functions. The Lunch Buddy program and Women in Action provide students with volunteer mentors. Volunteers come from First United Methodist Church, Turning Point Christian Center, Fort Vancouver Lions Club and Clark College. Parents volunteer in classrooms, participate in after-school and evening events, and serve on a Learning Improvement Team. Intermediate students serve as leaders on the Student Leadership Team.

➤ Results

Washington Elementary has experienced a range of accomplishments with the assistance of the Family- Community Resource Center. The FCRC Coordinator at Washington Elementary provided support to children last year on over 1000 occasions to address the needs of about 100 students and families. Despite having the highest numbers of low income students in the district, achievement at Washington Elementary has increased. Students reading achievement on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) has improved gradually each year since 2006-2007. In 2008, 72.4 percent of Washington's students met the standard (3-5 grades) compared to 73 percent in Washington state. In math, 3rd and 5th grade students have made gains over the last three years. Finally, student suspensions have gone down from 10 percent in 2006-2007, to 6 percent in 2008-2009. Mental health referrals have increased from 14 percent in 2007-2008, to 15 percent in 2008-2009, however, the percentage of those families following through with services from the initial referral has increased from 53 percent to 67 percent.

Appendix C

Multi-Use of Schools

School buildings are often an under-utilized resource. Although most have gymnasiums, libraries and multi-purpose rooms that could be used as a resource for the community, often they are open for only six hours each day, Monday through Friday. Today community based organizations and city and county agencies are struggling with budget shortfalls that have made it difficult to deliver the services needed by children and families, particularly those living in low-income communities.

Schools could be designed as “community schools”, a term used to describe both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings and weekends.

Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Partners work to achieve these results:

- Children are ready to learn when they enter school and every day thereafter. All students learn and achieve to high standards.
- Young people are well prepared for adult roles in the workplace, as parents and as citizens.
- Families and neighborhoods are safe, supportive and engaged.
- Parents and community members are involved with the school and their own life-long learning.

By planning and designing schools with community and government agencies involved in the process, schools could be configured to include a library that serves both students and the public; a YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or community center that can meet the fitness and enrichment needs of both students and their families; a health center that provides medical, dental, vision and human services that could serve the diverse needs of our communities; a community policing office to keep our schools safe; an early learning center that gets children ready to become lifelong learners and helps parents to learn strategies to support their children.

In addition to creating a hub for community resources, the cost savings to the various agencies would be substantial. By sharing construction costs, schools can be built to serve the greater demands of our increasingly diverse communities. Co-sharing custodial fees, transportation and building maintenance makes a more cost-effective infrastructure for everyone.

Source: Community schools are the school improvement strategy currently being promoted by Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. My suggestion would be to have the Educational Service Districts and/or the County lead focus groups and planning processes to think about how we use our resources in a new way. This process would be able to include community input and get buy-in from CBO's and government agencies. A blueprint for planning, funding and co-use of the buildings could be created.

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Community Schools Collaboration partners with community-based organizations, schools and municipalities to provide **Afterschool Programs** that focus on academics, enrichment and recreation. **Community Engagement & Empowerment** that connects families and other community members with resources and support and builds grassroots leadership. **Health Coordination & Services** that meet the critical needs of our students and their families. We provide services in sixteen schools in the Tukwila and Highline School Districts of South King County, Washington.

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