

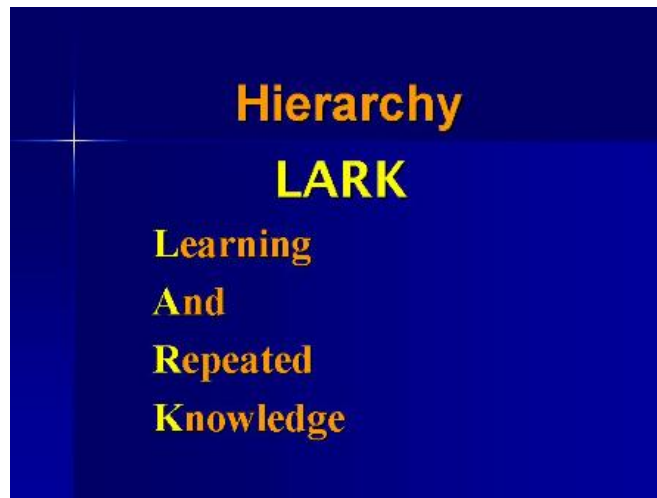
Chapter 15. The Role of Education in Community Development

Kai A. Schafft and Hobart L. Harmon

BEHAVIOR OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter and completing the online learning activities, students should be able to

1. Identify the key reasons why schools are critical institutions in the community development process.
2. Explain how schools define the boundaries of communities and why.
3. Understand the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act for community action.
4. Analyze the ways in which service-learning and place-based education connect schools to communities.
5. Understand some of the consequences of school consolidation for rural and urban communities.
6. Identify the barriers that community development organizations might face in developing partnerships with schools.
7. Explain the benefits of place-based education.
8. Identify the key lessons learned from the case studies about school-community interactions.



LARK Activity 15.1

Step 1. Create a short answer (150-250 words) to each of the following questions.

1. How do social interactions among people in locales help define community?

2. How do schools help to shape the local boundaries of communities and the identity of community members?
3. Although schools and the communities they serve are closely entwined and community development is in the best interests of schools, why may school leaders be hesitant about involving schools and students in important community development roles?
4. Of all social institutions, why might schools be best placed to catalyze community development?
5. What are some likely results of school consolidation in a rural community or urban neighborhood?
6. Beyond the socially integrative functions, what distinct local economic roles might a school have in a rural community or urban neighborhood?
7. What characteristics of a well-planned school-community partnership project would indicate it is mutually beneficial?
8. How might a community or neighborhood development activity reinforce what is taught in the public school classroom?
9. What barriers might a community development organization expect to experience when seeking to partner with a public school or school district?
10. How can service learning and place-based education serve to facilitate a viable school-community partnership and accomplishment of local community or neighborhood development needs?

Step 2. Discuss your responses with a group of 4 or 5 classmates.



SOAR ACTIVITY 15.1

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

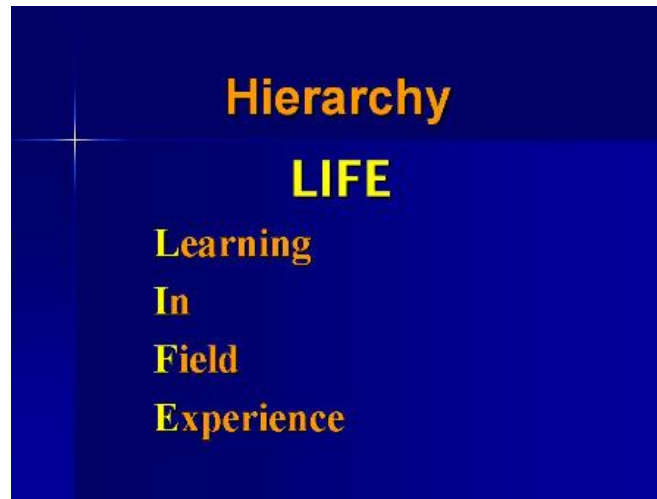
Step 1. Contact your local elementary, middle and high schools.

Step 2. Interview the principals about their partnerships with community organizations.

Step 3. Have them describe each activity and assess the benefits to the school and community.

Step 4. Compile a list of all the organizations and institutions involved with school programs.

Step 5. As part of this project, prepare a list of recommendations for improving school-community partnerships in your area.



LIFE Activity 15.1

Conducting Service-Learning Projects through Schools

Here are some examples of school-based service learning projects:

1. Drop-out prevention: A service-learning project focused on drop-out prevention might coordinate schools with local businesses to partner at-risk students with job shadowing and mentoring opportunities with local business leaders/members. These connections will help build bridges between schoolwork and work “in the real world,” and develop stronger ties between schools and local business, better meeting the needs of each while providing important opportunities to at-risk youth.

2. Subject-specific service-learning: Science and reading provide two examples of subject-specific service-learning. Connecting college students majoring in science with schools to tutor K-12 students can create opportunities for hands-on learning during or after school hours. This might involve engaging in environmental projects, such as local water quality testing, cleaning of local stream or river beds, or wildlife conservation efforts. Similarly, college students majoring in language arts or reading might provide tutoring services during or after school for at-risk students, assist in running family literacy programs after school to engage parents in literacy efforts, and/or read to students at the elementary level.

2. Building school-community connections: Students plan a school-community day, in which school staff, community members, and students organize, run, and attend a school-community fair. The school can set up exhibits of student learning and projects students are engaged in that connect to the community. Community leaders can set up exhibits featuring ways they have been or would like to be involved with the school and with students. Local businesses might provide food and donate prizes or items for auction. Students at the school can perform music or showcase artwork. This would also be a good venue for team-building exercises between

community organizations and businesses and school staff and leaders, culminating in competitions with awards.

These are only a few examples. We want to emphasize though that effective service learning projects are not “paint by the numbers” efforts, but are directly shaped by and responsive to the individual needs of local communities. That said, examples are useful, but ultimately your *best* guide is the community that lies before you.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING

Syllabi:

Literacy Tutoring: Principles and Practice (Syracuse University)

<http://www.compact.org/syllabi/syllabus.php?viewsyllabus=407>

Service Learning in Higher Education (Vanderbilt University)

<http://www.compact.org/syllabi/syllabus.php?viewsyllabus=663>

APPENDIX:

Additional Resources to Learn about School-Community Partnerships for Community Development:

NOTE that the following descriptions have been taken directly from organization websites and have been only slightly modified, if at all.

Associations, Organizations and Centers

Center for Place-Based Education

http://www.anei.org/pages/89_cpbe.cfm

The Center for Place-based Education promotes community-based education programs. Its projects and programs encourage partnerships between students, teachers, and community members that strengthen and support student achievement, community vitality and a healthy environment.

Coalition for Community Schools

<http://www.communityschools.org>

The Coalition for Community Schools represents an alliance of national, state and local organizations concerned with K-16 education, youth development, community planning, family support, health and human services, government and philanthropy, as well as national, state and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as a means to strengthen schools, families and communities and improve student learning.

Rural School and Community Trust

<http://www.ruraledu.org>

The Rural School and Community Trust is a national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving communities. It also serves as an information clearinghouse on issues concerning the relationship between schools and communities, especially in rural contexts.

School of the 21st Century. Linking Communities, Families and Schools

<http://www.yale.edu/21c/index2.html>

Based at Yale University, the 21C program develops, researches, networks, and supervises an educational model that links communities, families, and schools by transforming the school into a year-round, multi-service center that is open from 6 in the morning until 7 at night. The core components are affordable, high-quality child care for preschool children, before- and after-school programs for school-age children; and health services, referral services, support, and guidance for parents of young children.

Schools and Communities

http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/programs/schools_and_communities/

This webpage of Enterprise Community Partners documents and disseminates the nation's current efforts to combine school reform and community development.

Web-based Documents and Material

Local Governments and Schools: A Community-Oriented Approach

<http://icma.org/documents/SGNReport.pdf>

(International City/County Management Association, Washington, DC , 2008)

Provides local government managers with an understanding of the connections between school facility planning and local government management issues, with particular attention to avoiding the creation of large schools remotely sited from the community they serve. It offers multiple strategies for local governments and schools to bring their respective planning efforts together to take a more community-oriented approach to schools and reach multiple community goals-- educational, environmental, economic, social, and fiscal. Eight case studies illustrate how communities across the U.S. have already succeeded in collaborating to create more community-oriented schools. Includes 95 references and an extensive list of additional online resources. 40p.

Report NO: E-43527

Reconnecting Schools and Neighborhoods: An Introduction to School-Centered Community Revitalization

<http://www.practitionerresources.org/cache/documents/647/64701.pdf>

(Enterprise, Columbia, MD , 2007)

Provides an introduction to school-centered community revitalization. Part 1 presents the case for integrating school improvement into community development, drawing on the academic research linking school and neighborhood quality as well as early results from school-centered community revitalization projects across the country. Part 2 presents the core components of school-centered community revitalization, including both school-based activities and neighborhood-based activities. The final part of the paper illustrates the diverse approaches currently being taken to improve schools and neighborhoods, drawing on the experiences of eight

Robinson and Green
Introduction to Community Development
Online Learning Modules

school-centered community revitalization initiatives in five cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Paul. 30p.

New Relationships With Schools. Organizations That Build Community by Connecting With Schools. Volumes One and Two

<http://www.publicengagement.com/practices/publications/newrelationshipssmry.htm>

(Collaborative Communications Group for the Kettering Foundation, Nov 2004)
Case studies of organizations that establish strong connections between communities and schools using many different entry points. Includes a profile of New School Better Neighborhoods, a nonprofit intermediary organization in Los Angeles that works to design schools that serve as centers of communities. The organization brings together community stakeholders to plan multi-use development that combines residential, recreational, and educational use of scarce land in densely populated urban areas.

Schools, Community, and Development. Erasing the Boundaries

<http://www.practitionerresources.org/cache/documents/56274.pdf>

Proscio, Tony (The Enterprise Foundation, Columbia, MD, 2004)
This describes the results of efforts in four neighborhoods in Baltimore, St. Louis, and Atlanta to connect community-based revitalization initiatives with school reform programs in the same neighborhoods. Chapters include: 1) Building and Learning Go Separate Ways; 2) The School-Community Alliance in Practice; 3) The Developer as Educator; 4) Housing and Economic Development. 39p.

Using Public Schools as Community-Development Tools: Strategies for Community-Based Developers

http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/communitydevelopment/W02-9_Chung.pdf

Chung, Connie (Harvard University, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Cambridge, MA; Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. , 2002)
This paper explores the use of public schools as tools for community and economic development. As major place-based infrastructure and an integral part of the community fabric, public schools can have a profound impact on the social, economic, and physical character of a neighborhood. Addressing public schools, therefore, is a good point of entry for community-based developers to place their work in a comprehensive community-development context. The paper examines ways in which community-based developers can learn from, as well as contribute to, current community-based efforts, particularly in disinvested urban areas, to reinforce the link between public schools and neighborhoods. Furthermore, the paper considers the policy implications of including public schools in comprehensive development strategies, and asserts that reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is not only good education policy, but also good community-development policy and practice. An appendix presents contact information for organizations participating in school and community linkages. 55p.