



A Blueprint for Building a New 21st Century Citywide Education Ecosystem for 21st Century Children And Families



THE BLUEPRINT

A Blueprint and Strategic Vision for the Education Ecosystem
Leaders in the City of Saint Louis

*Where there is no vision,
the people perish...*

Proverbs 29:18

*"I did then what I knew how to
do, Now that I know better,
I do better."*

Maya Angelou

The Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis is the Convener of all Stakeholders and Resources for the Citywide Plan for Education(CWPE). The Board of Education shall have general and supervising control, government and management of the public schools and public school property of the district in the city and shall exercise generally all powers in the administration of the public school system therein. Missouri Public Law - Statute 162.621



JUNE 2023



EDITORS

Laverne Morrow Carter, Ph.D., MPH

PeopleareEverything.biz

A wholly-owned subsidiary
of Health in Color, Inc.

Joshua Childs, Ph.D.

University of Texas - Austin
College of Education

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF SAINT LOUIS



Antionette "Toni" Cousins
President



Matt Davis
Vice President



Donna Jones
Secretary



Natalie Vowell
Board Member



Emily Hubbard
Board Member



Sadie Weiss
Board Member



Tracy Hykes
Board Member

Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee

Antionette “Toni” Cousins | Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis Chairperson

Donna Baringer | Missouri House of Representatives

LaKeysha Bosley | Missouri House of Representatives

Dr. Patrick Charles | American Federation of Teachers Saint Louis Local 420

Dr. Maureen Clancy-May | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Byron Clemens | American Federation of Teachers Saint Louis Local 420

Marlene Davis | Retired Saint Louis City Alderwoman and Public Policy Expert Consultant

Jason Fletcher | Comptroller’s Office

Dr. Nicole Freeman-Williams | Saint Louis Public Schools

Avis Funches | Parents of Color Committee

Carron Johnson | American Federation of Teachers Saint Louis Local 420

Mike Jones | Public Policy Expert Consultant

Gloria Nolan | Saint Louis Public Schools

Dr. Isaac Pollack | Saint Louis Public Schools

Lakesha Robinson | Children, Youth, & Families, Saint Louis City Mayor’s Office

Don Roe | Planning and Urban Design Agency

Square Watson | Saint Louis Public Schools

Lori Willis | Saint Louis Public Schools





In 2019 the Missouri School Board ended their decade-long oversight of the Saint Louis Public School District, and reinstated the elected Saint Louis Board of Education as the authority on education in our city. As the newly established Board we are part of a paradigm shift happening in Saint Louis education. The current education infrastructure and experience created over a century ago has ceased to adequately serve today's students and families. The only viable option in 2022 was to construct a plan that responds to the education system's current condition and not its history. We made every effort to uphold our statutory responsibility, which is to ensure that every child in Saint Louis is guaranteed access to an excellent education, regardless of their circumstances or upbringing. Thus, to fulfill our historic obligation in the context of our ever-evolving city, the Saint Louis Board of Education has established a pathway for reimagining public education in the City of Saint Louis through this Blueprint.

The Blueprint is a strategic vision that provides guidance on what an excellent educational experience looks like for all school age children, their families and school staff. After taking a hard look at what is not working, and what we need moving forward, we initiated an 18-month long process to create a focused and time-sensitive vision for the future of public education in the City of Saint Louis. Through participation in an innovative, theoretical-framed and highly structured process, our stakeholders from across the Education Ecosystem of the City of Saint Louis have delivered 62 well-developed and responsive policy level recommendations in five key domains of action – (1) Community, (2) Education Workforce, (3) Health, Wellness, and Safety, (4) Infrastructure and (5) School Experience.

We look forward to updating you on our progress.



Antionette "Toni" Cousins
Board President



Matt Davis
Board Vice President
Chairperson, Citywide Plan for Education
Ad Hoc Committee

Table of Contents

PAGE

Executive Summary	1
Chapter 1 Background	10
Chapter 2 School Experience	17
Context	
Overarching Question and Enabling Factors	
Recommendations from Stakeholders	
Justifications	
Forces of Change	
Promising Practices	
Chapter 3 Community	30
Context	
Overarching Question and Enabling Factors	
Recommendations from Stakeholders	
Justifications	
Forces of Change	
Promising Practices	
Chapter 4 Health, Wellness, and Safety	38
Context	
Overarching Question and Enabling Factors	
Recommendations from Stakeholders	
Justifications	
Forces of Change	
Promising Practices	
Chapter 5 Infrastructure	52
Context	
Overarching Question and Enabling Factors	
Recommendations from Stakeholders	
Justifications	
Forces of Change	
Promising Practices	
Chapter 6 Education Workforce	68
Context	
Overarching Question and Enabling Factors	
Recommendations from Stakeholders	
Justifications	
Forces of Change	
Promising Practices	
Chapter 7 Workgroup Themes and Convergence	84
Schools as Anchors and Hubs	
Authentic and Frequent Community Engagement	
Equity for all Students, Families, Caregivers, and Staff	
The Value and Edification of all School Personnel	
Data and Evidence-Driven Decisions	
Chapter 8 Evaluation, Lessons Learned and Proposed Next Steps	92
Evaluation	
Lessons Learned: Hoped-For Outcomes versus Reality	
Proposed Next Steps – The Benefits of Collective Impact	

C W P E





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Given the challenges of a shrinking population of children, stagnant development, declining student enrollment, consolidation of schools, and an expansion of other school models, how can educational systems effectively and equitably leverage their resources to provide exceptional education and vital services to every child, regardless of whether they attend a Saint Louis Public School (SLPS) or another school in the City of Saint Louis? The SLPS Board's 2021 Citywide Plan Resolution, along with similar declarations issued by the Saint Louis Board of Alderman (October 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (January 2022), formalized the idea that their collective progress can only happen through a unified vision, a common set of commitments, and clear guidelines of engagement.

Two key hypotheses needed to accurately understand how the CWPE works are: (1) obsolescence and (2) evolution.

- 1) The City of Saint Louis, along with numerous cities nationwide, has traditionally addressed outdated structures as if they were simply in need of repair. While a broken system can be improved through additional resources and attention, it would be erroneous to assume that the previous excellence of Saint Louis schools automatically equips them for present and future transformative influences. When society undergoes change, and the established systems, such as education, fail to adapt, these systems become obsolete, operating ineffectively and inefficiently. Given that our society has already experienced significant changes, it is imperative that our educational systems also undergo transformations.
- 2) Educational systems need to be designed in a way to prepare students for a rapidly evolving social landscape, while also addressing their multitude of needs that influence learning. Through a deliberate process, students can be prepared to successfully transition into adulthood and have the necessary tools to engage in a highly connected world.

In May 2022, the Board selected an experienced and premier community engagement and research consulting firm to plan the first phase of the CWPE. With strong knowledge and a background in the culture, issues, and assets of the Saint Louis region, this firm has guided the first phase of the CWPE over the past 12 months. Additionally, the Board identified and selected ten professionals to facilitate the strategic activities of five workgroups (Community, Education Workforce, Health, Wellness, and Safety, Infrastructure, and School Experience). The five workgroups, consisting of cross-sector stakeholders, are involved with schools and the education support systems in the City of Saint Louis.



The consulting firm designed multilevel capacity building and engagement activities grounded in four theoretical frameworks for stakeholder engagement, systems redesign, and supporting the Pre-K-12 Education Ecosystem

The Citywide Plan for Education IS:

- A **Communal process**— the CWPE was informed by a diverse group of Saint Louis stakeholders selected by the Board Ad Hoc Committee.
- An **Intentional fight against obsolescence**— the CWPE aims to *create* a new system for a modern context.
- A **First step** in a multifaceted process—the CWPE offers a clear vision for what the education ecosystem in Saint Louis should look like in the future.

The Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) is NOT:

- A **Dead-end project**—the CWPE is designed with actionable segments and lays the groundwork for the next steps.
- A **Closed-door process**—the CWPE allowed active engagement with individuals from various backgrounds and regularly and openly engaged the public every other month to share outcomes and receive feedback.
- A **Strategic plan**—the strategic vision needs to be completed before strategic action is put into place. The activities of this engagement answered the “what and the why,” and will need to be followed by Phase II, which defines the “how and when,” inclusive of policies and implementation.

The CWPE Phase I process involved monthly hybrid meetings (face-to-face and via ZOOM) from August 2022 – April 2023. The consulting team planned and guided monthly structured workgroup meetings from August 2022-April 2023 that intentionally and thoughtfully worked through a process with three components:

- Defining sub-questions about circumstances that can lead to deliberate changes – Enabling Factors,
- Creating macro-level proposals for changes in education subsystems – Recommendations, and
- Providing clarifications for why the recommendation are important for change – Justification points.

More than 40 stakeholders worked diligently and came to a consensus on 62 macro-level recommendations across the five workgroups. The Phase II activities of the CWPE should include a focus on strategic action and the manifestation of outcomes from the proposed recommendations – no one agency or institution can do this work – collaboration and collective impact are required.

School Experience

The School Experience Workgroup focused on developing recommendations on how to ensure citywide systemic, equitable access, and opportunity for an excellent education EXPERIENCE for all students. Nationally known, the City of Saint Louis has a storied history of providing equitable school experiences for children of all backgrounds. Despite the many accomplishments of this district, in recent years, it has faced several challenges, signaling to community leaders and stakeholders the need to engage in an intentional process to reimagine the city's educational ecosystem.

The policy recommendations developed by the School Experience Workgroup focus on providing students with a well-rounded education in a safe environment. Furthermore, the recommendations respond to the historical inequities that have impacted SLPS and helped spur the district to develop and cultivate twenty-first century global citizens. The School Experience Workgroup began by adopting the idea of community schools to inform their policy recommendations. The community schools strategy is a comprehensive approach, operating with the understanding that “learning never happens in isolation” (National Education Association, 2021).

The eight School Experience recommendations respond to two key questions, which are defined as enabling factors, for reimagining a new 21st century, citywide education ecosystem for 21st century children and families:

1. *How do we develop and design the guaranteed traditional and non-traditional a) academic, b) non-academic /extra-curricular, c) social/well-being and d) student-inspired experiences of all children and special groups of children and their families/caregivers with valued Community input, along with school and citywide voice, commitment, and action?*
2. *Which mindsets and values, individually and organizationally, will give us institutional, systemic, and equitable access and opportunity for an excellent educational experience for all students and families/caregivers?*

Community

The Community Workgroup focused on establishing recommendations for how to build strong and effective connections between schools and their communities.

In February and March of 2020, just prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Louis Public Schools hosted “community visioning workshops” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 3) to gain insight from stakeholders on the district's strengths and areas of improvement. Among those stakeholders were parents/guardians, district employees, students, and a few elected officials. Findings from these workshops revealed that many community members saw the district as “challenged, inequitable, and disorganized” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 9), its constituents “underserved, diverse, and hopeful” (pg. 10), and outcomes as “disappointing, failing, and behind” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 10). It is imperative to seek out ways to empower communities and build education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to provide more efficient services, and most importantly, center the voices of those who have been historically marginalized. Schools and education support systems should not move ahead of their communities or establish policies without community input and engagement. Fostering a relationship with school communities is an important first step in working towards educational opportunities and outcomes that reflect a community's needs and culture.



The 12 Community recommendations respond to four key questions, defined as enabling factors, for reimagining a new 21st century citywide education ecosystem for 21st century children and families:

- 1. How should schools be supported through partnerships that address student, family, and caregiver needs?*
- 2. How can a public school be the “hub” that supports neighborhood stability and a culture of thriving?*
- 3. What types of formal agreements with organizations are needed to meet the needs of students, families, and caregivers in their efforts to support student learning?*
- 4. What do students, families, and caregivers need to promote engagement, ownership, and transformative relationships throughout the learning experience?*

Health, Wellness, and Safety

The Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup focused on developing recommendations to ensure that students, families, caregivers, and staff are healthy and safe across physical, mental, and emotional domains. Health is a state of complete physical, social, mental, psychological, and spiritual well-being (World Health Organization, 2006). Wellness is the ability to practice daily, healthy habits. Safety, on the other hand, is the act of being protected from risks or injury. These three areas of focus are interrelated as they constitute a safe and secure environment, essential for student learning. Every student across America deserves a high-quality education in a healthy and safe space. In Saint Louis, it is more important than ever for schools, education support systems, parents, communities, and local and federal governments to prioritize the health, wellness, and safety of students, families, caregivers, and staff.

School-aged children are suffering from mental disorders and substance use and engaging in sexual activities associated with multiple factors, including lack of support in their schools (Kolbe, 2019). Mental health issues take on many different forms within the world today. Whether it be stress, anxiety, depression, or eating disorders, all mental health issues are serious and need attention. Recent tragedies such as acts of targeted school violence, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize the need for, and importance of, safety in school systems. There is an ongoing crisis of community violence in the City of Saint Louis. Addressing the cycle of violence, economic inequalities, education opportunity gaps, and social injustices remains a top priority in urban communities and school districts. According to the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch data, as of December 29, 2022, at least 120 children were shot across the metropolitan area, including 26 who died. Nearly all of them were in Saint Louis.

The safety goals of the Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup include multiple, rapid, implementation strategies that schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can immediately activate.

The 14 Health, Wellness, and Safety recommendations respond to four key questions, defined as enabling factors for reimagining a new 21st century, citywide, education ecosystem for 21st century children and families:

1. *What are the needs, and how can Health, Wellness, and Safety resources, services, and personnel become accessible to all?*
2. *How do children access and receive identified resources and services they need to be healthy, well, and safe?*
3. *How do schools support and uphold the Health, Wellness, and Safety of students, families, caregivers, and staff?*
4. *How do we reduce incidents of youth trauma and violence to keep students, families, caregivers, and staff safe at school, home, and in the community?*

Infrastructure

School infrastructure represents a large element of the improvement of the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. More than 100 years ago, Saint Louis embarked on a revolutionary plan in education that made the city's schools the optimum example of the Midwest and a standard for urban school districts across the nation. Since then, there has been a long history of mismanagement, the effects of urban renewal, gentrification, and the steady declining enrollment of students. (*Public Education Infrastructure Profile: Missouri, 2021*). As in several urban areas, declining enrollment led to the closure of school buildings and the consolidation of existing student populations. Schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must focus on the value of making schools effective for all learners and the urgent need to guarantee the highest value of education. The recommendations from the Infrastructure Workgroup highlight the need to ensure the effective use of public assets in delivering the best education opportunities for all children.

The Infrastructure Workgroup focused on developing recommendations on how to build an efficient and effective school system to meet the community's current and future needs and challenges.

The 12 Infrastructure recommendations respond to three questions that are defined as enabling factors for reimagining a new 21st century, citywide, education ecosystem for 21st century children and families:

1. *Which school designs should be incorporated into all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to support 21st century learning?*
2. *How will the location of school facilities and resources available to them adapt to current and future population trends, community plans, pedagogy/instructional models, while supporting community collaboration?*
3. *How should resources be equitably distributed to support the systems?*



Education Workforce

The Education Workforce Workgroup focused on establishing recommendations for how the education labor market can meet the needs of the schools and students. Within the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis there is an urgent need to prepare, recruit, and retain career educators who are committed to advancing policies and practices to positively impact students from diverse backgrounds. The challenges that the public education systems in the City of Saint Louis have faced, such as COVID-19, social unrest related to the murder of George Floyd, school closures, and ongoing desegregation litigation (Duncan-Shippy, 2023) have necessitated the need to reimagine the possibilities for an innovative and fully-supported education workforce. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic created staffing and personnel issues, including educator shortages, the Education Workforce Workgroup targeted discussion and recommendations on understanding and supporting educators throughout the public education systems in the City. Through an iterative process, the recommendations developed by the Education Workforce Workgroup focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting educators, while ensuring that professional development opportunities are provided to improve overall teaching and learning experiences for students. The set of recommendations offers a robust approach to improve the capacity of public education systems in the City of Saint Louis, while also improving the teaching and learning environments for all Saint Louis students.

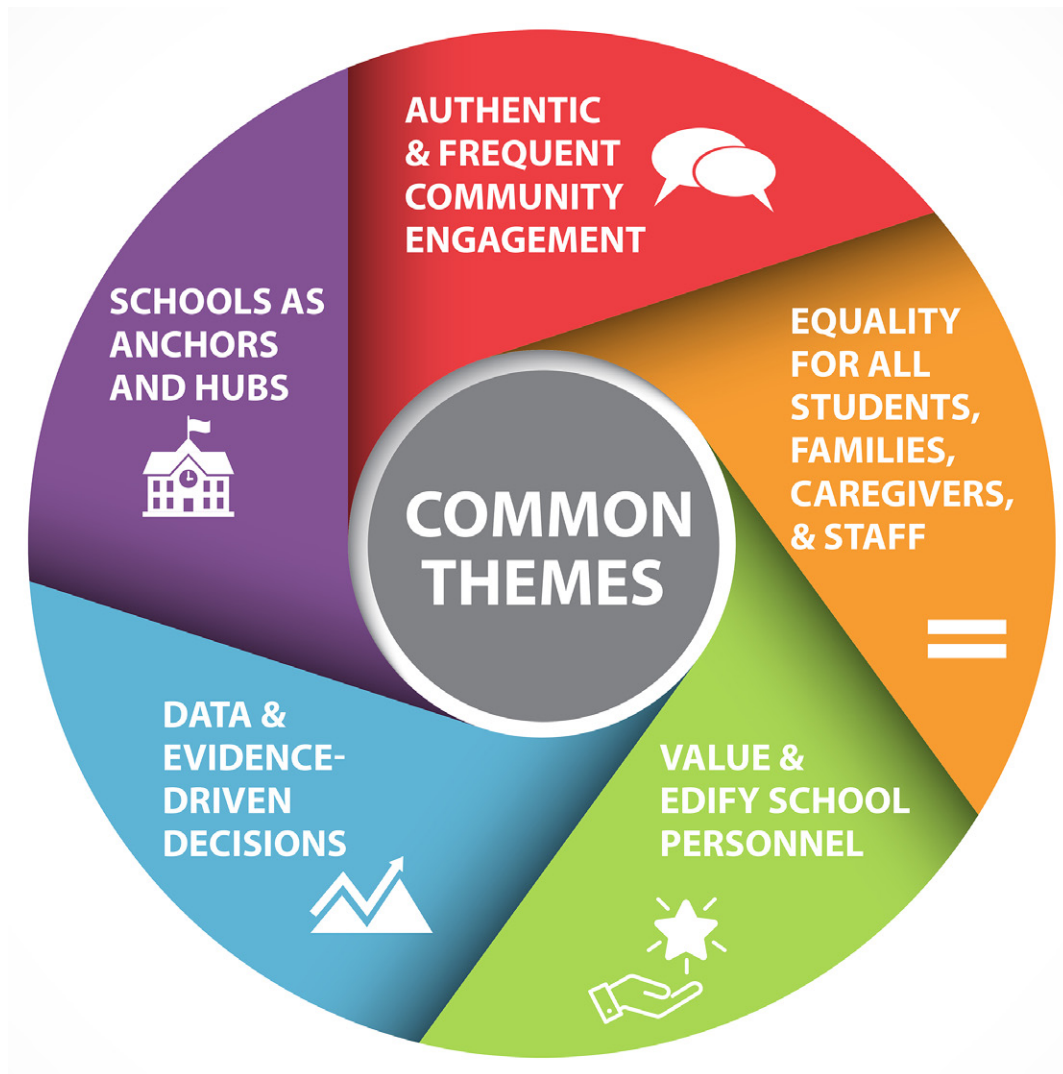
The 16 Education Workforce recommendations respond to four key questions, defined as enabling factors for reimagining a new 21st century citywide, education ecosystem for 21st century children and families:

1. *How do we improve incentives and compensation to attract and recruit a diverse and quality Education workforce?*
2. *How do we improve compensation to retain a diverse and quality Education workforce?*
3. *How do we create an equitable and effective review process for educators?*
4. *How do we assess the needs of the Education workforce?*

Workgroup Themes and Convergence

The Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) process intentionally set the stakeholders in the five respective workgroups on separate and distinct pathways to the overarching goal of building a Blueprint for a new 21st century, education ecosystem for 21st century children and families. For nearly 12 months, the Champions and stakeholders focused on the challenge of not fixing broken pieces from the past, but, instead, reexamining how education ought to be in the future for students, families, caregivers, and staff.

A careful content analysis of the recommendations across the education domains of Community, Education Workforce, Health, Wellness, and Safety, and Infrastructure and School Experience revealed five common and convergent themes:



Five Common Themes across the Workgroups

More than 40 of the 62 recommendations support five convergent themes:

1. Schools should be the Anchors and Hubs of neighborhoods.
2. Authentic and frequent Community Engagement is a driving force for future growth and stability of the city and schools.
3. Equity for all students, families, caregivers, and staff should be centered in all activities.
4. School personnel should be valued and edified.
5. All future decisions about school infrastructure, systems, and operations should be data and evidence-driven.



Evaluation, Lessons Learned, and Recommended Next Steps

Independent Evaluation

The Independent Evaluator found that the project management activities facilitated actionable outcomes, resulting in a blueprint and strategic vision for a new education ecosystem in the City of Saint Louis. Findings from the content analysis concluded that the Carter Team utilized a meeting planning strategy that was collaborative, transparent, and highly iterative. Both incoming and outgoing communication documents indicate that the Carter Team engaged Champions in the development and refinement of meeting agenda items. Additionally, outside of its contractual obligations, the Carter Team established and trained more than 80 stakeholders on the project management and communications cloud-based platform – Basecamp™. The monthly activities and strategies over a 10-month period yielded a strong set of enabling factors and 62 recommendations across the five workgroup domains. Month to month, the prevailing sentiment among workgroup participants was that the Carter Team designed workgroup activities to enable them to accomplish their goals: developing enabling factors, recommendations, and justification points. The reporting and dissemination process was comprehensive, transparent, and reflective of stakeholders' wisdom. The Carter Team developed a reporting and dissemination process to allow for transparency and equitable engagement. All email correspondence was maintained in the secure, cloud-based file hosting service, Dropbox, where all stakeholder communication was stored and accessible, from email transmittals to monthly reports.

The public engagement process was not comprehensively inclusive nor promoted to all residents and stakeholders of the City of Saint Louis. As part of its efforts to incorporate the voices of the most proximal and vulnerable stakeholders, the Carter Team convened a series of public forums as part of the Blueprint for the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE). The purpose of the planned events was to present the work of the CWPE team (Champions, Workgroups, and The Carter Team) to the public and solicit community input, feedback, and involvement going forward. While these events were regarded very favorably by the public members who attended, community members did voice on-going concerns that their involvement was limited solely to public forums.

Lessons Learned

When the Carter Team accepted this call from the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis to establish, guide, and facilitate the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) process, members of the Team saw it as a perfect fit for our business ministry and one of our two corporate pillars: edifying children, youth, and emerging adults. The Board's 2021 Citywide Plan Resolution and similar declarations issued by the Saint Louis Board of Alderman (October 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (January 2022) formalized the idea that the Stakeholders' progress together can only come via a unified vision, a common set of commitments, and clear engagement guidelines. As the Carter Team started this project, its aim was the timely delivery of a set of strategic and futuristic goals and objectives (recommendations) established by each workgroup, shaped by a set of guiding questions, specific to each workgroup. We understood that these outcomes needed to impact community trust, key policy decisions, and subsequent implementation steps.

Moreover, our goal was to lead and guide the Champions and Stakeholders through highly intentional and strategic monthly activities that went beyond a focus on fixing "broken pieces" of an obsolete system to reimagining how operations, systems and structures can be more aligned with the future

of education. We also challenged the groups to think wider than the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to a broader education ecosystem that is cross-sector. More than 50% of the CWPE Stakeholders are current staff and leaders in schools in the City of Saint Louis. They are living daily with a plethora of “broken pieces” in their respective systems and are intuitively attracted to proposals that are close and immediate to their pain and experiences. Consequently, the 62 recommendations across the five workgroups are a mix of (1) focus on how to fix failing processes and structures in the current systems and (2) macro-level recommendations that may be innovative for the education ecosystem in the City of Saint Louis. It is our hope that the strategic action process in Phase II will yield implementation plans, focusing more on disruptive innovation in future systems and operations, rather than repairing obsolete systems and operations.

Recommended Next Steps

The outcomes of this engagement provide the “what and the why,” which will need to be followed by Phase II, which will define the “how and when,” inclusive of policies and implementation. The Carter Team designed the Blueprint process to be followed by strategic implementation. The proposed recommendations cannot be fully actualized without engaging key leaders across the education ecosystem of the City of Saint Louis. We strongly propose to the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis the deployment of a Collective Impact Process. This process was successfully used by Greater Cincinnati to improve student success in dozens of key areas across three large public school districts (<https://www.strivetogether.org/what-we-do/collective-impact/>). No one school system or agency can actualize the recommendations proposed in this Blueprint.



I. BACKGROUND



I.A. A Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) Background: How Did We Get Here?

In late fall of 2019, the Board of Education for the City of Saint Louis (Board) was grappling with the same tough questions that were challenging innumerable school districts across the United States. In the face of a shrinking population of children, stagnant development, declining student enrollment, consolidation of schools, and an expansion of other school models, how do educational systems effectively and equitably provide an excellent education and important services to any child attending, not only a Saint Louis Public School (SLPS), but any school in the City of Saint Louis?

The Board recognized that policy decisions of this magnitude required the active engagement and input of parents, students, and all interested community stakeholders. Emerging Wisdom, a local consulting firm, was hired in 2020 to facilitate a series of meetings with stakeholder groups spanning the community in both the public and private sectors.

Almost a thousand participants provided feedback on SLPS school experiences and answered a series of questions, including their definition of “A System of Excellent Schools.” The Board’s 2021 Citywide Plan Resolution and similar declarations issued by the Saint Louis Board of Alderman (October 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (January 2022) formalized the idea that their collective progress can only happen through a unified vision, a common set of commitments, and clear guidelines of engagement.

The Board’s 2021 Citywide Plan Resolution and similar declarations issued by the Saint Louis Board of Alderman (October 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (January 2022) formalize the idea that our progress together can only come through a **unified vision**, a common set of commitments, and clear guidelines of engagement.

As the Emerging Wisdom’s community engagement process was concluding, COVID-19 impacted the United States, causing the rapid closure of schools in the City of Saint Louis, beginning in March 2020. For the next 18 months SLPS was forced to pivot, reexamine, and reimagine educational services and delivery in the wake of a global pandemic and social unrest. Also, during this time, families, state officials, and other individuals across various ecosystems began to examine the value



and purpose of schools in Saint Louis. The conversations and engagement surrounding the purpose of schools, prior to and during COVID-19, created an opportunity to fully engage in a Citywide Plan for Education in Saint Louis. By June 2022, the Board had established a CWPE Ad Hoc committee, sought and retained a highly experienced community engagement firm, PeopleareEverything.biz, a wholly owned subsidiary of Health In Color, Inc., to design the process and facilitate the multilevel activities of the Citywide Plan for Education. In July 2022, the Stakeholders selected by the Board Ad Hoc committee held their first meeting, and the 12-month process was officially set into motion.

I.B. What is the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE)?

The Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) focuses on *reimagining* what the **education ecosystem** in the City of Saint Louis should look like and the creation of a strategic, macro-level blueprint for what is needed to actualize that vision.

Two key hypotheses to accurately understand how the CWPE works are: 1) obsolescence and 2) evolution.

- 1) The City of Saint Louis, along with numerous cities nationwide, has traditionally addressed outdated structures as if they were simply in need of repair. While a broken system can be improved through additional resources and attention, it would be erroneous to assume that the previous excellence of Saint Louis schools automatically equips them for present and future transformative influences. When society undergoes changes and the established systems, such as education, fail to adapt, these systems become obsolete, operating ineffectively and inefficiently. Given that our society has already experienced significant changes, it is imperative that our educational systems undergo a transformation as well.
- 2) Educational systems need to be designed in a way to prepare students for a rapidly evolving social landscape, while addressing their multitude of needs that influence learning. Through a deliberate process, students can be prepared to successfully transition into adulthood, while having the necessary tools to engage in a highly connected world.

The Citywide Plan for Education IS:

- A **communal process**— the CWPE was informed by a diverse group of Saint Louis Stakeholders selected by the Board Ad Hoc Committee.
- An **intentional fight against obsolescence**— the CWPE aims to *create* a new system for a modern context.
- A **first step** in a multi-faceted process—the CWPE offers a clear vision for what the education ecosystem in Saint Louis should look like in the future,

The Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) is NOT:

- A **Dead-end project**—the CWPE is designed with actionable segments and lays the groundwork for the next steps.
- A **Closed-door process**—the CWPE allowed active engagement with individuals from various backgrounds and regularly and openly engaged the public every other month to share outcomes and receive feedback.
- A **Strategic plan**—the strategic vision needs to be completed before strategic action is put

place. The activities of this engagement answered the “what and the why,” and will need to be followed by Phase II, which defines the “how and when,” inclusive of policies and implementation.

I. C. How was the Citywide Plan for Education Completed?

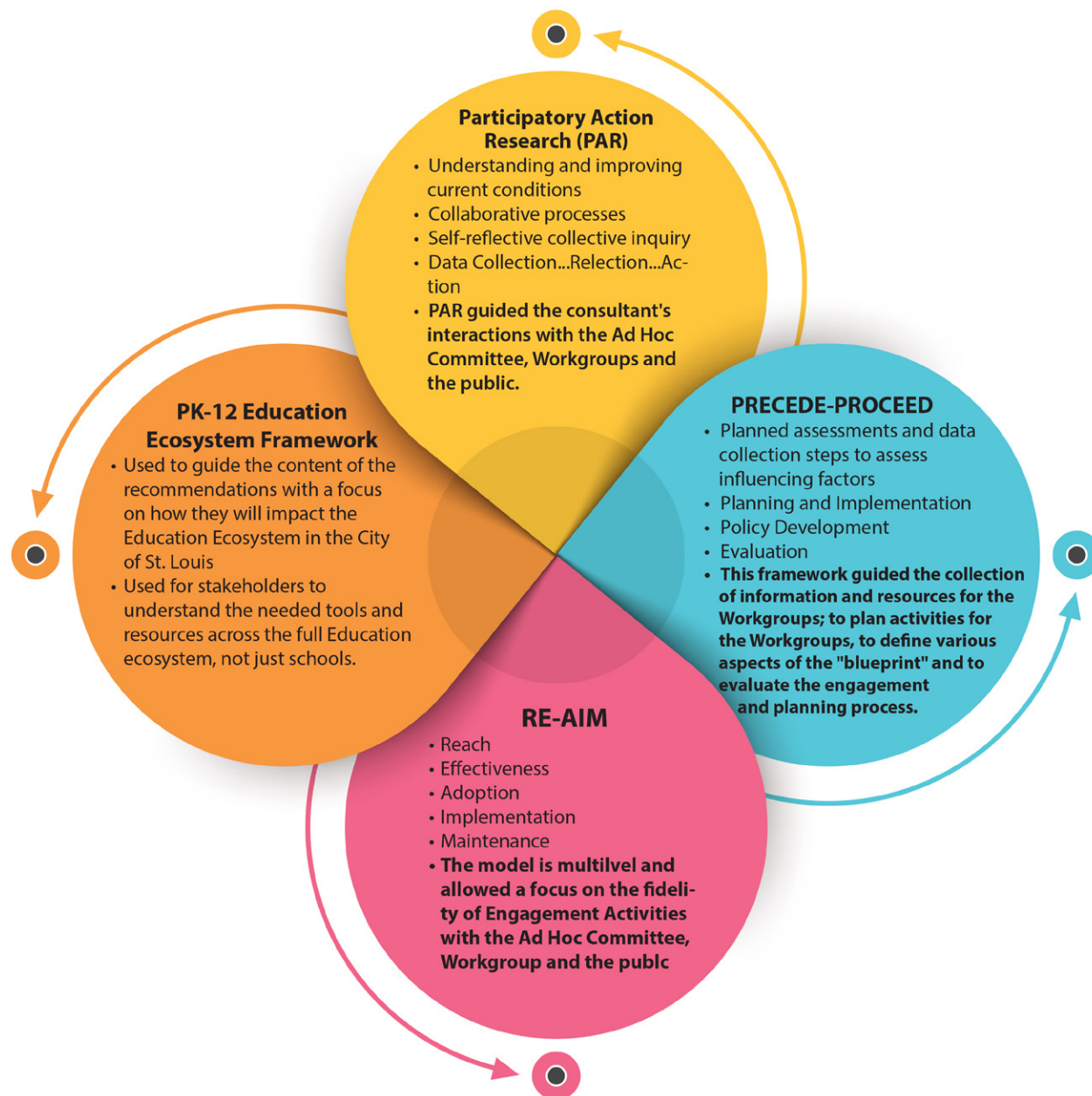


Figure 1 – Theoretical Frames

The consulting team used multiple theoretical frameworks to guide the CWPE process: 1) Participatory Action Research (PAR), 2) PRECEDE-PROCEED Model, 3) RE-AIM, and (4) PK-12 Education Ecosystem. These frameworks informed (1) The engagement with the Champions (2) the development of content, protocols, and activities for the workgroups, (3) and the process and impact assessments of planning. The information in **Figure 1** illustrates the integration of these frameworks into the planning process.

The process offered a pathway for engagement and change and included five key activities:

1. The Board established an Ad Hoc Committee for the Citywide Plan for Education.
2. In May 2022, the Ad Hoc Committee, led by the Chairperson, identified and secured a commitment from an accomplished consulting firm with expertise in community engagement, research, and policy analysis – PeopleareEverthing.biz.
3. The Chairperson, with the support of leaders in the Saint Louis Public Schools, identified a diverse and committed group of multisector volunteers. Two categories of volunteers devoted significant effort over a 10-month period:
 - A. *Champions*: A Champion is a person who fights or argues for a cause on behalf of someone else. In the context of this project, the Champions led a diverse team of Stakeholders to create responsive and justifiable recommendations that formed the foundation of the Blueprint.
 - B. *Workgroup Stakeholders*: An individual, group, or organization that is impacted by the outcome of a project or business venture. In the context of this project, Stakeholders from various sectors of the Saint Louis community gathered monthly to collectively reimagine the education system in the City of Saint Louis and construct policy recommendations that would guide the education ecosystem.

The logic model for the workgroup process is shown in **Figure 2:**

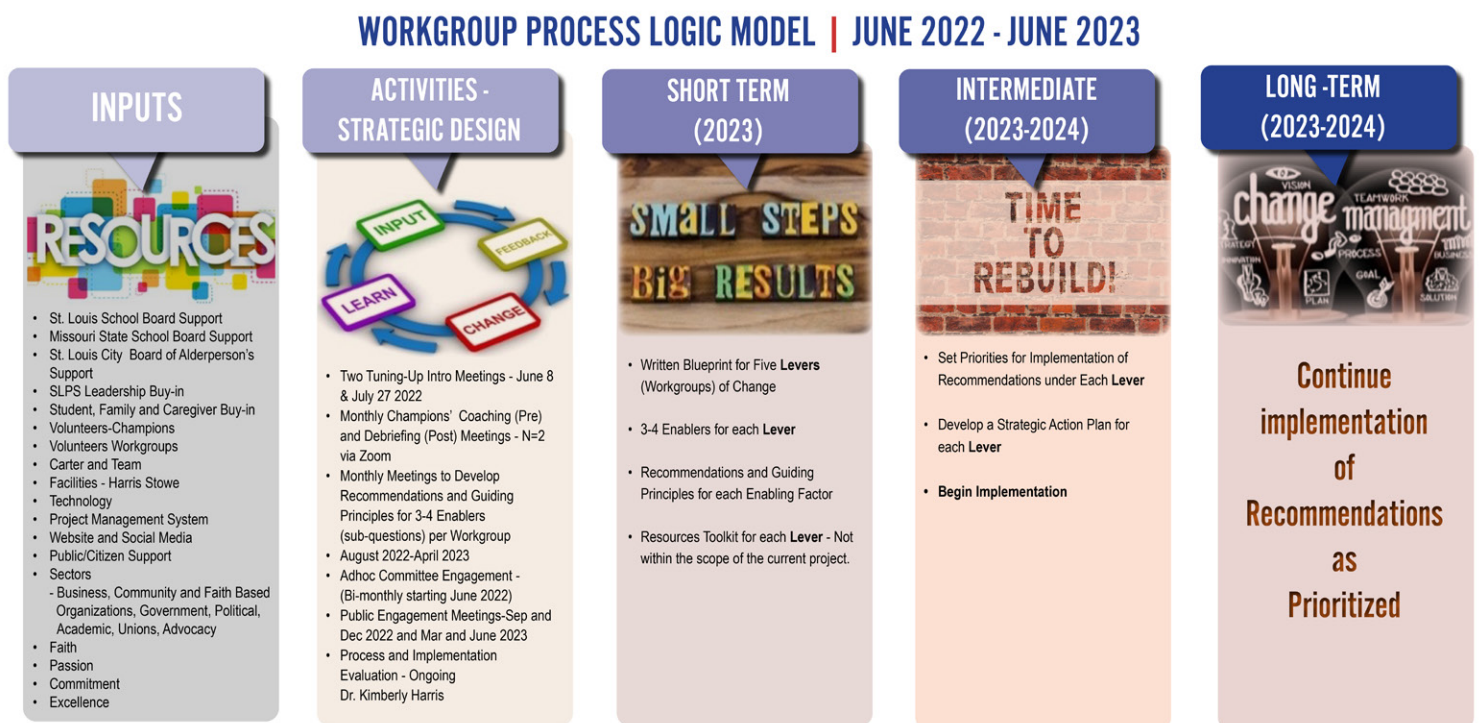


Figure 2 – Workgroup Process Logic Model

4. In June 2022, the lead consultant organized and activated the five workgroups with six to ten diverse Stakeholders led by two Champions. The Board Ad Hoc committee pre-approved the following workgroup domains, based on the outcomes of the 2019 community needs assessment:

- 1) School Experience
- 2) Community
- 3) Health, Wellness, and Safety
- 4) Infrastructure
- 5) Education Workforce

The workgroups were the *levers of change* (a means or agency for persuading or achieving a desired end). A description of each workgroup is presented in **Figure 3**.



Figure 3 – Workgroup Descriptions and Champions

5. The consulting team planned and guided monthly structured workgroup meetings from August 2022-April 2023 that intentionally and thoughtfully worked through a process with three components:
 - Defining sub-questions about circumstances that can lead to deliberate changes – Enabling Factors.
 - Creating macro-level proposals for changes in education subsystems –Recommendations
 - Providing clarifications for why the recommendation are important for change – Justification points.

OUR PROCESS

We are going slow...to go fast...to get BIG results!

Phase 1 – Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE)

Phase 2 – Strategic Action

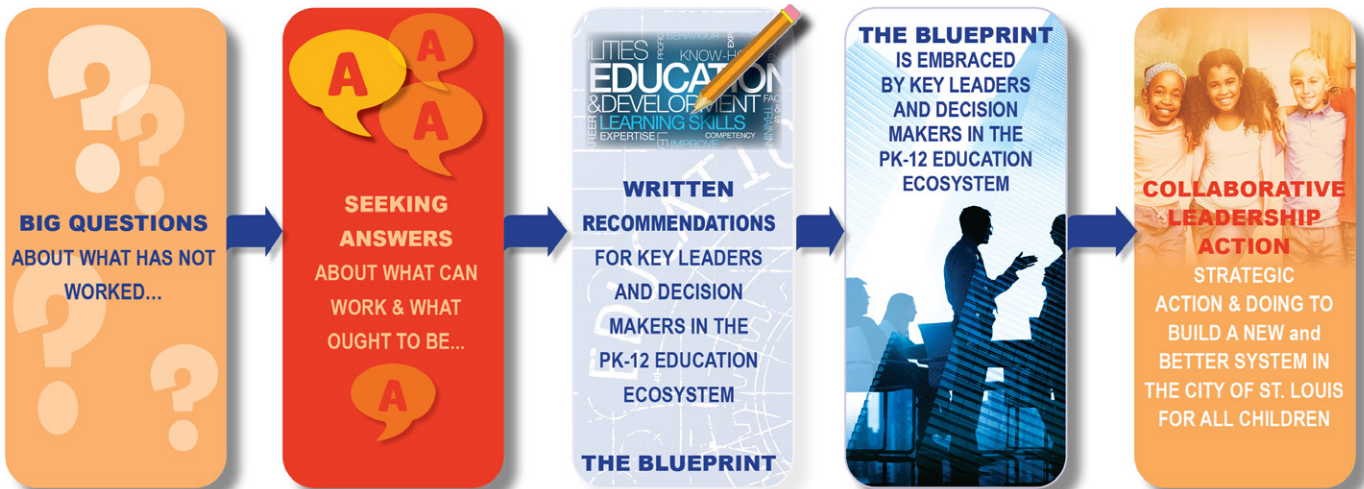
REVIEW & FEEDBACK

ENGAGEMENT WITH PUBLIC, PARENTS, STUDENTS & EDUCATORS

June 2022 – June 2023

July 2023

Aug 2023–Jul 2025



The St. Louis Board of Education is the Convener of All Stakeholders and Resources for these Actions.

The board of education shall have general and supervising control, government and management of the public schools and public school property of the district in the city and shall exercise generally all powers in the administration of the public school system therein.

Figure 4– Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the CWPE

6. An overview of the Phase I and proposed Phase II processes of the CWPE are shown in **Figure 4.**



I.D. The Structure of the Blueprint

The heart of the Blueprint is the 62 macro-level recommendations across the five workgroup domains. The recommendations focus on all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, not just on one school system. Each workgroup chapter consists of a specific overarching policy-level question researched and developed by the respective Stakeholders of each workgroup, using data and literature from the consulting team. The workgroup members then moved to developing sub-questions, which are labeled as enabling factors. Recommendations were developed following specific guidelines from the consulting team that included these seven criteria:

1. Recommendations are suggestions of specific actions, strategies, and interventions to address particular issues based on evidence and data.
2. The audience for the CWPE recommendations will be various organizations in the entire education ecosystem.
3. The recommendations should carefully and strategically align with the enabling factor (sub-question).
4. Recommendations should be one-sentence, succinct, and start with an action verb (i.e., create, establish, fund, facilitate, coordinate).
5. Recommendations should use a SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely). Each recommendation must be followed by a well-developed two-paragraph justification, grounded in data, evidence, and/or literature (grey or peer-reviewed).
6. In addition to being SMART, recommendations must be prepared with an understanding and knowledge of the Forces of Change (legislation, population shifts, technology, economic ups and downs).
7. Recommendations must also focus on timing. Often, solutions to identified problems are sequential, building upon intermediate steps. Recommendations are often framed as near-term (e.g., six to twelve months) and longer term (e.g., one to three years).

The chapters that follow include the recommendations and support content (justifications, forces of change, and promising practices for each respective workgroup) in the following order: Chapter II – School Experience, Chapter III – Community, Chapter IV – Health, Wellness, and Safety, Chapter V – Infrastructure, Chapter VI – Education Workforce. Additionally, Chapter VII, Common Themes and Convergence, discusses the common themes and select recommendations that converge across the five workgroups. The Blueprint concludes with Chapter VIII, which offers responses to the process and implementation evaluation questions, along with a discussion of lessons from the process and proposed next steps.

II. SCHOOL EXPERIENCE (SE)



II.A. School Experience Context

Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) have been at the forefront of U.S. public education in several ways. The district was responsible for the first public kindergarten school in the country, the first public high school for African-Americans, west of the Mississippi River, as well as having the first school in the U.S. aimed specifically on differently-abled African-American children (A Timeline of Saint Louis Public Schools, 2022). Nationally known, the City of Saint Louis has a storied history of providing equitable school experiences for children of all backgrounds. Despite the many accomplishments of the district, in recent years, it has faced several challenges, signaling to community leaders and stakeholders the need to engage in an intentional process to reimagine the city’s educational ecosystem.

The School Experience Workgroup envisions its work as the nucleus within the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) Blueprint, providing an important foundation for recommendations from other workgroups. Former Saint Louis Board of Education member, Dorothy Rohde-Collins (2022), wrote an op-ed stating that “the policies that guide public education are often reactive to a singular point in time and written without regard for historical context or future implications.” The policy recommendations developed by the School Experience Workgroup focus on providing students with a well-rounded education in a safe environment. Furthermore, the recommendations respond to the historical inequities that have impacted SLPS and help spur the district to develop and cultivate 21st century global citizens.

The School Experience Workgroup began with adopting the idea of community schools to inform their policy recommendations. The community schools’ strategy is a comprehensive approach, operating with the understanding that “learning never happens in isolation” (National Education Association, 2021). A community school “organizes the resources within the school and community around student success” (Quinn & Blank, 2020, p. 45) and builds upon a foundation of a strong instructional program that uses an asset-based approach to meet the specific needs of students and community members. Furthermore, community schools are created and run by the people who know the children best – families, educators, community organizations, local government, and students themselves (National Education Association, 2021).



Thus, it is imperative that there be a long-term commitment between all levels of the educational system, as well as collaborative local leadership to ensure program success and longevity for City of Saint Louis students, families, caregivers, and staff (Quinn & Blank, 2020).

In addition to the adoption of a community schools strategy, the School Experience Workgroup developed a ‘school experience’ working definition to guide its ongoing work. This definition focuses on understanding how students make meaning of school-related interactions within and around their schools and requires a progressive and holistic approach to developing and adopting necessary policy recommendations.

The student-centered recommendations developed by the School Experience Workgroup focus on moving beyond student proficiency and aligning resources and tools around student growth (Phillips, 2022). The recommendations also reflect the unique strengths and needs of all students. In addition to identifying specific student needs, the recommendations propose right-sized schools and the need for clusters of schools that are guided by community collaboration. Ultimately, the recommendations made by the School Experience Workgroup aim to ensure access to resources and equitable educational experiences for all students, including those not enrolled in SLPS, in the City of Saint Louis.

II.B. School Experience Overarching Question

The School Experience Workgroup, championed by Dr. Candice Carter-Oliver, CEO of Confluence Academies, and Dr. Jere Hochman, Retired Network Superintendent SLPS established recommendations to help ensure citywide, systemic, equitable access and opportunity for each student to achieve an excellent education experience. After many meetings and efforts, the workgroup agreed on eight recommendations.

II.C. School Experience Enabling Factors (EF), Recommendations(R), and Associated Justifications

SE-EF1 – How do we develop and design the guaranteed traditional and non-traditional a) academic, b) non-academic /extra-curricular, c) social/well-being and d) student-inspired experiences of all children and special groups of children and their families/caregivers with valued Community input; school; and citywide voice, commitment, and action be?

SE-R1: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must explore and establish community school models and work with key community stakeholders and regional economic ecosystem executives to ensure access to resources and equitable educational experiences within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Community schools serve as a comprehensive response to economically disenfranchised communities that are disconnected from quality educational opportunities due to systemic poverty, inequitable policies, and historical racism. These schools utilize a holistic approach to educate the whole child, while also connecting family, school, and community resources. The community school approach does not just address the needs of students, but also those embedded within the community. Typically, these needs fall within the following categories: health and social services, community engagement, academics, and youth and community development. To effectively ensure access to resources and equitable educational experiences, schools and education support systems must intentionally mobilize

various stakeholders (institutions, non-profit organizations, community members, etc.) to identify resources, assets, and priorities. Mobilization can create an environment for shared responsibility and investment in positive educational outcomes for students, and the community.

The community schools model focuses on doing things with people rather than to people. This approach values the input of all participants, regardless of community status, background, or socioeconomic status. The community schools model also incorporates the voices of students, parents, caretakers, and community members to design quality and efficient educational systems that create additional (or new) educational opportunities. Over the past 10 years, numerous studies have shown the efficacy and effectiveness of the community schools model (Quinn & Beck, 2020). Evidence-based practices, aligned with the standards of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are common markers among community schools. Studies have also shown improvements in overall student outcomes can be directly correlated to the community schools model. Additionally, opportunities exist outside of student learning alone, such as integrated health and social supports, along with authentic family and community engagement to provide support for responding to the assets and needs of a community.

SE-R2: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must mandate funding equity and implement best practices to provide guaranteed school experiences and reconnection to schools for all within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: In 2022, the U.S. Department of Education invited applications for \$68 million in grant funding for community schools. In the same year, President Biden and Congress increased federal funding for community schools, dedicating almost \$468 million in 2023 to community schools alone. The Federal investment in community schools signals that ongoing development and sustainability of community schools remains an important policy priority. Communities are still powerful entities when it comes to providing the support and economic investment that is necessary at the local level. Given that community schools operate in an environment requiring a rapid respond to changing needs, the creation of systems, policies, and practices that empower stakeholders to explore a changing context remains a priority. This allows partners to avoid funding shortfalls and to pursue new opportunities. Consistent financing of a community school's infrastructure is vital to its success, including short- and long-term funding that combines public and private investment.

Transparency around data and results is also a key factor in sustainable funding. There should be effective systems in place to share information with families and caregivers as well as other stakeholders invested in community schools. Data shared with local leaders, coupled with advocacy efforts from community members, can be a positive influence for others to work collaboratively around improving educational outcomes. Effective communication strategies, shaped primarily by local stakeholders, has been proven to be an effective measure in achieving equitable funding, fill in gaps of services needed in communities, and establish policies set forth by community members, school leaders, and leaders of various public service groups.

SE-R3: The Board, with input, along with Public Education Systems' Officials in the City of Saint Louis, and key stakeholders must institute (in policy) a citywide system of optimizing right-sized schools and school operations using a phased approach within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: In 2021, Saint Louis Public Schools planned to reduce the number of schools in the district. Declining enrollment over the years had forced SLPS to initiate the necessary steps



towards finding ways to cutting costs and decreasing operational expenditures. Having fewer buildings to maintain means more money available for teaching and learning experiences for students. It also provides more funding to school personnel such as nurses and counselors, along with funding for additional educational opportunities including elective classes and Advanced Placement studies.

While communities may lose some of their identity when a neighborhood school closes, rightsizing has its benefits. Through rightsizing, defined as adjusting education delivery models to current realities and evolving environmental factors, schools can sharpen their focus on objectives and learning goals to benefit all students. Through rightsizing and the development of community schools, students, families, and caregivers can better access learning and other social service supports in one place. Students with special needs can have increased access to Special Education teachers, speech language therapists, as well as occupational and physical therapists.

SE-R4: Appointed stakeholders must establish geographic clusters of neighborhoods (“villages”) to:

1. ensure advocacy, agency, and access for all children and families and
2. designate a school building as a “hub” within each neighborhood to (a) coordinate services and programs, (b) implement schools’ communications and efficient transportation, and (c) establish neighborhood pride within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Creating partnerships between schools and other social sectors provides opportunities for communities to thrive and flourish. Distributing services from a central “hub” can accommodate early childhood and adult education, recreational activities, libraries, information services, and health and wellness initiatives.

Historically, discussions around the purpose of schooling have focused on teaching and learning, otherwise known as the ‘inputs’ of schooling. However, there is a need to envision schools as critical organizations that can provide holistic opportunities and services to improve the health and well-being of students, families, and community members. As student enrollment continues to decline in the City of Saint Louis, community schools have the potential to meet the current needs of the broader community. Ideally, a “two-way hub” utilizes a school’s curriculum and learning activities as a connector to community development. Then, the community provides input on the learning activities that should be embedded in a school’s curriculum, along with teaching protocols to benefit local students. This strengthens community-school engagement, allowing deep integration of high-quality learning and schooling, wrap-around health and wellbeing services, adult engagement for families and caregivers, and extended engagement and enrichment activities.

SE-R5: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must ensure maximum funding for mandated services for special groups of students (English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SPED), and Free and Reduced Lunch (F&RL)). All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must also reinforce continuity and quality of programs and services for minoritized students, students in transition, early childhood, and newcomers’ programs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: To ensure maximum funding for mandated services for special groups of students, schools and education support systems should provide detailed data, disaggregated by race, gender, disability, income, and other relevant factors. While schools regularly collect this sort of

data, additional data at the macro level (housing, trauma/mental health, poverty, etc.) can also be beneficial to secure funding from various partners within the ecosystem.

Data systems and subsequent protocols provide access to important information and allow transparency in educational decision-making. Schools and relevant partners should have access to data, and policies should be created to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, agreements about funding should be in place to share necessary information to provide services to students in special groups.

SE-EF2 – What mindsets and values, individually and organizationally, will give us institutional, systemic, and equitable access and opportunity for an excellent educational experience for all students and families/caregivers?

SE-R6: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement strategies for systemic staffing and teacher and staff advocacy, efficacy, career development, respect, and teacher care within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: When schools have systemic staffing shortages, both students and educators suffer. Students with special needs are among the most adversely affected. Special needs students need additional investments to support ongoing learning and provide equitable systems, which can improve the overall school experience. Additionally, if students lack reliable transportation, due to a shortage of bus drivers, they are absent and miss out on instruction. Lack of substitute teachers or a deeper bench of educators puts a strain on schools to staff classrooms, potentially reducing extracurricular activities or eliminating various learning opportunities.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, schools have struggled with staffing classrooms. Some of the reasons for the staffing shortages include teacher salaries, student behavior, and the overall work culture and environment. Budget pressures from declining enrollment, which Saint Louis is currently experiencing, as well as rising inflation costs can make hiring high-quality teachers difficult. Thus, it is imperative to demonstrate how school personnel are valued. Under a community school approach, education system leaders should encourage autonomy among school and department leaders to find different strategies to meet specific and immediate needs relating to staffing.

Other means to address teacher staffing shortages are to create alternative pathways to teaching certification and licensure. Creating a career development pipeline can be utilized to make substitute teachers permanent, bring teaching assistants into full certification, and attract retirees into the classroom and other positions throughout the school building. Additionally, increasing the daily pay of bus drivers, food service workers, and visiting educators are effective strategies to address staffing shortages.

SE-R7: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must facilitate citywide 1) understanding of how Schools work and 2) literal adoption of optimum school experience principles within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Schools and education support systems in Saint Louis should develop several intentional strategies to increase public awareness and understanding of a more ideal school experience. Workshops, public service announcements (print/tv/radio/internet), community town



halls, and other forums to disseminate information can be important levers to facilitate change in Saint Louis. Public awareness should be offered around these key topics: student rights and protections, the role of the Federal government, the role of the Missouri State Department of Education, state funding and revenue, personnel and compensation procedures, and the organization and responsibilities of the local school board. Addressing these topic areas would help solidify public support and engage the public in meaningful ways.

In the next phase of the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE), stakeholders in the City of Saint Louis education ecosystem should work to create school experience principles to address some of the following pressing issues: attracting and retaining the best teachers and principals in citywide schools, access to early learning for all children, more responsive and structured efforts and services for students, families, and caregivers where they live, and strategic action around changing how residents think about public education. Developing quality approaches can serve as guideposts for creating more equitable and quality school experiences for students, families, and caregivers.

SE-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must set policy/protocol to monitor equity, quality, and voice implementing school experiences for all children and parent/caregivers at primary and secondary levels within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Schools and education support systems in Saint Louis must first identify the current school climate domains and conditions of learning before implementing systems to improve school experiences. Gathering input from families, caregivers, and other stakeholders should facilitate a data-driven process, leading to data-informed decision making around the necessary programmatic interventions necessary to improve student growth and outcomes. Developing strong partnerships under the community schools model increases the potential for more positive educational outcomes.

Implementing the recommendations on the school experience should be an ongoing process with education system officials and community stakeholders. This should be done annually, focusing on exploration and adoption of strategies, program installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability. The ongoing collection of data creates room for revising, adjusting, and making other modifications as needed. For full transparency, schools and education support systems must also develop a communication plan that documents and describes the process. Developing a shared vision and an outline of goals will ensure equity, equality, and voice among all stakeholders.

After each implementation phase, there should be ongoing professional development and training activities, technical assistance and support, and protocols for ongoing monitoring (and review) to assess the overall fidelity and viability of students' school experiences.



II.D. School Experience Forces of Change

Forces of Change are the external dynamics that may affect the context in which the community and education ecosystem operates. A primary question is considered – “What is occurring or might occur that affects this domain of education in the City of Saint Louis?” Improving the school experience for all communities in the City of Saint Louis requires responding to the ongoing societal, economic, political, technological, environmental, and legal contexts. Here is an overview of these implications:

1. Societal Implications: The school experience is both informed and impacted by a broader community in which an educational system is embedded. Schools and public education support systems must be highly mindful of such when engaging in all forms of decision-making.
 - A. School experiences and voices of students, families, and caregivers are enhanced when adopting the community schools’ mantra of doing things with people, as opposed to doing things to people.
 - B. In addition to academics, community schools create opportunities for integrated health and social supports that clearly align with the needs and assets of the community.
 - C. Education systems should work to address any language and cultural barriers. By developing a system of consistent engagement and interaction together, schools and communities can welcome families in a consistent and culturally appropriate manner.
2. Economic Implications: Funding is a primary source of concern when addressing school experiences. Schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis should be aware of and pursue all available funding opportunities. This maximizes Federal, state, and local resources to enhance the school experience for students, families, and caregivers.
 - A. From 2022 to 2023, the Federal government has increased Federal funding for community schools by \$400 billion. This speaks to the efficacy of already existing community schools and the Federal government’s commitment to future investment.
 - B. While Federal funding is a significant asset to community schools’ funding, sustained systems of local community and economic ecosystem are still required.
 - C. Systems, policies, and procedures should empower stakeholders to explore the ever-changing context of public education. This helps to avoid funding shortfalls, through consistent and deliberate exploration of new funding opportunities; these are vital to the school system’s success.
 - D. Community schools should explore a mixed funding approach, including short- and long-term funding, as well as funding from different private and public sources to create a secure funding base.



- E. Transparency in data also lends itself to sustaining a secure funding base. Student-centered data informs opportunities for funding students in special groups (unhoused, English language learners, gifted, etc.).

3. Political Implications: Using a community school model creates a more participatory process in advocacy and political engagement for students, families, and caregivers. This inclusive approach may involve more political actors, which can create greater equitable engagement. However, it can also create an opening for too many outside voices (beyond Saint Louis or Missouri) that are unfamiliar with and disconnected from local issues.

- A. Advocacy is necessary at all levels: Federal, state, and local, and in smaller communities. Creating advocacy alliances at all levels enables community schools to be a part of a broader network that can help influence the local school board, city, and state policies, while providing additional resources that can lead to improved outcomes.
- B. Given the current political climate, especially as it relates to public education, working to adopt community schools can serve as a welcoming opportunity for equitable and meaningful engagement.

4. Technological Implications: The utilization of technology can enhance the school experience for all students, families, and caregivers. Under the community schools model, technology can be leveraged to advance teaching and learning opportunities, information dissemination, and respond to constituents' needs.

- A. The use of current technology is an important tool to connect with students, families, and caregivers. However, there are still important forms of less modern communications to disseminate information. This can include tv/radio/print, town halls, and the use of well-connected community organizations, which may have better tools to connect with special groups.
- B. Public education systems should utilize the benefits of technology to connect with students, families, and caregivers who may not have access to traditional forms of communication due to language barriers, lack of disability accommodations, or other factors leading to an information disconnect.

5. Environmental Implications: The school experience should consider environmental factors that exist inside and outside of the school context to improve the educational well-being of all students. While it is difficult to prioritize one over the other, the school experience should dedicate equal time, effort, and resources to both, to ensure a safe and meaningful learning and working environment.

- A. Schools and education support systems should first identify the school climate and conditions of learning prior to implementing protocols to enhance the school experience.
- B. Evidence-based policies and protocols based on identified needs contribute to learning environments where all students can thrive and achieve.
- C. To demonstrate that school personnel are valued and to boost morale, schools and education support systems should look to create a career development pipeline, alternative pathways to teacher certification, and ways to increase compensation.

6. Legal Implications: All policies and procedures adopted to enhance the school experience for students, families, and caregivers must follow all local, state, and Federal laws.

- A. Ongoing collection of data that allows for revisions, adjustments, and other modifications must be done in a manner where vulnerable parties are protected, in alignment with current laws and statutes.
- B. Funding agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) should be initiated to provide structured services with measurable outcomes for various students, families, and caregivers.

II.E. School Experience Promising Practices

Out of the nearly 100,000 public schools nationwide, 5,000 of them are community schools. The community schools model has achieved organizational and academic success when implemented properly across the country. The community school model strengthens the family and caregiver partnership within the educational system by promoting equity and positive schooling experiences. Community schools leverage partnerships with local community organizations, faith-based institutions, various government entities, and other relevant stakeholders. Using data and community wisdom, these schools seek to enhance whole child learning experiences, including socio-emotional health, wellness, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Promising practices of community school models provide a snapshot of public education systems across the country that have demonstrated success enacting this model of schooling.

Oakland Unified School District (Oakland, CA)

In 2011, Oakland transformed its entire school district to a community schools model. It began this initiative by first engaging local organizations to build partnerships. Organizations learned to be accountable to one another and mobilize their resources. Building its vision of community schools together and continuing to work with those same groups provided stability for the schools over time. As a result, Oakland entered into an agreement with Alameda County (where Oakland is located) specifying how district and county agencies will support community schools in Oakland Unified (Jacobson, 2022).

Hartford Public Schools (Hartford, CT)

The Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, Dr. Torres-Rodriguez sought to deepen the knowledge and understanding of current district staff by using professional development opportunities. To best serve community schools, it is imperative that district level staff, as well as school personnel, understand how this model and strategy inform their responsibilities. As a result, the district was better able to align and implement best practices to ensure the success and sustainability of community schools within the system (Jacobson, 2022).

Metro Nashville Public Schools (Nashville, TN)

This school district in Nashville maximized its ability to fund community schools by using a variety of funding sources. Its use of Federal funds through programs like Race to the Top and the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund aided the development of community schools. Using community grants, local school budgets, as well as district budgets allowed Nashville to layer and diversify its funding sources (Jacobson, 2022).



Prince George's County Public Schools (Prince George's County, MD)

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is the second largest school district in the State of Maryland, located just outside of Washington, DC. The State of Maryland passed landmark legislation by prioritizing community schools as a statewide initiative to best support students, families, and caregivers. This policy turns schools with high concentrations of poverty into community schools. As a result, PGCPS has dedicated district personnel, as well as an administrative policy mandating a steering committee to provide guidance while transitioning into a community school model (Jacobson, 2022).

Rightsizing

A crucial aspect needed to pursue community schools is rightsizing. Rightsizing, distinct from downsizing (which lays off employees and cuts costs) restructures goals and strategies. Public education systems across the Nation have adopted concepts of rightsizing to ensure sustainability, with the most common justification being enrollment declines. Cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit have all undertaken their own version of rightsizing to address the changing dynamics that exist within their urban education systems. In 2013, the Chicago Board of Education voted to close 49 schools, the largest school closure to date. Rightsizing is an act of self-preservation for many urban districts, and Saint Louis has sought to maintain its ability to provide quality education to its students by closing several schools over time. Though rightsizing can be upsetting for impacted residents, it creates an opportunity to reimagine and transform current schooling to develop well-resourced community schools (Slavic, 2019).

Dayton Public Schools (Dayton, OH)

During the 2017-2018 school year, Dayton began the process of rightsizing its district. Through an internal review, along with garnering input from various community stakeholders including parents, organizations, and a 20 member task force, the district embarked on a three-year plan. This plan included: closing buildings, combining elementary school buildings, updating the curriculum, adding staff, and continuing to monitor enrollment to ascertain if more buildings in the future needed to be closed (Slavic, 2019).

Kansas City Public Schools (Kansas City, MO)

From 2000 to 2010, student enrollment plummeted from 30,000 to 17,000. Over 70% of its schools had student proficiency lower than 25% on statewide assessments. Additionally, Kansas City Public Schools was faced with a projected deficit of \$8.5 million dollars. In this case, Kansas City was dealing with dire circumstances that would impact the sustainability and efficiency of its district. Through rightsizing, Kansas City restructured the entire organization of the district through examining programming, revenue, and expenditures that matched changes in student population (Slavic, 2019).

Glossary

Ecosystem: a community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment.

Equitable: fair and reasonable; treating everyone in an equal way.

Holistic approach: to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental needs; the support should also consider their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing.

Hub: the central and most important part of a particular place or activity.

Nucleus: the central and most important part of an object, movement, or group, forming the basis for its activity and growth.

Reimagining: to recreate or form a new concept about the way something should be.

Rightsizing: the process of restructuring an organization in order to improve performance and meet its needs.



III. COMMUNITY (CO)



III.A. Community Context

In February and March of 2020, just prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Louis Public Schools hosted “community visioning workshops” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 3) to gain insight from stakeholders on the district’s strengths and areas needing improvement. Among those stakeholders were parents/guardians, district employees, students, and a few elected officials. Findings from these workshops revealed that many community members saw the district as “challenged, inequitable, and disorganized” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 9), its constituents “underserved, diverse, and hopeful” (pg. 10), and outcomes as “disappointing, failing, and behind” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 10).

Far too often, negative perceptions of minoritized communities become a broadly accepted narrative of their identity and needs. These preconceived notions and beliefs about the community fuel the deficit mindset around the children and their environment. Thus, it is imperative to seek out ways to empower communities and build education support systems in the City of Saint Louis that will provide more efficient services, and most importantly, center the voices of those who have historically been marginalized. “Districts should not get out ahead of their communities or set policies for their communities...they should be networked with authentic community leaders and move toward change with their communities” (Horsford, Scott & Anderson, pg. 10). This kind of shared governance demonstrates a different level of commitment and investment. Moreover, it honors the feedback received in the district’s April 2020 report derived from the community visioning workshop, which identified a need to “increase parent, family and community involvement in decision-making” (Emerging Wisdom LLC, pg. 35, which was one of their top five requests).

Fostering a relationship with school communities is an important first step in working towards educational opportunities and outcomes that are reflective of a community’s needs and culture. “Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)...good schools were closed or reconstituted for low test scores or under-enrollment, even though they were responsive to their community and served their students

well” (Horsford, Scott & Anderson, pg. 6). The work of the Community Workgroup aims to provide a roadmap for schools and education support systems to actualize a vision for students and families, “a promise of a neighborhood school for every child that would uphold a great education and serve as an anchor of community identity” (Strauss, 2017).

III.B. Community Overarching Question

The Community Workgroup, championed by Ms. Wray Clay, Vice President United Way of Greater Saint Louis (Retired), and Dr. Katrice Noble, Deputy Director of the Lift for Life Academy established recommendations for building strong and effective connections between the Saint Louis schools and communities. After many meetings and efforts, the workgroup agreed on 12 recommendations.

III.C. Community Enabling Factors(EF), Recommendations(R), and Associated Justifications

CO-EF1. How should schools be supported through partnerships that address student, family and caregiver needs?

CO-R1: Saint Louis Public School Officials, Saint Louis City Officials and participating partners must evaluate and address the challenges that hinder facilitation of partnerships and implementation of recommendations within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Political “misalignment” between state authorities and local communities results in the latter being less engaged in collaborative efforts in policymaking and thus vulnerable to potentially hostile policies. Disconnecting community from active engagement in decision-making hinders civic capacity within public education systems. Even in favorable cohesive environments, the lack of funding to support initiatives can hinder implementation of desired policies and recommendations. School improvement is deeply connected to the politics of school funding. Relying solely on local property taxes for educational funding can lead to inequitable outcomes for low-income communities. As a result, the fight for adequate school funding often occurs in state legislatures and the judicial system. Building an alliance between communities and local and state stakeholders must create a more cohesive collaborative effort to secure adequate funding to enable the transformation of public education systems. This creates a welcoming environment to future potential allies and partnerships to continue building upon improvements.

CO-R2: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with appropriate partner organizations to create a unified, accessible, data-driven system to identify and address student, family, and caregiver needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Schools can make student, family, and caregiver engagement more equitable and effective by implementing strategies that reflect needs and values of the community. Ongoing needs assessments and reflection activities can be modified over time as community needs change, through the development of a long-term strategy that includes a clear articulation of vision, establishment of standards and accountability, support to encourage new thought processes and ideas, examination and modification of policies as needed, reallocation of resources when necessary, and the monitoring of progress and evaluating success over time. To effectively meet the needs of students, families, and caregivers, public education systems



must ensure that communication is accessible to all. Officials must address barriers related to language and cultural norms and values. Schools and education support systems must also work to welcome families in consistent and culturally appropriate ways. An agreed-upon process for interaction between the school and students, families, and caregivers should be established, involving community advocates and liaisons trusted by the community. Additionally, a bridge between the school and community through outside partnerships creates more pathways to better meet the needs of all.

CO-R3: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with organizations and community members to create equitable, wholistic programming opportunities inside schools on an ongoing basis within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint. Justification: In-school enrichment programs should exist for all students, not just those who have been identified as “gifted.” All students deserve and benefit greatly from these programs. They can help students develop hobbies, provide support for homework and other academic assignments, and lead to the discovery of new interests outside of the classroom curriculum. Academic enrichment in school, albeit outside of the classroom, provides alternative pathways to educational growth for all students. Developing programs to address these needs with community partners creates opportunities for more equitable programs that change mindsets while helping students demonstrate growth and meet their full potential. The benefits of collaborative-led enrichment often lead to more fully engaged students, who are motivated by out-of-classroom activities. It can also lead to improved study skills, time management, and confidence in test-taking. Both students and community members involved in the creation of equitable and holistic programs may begin to see, over time, that their insights and contributions are valued and lead to success.

CO-EF2. How can a public school be the “hub” that supports neighborhood stability and a culture of thriving?

CO-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, through collaborative engagement with community partners, must garner their input and support on how to broaden the use of school buildings to serve as hubs that support education and identified community needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: In an effort to reimagine the purpose of schools and school buildings, public education systems in the City of Saint Louis must consider the positive externalities that its buildings can produce for their communities. Identifying the root causes of student achievement provides a clear understanding for education systems to address how external factors play a role and develop creative ways to utilize current resources to tackle these issues. Developing schools as community hubs further enables systems to provide nonacademic supports to improve children’s health and well-being. Structuring school activities in a manner that is both academic and nonacademic can enhance partnerships with organizations to assist in providing support for students, families, and caregivers, who have health, wellness, custodial, and other needs. To ensure success, the strategies must be interactive, inclusionary, and respectful of community partners, while aligning completely with the academic functions of schools. Carefully crafted partnerships eliminate notions of outsourcing and hobbling together supports and, instead, provide critical professional services.

CO-R5: Saint Louis Public School Officials, Saint Louis City Officials and participating partners must develop a transparent process, that engages community from start to finish, for utilizing

vacant and unused school buildings to help support and house identified community needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Given the decline in enrollment across school systems in the City of Saint Louis, many school buildings are either vacant or severely underutilized. Compared to 117 cities, data show that Saint Louis has the second lowest average of building enrollment and has a smaller average enrollment per building than any other district in the State of Missouri. Considering that many schools have closed and are slated to close at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, it is imperative for stakeholders to be engaged in conversations and decision-making around school closures to consider the impact on community, cultural significance, and costs per-pupil. Participatory action is a must for education systems to better understand the needs of students and communities.

CO-R6: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must develop ongoing partnerships and an evaluation process to maximize support, financial or otherwise, thereby sustaining schools as hubs, within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Through the collaborative efforts of nonprofit organizations, community members, families, caregivers, government agencies, local institutions, and others, education systems are better able to serve and provide resources to sustain schools as hubs. Each of these groups provides a variety of entry points and information on the various challenges faced within a community. As a result, their coordinated efforts to address specific needs have the potential to be more impactful, build assets, and reduce community inequities.. Relying on cooperative efforts also helps to sustain effective approaches to ensure the success of each community hub. When community stakeholders are mobilized, they are empowered to share resources that create student success. Their involvement fosters an environment of co-creation between schools, families, caregivers, and others in the community towards building a stronger educational system and hub. Schools and their associated partners must move from operating in silos to shared decision-making, responsibility, and accountability in maintaining the sustainability of schools as hubs. One effective evaluative process is to determine how well the “school as a hub” strategy aligns with the education systems’ strategic plan. Ensuring visibility and integration within the language and framework of internal action plans can ensure the longevity of hubs. It can also change the culture of the education system by dedicating staff and resources that match the needs and values of each hub. Public education systems can become better positioned to leverage financial support for operational and programming costs using hubs.

CO-EF3. What types of formal agreements with organizations are needed to meet the needs of students, families, and caregivers in their efforts to support student learning?

CO-R7: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, the Saint Louis Public School Board of Education must research and adopt appropriate strategies to expedite the MOU process, which includes a formal review and response.

Justification: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a written agreement that sets forth the terms of engagement between two organizations that wish to partner on any set of activities. It should outline what each organization will contribute to the partnership, along with a mutually agreed upon timeframe for deliverables. It must also outline the length of time that the MOU is valid, described as the period of performance, stating specifically when the MOU starts and ends. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is a conditional agreement stating when the transfer of funds for service is expected. MOAs are often used to establish legal terms but do not guarantee funds.



CO-R8: Saint Louis Public School Officials must review the current MOU approval process annually and develop more effective and inclusive communication strategies, within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: The communication plan regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should aim to do the following: a) ensure clear communication between nonprofit partners, District officials, and the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis, b) increase public confidence in the District's MOU process, and c) foster all parties' accountability and credibility by demonstrating collaborative efforts are well-managed and well-coordinated

CO-R9: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must convene on a quarterly basis to take a more equitable approach to: alignment, integration, synergy and different criteria to identify initiatives that can benefit all students, regardless of their schools, within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can tap into resources that provide guidance on how to launch and strengthen student initiatives. Through established connections with the community, identifying goals along with roles and responsibilities and allocating resources, schools and education support systems will be equipped to implement or expand critical programs for students.

This approach helps school systems to: a) assess current implementation processes to determine what is and is not working, b) build a collaborative implementation team that is reflective of and works to serve students, families, and caregivers, c) brainstorm a number of initiatives that enable and promote long-term sustainability, d) finalize which initiatives to fund with clear and agreed upon criteria and processes, and e) consistently monitor and evaluate the process and engage with key stakeholders. Effectiveness relies upon stakeholders' understanding of current systems' capabilities and priorities. Involving key individuals and partners who are deliberate and thoughtful ensures valuable input, resulting in processes and initiatives that truly represent the needs, values, and perspectives of all students and communities.



CO-EF4. What do students, families, and caregivers need to promote engagement, ownership, and transformative relationships throughout the learning experience?

CO-R10: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, using a participatory process with families, must develop a published template for sharing effective family and student engagement strategies, which should be reviewed and finalized, annually.

Justification: In some instances, there are both school personnel and families/caregivers who have not participated in or been exposed to positive and meaningful engagement. Coming to the table to develop more efficient engagement should accompany an understanding to create space for more equitable approaches and ideas. There are two identified essential conditions to build a successful template for engagement: a) Process: builds on mutual trust, is connected to

learning and development, asset-based, interactive, and collaborative, and culturally responsive and respectful; and b) Operation: is systemically embraced by all across education systems, is well integrated and embedded in strategic plans, and sustained with sufficient resources and infrastructure. This builds and enhances the capacity between families and caregivers and schools, The “4 C’s”: capabilities (skills and knowledge), confidence (self-efficacy), connection (across networks and communities), and cognition (shifts in beliefs and values) are directly connected to establishing and implementing policy and program goals for engagement. Ultimately this serves as an empowerment tool for all. Educators and other school personnel can work with families and caregivers to enhance learning and development, engaging them as co-creators. It also acknowledges and respects the knowledge families bring to the table, creating a welcoming space for diverse cultures. It allows families and caregivers to take on multiple roles as advocates, models, monitors, etc. These efforts lead to partnerships that support student and school improvement.

CO-R11: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must be comprised of individuals who are trained and technology proficient to develop a multi-tiered approach to communicating existing program/partnership opportunities to students, families, and caregivers, at least twice per year. Access to all information must be available online.

Justification: Communication is essential to establishing a strong school community. With the rapid development of digital technology, communication has evolved over time, and, in some instances, has been difficult to keep up with. Families and caregivers are likely to be receptive to different forms of communication, primarily based upon accessibility. To determine the best methods of communication, schools and public education support systems should ask the following: a) which tools do families/caregivers and schools use to communicate and how frequently? b) how does the integration of new technology impact current ways of communication between schools and families/caregivers? c) what variables impact family/caregiver perceptions and practices? d) which variables impact school perceptions and practices?

While schools are obligated to provide communication about activities, student progress, and other programs, families and caregivers may want or need access to more information regarding the aforementioned. Moreover, frequency of communication should be equal across all grade levels. Given the various barriers for school personnel as well as families and caregivers, individuals who are technologically proficient should be identified and utilized by schools and education support systems to bolster ongoing technology-based engagement strategies. Digital competence and biased attitudes towards technology can be allayed by providing workshops and trainings to improve digital literacy skills for both families and caregivers, as well as school personnel.

CO-R12: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must inform and improve policies, practices and procedures that do not marginalize or further marginalize underrepresented students, families, and communities. School district officials, principals & board members must collect, compile, and create a plan with identified community members, developed from an entry/exist feedback process, and must analyze and report results.

Justification: Widening the distribution of power creates a more participatory process of policymaking, centering on the voices of educators and other stakeholders in education



that exist outside of the status quo. This speaks to the aspects of critical policy analysis that “challenge traditional notions of power, politics and governance” through its interrogation of the “distribution of power and resources” (Horsford, Scott & Anderson, pg. 21). The very possibility lends itself to a significant role in “renegotiating social power structures and unequal hierarchies reflected within schools...and effect change in educational policy and practice” (Mansfield & Lambrinou, pg. 51).



III.D. Community Forces of Change

Forces of Change are the external dynamics that may affect the context in which the community and education ecosystem operate. A primary question is considered – “What is occurring or might occur that affects this domain of education in the City of Saint Louis?”. Improvement of Community engagement and partnerships in all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis will require attention and responsiveness to societal, economic, political, technological, environmental, and legal implications. An overview of these implications follows:

1. Societal Implications: School and Community both rely on the strength of their relationships. When communities are valued and empowered, they are in a better position to support systems and institutions within.
 - A. Building alliances between communities, as well as local and state stakeholders, creates a more collaborative effort in transforming public education systems.
 - B. Schools that make engagement more equitable and effective do so by implementing strategies that reflect the needs and values of their communities.
 - C. Education systems should work to address any language and cultural barriers. By developing a system of consistent engagement and interaction together, schools and communities can welcome families in a consistent and culturally appropriate manner.



2. Economic Implications: An asset-based approach to Community “funding” moves beyond monetary support to include additional, meaningful resources that a community can provide to support the success of its schools.

- A. Moving away from solely relying on local property taxes for educational funding creates fewer inequitable outcomes for those living in low-income communities.
- B. The fight for school funding often occurs in state legislatures and the judicial system. Creating alliances between community, local, and state stakeholders facilitates opportunities to secure adequate funding to support necessary changes in the public education system.
- C. When community stakeholders are mobilized through collaborative efforts, they are empowered to share resources that support student success and are equally responsible for and accountable to one another.
- D. Adequate funding to and for communities enables support for initiatives that lead to the implementation of favorable policies and recommendations.

3. Political Implications: Policymakers tend to work in silos, brainstorming and developing policies and procedures without the input of their communities. This creates misalignment and can sow seeds of discord and resentment between communities and political actors.

- A. Communities that are less engaged in collaborative policymaking become vulnerable to hostile policies. Active community engagement in decision-making encourages civic capacity.
- B. Expanding the distribution of power in the policymaking process can center the voices of the community that extend beyond the status quo. This can potentially alter the social power structures and allow for the collapse of inequitable hierarchies in schools, thus effecting meaningful change in educational policies.

4. Technological Implications: The utilization of technology is imperative for communities to be connected to other stakeholders. Due to the rapid changes in digital space, the community representatives should identify accessible and equitable ways to utilize technology to stay connected.

- A. Lack of digital competency/computer literacy, as well as biased attitudes toward technology are common barriers to consistent engagement. This can be addressed by schools through workshops and trainings to improve the skills of both community members and school personnel.
- B. Technology is constantly evolving and can be difficult to keep up with. However, schools may need to explore various ways to integrate new technology and be mindful of its impact on preexisting communication methods between education systems and the community.

5. Environmental Implications: Improving the community means considering how members are impacted by their environment and the ways in which it influences how they are impacted by powerful external forces.

- A. Schools developed as community hubs are enabled to garner support that extends beyond academics. When partnerships are developed using needs-based strategies, schools and education support systems can partner with organizations to strengthen the provision of health, wellness, and safety resources for students, families, and other members of the community.



- B. Given that a number of schools in the City of Saint Louis have closed and are slated to close in the future, community stakeholders should be engaged in conversations on these matters. School closures impact the community, its cultural significance, and overall per-pupil expenditures.
- C. The development of in-school enrichment programs with community partners for students, families, and caregivers creates opportunities to help change mindsets and grow potential.
- D. Students and community members who collaborate on creating holistic and equitable in-school enrichment programs are positively reinforced when they view their contributions as valued and successful.

6. Legal Implications: A proactive approach to legal implications requires the community being educated on legal processes as it relates to the public education system, opposed to being simply negatively impacted or victimized by them.

- A. Community stakeholders engaged with the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis should properly identify the use of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) when determining partnerships that require legal agreements and/or to determine funding sources.
- B. Schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis should communicate with students, families, and caregivers about their rights as consumers in the education system.

III.E. Community Promising Practices

For public education systems across the country, creating and sustaining community engagement can be difficult. Schools are often cornerstones of the community and can create opportunities to bring educators, families and caregivers, and community partners together to achieve optimal student success through varied ideas and methodologies. Schools are primed for success when they establish good and harmonious relationships with the communities they serve.

Community involvement can increase learning opportunities, promote optimism among school personnel, and create community-inclusive processes to contribute to strategic alignment. There are several school districts that have found innovative ways to make inroads with communities within their districts.

Compton Unified School District (Compton, CA)

In a district with almost 40 schools and over 90% of its students participating in free or reduced lunch programs, Compton Unified utilized school data to personalize learning experiences and develop a 21st century curriculum built around science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM). The district created “STEAMFest,” an event where members of the community are invited to engage in interactive displays and student exhibitions. Through this program, Compton Unified has been able to engage 10,000 members of their community.

Chicago Public Schools (Chicago, IL)

Chicago Public Schools worked to develop a structured system in which the voices of families, caregivers, and other community members could be heard. Through the creation of Community Action Councils, representatives from families, community-based organizations, and faith-based institutions work together to develop strategic plans to ensure students’ educational success.

District of Columbia Public Schools (Washington, DC)

To engage members of the community through more equitable means, the District activated Academic Parent—Teacher Teams. The team offers individual and family conferences, as well as group conferences with families and caregivers of all students in the class. This has been an effective tool for connecting families of students to forge relationships, expand their community network, share information with each other, and gain understanding of expectations and learning goals.

Federal Way Public Schools (Washington)

In this district just outside of Seattle, community-based organizations are engaged outside of school in specific meetings to glean insight on their perspectives on school support systems. These ongoing efforts enable community groups to build and improve upon the supports provided to students, families, and caregivers.

Glossary

Hub: the central and most important part of a particular place or activity.

Interdependent: a situation in which two or more people depend on or affect each other such that the actions of one will influence the other.

Marginalized: the act of treating a person or group as though they are insignificant by isolating and/or disempowering them.

Modular: consisting of separate parts that, when combined, form a complete whole.

Needs assessment: a systematic process for determining the needs, or gaps, between a current and desired outcome.

Silos: when a group of people do not share information, goals, tools, priorities, or processes with other groups.

Status quo: the existing state of affairs, especially regarding social or political issues.





IV. HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY (HWS)



IV.A. Health, Wellness, and Safety Context

Health is a state of complete physical, social, mental, psychological, and spiritual well-being (World Health Organization, 2006). Wellness is the ability to practice daily, healthy habits. Safety, on the other hand, is the act of being protected from risks or injury. These three areas of focus are interrelated as they constitute a safe and secure environment, which is essential for student learning. Every student across America deserves a high-quality education in a healthy and safe space. In Saint Louis, it is more important than ever for schools, education support systems, parents, communities, and the local and Federal government to prioritize health, wellness, and safety of students, families, caregivers, and staff.

School-aged children are suffering from mental disorders and substance use and engaging in sexual activities associated with multiple factors, including lack of support in their schools. (Kolbe, 2019). Mental health issues take on many different forms in today's world. Whether it be stress and anxiety or depression and eating disorders, all mental health issues are serious issues that need attention. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2014, one in ten young people experienced a period of major depression. Additionally, intentional self-harm (i.e., suicide) was the sixth leading cause of death for children under 18 years of age, and it is the tenth leading cause of death for all age groups in both the United States and the State of Missouri (Kret, 2017).

Among children 12 years and older who felt that they needed substance use treatment, the top reason for not getting treatment in the past year was that they "weren't ready to stop using," followed by "I could not afford the cost" It is important to understand and characterize the burden of mental disorders, the barriers to getting help, and disparities that may exist in the Saint Louis region. Mental

health issues can result in disastrous outcomes, leading to outcomes such as gun violence and self-harm. Counseling, psychological, and social services should also be provided to decrease the mental health burden on students, staff, and families (Kolbe, 2019).

School facilities should also be built in a way to minimize exposure to hazards and allow for optimal wellness. Buildings should be well-ventilated, spacious, and secure. Issues such as water and air quality in these school building are of high importance as those can lead to bigger issues such as lead poisoning and asthma exacerbations. In a 2019 report prepared by Washington University's School of Law's Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic (IEC), findings were enumerated various issues related to environmental and wellness disparities.

Among these report findings were:

- Black children in the City of Saint Louis are 2.4 times more likely than white children to test positive for lead in their blood and account for more than 70% of children suffering from lead poisoning.
- Black children in Saint Louis make roughly 10 times more emergency room visits for asthma each year than white children. Black children make more than 42 emergency room visits per 1,000 children, compared to less than 4 visits per 1,000 children for their white counterparts.
- Most of the city's air pollution sources are in neighborhoods of color, and more building demolitions — which create harmful dust that may contain asbestos and lead — occur in majority-black neighborhoods.
- More than 90% of the city's exceptionally large inventory of vacant properties are located in majority-black neighborhoods.

Recent tragedies such as acts of targeted school violence, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize the need for and importance of safety in school systems. There is an ongoing crisis of community violence in the City of Saint Louis. Addressing the cycle of violence, economic inequalities, education opportunity gaps, and social injustices remains a top priority in urban communities and school districts. According to the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch data, as of December 29, 2022, at least 120 children were shot across the Metropolitan area, including 26 who died. Nearly all incidents were in Saint Louis.

The safety goals of the Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup include multiple rapid implementation strategies that schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can immediately activate:

- Access control: Measures like single-access points, fencing, or external door locks that prevent unauthorized access to schools.
- Interior door locks: Interior door locks enable educators to lock out shooters and seal classrooms without exposing themselves to danger by stepping into hallways and the line of fire.
- Development of emergency plans to help facilitate communication between school employees, law enforcement, and other first responders. Plans should provide clear guidance and trauma-informed training on what staff should do in case of an emergency.
- Development of safety plans, including proper firefighting equipment.
- Annual training of school staff and community participants to include courses on gun violence and continuously to ensure their development.

Safe and secure campuses are essential for student learning. Feeling safe in the classroom helps students succeed in their academic endeavors. The City of Saint Louis schools and education



support systems should focus on future well-being and productivity, which is heavily influenced by both health and educational outcomes. The Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup presents 14 recommendations across four enabling factors for strategic action by broad cross-sector coordination of officials in the City of Saint Louis Education Ecosystem. (Kania, Williams et al., 2022, Scott, 2022)

IV.B. Health, Wellness, and Safety Overarching Question

The Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup, championed by Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Cousins, Commander of the Bureau of Investigative Services, and Dr. Deidra Thomas-Murray, Homeless and Foster Care Liaison – SLPS established recommendations for ensuring that students, families, caregivers, and staff are healthy and safe across physical, mental, and emotional domains. After many meetings and efforts, the workgroup agreed on 14 recommendations.

IV.C. Health, Wellness, and Safety Enabling Factors (EF), Recommendations(R), and Associated Justifications

HWS-EF1 – What are the needs, and how can Health, Wellness, and Safety resources, services, and personnel become accessible for all?

HWS-R1: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must work strategically to develop a collaborative consisting primarily of healthcare providers and public safety personnel, to create a process that assesses the needs of students, families, caregivers, and staff.

Justification: Trauma-exposed students appear in schools in greater numbers than ever before, and their trauma affects the way they behave in the classroom. All school and education support system officials in the City of Saint Louis can play a crucial role in making a difference in the lives of the children they serve. According to a National School Boards Association resource on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), “childhood trauma is among the most relevant and significant psycho-social factors affecting education today.”

Trauma is an emotional response to a distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms the individual’s ability to cope. Students face trauma in various ways, and often it’s not just one event. It is ongoing abuse and neglect, violence in their homes and neighborhoods, not having a place to sleep or food to eat, to name just a few examples. As a result of trauma, students will respond by displaying signs in the classroom such as excessive anger or irritability, low self-confidence, aggression (physical or verbal), and panic attacks. Subsequently, the exposure to traumatic events, mental illness, and behavioral changes in the classroom carries over to the student’s overall education experience. According to the American Psychological Association, the trauma can:

- Lower students’ academic performance
- Lead to more school absences
- Increase the possibility of dropping out of school
- Result in more suspensions and expulsions
- Fundamentally impact a child’s reading abilities

For these reasons, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must work strategically to develop a collaborative effort to identify and develop an online catalogue

of existing resources and establish written and published procedures for disseminating user-friendly information. Using a strong multi-disciplinary team, including educators, school psychologists, counselors, educational support professionals, principals, students, family members, and other stakeholders will provide an opportunity to review data on school safety and climate, identify patterns of student behavioral, academic, and mental health concerns, and develop plans for improving conditions for student learning.

HWS-R2: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, the Saint Louis Board of Education must identify and hire (or contract) an independent evaluator to perform a gap analysis that determines existing and needed support services for students, families, caregivers, and staff and identify funding resources and community partners to effectually address needs.

Justification: Identifying and hiring and/or contracting an independent evaluator to perform a gap analysis is needed. This evaluator will support the collaborative group in an extended assessment of needs through collecting data and preparing a gap analysis focused on the resources that are needed, but not currently present, within all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis.

There is a need to address school-level responsibilities in providing equitable, quality learning environments and equitable outcomes for all students in Saint Louis. Closely following and adhering to the U.S. Department of Education student privacy laws, a few gaps to address to meet current needs of students, families, caregivers, and staff could include:

- Access to student medical and health records for PK-12 students; students with underlying medical, health, and behavioral problems are a group of at-risk students who could benefit from educationally based prevention and intervention services. Addressing the links between early health indicators and later outcomes would help to direct resources to the students who need them most at key developmental periods.
- Access to juvenile services and criminal records; this information is an important gap to address as information related to the criminal justice system and a student's outcome is important when reexamining the school to prison pipeline.
- Availability of student-level data on PK-12 school climate; by understanding the climate from the perspective of students, parents, and teachers, the expert can help identify why differences in schools account for differences in student outcomes.
- Access to personal information records for students in need of assistance; meaning a child who requires court intervention due to abuse, neglect, developmental disabilities, or has a mental disorder and/or if the child's family or caregiver is unable or unwilling to properly care and address the child's needs. This information would allow for the education system to ensure a student's health, wellness, and safety.

Addressing these gaps will speak to existing and needed support services and will avoid supplanting existing resources, while emphasizing the priority of this initiative for the well-being of students, families, caregivers, and staff in the education systems of Saint Louis.

HWS-R3: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, must establish a broad-sector network that develops, implements, and sustains a public awareness campaign of existing health, wellness, and safety services available to students, families, caregivers, and staff.

Justification: Various advocacy organizations devote time and resources to increasing community awareness and educating the public in an effort to gain support for their respective



issues. Developing, implementing, and sustaining a public awareness campaign is key to communicate the issues, needs, and resources and share existing health, wellness, and safety services available for students, families, caregivers, and staff. Additionally, public awareness campaigns are able to reach a wide audience and raise awareness for subjects not frequently discussed or largely known to the general public.

For example, a recent study offered evidence of how a public awareness campaign for suicide prevention increased help-seeking behavior. While some of the campaign strategies focused on suicide prevention, other messages addressed suicide prevention with a focus on mental health and managing stress. Suicide is a pressing issue with students in the City of Saint Louis and just one example of a need that could be addressed by a public awareness campaign.

Examples of solutions used in other campaigns that could be addressed in an awareness campaign for all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis are:

- Creation of school-based programs tailored to understanding the needs of students.
- Getting involved in parent and/or caregiver activities focused on students' unmet needs.
- A Community involvement initiative to allow for partnerships with schools and education support systems.
- Community and cross-sector involvement from city politicians, educators, businesses, community leaders, and child advocates to develop action plans to highlight the resources available to students, families, caregivers, and staff.

Having real-time and up-to-date information about services available will allow students, families, caregivers, and staff access to maximize the benefits they receive and improve the outcomes within the school system overall.

HWS-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must conduct an impact and outcomes assessment focused on implementing recommendations for this enabling factor within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Saint Louis schools and education support systems are still addressing the immense loss that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic took a massive toll on student well-being and mental health resulting in grief and isolation co-existing with other daily challenges faced by students. According to a recent poll of parents regarding their child's mental health post COVID-19, nearly three in ten said that their child was experiencing harm to [their] emotional or mental health, with almost half of them citing the separation from teachers and classmates as a "major challenge." Suicidal ideation was also significant in the polled group, with shutdowns and isolation impacting students' mental and emotional well-being.

Well before the pandemic, many students of color faced significant barriers to educational opportunities. The pre-pandemic disparities in resources, opportunities, and outcomes set the foundation for additional race-based disparities in educational opportunities as a result of COVID-19. State budgets nationwide have been tight for more than a decade, affecting many schools and students. Across the country, students of color are still far more likely than their white peers to attend schools with fewer resources, in settings that are less safe and require maintenance to keep the school environment safe, with students' well-being in mind. Many of these students and their families have fewer resources at home, with parents and caregivers earning low pay, often working unpredictable hours and schedules due to the nature of their jobs, resulting in a higher-than-average household poverty level.

With fewer opportunities, come poorer outcomes. Both pre-pandemic and currently, many



students are experiencing disparities in their academic opportunities. This is reflected in less experienced teachers, tracking into less rigorous courses and programs, and lower expectations for their educational achievement. A recent study found that Black students made up 14.2% of all public high school seniors in 2020, they accounted for only 8.3% of students nationwide who sat for an AP exam. These statistics translate into disparities, including fewer opportunities to learn advanced content from educated teachers, reduced academic achievement, lower college attendance rates, and lesser opportunities to develop specialized skills needed to enroll in higher education or become successful in a future job.

Implementation of these recommendations is essential to the success of all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. An impact and outcomes assessment will be vital to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of health, wellness, and safety resources, services, and personnel. This will determine if services provided to students, families, caregivers, and staff are achieving the intended objectives, including effective delivery, and the program's successful implementation. Conducting an impact and outcomes assessment within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint would ensure services are accessible to all.

HWS-EF2 – How do children access and receive identified resources, and services they need to be healthy, well, and safe?

HWS-R5: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify community and social partners that provide resources at no cost to student such as: navigating the criminal justice system, medical and social assistance, and trauma-focused therapy, as soon as needs are identified.

Justification: The City of Saint Louis, like most urban centers, is filled with a plethora of mostly “siloe” organizations and initiatives across various social sectors, focusing on adolescent risk reduction. Many programs are implemented in isolation, especially as it relates to youth development interventions through afterschool programs, youth and family services for teens in emergency and troubled situations, and health services for teens receiving Medicaid. Students, families, and caregivers consistently share that they do not know about agencies, organizations, and opportunities to support them when traumatized and in day-to-day struggles. Strategic action will require engaging the end-users to offer important feedback on the development of a compendium of organizations and how best to update and disseminate information.

HWS-R6: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create



alternative learning programs that support at-risk students with prolonged absences due to chronic medical and mental health conditions, temporary incarcerations, and disciplinary exclusions within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: An estimated 10% of children and adolescents in the United States have a serious emotional disturbance (SED), yet approximately 80 percent of those children and adolescents do not receive needed services. In implementing this recommendation, gaps in learning and social interaction due to prolonged absenteeism can be mitigated. Impacted students can be assimilated into appropriate learning environments and provided educational support.

HWS-R7: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create spaces to be utilized explicitly by students as a refuge to recover from trauma within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Approximately 80% of children and adolescents with mental health diagnoses have unmet mental health needs. A calm room is a designated space intentionally structured to help students take a break, defuse anger, and re-center outside of the classroom. The creation of a safe space for students to recover from trauma decreases the incidence of physical aggression and allows space for healing. Students have the opportunity to self-regulate, de-escalate, and incorporate learned techniques for calming and resilience.

HWS-EF3 – How do schools support and uphold the Health, Wellness, and Safety of students, families, caregivers, and staff?

HWS-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must provide equitable academic resources to students, such as programs specific to: performing arts, world languages, leadership, science, technology, engineering, and math programs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: It is important to offer students and families resources and options in the availability of academic programs and the selection of schools. By removing barriers and helping all students access academic enrichment experiences, such as fields trips, enrichment programs, and elective courses, similar to those listed in this recommendation, equity and inclusion for all students is assured. Increasing the number of Advanced Placement and elective courses offered will ensure college and career readiness, resulting in improved academic performance overall. Research suggests that high school students who enroll in advanced coursework opportunities are more likely to graduate, go on to college, and earn a degree.

HWS-R9: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create an intentional process to coordinate health, wellness, and safety resources for students, families, caregivers and staff within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: With additional school staff, such as the addition of a School Resources Coordinator, resources can be identified and accessed much sooner for students. The coordinators could also provide workshops on mental health topics and link the schools to community resources that may otherwise be unknown, due to a lack of time to develop community connections. The Coordinator could serve as a known designated point of contact and ensure that students, families, and staff are connected to necessary resources.

HWS-R10: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must allocate funding to provide direct and indirect services to students, families, caregivers and staff to promote and support students' academic and social successes within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Today's students face a multitude of stressors, from cyberbullying to recovering from the pandemic, and danger at school. One example is how parents struggle to inform their children about school shootings, without creating fear of schools. Significantly increasing the number of school social workers would help reduce burnout due to high caseloads and also increase the availability of these services. School social workers understand better how factors such as family, culture, socio-economic status, and physical and mental health can impact student performance. School social workers collaborate with community agencies and organizations and coordinate services for family members. Having enough social workers to help students through crises is key, as it would reduce the number of unresolved traumas among students.

HWS-EF4 – How do we reduce incidents of youth trauma and violence to keep students, families, caregivers, and staff safe at school, home, and community?

HWS-R11: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must establish a process to follow up with students, families, caregivers and staff to verify enrollment and attendance at the start of the school year, and quarterly in order to mitigate the incidence of youth trauma and violence.

Justification: Safe schools promote the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying and harassment, the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds, and other emergencies. School safety is linked to improved student and school outcomes. By implementing an enrollment verification process, each student could be accounted for by referencing students enrolled in each city school. This process will be key at the start of the school year and quarterly so that there is clarity as to the whereabouts of the student during the school year, reducing the incidence of youth trauma and violence.

HWS-R12: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must strengthen current attendance policies that include follow up with students, families, caregivers and staff to address absenteeism.

Justification: Attendance is a key component to keeping students safe while they are in school. When students are in safe locations, they have an opportunity to achieve academic success. Knowing who is in the building and where they are is crucial to school safety, both for everyday operations and during emergencies. If a student has a history of excessive absences, the engagement of a Student and Family Engagement Mentor can provide necessary support for the student, while identifying actual and perceived needs to provide support and referrals for abuse and trauma for students, families, and caregivers.

HWS-R13: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with community and social organizations to create a confidential communication portal to assist students, families, caregivers and staff in coping with violence, trauma and safety, in order to provide wrap-around services within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: An immediate referral to community and social partners should be made when concerns about a student arise. Possible sources of referrals may include self-referral by students, concerned peers, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, administrators, and other school staff. Emergency interventions are required in those situations needing immediate attention, such as peer concern about the personal safety of another student, death of a pet or family member, and physical and/or sexual abuse so that students feel safe and want to participate in their education.

HWS-R14: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement a safe route for students who live less than a mile from school to establish safe walking and biking to and from school and school related activities. Justification: Gun violence, street crime, and theft take a toll on students and their ability to learn and succeed. Students often have to travel through unfamiliar and unsafe neighborhoods to get to school. A Safe Routes to School Program is needed so that school leaders and community members can work as a team, share information, and report suspicious or unusual activity to ensure students make it to school safely. For children who live in gang violence “hot zones,” a safe passage route to school is essential to their overall wellbeing and ultimately, their lives.



IV.D. Health, Wellness, and Safety Forces of Change

Forces of Change are the external dynamics that may affect the context in which the community and education ecosystem operate. A primary question is considered – “What is occurring or might occur that affects this domain of education in the City of Saint Louis?” Improvements to the health, wellness, and safety in all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis will require attention and responsiveness to social, environmental, ethical, and health-related implications. An overview of these implications follows:

1. Societal Implications: Improvements in health, wellness, and safety can bolster and impact the public education system in addressing student enrollment, safety concerns, and school closures. If actions are not taken in these areas, it could have detrimental effects, leading to more school closures and reduced enrollments citywide.
 - A. Student Enrollment: Efforts to improve health, wellness, and safety can return student enrollment to what it was years ago. There has been a major decrease in student enrollment along with reduced resources throughout the systems needed to reach and meet students’ needs.
 - B. Safety Concerns: The maintenance of health and wellness is imperative; however, safety is also a critical aspect of well-being. Studies and data reveal a steady increase in crime among school-aged children. Opportunities such as developing education and partnerships within all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis alongside public safety entities can help reduce these trends.
 - C. School Closures: Improving health, wellness, and safety means assessing current school facilities. With more and more schools closed due to low enrollment, Saint Louis is faced with fewer school options in the vicinity of students’ homes. It is important to address the current transportation crisis, created by the shortage of bus drivers. A way to address this would be to promote school enrollment by offering appealing and free neighborhood-based programs.



2. Economic Implications: Improving health, wellness, and safety concerns can be expensive, and funding may not always be readily available. The related economic impact could include more school closures, a decrease in staffing due to lower budgets allocated to teachers' salaries, and an overall lack of funding due to a decrease in residential property taxes.

- A. Decreased Budget: Improving health, wellness, and safety can help address current budget issues related to school closures citywide. Currently, there is a decreased number of students benefiting from school services, due to school closures. This leads to an overall decrease in students' overall academic performance. Opportunities include efforts to strategize and reallocate funding so that academic programs can thrive, with an overall improvement to the academic performance of students.
- B. Salary Gaps: Improving health, wellness, and safety can narrow the salary gaps that exist regarding teacher compensation. Teacher and other personnel retention rates are troubling in most school systems. While salaries are only a part of the problem, efforts to standardize average salaries for administrators and teachers across all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis are needed.
- C. Property Taxes: Improving health, wellness, and safety can increase educational funding through available property taxes. If not addressed, low educational funding leads to inequitable services being offered to students, due to funding allocated per student. By meaningfully redistributing education funding across school districts, equity in education outcomes can be attained.

3. Technological Implications: Technology is changing the way various settings accomplish work; however, that very same innovation can provide limitations and detrimental effects through the use of social media, increases in mental health issues, and decreases in overall educational resources.

- A. Social Media: Improving health, wellness, and safety will lead to addressing the effects of social media on students' mental and physical health. Social media poses distractions in the school environment and classroom. Opportunities for the implementation and enforcement of school policy regarding social media use on campus should be addressed.
- B. Mental Health: Improving health, wellness, and safety can help to address the current increase in students' psychological disorders. Students, families, caregivers and staff all carry a burden of trauma from previous and ongoing stressors. An effort to reduce this would be to provide mental health services throughout all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. Technology is becoming a major delivery platform for mental health services.

4. Environmental Implications: Improving health, wellness, and safety concerns may have environmental implications within our school buildings. It is important to consider the environmental impact when making decisions about health, wellness, and safety improvements.

- A. Building Conditions: Improving health, wellness, and safety can help address various issues within a school building. An example of this is both the air and water quality within a school building. Mold is often an issue in older school buildings. If not addressed, this could lead to increased health conditions among school staff and students. Implementing funding resources to improve air quality through improved ventilation systems as well as mold remediation in all buildings is vital. In doing so, we can ensure the overall health, wellness, and safety of everyone in Saint Louis's educational buildings.



- B. Safe Routes: Improving health, wellness, and safety also means a safe passage route to and from school. Currently, there is an increased incidence of students confronting violent crime, often occurring on their way to and from school. Implementation of new programs related to safe passage can provide opportunities to establish a citywide plan for safety for students to and from schools.

5. Legal Implications: There may be legal implications associated with implementing policy recommendations for health, wellness, and safety matters, including addressing gun violence, illegal drug use, and disciplinary exclusions.

- A. Gun Violence: Improving health, wellness, and safety involves addressing current gun violence and gun control issues. There are ongoing threats to students, families, caregivers, and staff, impacting their health, related to gun violence within the school systems. Opportunities for improvement in this area include working with public safety officials to reduce crime throughout the city and ensure safety measures are in place.
- B. Illegal Drug Usage: Improving health, wellness, and safety can address the increased exposure to illegal drugs. An increase in drug use is leading to high mortality rates among students within education systems. Opportunities to decrease illegal drug exposure include structured and intentional educational efforts throughout the Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis discussing the lasting effects of drug use.
- C. Disciplinary Exclusions: Improving health, wellness, and safety can aid in increasing the attendance of students impacted by disciplinary exclusions. Failing to address this issue could continue the trend of poor student academic outcomes due to disciplinary actions. Counseling and encouragement are needed to meet students' needs, providing them with resources to overcome challenges along with guidance and direction to help decrease disciplinary exclusions and shift the focus away from punitive actions.

6. Ethical Implications: It is important to address the existing ethical implications when working towards solving issues related to improving the health, wellness, and safety of schools and education support systems.

- A. Cultural Competency: Improving health, wellness, and safety requires confronting the lack of cultural competency within a school district. The diverse student population may not feel represented in a school system, leading to poor educational outcomes. Schools and education support systems must recruit and retain staff of diverse backgrounds so that students feel represented and have opportunities for associated role models.
- B. Health Disparities: Improving health, wellness, and safety is an important determinant in efforts to decrease existing health disparities. Limited resources among students, families, and caregivers can create health-related burdens. Not having access to care or the financial feasibility to seek care can impact the overall health, wellness, and safety of students. Promoting access to resources in the community is one way to work towards reducing these disparities.

7. Health Implications: Improvements in health, wellness, and safety can address and impact the public education system in addressing health-related issues. This focus would work to reduce mental health issues caused by various factors and reduce violence in communities and schools.

- A. **Mental Health:** Improving health, wellness, and safety can help address the current shortage of mental health professionals within individual schools. This shortage of providers decreases access to mental health services within school environments. It also contributes to low academic performance, missed school days, bullying, and violence. In addition to building partnerships with behavioral health agencies, integrating mental health concerns into the school curriculum would help increase exposure to the important role mental health plays in our daily lives.
- B. **School Violence:** Improving health, wellness, and safety can assist in reducing violence in the community and schools. Harassment, bullying, gun violence, and alcohol and drug abuse are interconnected within students' overall health, wellness, and safety. Opportunities to create community involvement and partnerships while educating students, families, caregivers and staff regarding the effects of violence can all help in reducing acts of violence.

In closing, the implementation of policy recommendations for health, wellness, and safety within all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis will need careful consideration of the above implications. Collaboration among stakeholders, the community, as well as personnel across all schools and education systems, will be vital to the activation of the Phase I Blueprint of the Citywide Plan for Education in the City of Saint Louis.

IV.E. Health, Wellness, and Safety Promising Practices

Every child deserves the opportunity for academic success. Supporting their health, wellness, and safety needs will ensure this success is possible. Various educational opportunities and existing practices outside of the public education systems in the City of Saint Louis are being implemented and producing significant results in the education sector.

The United Way of Salt Lake City, Utah

In Utah's Salt Lake region, community leaders are thinking beyond single organizations and services to come together for better results for kids and families. The United Way of Salt Lake uses collective impact to support the collaboration of different sectors on common challenges. These efforts are organized through the Promise Partnership of Salt Lake, a member of the StriveTogether Network. Chronic absenteeism was a promising target for the Partnership's improvement efforts. What is known is that a day missed of school is a day missed of learning, whether or not a student is out sick, recreating, or worse, involved in acts of violence. Absenteeism is the effect of a larger problem, and it requires a better approach: support rather than punishment. With the help of the StriveTogether Network, United Way of Salt Lake held seven learning sessions over nine months, with eight schools represented by six teams. The teams included teachers and other school staff. During the initial process, they collected data and researched chronic absences. They spoke to teachers, students, families, and caregivers and then divided the data by grade levels. Of the 154,484 students in the network schools, 41% had a financial disadvantage, 34% were students of color, 12% were English language learners and 11% required Special Education.

Focus groups were also held and posed the following questions:

- Do you like school?
- Do you feel comfortable at school?
- Do you have friends?
- Are there adults at school you care about?
- Why don't you come to school?



The teams found a variety of reasons why students did not attend school, including physical illness, anxiety, depression, learning struggles, and family problems. To address these problems, different schools piloted various ideas such as: hanging oversized attendance posters in prominent places for all to see; holding competitions with rewards for improved attendance; assigning adult mentors of students' choosing; offering free donuts and holding dance parties. Results were significant, with chronic absenteeism declining among students, from 21% at the start of the 2015-16 school year to 17% at the end of the year.

Memphis, Tennessee Seeding Success

StriveTogether has also joined forces with Seeding Success in Memphis, Tennessee to explore the impact of school nurses on attendance rates and overall academic success. In recent years, 36% of Memphis' low-income students have been chronically absent, defined as missing over 18 days in a 180-day school year; health was the significant barrier to attendance. Demographically, students of color are nearly twice as likely to be chronically absent than white students, and youth from low-income households struggle with access to healthy foods and routine health check-ups, leading to higher rates of chronic illness. Chronic absenteeism has been shown to ultimately lead to poverty, unemployment, incarceration, and poor health outcomes in adulthood. Attendance is often based on a student's health, but income gaps in cities like Memphis result in a disparity in access to health care. School nurses do not require health insurance to see students and can monitor such chronic conditions as asthma, seizure disorders, and sickle cell anemia, which can prevent regular attendance. As a result, 93% of the students treated by the school nurse were able to return to class. Even students who were generally in good health benefited from the nurses, who administered hearing, vision, and blood pressure screenings and kept records on students' vaccines and physical exams. Seeding Success's efforts are still underway as data is being collected to assess the program's long-term impact. As of now, the initiative, which placed school nurses in five Memphis schools with high absentee rates, has seen promising success since its inception during the 2019-2020 school year.

Bexar County, Texas UP Partnership

In addition to other efforts, the StriveTogether network partnered with UP Partnership to replace exclusionary discipline with restorative practices. Punitive practices such as out-of-school suspension disproportionately impact male students of color, a nationwide pattern that holds true in Bexar County, Texas. Data suggests these punitive approaches are linked with academic achievement, future employment, physical and behavioral health, and income. In 2019, UP Partnership piloted a Restorative Practice Collaborative focused on three Bexar County districts. Teachers and staff in these schools underwent a three-day training session in Restorative Justice principles. In the first year, one school district saw dramatic results, particularly in disciplinary incidents. In that year, an elementary school experienced an immediate decline in September 2019, with incidents measuring at around 29% of recorded incidents from the previous year. That trend continued throughout the year, holding steady at a 70% decline in February 2020. To achieve these results, the UP Partnership joined community partners to provide high-quality coaching in Restorative Justice. Various organizations were involved in the pilot to help schools navigate the new efforts. School districts appointed an internal liaison to work closely with the UP Partnership. That individual was responsible for supporting and coordinating monthly community of practice activities and serving as a resource for school teams.

Just as StriveTogether partnered with schools across the nation, the same could be done with schools and public education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. These efforts were achieved by the collective impact framework and structure. The tools needed to achieve similar results are to engage



the community, advance equity across our schools, develop a culture of continuous improvement, and leverage Saint Louis' existing resources. Better outcomes start with changing the way we all work together to prioritize the success of every student. Efforts such as StriveTogether prove that schools and their education ecosystems are stronger together and that they can create a platform to connect and collaborate so communities can create solutions to address the roots of educational issues, leading to lasting change.

Glossary

At-risk students: students who have a high probability of flunking a class or dropping out of school; factors that can create an at-risk student can include homelessness, pregnancy, health and financial issues, domestic violence, and more.

Collective impact: addresses complex social problems that involve bringing together different organizations from different sectors to work towards a common goal.

Comorbidities: the simultaneous presence of two or more diseases or medical conditions in a patient.

Restorative practices: focus on how to improve and repair relationships between people and communities in order to foster an equitable and positive culture.

Trauma-focused therapy: a specific approach to therapy that recognizes and emphasizes understanding how the traumatic experience impacts a child's mental, behavioral, emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing.

Wrap-around services: an individually designed set of services and supports provided to a child and their family that includes treatment services, personal support services, or any other supports necessary to achieve the desired outcome.



V. INFRASTRUCTURE (IS)



V.A. Infrastructure Context

School infrastructure represents a large element of the improvement of schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. Over 100 years ago, Saint Louis embarked on a revolutionary plan in education that made the city's schools the optimum example in the Midwest and a standard for urban school districts across the nation. Over time, there has been a long history of mismanagement, as well as the effects of urban renewal, gentrification, and a steady declining enrollment of students (Public Education Infrastructure Profile: Missouri, 2021). As in other urban areas, declining enrollment led to the closure of school buildings and the consolidation of existing student populations. Schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must focus on the value of making schools effective for all learners, while addressing the urgent need to guarantee the highest valued education possible. The recommendations from the Infrastructure Workgroup highlight the need to ensure the effective use of public assets to deliver the best educational opportunities for all children.

Led by the lure of new suburban neighborhoods, followed soon by the interstates, feeder arteries, and supporting infrastructure connecting the sprawling suburban landscape to the urban business center, the small neighborhood approach to schools began to show its strain. The once world-changing concept of schools located in residential neighborhoods and easily walkable by thousands of children was a victim of its own success. The urban neighborhood population, which had been stable for decades due to industry, traditions, and housing policy was suddenly fluid. After decades of a declining student population, the concept of walkable community-based schools could not be sustained, leading many school districts to adapt small, dispersed campuses into a series of disconnected schools, chasing an ever-changing and mobile student population. Aging properties closed or were consolidated with other dwindling programs, leading to an ad hoc series of boundaries and feeders, bearing little relationship to the early 20th century cities they were designed to support.

The urban centers most impacted by population shifts from urban to suburban, and later northern to southern population centers, including Saint Louis, Boston, Minneapolis, and Detroit, face a new paradigm that has few, if any, modern, historical precedents. The scale of the geographic boundaries is typically fixed, the students extremely mobile, the existing infrastructure obsolete, and the students per acre nearing rural rates. Leadership scholars refer to such situations as adaptive challenges: complex and ambiguous problems or opportunities that are often systemic with no readily understood answers. The reality is most adaptive challenges are simply ignored, as it is much easier to maintain the failing status quo by focusing on technical challenges that can be more easily defined, budgeted, processed, and realized. A great example of this is often deferred funding of maintenance on existing obsolete infrastructures. To make progress or begin addressing adaptive challenges, organizations generally must look outside of their traditional toolbox to other industries, in search of models or strategies that may correlate, despite having few similarities.

The dynamic system of fixed anchors and changeable secondary services provides an enviable situation for public schools and the ever-changing services that their students require. Since the collection of individual schoolhouses progressed to all students moving into graded public-school buildings, auxiliary functions have been added to educational delivery spaces. The first recognizable schools housed classrooms only; places to exercise, learn specific skills, and conduct school business quickly followed. Soon the “standard” was to have a space for a nurse, a projection room for movies, a library for books, a cafeteria to eat in, a kitchen to cook the food, and a gymnasium for sports. Current schools house many diverse programs to support children, parents, staff, and the local community. Public schools host almost every possible public service, including health clinics, adult education, daycare, mental health services, and food pantries. Communities also desire access to the many high-quality public areas, including gyms, theaters, libraries, and meeting and banquet facilities. These intersections of public/private interests create an excellent opportunity to adopt a management concept to auxiliary spaces, opposed to an ownership approach.

The positive benefits associated with creating an educated population are spelled out in the latest World Development Report (WDR) by the World Bank, entitled “Learning to Realize Education’s Promise” (World Bank 2018). The goal of the Infrastructure Workgroup of the Saint Louis Citywide Plan for Education is built upon the concept that education is an important way to attain progress and growth. Thus, it is critical to construct educational infrastructure in such a way as to expand the accessibility and efficiency of the education being delivered. It is also vitally important to highlight that the capacity of education can only be accomplished if education policies are evidence-based and well-targeted and if the entire ecosystem is constructed to promote high-quality learning. The recent expansion of education does not guarantee the immediate achievement of important learning outcomes; therefore, more attention must be paid to measuring and improving the quality of learning. An argument can be made for the importance of developing the skills of both pupils and teachers, to enable them to meet the demand for teachers in the future. This emphasis on future-orientated skills aligns with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) learner-centered principles (Adequate & Equitable U.S. PK-12 Infrastructure, 2017). To ensure that investments in school infrastructure achieve the maximum positive impact on learning, the Infrastructure Workgroup suggests that a thorough set of questions needs concrete and comprehensive answers:

- First, do all children have access to a place at school?
- Second, do the school buildings provide a safe and healthy environment?
- Third, are the learning spaces optimally designed for learning?
- Fourth, does the school’s design facilitate pedagogy and community engagement?
- Fifth, how can the school infrastructure be designed to evolve sustainably over the longer term?



V.B. Infrastructure Overarching Question

The Infrastructure Workgroup, championed by Ms. Marlene Davis, Retired Saint Louis City Alderwoman for Ward 19 and Public Policy Expert Consultant, and Dr. Gerry Kettenbach, Director of Charter School Operations at the University of Missouri established recommendations on how to build an efficient and effective school system to meet current and future needs as well as challenges that arise. After many meetings and efforts, the workgroup agreed on 12 recommendations:

V.C. Infrastructure Enabling Factors(EF), Recommendations(R), and Associated Justifications

IS-EF1 – What school designs should be incorporated into all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to support 21st Century Learning?

IS-R1: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, for all future projects, public education officials must direct design professionals to develop school designs and facility plans that prioritize education and clearly support specific academic programs, and goals defined by the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE)

Justification: The policy of directing design professionals to prioritize education and support specific academic goals defined by the CWPE is a necessary step to ensure that the schools and education support systems provide high-quality education to all students. The policy is justified for the following reasons:

- **Alignment with Educational Goals:** The CWPE has set specific academic goals for all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis. By directing design professionals to prioritize education and support these goals, school systems can ensure that its facilities are aligned with the educational needs of its students.
- **Improved Learning Environment:** Designing school facilities with education as the top priority can create an environment that encourages learning and academic success. For example, classrooms can be designed to enhance teacher-student interactions, and libraries can be designed to promote reading and research.
- **Cost-Efficiency:** By prioritizing education in the design of school facilities, the school systems can avoid costly mistakes that may arise from poorly planned facilities. For example, a well-designed library can save money in the long run by reducing the need for additional resources such as textbooks and materials.
- **Attracting and Retaining Students:** High-quality school facilities can attract and retain students, which can lead to increased enrollment and resources. When students have access to modern, well-equipped facilities, they are more likely to be engaged in their education and experience academic success.
- **Community Support:** Designing school facilities that prioritize education and support specific academic goals can help build community support for school systems. When the community sees that the school system is committed to providing a high-quality education to its students, they are more likely to support the system through increased funding and other resources.

IS-R2: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must direct design professionals to design facilities that encourage a positive culture, collaboration, community pride, and a love of learning.

Justification: The recommendation of directing design professionals to design facilities that encourage a positive culture, collaboration, community pride, and a love of learning is justified by several studies and assessments. A positive school culture has been linked to better academic performance and higher levels of student engagement (Haynes, 2016). When students feel connected to their school community and are motivated to learn, they are more likely to succeed (McFarland et al., 2018).

Collaboration and teamwork are also essential skills in the 21st-century workforce (National Education Association, 2015). By designing facilities that encourage collaborative learning, students will be better prepared for future careers and become more productive members of society. Furthermore, creating a sense of community pride in schools can positively impact the surrounding neighborhoods. Research has shown that schools that are well-maintained and visually appealing have a positive effect on property values and crime rates in the surrounding area (National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, 2013).

Finally, designing facilities that promote a love of learning can help to address the issue of student disengagement. According to a report by the National Research Council (2015), many students lose their love of learning due to a lack of engagement and motivation. By designing facilities that are engaging and inspiring, students may become more interested in learning and may be more likely to pursue higher education or careers in fields related to their interests.

IS-R3: To ensure that students have access to community resources, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must tailor facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and utilize existing resources in that particular community within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: The recommendation to tailor facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and utilize existing community resources is essential to ensure that students have access to the resources they need to succeed academically and personally. Community resources can include libraries, community centers, museums, and other facilities that offer educational and cultural enrichment opportunities. By using these resources, schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can help students to gain a broader perspective of the world and expand their knowledge and skills beyond what they learn in the classroom.

Research has shown that access to community resources can have a positive impact on student achievement and engagement. A study by the National Endowment for the Arts found that students who had access to cultural resources outside of school had higher levels of academic achievement and were more likely to be engaged in their education (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). Additionally, a study by the American Library Association found that students who had access to public libraries had higher reading scores and were more likely to graduate from high school (Lance & Hofschire, 2012).





Tailoring facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and using existing community resources can also help to address issues of equity and access within the public education system. By offering resources and opportunities in each community, public education systems can assure that all students have access to the resources they need to succeed, regardless of their background or socio-economic status.

Therefore, it is essential that the Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis adopt this recommendation and tailor facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and utilize existing community resources within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint. This will help to ensure that students have access to the resources they need to succeed academically and personally, and that the public education system is able to deliver on its promise of providing a high-quality education for all.

IS-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must redesign the physical plant to best align with the desired delivery of educational services for all students of Saint Louis City within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: The physical plant of a school plays a crucial role in the overall educational experience of students as it can significantly impact their ability to learn and succeed in their academic pursuits. Research has shown that the design of learning environments can have a significant impact on student outcomes

(Barrett, Zhang, Moffat, & Kobbacy, 2013; Hajiheydari & Moeini, 2014; Woolner, 2010). The physical plant can also impact student behavior, safety, and well-being (Knezek & Christensen, 2008). Moreover, the redesign of the physical plant can help to address issues of equity and access in the public education system. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that students in newer schools with modern facilities had higher academic achievement than students in older schools with outdated facilities (Alexander & Lewis, 2014). This highlights the importance of ensuring that all students have access to modern, high-quality learning environments.

IS-EF2 – How will the location of school facilities and the resources available in them adapt to current, as well as future population trends, community plans, pedagogy/instructional models, and support community collaboration?

IS-R5: To acknowledge the feasibility of current buildings and to assist in the choice of building usage, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must generate an online catalog of all school facilities by location, utilization (occupied or vacant), status of building's condition and age, student population, and a complete inventory of nearby community resources within 10-12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: The CWPE Blueprint proposes an intentional set of recommendations across five domains of education, aiming to improve the quality of education offered in schools in the City of Saint Louis. An imperative strategic action is for schools and education support systems to generate an online catalog of all school facilities by location, utilization, condition and age, student population, and nearby community resources. This recommendation is supported by existing literature and evidence:

- Improved Resource Allocation: In a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, it was noted that over 60% of the public-school buildings in the United States were constructed before 1970 (Alexander & Lewis, 2014). This suggests that many school

districts, including schools in the City of Saint Louis, may be operating in buildings that are outdated and in need of repair. By generating an online catalog of all school facilities, school systems can assess the condition and age of each building and allocate resources accordingly. This will ensure that resources are prioritized to those buildings that are in the greatest need of repair or renovation, ultimately improving the learning environment for students.

- **Increased Community Engagement:** The online catalog of all school facilities will also include a complete inventory of nearby community resources. This information can be utilized to foster partnerships between the district and local organizations, businesses, and community groups. These partnerships can provide valuable resources to the schools, such as volunteers, supplies, and funding. Additionally, community engagement has been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). By providing information about nearby community resources, the District can encourage greater community involvement in the schools, ultimately benefiting the students.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** Finally, generating an online catalog of all school facilities will assist in the choice of building usage. The district can assess the utilization of each building and determine whether a particular building could be repurposed for a different use. For example, a building that is currently vacant could be converted into a community center or a facility for adult education. This will enable the district to make informed decisions about the usage of each building, ultimately maximizing the district's resources.

IS-R6: To ensure that students have access to community resources, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must tailor facilities to utilize and support existing resources in that community to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: In order to improve the quality of education offered by Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis, it is recommended that the District tailor its facilities to utilize and support existing community resources. This policy justification will explore the rationale behind this recommendation, supported by existing literature and evidence:

- **Improved Student Outcomes:** Research has shown that access to community resources can have a positive impact on student outcomes. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, students who have access to community resources such as libraries, museums, and after-school programs are more likely to have higher test scores and grades, as well as improved attendance and behavior (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). By tailoring facilities to utilize and support existing community resources, Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis can provide students with access to these resources, ultimately improving their academic performance and overall well-being.
- **Increased Community Engagement:** In addition to benefiting students, tailoring facilities to utilize and support existing community resources can also foster greater community engagement. By partnering with local organizations and using those resources, Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis can strengthen relationships with the community and build truSaint This can lead to increased community involvement in schools, as well as greater support for District initiatives and policies.
- **Cost Savings:** Tailoring facilities to utilize and support existing community resources can also result in cost savings for the Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis. By partnering with local organizations, the district can share the costs of providing resources and services to students. Repurposing existing facilities to support community resources



can also result in cost savings, opposed to building new facilities. These cost savings can be reinvested in other areas of all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, such as hiring additional staff or purchasing new technology.

IS-R7: At the onset of the Collective Impact Phase of the Citywide Plan, the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis must conduct quarterly public engagement meetings to ensure public awareness about the process within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: The recommendation to conduct quarterly public engagement meetings during the Collective Impact Phase of the citywide plan is essential to ensure that the public is aware of the process and has the opportunity to provide feedback. This policy is supported by several studies, showing that public engagement is critical to the success of community-based initiatives (Bryson et al., 2015; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). One study found that public engagement is essential to the success of community-based initiatives because it allows stakeholders to provide feedback and make contributions to the planning process (Bryson et al., 2015). Community members have a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing their communities and can provide valuable insights to inform decision-making. Another study found that public engagement can improve the quality of decision-making by ensuring that all stakeholders are heard and that their concerns are taken into account (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009). Public engagement can also help build trust and collaboration between stakeholders, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

IS-EF3 – How should resources be equitably distributed to support the systems?

IS-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must critically and thoroughly define EQUITABLE access to excellent education for all students before implementation of the Blueprint.

Justification: There is growing recognition that access to quality education is a fundamental right for all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or racial/ethnic background (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014). The CWPE Blueprint is a comprehensive plan that aims to improve education outcomes for all students in the District. The implementation of this plan must be guided by a clear and comprehensive definition of what constitutes equitable access to an excellent education for all students. Research has shown that inequitable access to education can have a significant impact on student outcomes. In particular, low-income and minority students are more likely to attend schools that are under-resourced and have less experienced teachers (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). This can lead to lower academic achievement, higher dropout rates, and fewer opportunities for post-secondary education.

To address these disparities, it is essential for schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to have a clear definition of what constitutes equitable access to excellent education. This definition should take into account a range of factors, such as the quality of teachers, the availability of resources, and the accessibility of extracurricular activities. Furthermore, this definition should be grounded in research-based best practices for promoting equity in education (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

IS-R9: Within 6-8 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must develop benchmarks and measurement tools to evaluate whether each student is receiving equitable access to facilities, programs, and supports required for student success.

Justification: The recommendation to develop benchmarks and measurement tools to evaluate equitable access to facilities, programs, and supports for student success is critical to ensure that all students in the City of Saint Louis have an equal opportunity to succeed. This policy recommendation aligns with research demonstrating the importance of measuring and evaluating equity in education to improve student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2013).

Developing benchmarks and measurement tools is essential to monitor progress towards improving equity in education. It enables educators and policymakers to identify areas where improvements are needed and to develop strategies to address those areas (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2013). This is especially important given the significant disparities in educational outcomes among students from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in the City of Saint Louis (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). Furthermore, measuring equity in education helps to hold schools and education support systems accountable for ensuring that all students have access to the resources and supports they need to succeed. This can lead to increased transparency and accountability in the education system, which can ultimately benefit all students (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

IS-R10: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis must establish and prioritize equitable access to all available programs and resources.

Justification: The recommendation to establish and prioritize equitable access to all available programs and resources within 12 months of adoption of the CWPE Blueprint is crucial for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed. This policy recommendation aligns with research demonstrating the importance of equitable access to resources and programs to improve educational outcomes (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2013; Reardon & Portilla, 2016). Providing equitable access to resources and programs is crucial to promote equity in education. Research has shown that students who attend schools with more resources and higher-quality programs are more likely to achieve academic success (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2013); students from low-income and minority backgrounds are often disproportionately represented in schools with fewer resources and lower-quality programs (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). This can lead to lower academic achievement and fewer opportunities for post-secondary education.

IS-R11: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must ensure efficient and effective use of their resources (i.e. Effective and experienced personnel (faculty), learning materials (up-to-date textbooks and technological resources, and modern facilities (accessible classrooms and computer labs to enrich student learning) by utilizing existing local resources when available to ensure equitable access for all students and staff; the time limit on this will be within 12-18 months of implementation of the Blueprint.

Justification: The recommendation to ensure efficient and effective use of District resources by using existing local resources is crucial to ensure equitable access to education for all students and staff in the City of Saint Louis. The schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis serve a diverse student population, including low-income students and students of color, who may experience barriers to accessing quality education. Officials in the City of Saint Louis education ecosystem have a responsibility to ensure that all students have access to effective teachers, up-to-date learning materials, and modern facilities to support their learning and academic success.



By using existing local resources, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can ensure equitable access to these resources for all students and staff. One potential benefit of implementing this recommendation is cost savings. All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis can avoid unnecessary expenses associated with purchasing additional resources or renovating facilities. This can free up resources for other critical needs, such as hiring additional staff or providing professional development opportunities for teachers.

Using existing local resources can also help build stronger relationships between the District and local community organizations. For example, partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits can provide valuable resources and support for students and staff. These partnerships can help to foster a sense of community and promote engagement among stakeholders. Research supports the effectiveness of using existing local resources to support student learning and success. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that schools with strong community partnerships had higher levels of academic achievement and student engagement (NCES, 2019). Similarly, a study by the RAND Corporation found that schools that leveraged community resources to support student learning had improved academic outcomes and increased parental engagement (RAND Corporation, 2013).

IS-R12: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must annually evaluate and revise use of resources to ensure adherence and compliance to CWPE goals. Justification: The recommendation to annually evaluate and revise the use of resources in public education systems in the City of Saint Louis is critical to ensure adherence to and compliance with the goals of the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE). To achieve these goals, it is necessary that public education systems in the City regularly evaluate and revise their use of resources. One potential benefit of implementing this recommendation is improved accountability. By regularly evaluating and revising the use of resources, public education systems can ensure that they are meeting CWPE goals. This can help to hold all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis accountable for their performance and ensure that resources are being used effectively to promote equity in writing education.

Furthermore, regular evaluation and revision of resource use can help to identify areas of improvement. By analyzing data and feedback from teachers, students, and other stakeholders, public education systems can identify areas where resources are not being used effectively or where additional resources may be needed. This can help to ensure that all students have access to the resources they need to succeed in education.

Research supports the effectiveness of regular evaluation and revision of resource use to promote student achievement and equity. A study by the National Education Association found that schools that regularly evaluate and revise their use of resources have higher levels of student achievement and teacher engagement (National Education Association, 2018). Similarly, a study by the American Educational Research Association found that schools that prioritized equity in resource allocation had improved student outcomes and reduced achievement gaps (American Educational Research Association, 2019).

V.D. Infrastructure Forces of Change

Forces of Change are the external dynamics that may affect the context in which the community and education ecosystem operate. A primary question is considered – “What is occurring or might occur that affects this domain of education in the City of Saint Louis?” Implementing policy recommendations on improving infrastructure in the Public Education Systems within the City of Saint Louis can have several societal, political, economic, and legal implications. Some of these implications include:

1. **Societal Implications:** Improving infrastructure can have a positive impact on the school environment, making it more conducive to learning. This can lead to better educational outcomes for students. However, if improvements are not made equitably across all schools, it could widen the achievement gap and exacerbate existing inequalities.
 - A. **Improved Educational Outcomes:** Improving infrastructure can create a more conducive learning environment, which can lead to improved educational outcomes for students. This can have long-term social and economic benefits, as a well-educated population is more likely to be productive and contribute positively to society.
 - B. **Increased Equity:** Improving infrastructure in the schools and education support systems of the City of Saint Louis can help to reduce disparities in educational resources and opportunities between different schools and communities. This can promote greater equity and social justice, as all students will have access to high-quality educational facilities and resources.
 - C. **Economic Benefits:** Improving infrastructure can create jobs and stimulate local economic activity, which can have positive impacts on the broader community. This can help to reduce poverty and promote economic growth and development.
 - D. **Improved Health and Safety:** Improving infrastructure can create safer and healthier learning environments for students and staff. This can help to reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries and promote better physical and mental health.
 - E. **Improved Community Engagement:** Improving infrastructure can help to build stronger relationships between schools and the broader community. This can encourage greater community involvement in schools and promote greater social cohesion.
2. **Political Implications:** Implementing policy recommendations may require political will and support from elected officials. If policymakers do not prioritize school infrastructure improvements, it could lead to a lack of funding and resources for these projects.
 - A. **Political Opposition:** Improving infrastructure may face opposition from certain political groups or individuals who do not see the need for investing in school infrastructure or who may prioritize other issues over school infrastructure.
 - B. **Partisan Politics:** Improving school infrastructure may become a partisan issue, with political parties taking different stances on the issue. This could lead to gridlock and difficulty in passing legislation or securing funding.
 - C. **Accountability and Transparency:** Implementing policy recommendations may require transparency and accountability measures to ensure that funding is allocated appropriately and that improvements are made equitably across all schools.
 - D. **Accountability and Transparency:** Implementing policy recommendations may require transparency and accountability measures to ensure that funding is allocated appropriately and that improvements are made equitably across all schools.



- E. Accountability and Transparency: Implementing policy recommendations may require transparency and accountability measures to ensure that funding is allocated appropriately and that improvements are made equitably across all schools.

3. Economic Implications: Improving infrastructure can be expensive, and funding may come from taxpayers or other sources.

- A. Cost: The expense of improving infrastructure could lead to economic implications, such as higher taxes or cuts to other programs to make room for infrastructure improvements.
- B. Economic Development: Improving infrastructure can also stimulate economic development and job growth, particularly in construction and related industries. This could have positive economic implications for the local community.
- C. Return on Investment (ROI): Improving infrastructure can have a long-term return on investment, particularly if it leads to improved educational outcomes and increased property values. This could have positive economic implications for the community as a whole.
- D. Maintenance Costs: Even if improvements are made, there may be challenges in maintaining them over time, especially if funding for maintenance is limited. This could lead to additional economic implications in the future.
- E. Access to Financing: Improving infrastructure may require access to financing, such as loans or bonds, which could have implications for the school district's credit rating and future borrowing ability.
- F. Resource Allocation: Improving infrastructure may require allocating resources away from other programs or initiatives, which could have economic implications for those programs or initiatives.



4. Legal Implications: There may be legal implications associated with implementing policy recommendations, such as complying with regulations and obtaining permits. Additionally, some legal challenges may arise if there are contractual obligations or zoning restrictions that prevent infrastructure improvements.

- A. Funding: Improving infrastructure will require significant funding, which may require approval from the state or Federal government. This may involve complying with various legal requirements and regulations for obtaining and using funds.
- B. Contracting: Improving infrastructure may involve hiring contractors to perform construction work. Schools and education support systems will need to comply with procurement laws and regulations when selecting contractors.
- C. Zoning and Land Use: Improvements to infrastructure may require zoning changes, permits, or approvals from local government authorities.
- D. Compliance with Environmental Regulations: The construction and renovation of schools

must comply with environmental regulations, such as those governing the use of hazardous materials, waste disposal, and air quality.

- E. **Compliance with Accessibility Laws:** Improvements to infrastructure must be designed to comply with accessibility laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- F. **Compliance with Safety Regulations:** Improvements to infrastructure must be designed to comply with safety regulations, including building codes and fire safety requirements.

5. **Public Perception:** The public perception of the need for infrastructure improvements can also have implications. If the public does not see the need to invest in school infrastructure, it could make it more difficult to secure funding and support for these projects. It may be helpful to engage with stakeholders and communicate the benefits of the improvements to build support and address any concerns or opposition.

- A. **Positive Perception:** Improving infrastructure in the schools and public education systems in the City of Saint Louis can be seen as a positive step towards improving the quality of education and providing a better learning environment for students. This can lead to a positive perception of the school district and its commitment to providing high-quality education.
- B. **Negative Perception:** Implementing policy recommendations to improve infrastructure may involve significant costs, which could lead to negative perceptions among taxpayers, who may see it as an unnecessary expense. This could be especially true if the improvements lead to increases in property taxes or other fees.
- C. **Support from Stakeholders:** Improving infrastructure in schools and public education systems in the City of Saint Louis can garner support from stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and community members, who may see it as a positive step towards improving the quality of education in the district.
- D. **Opposition from Stakeholders:** Some stakeholders may oppose the implementation of policy recommendations to improve infrastructure, especially if they believe that the funds could be better spent on other educational programs or initiatives.
- E. **Impact on Enrollment:** Improving infrastructure can have a positive impact on enrollment, as parents may be more likely to enroll their children in schools with modern facilities and amenities. This can lead to increased public perception and positive public opinion of the school district.

6. **Workforce Implications:** Infrastructure improvements may require hiring additional staff or contractors, which could have implications for the workforce. This could include job creation or displacement, contingent upon on how well recommendations are implemented.

- A. **Job Creation:** Improving infrastructure may require hiring additional staff, including construction workers, engineers, and maintenance personnel.
- B. **Retraining Needs:** Existing staff may need to be retrained to handle new equipment or technology or to perform new job functions related to infrastructure improvement.
- C. **Budget Allocation:** Improving infrastructure may require diverting funds from other areas, which could lead to budget cuts or staff reductions in other departments.
- D. **Increased Workload:** The implementation of policy recommendations may increase the workload of existing staff, especially if they are responsible for managing infrastructure projects.
- E. **Improved Job Satisfaction:** If the infrastructure improvements make the school environment safer and more comfortable, it could lead to increased job satisfaction among staff.



- F. Enhanced Educational Experience: Improved infrastructure can lead to a better educational experience for students, which could ultimately lead to a more motivated and engaged workforce.

7. Environmental Implications: Improving infrastructure may have environmental implications, such as increased energy usage or waste production. It is important to consider the environmental impact when making decisions about infrastructure improvements.

- A. Energy Consumption: Improving infrastructure could involve updating building systems and equipment, which could affect energy consumption. Using energy-efficient products and equipment could reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- B. Waste Management: The construction and renovation of schools could generate waste materials. Proper waste management practices should be implemented to minimize the amount of waste generated and to ensure that waste is disposed of properly.
- C. Air Quality: Construction activities can cause dust and other particulate matter to be released into the air, which can have negative impacts on air quality. Proper measures should be taken to minimize dust and other emissions during construction activities.
- D. Water Quality: Construction activities can also lead to soil erosion and sediment runoff, which can negatively impact water quality. Proper measures should be taken to prevent soil erosion and sediment runoff during construction activities.
- E. Indoor Air Quality: Improving infrastructure could also involve updating ventilation systems and other indoor air quality measures. Proper ventilation and air filtration systems can help to improve indoor air quality, which can have positive impacts on the health and well-being of students and staff.

Overall, implementing policy recommendations on improving infrastructure in Saint Louis Public Schools will require careful consideration of these societal, political, economic, and legal implications, as well as collaboration and support from multiple stakeholders. To address these challenges, policymakers may need to work to secure funding, build political support, enhance engagement with the community, navigate legal and regulatory barriers, and streamline bureaucratic processes.

V.E. Infrastructure - Promising Practices

The financial aspect of the construction and maintenance of school facilities is highly complex. Absent a Federal source of funds, or even mandatory Federal standards for issues like indoor air quality, it falls to each state to set its own plans and protocols for school buildings—and to fund their own projects. Education advocates call for a Federal investment to match the urgency of the problem. The 21st Century School Fund, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, is calling on Congress to include a \$130 billion funding component for school facilities, named the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act in the broad COVID relief legislation known as the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2). Teach for America (TFA) is joining the National Indian Education Association and the National Congress of American Indians in requesting \$430 million for school reconstruction and renovation of schools managed by the Bureau of Indian Education.

Without significant Federal investment, Mary Filardo, the 21st Century School Fund's Founder and Executive Director, says that even when money is made available through local tax increases or bond programs, low-income communities bear a disproportionate burden in putting those funds to use beyond the most basic maintenance needs of struggling buildings (Heitin, 2020).

Chicago Public Schools

In Chicago Public Schools, beginning in 2017, the Board of Education devised a strategy to critically look at underutilized school buildings. An Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) is a long-range plan, often established as a plan for at least a ten-year period. It usually includes information on the following subjects:

- A. Educational goals, standards, and guidelines
- B. Educational instructional programs and services
- C. The capacity in the existing schools and utilization thereof
- D. Community analysis, including current and projected demographics, land usage, transportation plans, residential and commercial development, private schools, plans for water and sewage service expansion and/or redevelopment, and institutions of higher education
- E. An educational facility inventory and an assessment of building conditions
- F. Historical and projected enrollment data
- G. An analysis of the facility needs and requirements of the district (based upon data and information)
- H. The consideration of options for addressing needs and requirements
- I. Identified potential sources of funding for implementation
- J. A description of the process, procedure, and timeline for community participation in the development of the plan

An EFMP, once adopted or approved, can be the basis for development of a capital improvement program for the school district. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) could include projects for major renovations, additions, renovations combined with additions, new schools to accommodate or provide for consolidations and/or school closures, school replacements, replacement of building systems and/or components, acquisition of future school sites, and purchase or lease of relocatable classrooms. The CIP sets priorities, establishes timelines and the sequence of the projects, develops cost estimates for each project as well as potential sources of funding. School building improvements and new construction have a major impact on the education of students and the school community. Therefore, each school project should be carefully planned and coordinated in relationship to other school projects and the larger community. Educational facility master planning should be proactive, not reactive. The development and submission of an EFMP can assure the community that the school district is well prepared for the future and the potential changes that may impact the condition and utilization of their school buildings (Adequate & Equitable, 2017).

Public school districts invest taxpayer resources to develop and operate public school facilities within the district. They have a responsibility and obligation to protect and maintain that investment. The School District in the City of Philadelphia achieved this objective in 2016, through the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP). The CMP is a plan that recognizes that the proper maintenance of public-school buildings can:

- A. Help maintain a positive learning environment.
- B. Maintain the asset value of the property.
- C. Eliminate or reduce the number of fires, accidents, and other safety related hazards in or on the property.
- D. Provide buildings that function efficiently.
- E. Enable the continuous use of the school building without disruption to educational programs and services.
- F. Conserve energy.



The CMP generally includes information pertaining to:

- A. Staffing and its respective activities and responsibilities.
- B. Services provided by school district staff and those that are performed under contract.
- C. An inventory of the facilities and their condition.
- D. A schedule for preventative maintenance for various building systems and/or components as well as a schedule for potential replacement.
- E. The process and procedure for unscheduled maintenance and the handling of work orders.
- F. A description of scheduled and/or unscheduled maintenance work that has been deferred due to lack of funds or personnel and/or changes in priorities.
- G. Budget information for the overall operation of the maintenance department and the implementation of the Plan.

Pennsylvania Department of Education

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has worked closely with the City of Philadelphia to establish procedures for monitoring and verifying that the CMP is implemented. This assures taxpayers that the local school system level and those responsible for the allocation of state funds are properly caring for those investment monies.. It makes good business sense and practice to protect capital investments that have a long-life expectancy so that resources are not wasted or misused (Adequate & Equitable, 2017). Coordination must be encouraged between the different local/state government agencies and the school district in order to facilitate effective educational facility planning. The sources of income can also vary based on the relative affluence of a school district. In addition to more available property tax dollars, more affluent communities tend to benefit from greater philanthropic giving, according to Kerri Ranney, an attorney and architect who works for Huckabee, an architecture and engineering firm in Austin, Texas that develops learning environments, including public schools. As the Center for American Progress highlighted in a 2017 study, a Parent-Teacher Organization in a wealthy district might be able to fund a new piece of playground equipment or other upgrades through private giving rather than navigating the complicated funding process. In areas with low property values and significant poverty, general school funds often go towards social supports like food, clothing, and health care before they can be used for improved air filtration systems, pest management, or even a fresh coat of paint (Wulfhorst, 2017).

Detroit Public Schools

In September 2016, students from five of Detroit's lowest-performing schools sued the State of Michigan for providing what their complaint alleges are "schools in name only, characterized by slum-like conditions." The complaint, which was filed on behalf of five students, aged 9 to 18, alleges a laundry list of unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the buildings, including extreme classroom temperatures—both freezing, and even in winter, over 90 degrees, due to faulty heating systems. Allegations listed include unmitigated infestations of mice, cockroaches, and other vermin, undrinkable, hot, drinking water from fountains, broken sinks, doorless bathroom stalls, crumbling ceiling tiles that often fell in pieces during classes, and broken, hazardously sharp playground equipment (Heitin, 2020). In December 2019, following a report compiled by an attorney representing the students, the Detroit Public Schools Community District's Superintendent, Nikolai Vitti, proposed some initial plans to move students to better facilities, while further plans are made. The report projected the price tag for capital repairs and renovations at more than \$500 million (Wulfhorst, 2017).

State of Rhode Island

Rhode Island's schools, like every other state, are struggling with whether they can meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines around indoor air quality, while facing delays and challenges in funding to protect students and educators. The difference is that Rhode Island has been a national leader in prioritizing funding for comprehensive improvements to school facilities. The funding plan provides more money for schools in underserved areas. The initiative stands out nationwide for its comprehensiveness and for the community input and buy-in.

Glossary

Community-based schools: public schools that provide services and support that fit each neighborhood's needs, created and run by the people who know children best, all working together.

Partisan: a strong supporter of a party, cause, or person, often without considering or judging certain matters objectively.

Pedagogy: the theory and practice of learning, and how this process influences, and is influenced by, the social, political, and psychological development of learners.

Physical plant: the necessary infrastructure used in operation and maintenance of a facility.

Socioeconomic status: an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic access to resources and social position in relation to others.





VI. EDUCATION WORKFORCE (EW)



VI.A. Education Workforce Context

Within the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, there is an urgent need to prepare, recruit, and retain career educators who are committed to advancing policies and practices that will positively impact students from diverse backgrounds. Within the City of Saint Louis, there exists a rich array of assets that can propel the education workforce to address the needs of students within the various educational systems. For over a century, the public education systems in the City have worked tirelessly to address the perpetual wicked problems (Childs & Lofton, 2021) that have led to inequitable academic and societal outcomes for students and families. The challenges that the public education systems in the City have faced, such as COVID-19, social unrest related to the murder of George Floyd, school closures, and ongoing desegregation litigation (Duncan-Shippy, 2023), have necessitated the need for reimagining the possibilities for an innovative and fully supported education workforce. To accomplish this goal, the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) commissioned a working group of experts to strategically outline how public education systems in the City of Saint Louis can support the emerging and diverse education workforce.

The Education Workforce Workgroup convened throughout the 2022-2023 school year to establish recommendations for how the education labor market within the City of Saint Louis can meet the needs of the school body and students. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic created staffing and personnel issues, including educator shortages, the Education Workforce Workgroup targeted their discussion and recommendations on understanding and supporting educators throughout the public education systems. Through an iterative process, its recommendations focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting educators, while ensuring that professional development opportunities are provided to improve overall teaching practices and learning experiences for students.

The pandemic has caused uncertainty within the school and education support systems in the City. The Education Workforce Workgroup provides guidance on how to tackle ongoing challenges affecting educators throughout the city. For example, the workgroup outlined steps for exploring compensation and incentives to attract teachers to local schools. When compared with other states, Missouri teachers have the country's lowest starting and average salaries (Anglum et al., 2022), impacting the teaching and learning experiences of students in classrooms. Educator burnout is a constant burden impacting public education systems in the City, and the compounding demands and stressors placed on the education profession require a deep dive on how to improve support for educators who work in schools and classrooms. Thus, the Education Workforce created policy recommendations that converged around improving retention incentives (and strategies), along with creating an equitable educator review process that could lead to additional support and compensation. These specific recommendations created by this workgroup seek to curb the exit of Saint Louis educators to other professional opportunities that may exist in other social sectors (Weiner et al., 2021).

The workgroup's recommendations address some of the most urgent needs within the City and strive to safeguard the educational experiences of students in classrooms so they are not compromised by lack of resources or support for teachers and other school staff (Bryner, 2021). The set of recommendations offer a robust approach for improving the capacity of the public education systems, while also improving the teaching and learning environments for all Saint Louis students.

VI.B. Education Workforce Overarching Question

The Education Workforce, championed by Dr. Tanisha Stevens, Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis established recommendations for how the education labor market can meet the needs of the school body and its students. After many meetings and efforts, the workgroup agreed on 16 recommendations.

VI.C. Education Workforce Enabling Factors (EF), Recommendations(R), and Associated Justifications

EW-EF1 – How do we improve incentives and compensation to attract and recruit a diverse and quality Education workforce?

EW-R1: To identify barriers and improve recruitment efforts, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must facilitate a survey for certified and non-certified employees regarding incentives (i.e., housing, tuition reimbursement, etc.) desired for workplace needs within 6-12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Surveying teachers about compensation and incentives can help to ensure that teachers are fairly compensated for their work and are motivated to do their best by surveying teachers, school districts can get a better understanding of what teachers value in terms of compensation and incentives, using this information to design compensation and incentive programs that are more likely to be successful. Surveying teachers can help to build trust and communication between teachers and school administrators. When teachers feel like their voices are being heard, they are more likely to be supportive of school district initiatives, including compensation and incentive programs.

EW-R2: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must communicate the requirements and expectations of certified and non-certified employment positions that are direct and clear for potential candidates during the initial phase of the hiring process.

Justification: When hiring teachers, it is important to communicate the requirements and expectations of both certified and non-certified teachers in the initial phase of the hiring process. This will help to ensure that both parties are on the same page and that the teacher is a good fit for the school and the position. For certified teachers, the requirements will typically include a bachelor's degree in education, a teaching license, and experience teaching in the subject area they are applying to teach. The expectations for certified teachers will typically include providing high-quality instruction, creating a positive learning environment, and meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students.

For non-certified teachers, the requirements may vary depending on the school district. However, they may include a bachelor's degree in a related field, experience working with children, and the completion of an alternative teacher certification program. The expectations for non-certified teachers will typically be similar to those for certified teachers but may also include additional requirements, such as completing a mentorship program or obtaining a teaching license within a certain time limit.

By communicating these requirements and expectations of both certified and non-certified teachers in the initial phase of the hiring process, schools can ensure that they are hiring the best possible teachers for their students.

EW-R3: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must provide platform(s) that allow users to access equitable, transparent, and competitive compensation data that is aligned across educational organizations within Saint Louis within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Providing equitable and transparent compensation data to teachers is important for several reasons. First, it helps to ensure that teachers are paid fairly for their work. Second, it helps to build trust between teachers and their school districts. Third, it can help to attract and retain qualified teachers.

There are a few ways to provide equitable and transparent compensation data to teachers. One way is to create a public salary schedule showing the salary range for each position and the factors used to determine salary. Another way is to provide teachers with access to their own salary data and the data of other teachers in their school district. Equitable and transparent compensation data can help to ensure that teachers are paid fairly for their work. It can also help to build trust between teachers and their school districts. Finally, it can help to attract and retain qualified teachers.



EW-R4: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, diverse organizations across various sectors should implement collaborative and strategic marketing efforts that highlight the value of living and working in Saint Louis (i.e., amenities, salary & benefit packages, etc.), that is launched collaboratively with partners, and reviewed on a continuous basis.

Justification: Although the City of Saint Louis has a lot to offer, it can be difficult to make it stand out from the competition. That is why it is important to implement strategic marketing efforts to highlight the value of living and working in the City. There are several ways to do this. One way is to create a strong brand identity for Saint Louis. This means developing a clear and concise message about what makes the City unique and desirable. Another way to market Saint Louis is to focus on its strengths. This could include its strong economy, its diverse population, and its vibrant culture. With a diverse range of schools and education support systems and a competitive job market, teachers and educational organizations must effectively promote their offerings to attract students, secure funding, and establish a powerful reputation.

Strategic marketing plays a crucial role in highlighting the unique aspects of teaching in Saint Louis, such as the city's rich cultural heritage, vibrant arts scene, and access to cutting edge resources. By employing targeted advertising campaigns, leveraging social media platforms, and forging partnerships with local businesses and community organizations, educators can showcase the opportunities and advantages of teaching in the City, attracting talented individuals and fostering a dynamic learning environment for students. Furthermore, strategic marketing efforts can contribute to the overall growth and development of its education sector, attracting investment, fostering collaboration, and creating a thriving educational ecosystem that benefits both educators and learners alike.

EW-EF2 – How do we improve compensation to retain a diverse and quality Education workforce?

EW-R5: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must conduct a comparative compensation salary/scale review for certified and non-certified employees and compare data with local and regional school districts.

Justification: Writing a comparative compensation salary/scale review for certified and non-certified employees allows schools and education support systems to ensure fairness and equity in their compensation practices. By comparing the salaries and scales of certified and non-certified employees, schools can identify any potential disparities and make necessary adjustments to ensure that employees with similar qualifications and responsibilities receive comparable compensation. Conducting such a review helps schools and education support systems remain competitive in attracting and retaining talented individuals. By benchmarking their compensation packages against those of local and regional school districts, they can gauge whether they are offering competitive salaries and benefits. This information enables schools to make informed decisions about adjusting compensation to attract high-quality candidates and retain experienced staff; a comparative review provides valuable insights into market trends and standards. It allows schools and education support systems to stay updated on prevailing compensation practices within their geographic area, ensuring they remain aligned with industry norms. This knowledge empowers schools to make informed decisions regarding salary adjustments, benefit packages, and overall employee satisfaction.



Conducting a comparative review supports transparency and accountability within the educational institution. Providing employees with clear and objective data on how their compensation compares to that of their peers in similar roles fosters trust and reduces the potential for dissatisfaction or resentment. It also enables administrators to justify compensation decisions based on reliable external data, promoting fairness and consistency. A comparative compensation salary/scale review can aid in budget planning and resource allocation. By understanding the salary ranges and scales in local and regional school districts, schools and education support systems can make informed decisions regarding financial planning, ensuring that compensation expenses are adequately budgeted and that resources allocated effectively to attract and retain top talent.

EW-R6: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must provide an annual “snapshot” report that includes salary, benefits, pension, and incentives that will inform certified and non-certified employees of their compensation through an accessible platform.

Justification: Transparency in compensation is essential to build trust and foster a positive working environment. By offering a comprehensive report detailing the various components of their compensation, schools and education support systems demonstrate their commitment to openness and fairness. This transparency helps to alleviate concerns and misconceptions regarding compensation, ensuring that teachers have accurate and up-to-date information about their total remuneration package. An annual “snapshot” report serves as a valuable tool for informed decision-making and financial planning for teachers. By providing a clear breakdown of salary, benefits, pension contributions, and incentives, teachers can gain a holistic understanding of their compensation and make informed decisions about their financial well-being. They can assess the value of their benefits and pension contributions, plan for retirement, and make informed comparisons with other job opportunities.

An accessible platform for the annual “snapshot” report ensures convenience and ease of access for teachers. By making this information readily available online or through a digital portal, teachers can review their compensation details at their own convenience, eliminating the need for additional administrative procedures or inquiries. This accessibility promotes efficiency and empowers teachers to stay informed about their compensation throughout the year. The annual “snapshot” report encourages transparency and equity within the educational institution. By providing all employees with the same access to information about compensation, regardless of their certification status, it helps create a sense of fairness and equality. Teachers can compare their compensation with colleagues in similar roles and qualifications, fostering a more collaborative and supportive work environment.

The report serves as a valuable tool for attracting and retaining top talent. Potential candidates considering employment in the educational institution can review the comprehensive compensation report to assess the overall value of the package. This transparency and clarity can make the institution more attractive to highly qualified candidates, supporting recruitment efforts and enhancing the overall quality of the teaching staff.

EW-R7: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify incentives that support workforce needs through an annual survey that informs future engagement with corporate, non-profit, and other social service organizations that invest in educator retention efforts.

Justification: Conducting an annual survey allows schools and education support systems to gain valuable insights into the needs and preferences of their workforce. By collecting feedback directly from school personnel, the survey can identify specific incentives and initiatives that are most desired and impactful in promoting teacher and staff retention. This information provides a data-driven basis for strategic decision-making and resource allocation. Survey results enable schools and education support systems to align their engagement efforts with the needs and expectations of their personnel. By identifying incentives that resonate with personnel, institutions can tailor their engagement strategies to better meet those needs. This personalized approach increases the likelihood of successful retention efforts and enhances overall job satisfaction among teachers.

Moreover, the survey serves as a crucial tool for building partnerships with corporate, non-profit, and social service organizations. By gathering data on incentives and preferences, schools and education support systems can provide valuable information to potential partners, showcasing areas where their investment in educator retention efforts can have a meaningful impact. The survey results can serve as a basis for informed discussions and collaborations, fostering mutually beneficial relationships between schools, education support systems, and external stakeholders.

An annual survey demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and a proactive response to workforce needs. By conducting regular assessments of incentives and engagement strategies, schools and education support systems show a willingness to adapt and evolve. This commitment to staying attuned to the needs of their teachers enhances organizational agility, leading to more effective retention efforts, ultimately improving the overall quality of education. Survey results can inform the allocation of resources and funding. By identifying incentives and initiatives that have the greatest impact on teacher retention, schools and education support systems can prioritize their investments in a targeted manner. This strategic allocation of resources ensures that efforts and resources are channeled towards initiatives that yield the highest return on investment, maximizing the effectiveness of retention strategies.



EW-R8: Within 1-2 years after adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify career advancement and transition pathways that support the retention of certified and non-certified employees.

Justification: Providing clear career advancement opportunities and pathways demonstrates an organization's commitment to employee growth and development. By offering a structured framework for career progression, schools and education support systems demonstrate that they value the professional aspirations and long-term goals of their employees. This fosters a sense of investment and loyalty among the workforce, increasing their motivation and commitment to the organization. Career advancement pathways contribute to the retention of talented individuals by providing a clear trajectory for growth and advancement within the organization. When employees see a viable path for their career progression, they are more likely to remain



engaged and committed to their current roles. This sense of purpose and future potential minimizes the risk of stagnation and encourages employees to stay with the institution, reducing turnover and the associated costs of recruitment and onboarding. Identifying career transition pathways is crucial for accommodating the changing needs and interests of employees.

People's professional goals and aspirations can evolve over time, and schools and education support systems that recognize this and provide opportunities for career transitions within the organization foster a culture of flexibility and adaptability. This ensures that employees can explore new areas of interest, apply their skills and knowledge in different roles, and maintain a sense of fulfillment and motivation throughout their careers. Well-defined career pathways enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction. When employees can see a clear connection between their current responsibilities and future growth opportunities, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated in their roles. This sense of purpose and direction positively impacts overall job satisfaction, leading to higher levels of productivity, innovation, and employee well-being. Career advancement and transition pathways contribute to the professionalization of the workforce. By providing opportunities for skill development, training, and advancement, schools and education support systems invest in the continuous improvement of their employees' competencies. This leads to a more qualified and capable workforce, which in turn enhances the quality of education provided and the institution's reputation. Well-defined career pathways can attract and retain top talent. Professionals seeking employment often prioritize organizations that offer clear growth opportunities and demonstrate a commitment to employee development. By showcasing career advancement and transition pathways, schools and education support systems can position themselves as attractive employers, thereby attracting high-caliber individuals and reducing the risk of talent attrition.

EW-EF3 – How do we create an equitable and effective review process for educators?

EW-R9: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify quality professional development opportunities that are relevant, timely, effective, and measurable annually, and will solicit input and/or recommendations from educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Quality professional development is essential for enhancing the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of educators. By identifying and offering relevant and timely opportunities, schools and education support systems demonstrate their commitment to supporting continuous growth and improvement among their staff. Professional development enables educators to stay up to date with the latest research, instructional strategies, and educational trends, resulting in enhanced teaching practices and improved student outcomes. Involving educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders in the identification of professional development opportunities, institutions can ensure that the training aligns with the specific needs and priorities of the educational community. Soliciting input and recommendations from these key stakeholders provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by educators and helps identify areas where professional development can have the greatest impact. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, leading to increased engagement and effectiveness in addressing professional development needs. Measuring the effectiveness of professional development initiatives is crucial for evaluating their impact and allocating resources wisely. By setting clear goals and incorporating measurable outcomes, schools and education support systems can assess the effectiveness of the training and make data-driven decisions about future investments. This evidence-based approach

ensures that resources are directed towards programs and initiatives that yield tangible results, enhancing the overall quality and value of professional development efforts. Identifying quality professional development opportunities contributes to attracting and retaining top talent within the educational community. Talented educators seek opportunities for growth and development, and institutions that offer robust and effective professional development programs become desirable employers. This emphasis on ongoing learning and advancement creates a culture that values and supports the professional aspirations of educators, leading to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately, higher retention rates. Identifying quality professional development opportunities annually demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptability.

The field of education is dynamic, with new research, technologies, and pedagogical approaches emerging regularly. By conducting regular assessments and soliciting input, institutions can stay responsive to changing needs and evolving best practices, ensuring that professional development remains relevant and effective.

EW-R10: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must involve educators in a transparent participatory process to create, implement, and assess the evaluation tools that improve educator working conditions and quality within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Educators are the primary stakeholders in the evaluation process as they are directly impacted by the tools and procedures used to assess their performance and working conditions. Involving them in the development of evaluation tools ensures that their perspectives, expertise, and needs are considered. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership, trust, and collaboration among educators, leading to greater acceptance and buy-in for the evaluation process. Educators possess valuable insights and first-hand knowledge about their work environment, challenges, and professional needs. By involving them in the creation of evaluation tools, schools and education support systems can tap into their expertise to design assessments that are relevant, comprehensive, and reflective of the unique aspects of their roles. This collaboration ensures that evaluation tools accurately capture the complexity and nuances of teaching, leading to more meaningful and effective evaluations. Involving educators in the implementation of evaluation tools promotes a sense of fairness and transparency.

Educators can contribute to the design and implementation of evaluation procedures, ensuring that the process is conducted in a consistent and unbiased manner. Their involvement helps build trust among educators and administration, reducing concerns about subjective evaluations and fostering a culture of openness and accountability. Educators' active participation in the assessment of evaluation tools is crucial for continuous improvement. By involving them in the ongoing assessment and review of evaluation processes, school districts can gather valuable feedback about the effectiveness, relevance, and fairness of the tools. Educators can identify areas for improvement, provide insights into the impact of the evaluation process on their professional growth, and suggest modifications that enhance the overall quality of evaluations. Involving educators in a transparent participatory process ensures that evaluation tools address their broader working conditions and well-being. Educators can provide input on aspects such as workload, resources, professional development opportunities, and support systems. By considering these factors in the evaluation process, school districts can create a more comprehensive and holistic approach that supports educator well-being, leading to improved job satisfaction, retention, and overall quality of education.



EW-R11: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement an authentic year-round employee recognition program with a dedicated staff person to ensure it is equitable and effective in three categories: peer to peer, staff to student, student to staff.

Justification: A comprehensive employee recognition program acknowledges and appreciates the valuable contributions of educators throughout the year. Educators play a critical role in shaping the lives of students and investing in their future. Recognizing their efforts on a regular basis not only boosts morale but also reinforces their sense of purpose and dedication to their work. By implementing a year-round program, schools and education support systems demonstrate a sustained commitment to valuing and honoring their employees' achievements and efforts. An equitable recognition program promotes a positive work culture and enhances employee engagement. By ensuring that recognition is provided in a fair and unbiased manner, the program fosters a sense of inclusivity and equality among staff members.

Recognizing the achievements of employees at all levels and in various categories creates an environment that appreciates diverse talents and contributions. This inclusiveness cultivates a stronger sense of camaraderie, teamwork, and collaboration among staff members. Dedicating a staff person to oversee the recognition program ensures its effectiveness and sustainability. Having a designated individual responsible for managing the program allows for consistent and thoughtful implementation. This staff person can coordinate and facilitate the recognition process, gather nominations, evaluate the appropriateness of recognition, and ensure that all employees have equal opportunities to be recognized. Their expertise and focus on the program's success enable a seamless and impactful recognition experience for all participants. Including peer-to-peer recognition in the program fosters a culture of appreciation and support within the staff community.



Educators often have unique insights into their colleagues' hard work and dedication. Encouraging peers to recognize and celebrate one another's accomplishments not only boosts morale but also strengthens professional relationships and promotes a sense of collective achievement. Peer recognition can inspire and motivate employees to continue delivering their best, leading to a more positive and productive work environment. Staff-to-student recognition in the program acknowledges the profound impact educators have on students' lives. Recognizing educators who go above and beyond to support and inspire students fosters stronger relationships and a deeper sense of connection between staff and students. It also reinforces the importance of positive interactions and appreciation in the learning process. Staff-to-student recognition can boost students' self-esteem, engagement, and overall educational experience.

EW-R12: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must initiate the development of a citywide support center that focuses on offering holistic support and training for all employees within the education ecosystem.

Justification: A citywide support center recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all stakeholders within the education ecosystem. It acknowledges that the success of

the education system relies not only on the efforts of teachers but also on the collaborative contributions of administrators, support staff, counselors, and other professionals. By providing holistic support and training, the center ensures that everyone involved in education has access to resources and services that enhance their professional growth, well-being, and effectiveness. A support center offers a centralized hub for expertise, resources, and professional development opportunities.

Schools and education support systems can tap into the collective knowledge and experience of experts in various fields to provide comprehensive and specialized training for employees. The center can offer workshops, seminars, mentoring programs, and access to research and best practices, ensuring that educators and other professionals have the necessary tools and skills to meet the evolving needs of the education landscape. A holistic support center addresses the diverse needs of employees within the education ecosystem. It recognizes that individuals have unique challenges and circumstances that require tailored support. The center can provide a range of services, including mental health support, work-life balance resources, wellness programs, career counseling, and assistance with personal and professional development. By taking a comprehensive approach to support, the center promotes employee well-being and resilience, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction, retention, and overall performance.

A citywide support center fosters collaboration and networking among professionals in the education field. It serves as a platform for educators and other employees to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another. By facilitating collaboration and networking, the center promotes a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and the exchange of knowledge. This collective intelligence and shared expertise contribute to the growth and advancement of the entire education ecosystem. A citywide support center promotes equity and inclusivity within the education ecosystem. It ensures that all employees, regardless of their role, have equal access to support and training opportunities. This includes addressing disparities in resources, professional development, and well-being. By prioritizing equity, the center contributes to a more inclusive and fair education system, which ultimately benefits students and the broader community.

EW-R13: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify mechanisms, policies, and processes that lead to performance-based incentive systems for certified and non-certified employees within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Performance-based incentives recognize and reward employees who consistently demonstrate exceptional performance and contribute significantly to the organization's goals and outcomes. By linking incentives to performance, schools and education support systems will create a culture of excellence and motivation, encouraging employees to strive for continuous improvement and outstanding results. Such recognition and rewards not only boost morale but also attract and retain high-performing individuals, enhancing the overall quality of education. Performance-based incentive systems promote fairness and transparency in the workplace. Establishing clear criteria and metrics for evaluating performance, schools, and education support systems ensures that incentives are allocated based on merit and objective standards. This mitigates potential biases and favoritism, fostering a sense of equity among employees. When employees see that their efforts and achievements are recognized and rewarded fairly, it strengthens their trust in the system and encourages a healthy competitive spirit. Performance-based incentive systems provide opportunities for professional growth and development. To qualify for incentives, employees often need to demonstrate specific competencies and meet



predetermined performance targets. This encourages continuous learning and skill development as employees strive to enhance their abilities and achieve the desired outcomes. The focus on performance improvement can lead to a more engaged and skilled workforce, ultimately benefiting the students and their educational institutions.

Performance-based incentive systems encourage a results-oriented culture as well as accountability. When employees are aware that their performance directly affects their compensation and recognition, it creates a sense of ownership and responsibility. This fosters a commitment to achieving measurable outcomes and holding oneself accountable for meeting performance targets. The emphasis on results-driven performance can lead to increased productivity, efficiency, and innovation within the educational institution. Implementing performance-based incentive systems aligns with broader trends in the field of education.

Many educational systems and organizations worldwide are transitioning towards performance-based evaluation and reward systems, recognizing the need for accountability and continuous improvement. By identifying mechanisms, policies, and processes that support performance-based incentives, schools and education support systems can remain competitive and progressive, aligning with industry standards and best practices.

EW-EF4 – How do we assess the needs of the Education Workforce?

EW-R14: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must periodically collect qualitative and quantitative data that assess the changing working conditions and demographics of the education workforce in the City of Saint Louis within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Collecting data on working conditions provides crucial insights into the experiences and challenges faced by school personnel. Understanding the conditions under which school personnel work, such as workload, resources, and support systems, helps identify areas for improvement, informing policy decisions. By periodically assessing working conditions, schools and education support systems can proactively address issues impacting school personnel's well-being, job satisfaction, and ultimately, the quality of education provided to students.

Monitoring the demographics of the education workforce is essential to ensure equity and inclusivity. By collecting data on the demographic characteristics of school personnel such as race, gender, age, and cultural background, schools and education support systems can assess representation and identify potential disparities or underrepresentation. This data can inform targeted strategies and initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workforce, creating a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment. Tracking changes in the working conditions and demographics of the education workforce across points in time allows for trend analysis and long-term planning. By comparing data from different time periods, schools and education support systems can identify patterns, emerging needs, and areas of improvement. This data-driven approach enables proactive decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that policies and initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of the workforce and the community.

Collecting data on the education workforce can inform recruitment and retention strategies. By analyzing the demographic trends and factors influencing retention, schools and education support systems can tailor their recruitment efforts and implement focused retention initiatives. This data-driven approach assures that efforts to attract and retain educators are evidence-based, effective, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of the workforce. Regularly

collecting data on the education workforce demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based decision-making and transparency. When schools and education support systems prioritize data collection and analysis, they signal their dedication to understanding the needs of their workforce and making informed decisions. This fosters trust and collaboration among educators, administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders, creating a culture of transparency and continuous improvement.

EW-R15: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create pathways that holistically support the needs of educators within in the City of Saint Louis within 1-2 years after adoption of the Blueprint.

Justification: Educators play a crucial role in shaping the lives of students and contributing to the overall quality of education. Supporting their needs is essential to foster a positive and conducive working environment that allows educators to thrive personally and professionally. By creating pathways addressing their diverse needs, schools and education support systems demonstrate a commitment to the well-being and success of their educators. Holistic support acknowledges that educators have multifaceted needs extending beyond their professional responsibilities. Educators face various challenges, such as managing work-life balance, maintaining mental and physical health, accessing professional development opportunities, and navigating career progression.

By creating pathways that encompass these dimensions of well-being, schools and education support systems promote a comprehensive and balanced approach to support. Holistic support for educators enhances job satisfaction and retention. When educators feel supported and valued, they are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which positively impacts their performance and commitment to their work. By addressing their needs through various pathways, schools and education support systems can foster a positive and fulfilling work environment that encourages long-term retention of talented educators. Creating pathways to support educators aligns with the principles of equity and inclusivity. Schools and education support systems should strive to provide equal opportunities and support for all educators, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.

By developing pathways that consider the unique needs of different individuals, such as new teachers, experienced educators, educators from marginalized communities, or educators with diverse learning styles, institutions can promote equitable access to support and resources. Supporting the needs of educators contributes to their professional growth and development. Providing pathways that offer opportunities for continuous learning, skill enhancement, and career advancement allows educators to thrive in their roles. By investing in their professional development, schools and education support systems not only enhance the capabilities of individual educators but also strengthen the overall quality of education. Holistic support for educators can positively impact student outcomes. When educators receive the necessary support to address their needs, they can focus more effectively on their teaching responsibilities, which benefits student learning experiences. Well-supported educators are better equipped to create engaging and inclusive learning environments, more effectively address students' diverse needs, and foster positive relationships with their students.

EW-R16: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement robust employee program(s) and services in partnership with organizations that will support the ongoing mental and social well-being of all employees within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.



Justification: The mental and social well-being of employees is paramount to creating a healthy and productive work environment. Schools and education support systems rely on the dedication and well-being of their employees to provide quality education and support to students. By prioritizing mental and social well-being, institutions demonstrate a commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that values the holistic health of their employees.

Robust employee programs and services contribute to the overall retention and satisfaction of the workforce. When employees have access to resources and support that address their mental and social well-being, it enhances their job satisfaction and engagement. By partnering with organizations to provide comprehensive behavioral health services, schools and education support systems can attract and retain talented individuals who feel valued and supported in their roles. Promoting mental and social well-being fosters a positive work environment and improves overall productivity. When employees are mentally and socially healthy, they are better equipped to manage stress, build positive relationships, and collaborate effectively. This leads to improved teamwork, communication, and performance, which ultimately benefits the entire educational institution. Implementing such programs and services helps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and encourages open conversations about well-being.

By partnering with external organizations, schools and education support systems can provide confidential and professional resources to support employees in addressing mental health challenges. This proactive approach sends a powerful message that mental and social well-being are valued and prioritized, encouraging employees to seek help when needed and fostering a culture of compassion and support. Schools and education support systems may not have the internal capacity or knowledge to effectively address all aspects of employee well-being. By collaborating with external organizations that specialize in mental health and social support services, institutions can leverage their expertise and resources to provide tailored and evidence-based programs to meet the specific needs of their employees.

VI.D. Education Workforce Forces of Change

Forces of Change are the external dynamics that may affect the context in which the community and Education ecosystem operate. A primary question is considered – “What is occurring or might occur that affects this domain of education in the City of Saint Louis?” The Education Workforce recommendations may be affected by societal, economic, political, technological, environmental, and legal forces.

1. Societal Implications: Improving the education workforce can positively impact the overall school ecosystem and provide opportunities for all students in the City of Saint Louis to thrive. However, educational systems do not operate within a vacuum and are influenced by other societal stressors and events.
 - A. Teacher Vacancies: Since the pandemic, the number of teacher vacancies has risen, thus leaving many schools (districts) understaffed, along with students lacking high-quality instructors. There is an opportunity to promote the value of teaching within all education systems in the City of Saint Louis and promote the quality of learning throughout the ecosystem.
 - B. Dearth of Leadership: The past decade has seen a decline in the number of trained school and district leaders who are equipped to meet evolving educational objectives. There exist opportunities to create a “build-your-own” pipeline of educators (including leaders) equipped and trained to work within all education systems in the City of Saint Louis.

2. **Economic Implications:** Improving the education workforce will take a considerable investment of funds and resources. Economically, the impact of school closures and the funding of education can have a direct impact on how teaching and learning is implemented throughout Saint Louis.
 - A. **Shrinking Budgets:** Layoffs, increased workload & stress, and limited professional development resources are all outcomes related to shrinking budgets (due to declining investment from the state or the end of ESSER funds). Opportunities exist to partner with local, citywide, and regional partners that could invest in all education systems in the City of Saint Louis and backfill declining budgets with resources.
 - B. **School Closures:** Declining enrollment has led to the closing of schools, impacting the workforce, while providing educational opportunities to students in specific communities within the City of Saint Louis. All education systems in the City can look at repurposing school buildings to provide holistic and wraparound services to students and families within the greater community.
 - C. **Teacher Pay:** Teacher wages continue to lag other states (and districts within Missouri), inhibiting educational systems from recruiting and retaining the best teachers. There is an opportunity to reallocate funds to promote increases in teacher pay and investment in teacher professional development.
3. **Political Implications:** The political landscape within education has directly impacted education workforce populations throughout the United States. Within all education systems in the City of Saint Louis, the politics around teaching and learning can directly impact students' experiences inside schools.
 - A. **Culture Wars in Schools:** There is increased surveillance of what is being taught and learned in schools. Opportunity exists to promote what is being taught in all education systems in the City of Saint Louis and highlight the quality of education present within the ecosystem.
 - B. **Pushback on DEI:** Attempts to erase efforts that focus on equity within public education system could directly impact the educator workforce. An opportunity exists to clearly define what is happening within the City of Saint Louis and how education systems are focusing on improving the educational outcomes for all students.
 - C. **Declining Support for Teachers:** There have been questions about the role and purpose of teachers, especially in the public education system, which has led to a lack of support for teaching (and teaching). Marketing and promoting educator practices within the City could help to highlight the quality of teaching and learning that is taking place throughout Saint Louis schools.
4. **Technological Implications:** Technology will have a direct impact on how teaching and learning are implemented throughout all education systems in the City of Saint Louis. Innovation can provide opportunities and limitations that can directly impact how educators engage with students, families, and caretakers throughout the education ecosystem.
 - A. **Online/Virtual Learning:** More students and families have transitioned to online/virtual learning, which has led to declining enrollment in physical school buildings. Opportunities exist for educational systems to embrace online/virtual learning and incorporate these modalities into school-day course schedules, curriculum, and learning opportunities.



- B. Technology Integration: Education systems are constantly evolving when it comes to integrating the latest technology into their educational offerings and programming, which can lead to user errors and differentiation. Opportunities for educator and community professional development around technology usage and integration for promoting high-quality teaching and learning are rapidly escalating.
5. Environmental Implications: The education workforce is directly influenced by changes in the overall educational environment. Lack of partnerships and an overall disconnect to the broader education ecosystem influence how educators navigate organizational structures.
- A. Partnerships: There exist many informal partnerships that are not strategically formalized to promote education. Numerous opportunities exist to promote broad sector and formal agreements between organizations and all education systems in the City of Saint Louis.
 - B. Disconnect in the 'educational ecosystem': Many organizations work in silos and are disconnected to the overall ecosystem that exists within the City of Saint Louis. There are opportunities to bridge connections between community partners and promote networking interactions to promote educator development and investment.
6. Legal Implications: Educators are directly impacted by legal issues that challenge the nature and delivery of teaching and learning within the Saint Louis ecosystem. These challenges could influence who gets certified to teach, the types of curricula, how instruction is delivered, and where teachers get placed within the various educational systems.
- A. State Statutes and Laws: The legislature has passed legislation leading to underfunding and performance barriers for all education systems in the City of Saint Louis. Opportunities to partner with state legislators and officials to promote the CWPE and how they can leverage those partnerships at the statehouse should be vigorously explored.
 - B. Teacher Certification: Becoming a certified teacher can be a difficult and confusing process that prevents many potential future educators from entering the profession. Opportunities exists to create and strengthen educator pathways that promote the certification of new teachers to enter all educational systems in the City of Saint Louis.

VI.E. Education Workforce Promising Practices

Denver Public Schools

Denver Public Schools (DPS) has been facing a teacher shortage for several years. In 2017, this District was thousands of teachers short of its target. In response, DPS implemented several strategies to recruit and retain teachers. First, DPS offers competitive salaries and benefits, which makes it an attractive place to work for teachers. The district also offers several additional benefits, such as student loan forgiveness and tuition reimbursement. In 2022, the average salary for a teacher in DPS was \$63,000. This is higher than the average salary for a teacher in Colorado, which is \$56,000. DPS also offers several additional benefits, such as health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits. The district also offers several student loan forgiveness programs, which can help teachers to pay off their student loans. Second, DPS provides teachers with a variety of professional development opportunities, which helps them to stay up-to-date on the latest teaching practices. The District also offers several leadership development opportunities, which supports teachers in advancing their careers. Finally, DPS is committed to



recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds. The District believes that a diverse workforce is essential for providing students with a high-quality education. DPS has a few programs in place to recruit teachers from diverse backgrounds, such as the Teacher Residency Program, which is a year-long program that prepares non-certified teachers to become certified teachers. The program is designed to attract and retain teachers from diverse backgrounds. These strategies have been successful in helping DPS to recruit and retain teachers. In 2022, the District was only 200 teachers short of its target. DPS is now considered a leader in teacher recruitment and retention.

Pittsburgh Public Schools

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) has actively pursued partnerships with local universities to enhance educational opportunities and support for students and educators. The University of Pittsburgh has collaborated with PPS through various initiatives. For instance, the Pitt/PPS Partnership for Family School and Community Engagement focuses on strengthening relationships between families, schools, and the community to improve student outcomes. Additionally, the School of Education at Pitt offers teacher training programs and professional development opportunities for PPS educators. Duquesne University's School of Education has collaborated with PPS on various projects, including the Transforming Learning through Inquiry in Mathematics and Science (TLIMS) program. TLIMS aims to enhance teaching and learning in mathematics and science by providing professional development to PPS educators.

Kansas City Public Schools

Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) has implemented several initiatives to improve the education workforce and enhance educational opportunities for students. The Kansas City Teacher Residency program is a partnership between the Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) and local universities. It aims to recruit, train, and retain high-quality teachers in the District. The program provides aspiring teachers with a year-long residency experience alongside an experienced mentor teacher, followed by a commitment to teach in KCPS for at least three years. Kansas City schools have invested in professional development programs to support educators and enhance their instructional practices. These programs offer ongoing training, coaching, and resources to help teachers refine their skills and stay up-to-date with best practices in teaching and learning.

Glossary

Disparities: a difference in level of treatment, especially one that is seen as unfair.

Remuneration: the total compensation someone receives in exchange for their services or work for a company or organization.

Resource allocation: the process of identifying and assigning resources, such as human, financial, material, and time, to tasks and activities necessary for completing a project.

Sectors: various groups that people might be divided into for reasons of common social, political, economic, cultural, or religious interests.

Strategic marketing: a process through which an organization establishes marketing goals to successfully capitalize on its strengths.

VII. COMMON THEMES AND CONVERGENCE ACROSS WORKGROUP DOMAINS

Convergence: *Noun. con-ver-gence*

A location where two or more entities or elements meet, characteristically marked by upwelling.

The Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) process intentionally set the stakeholders in the five respective workgroups on separate and distinct pathways to the overarching goal of building a Blueprint for a new 21st century Education Ecosystem for 21st century children and families. For nearly 12 months, the Champions and stakeholders focused on the challenge of not fixing broken pieces and the past but reexamining how education ought to be in the future for students, families, caregivers and staff.

A careful content analysis of the recommendations across the education domains of Community, Education Workforce, Health, Wellness, and Safety, Infrastructure and School Experience revealed five common and convergent themes as shown in **Figure 5**:

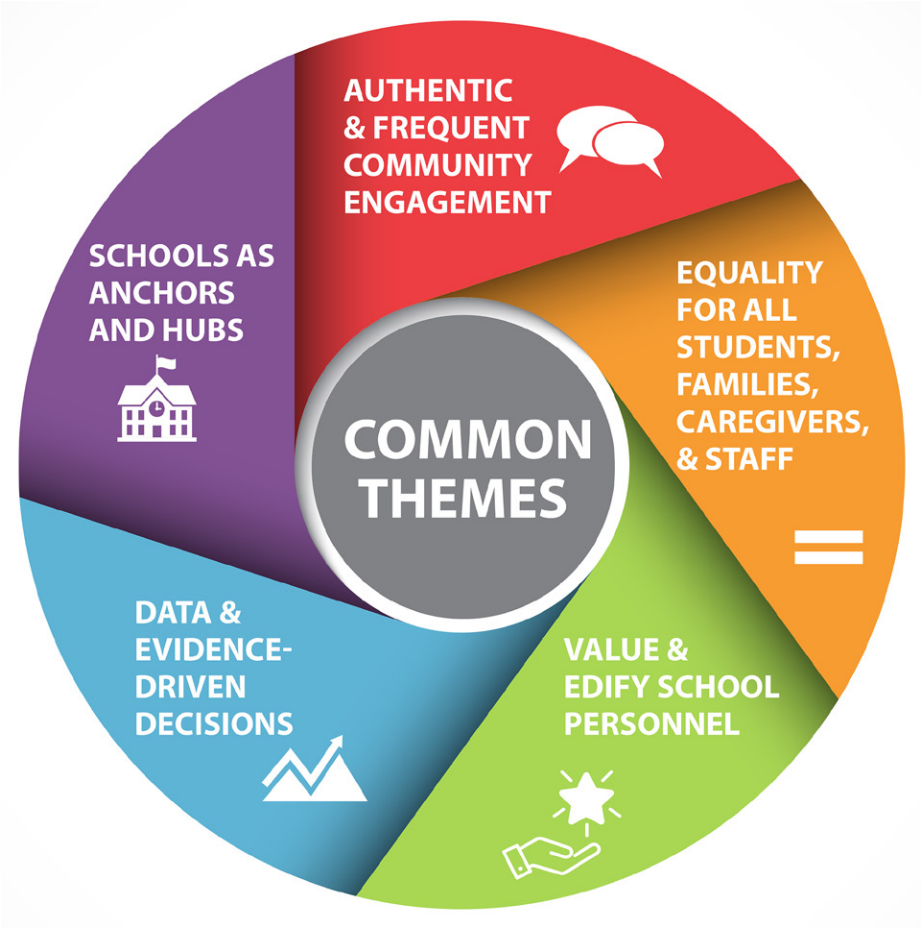


Figure 5 – Five Common Themes Across Workgroup Domains



1. Schools should be the Anchors and Hubs of neighborhoods.

The Infrastructure Workgroup presents a model that mirrors how shopping malls are designed and developed with an anchor tenant. These stakeholders propose that schools be structured as community anchors with a focus on wrapping around partners and services to provide health, mental health, and other support services:

IS-R3: To ensure that students have access to community resources, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must tailor facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and utilize existing resources in that particular community within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Both the Community and School Experience Workgroups call for establishing schools as “hubs” to support education; they both identified community needs in neighborhoods:

CO-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, through collaborative engagement with community partners, must garner their input and support on how to broaden the use of school buildings to serve as hubs that support education and identified community needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

SE-R1: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must explore and establish community school models and work with key community stakeholders and regional economic ecosystem executives to ensure access to resources and equitable educational experiences within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

SE-R4: Appointed stakeholders must establish geographic clusters of neighborhoods (“villages”) to:

1. ensure advocacy, agency, and access for all children and families and
2. designate a school building as a “hub” within each neighborhood to (a) coordinate services and programs, (b) implement schools’ communications and efficient transportation, and (c) establish neighborhood pride within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

The Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroup also discussed the value of additional academic and behavioral support and resources that are neighborhood-based:

HWS-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must provide equitable academic resources to students, such as programs specific to: performing arts, world languages, leadership, science, technology, engineering, and math programs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

2. Authentic and frequent Community Engagement is a driving force for future growth and stability of the City and its schools.

Engagement involves communicating with, learning from, and partnering with external individuals and organizations. The engagement of families and community by schools and education support systems should not be an afterthought with disjointed efforts but a key aim in all future plans and operations. Research shows that schools with high levels of community support from parental involvement and partnership programs have increased student attendance, grades, and



achievements (Van Schoales and Eschbacher, 2022, Kaplan, 2022 and Lash and Belifore, 2017). Three workgroups (School Experience, Community, and Infrastructure) focus on the development and implementation of intentional and measured plans to engage family and community in all aspects of the education experience.

The School Experience Workgroup strongly defines and recommends a Community Schools Model. The recommendations of two other workgroups support that model through facility designs as well as structured and equitable programming activities:

SE-R1: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must explore and establish community school models and work with key community stakeholders and regional economic ecosystem executives to ensure access to resources and equitable educational experiences within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

SE-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must set policy/protocol to monitor equity, quality, and voice implementing school experiences for all children and parent/caregivers at primary and secondary levels within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

CO-R3: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with organizations and community members to create equitable, wholistic programming opportunities inside schools on an ongoing basis within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

IS-R2: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must direct design professionals to design facilities that encourage a positive culture, collaboration, community pride, and a love of learning.

IS-R3: To ensure that students have access to community resources, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must tailor facilities in each location to meet the needs of students and utilize existing resources in that particular community within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

IS-R7: At the onset of the Collective Impact Phase of the Citywide Plan, the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis must conduct quarterly public engagement meetings to ensure public awareness about the process within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

The Community and Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroups propose recommendations that strongly encourage partnerships with community-based partners to support persistent and unaddressed student and community needs:

CO-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, through collaborative engagement with community partners, must garner their input and support on how to broaden the use of school buildings to serve as hubs that support education and identified community needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

CO-R10: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, using a participatory process with families, must develop a published template for sharing effective family and student engagement strategies, which should be reviewed and finalized, annually.

HWS-R3: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis, must establish a broad-sector network that develops, implements and sustains a public awareness campaign of existing health, wellness, and safety services available to students, families, caregivers and staff.

HWS-R5: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify community and social partners that provide resources at no cost to student such as: navigating the criminal justice system, medical and social assistance, and trauma-focused therapy, as soon as needs are identified.

3. Equity for all students, families, caregivers, and staff should be centered in all activities.

Equity is defined as the quality of being fair and is differentiated from equality. While equality means providing the same for all, equity acknowledges that people do not start from the same place—disparities exist and adjustments must be made to address them.

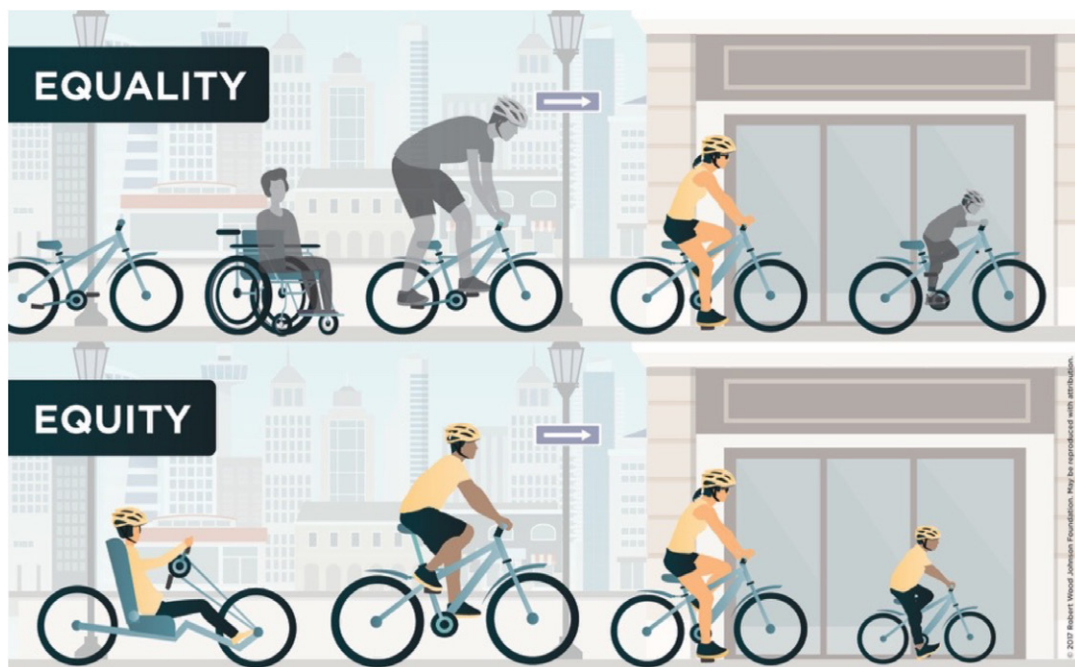


Image from Virginia Department of Health

Equity in education involves creating an educational system that edifies all students. This means that no matter what a student's background, language, race, economic profile, gender, learning capability, disability, or family history, each student has the opportunity to get the support and resources they need to achieve their educational goals. Examples of equity in education include teachers who are able to alter their teaching style to respond to students with different learning capabilities and environments where student of different races and ethnicities can see people they can relate to around them in the schools and classrooms.



The School Experience, Community, and Health, Wellness, and Safety Workgroups offer recommendations that place equity at the center of funding decisions for all categories of students. They set forth requirements for authentically initiating and tracking policies and interventions that lead to measurable equity outcomes:

SE-R2: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must mandate funding equity and implement best practices to provide guaranteed school experiences and reconnection to schools for all within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

SE-R5: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must ensure maximum funding for mandated services for special groups of students (English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SPED), and Free and Reduced Lunch (F&RL)). All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must also reinforce continuity and quality of programs and services for minoritized students, students in transition, early childhood, and newcomers' programs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

SE-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must set policy/protocol to monitor equity, quality, and voice implementing school experiences for all children and parent/caregivers at primary and secondary levels within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

CO-R9: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must convene on a quarterly basis to take a more equitable approach to: alignment, integration, synergy and different criteria to identify initiatives that can benefit all students, regardless of their schools, within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

CO-R13: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must inform and improve policies, practices and procedures that do not marginalize or further marginalize underrepresented students, families, and communities.

HWS-R6: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create alternative learning programs that support at-risk students with prolonged absences due to chronic medical and mental health conditions, temporary incarcerations, and disciplinary exclusions within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Additionally, the Infrastructure and Education Workgroups offer multiple recommendations to encourage defining equitable access and processes for students and staff:

IS-R8: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must critically and thoroughly define EQUITABLE access to excellent education for all students before implementation of the Blueprint.

IS-R9: Within 6-8 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must develop benchmarks and measurement tools to evaluate whether each student is receiving equitable access to facilities, programs, and supports required for student success.

IS-R10: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, Public Education Systems in the City of Saint Louis must establish and prioritize equitable access to all available programs and resources.

EW-R12: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must initiate the development of a citywide support center that focuses on offering holistic support and training for all employees within the education ecosystem.

EW-R15: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create pathways that holistically support the needs of educators within in the City of Saint Louis within 1-2 years after adoption of the Blueprint.

4. School personnel should be valued and edified.

A National Education Association (NEA) survey (2022) reveals that 55 percent of educators are thinking about retiring or leaving their careers earlier than planned. Moreover, the assessment revealed “the top issue facing educators right now is burnout, with 67% reporting it as a very serious issue and 90% a very serious or somewhat serious issue. General stress from the pandemic is also a very serious concern, and student absences and unfilled job openings leading to more work for remaining staff are also key stressors.” Public officials and school leaders must rapidly begin to make significant investments to recruit, train, and retain a force of high-quality educators and support staff in every school district. Several workgroups addressed these issues across multiple recommendations.

Multiple recommendations from School Experience, Health, Wellness, and Safety, and Education Workforce focus on using participatory processes to develop new policies for staff recruitment, development, retention and advocacy:

SE-R6: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement strategies for systemic staffing and teacher and staff advocacy, efficacy, career development, respect, and teacher care within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

HWS-R1: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must work strategically to develop a collaborative consisting primarily of healthcare providers and public safety personnel, to create a process that assesses the needs of students, families, caregivers and staff.

EW-R1: To identify barriers and improve recruitment efforts, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must facilitate a survey for certified and non-certified employees regarding incentives (i.e., housing, tuition reimbursement, etc.) desired for workplace needs within 6-12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

EW-R7: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify incentives that support workforce needs through an annual survey that informs future engagement with corporate, non-profit, and other social service organizations that invest in educator retention efforts.



Moreover, two workgroups focused on the activation of robust staff support programs to address health, well-being, and trauma from various external and internal stressors:

HWS-R9: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must create an intentional process to coordinate health, wellness, and safety resources for students, families, caregivers and staff within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

HWS-R13: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with community and social organizations to create a confidential communication portal to assist students, families, caregivers and staff in coping with violence, trauma and safety, in order to provide wrap-around services within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

EW-R16: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must implement robust employee program(s) and services in partnership with organizations that will support the ongoing mental and social well-being of all employees within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

5. All future decisions about school infrastructure, systems, and operations should be data and evidence-driven.

Data-driven decision-making provides institutions with the capabilities to create real-time insights and predictions to elevate their performance across multiple domains. Using data, they can measure the success of different strategies and select educational options that improve outcomes for both students, families, communities, and staff. Data can be used to identify problems and support options for solutions. The recommendations from several workgroups suggest that the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must actualize a data and evidence-guided culture to measure progress and support goals relating to schools and students.

The Health, Wellness, and Safety, Infrastructure, Education Workforce, and Community Workgroups specifically propose the rigorous assessment of staff and student needs and the evaluation of challenges schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis face with community-based partnerships:

HWS-R1: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must work strategically to develop a collaborative consisting primarily of healthcare providers and public safety personnel, to create a process that assesses the needs of students, families, caregivers and staff.

HWS-R2: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, the Saint Louis Board of Education must identify and hire (or contract) an independent evaluator to perform a gap analysis that determines existing and needed support services for students, families, caregivers and staff and identify funding resources and community partners to effectually address needs.

IS-R9: Within 6-8 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must develop benchmarks and measurement tools to evaluate whether each student is receiving equitable access to facilities, programs, and supports required for student success.

EW-R7: Within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint, all schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must identify incentives that support workforce needs through an annual survey that informs future engagement with corporate, non-profit, and other social service organizations that invest in educator retention efforts.

CO-R1: Saint Louis Public School Officials, Saint Louis City Officials and participating partners must evaluate and address the challenges that hinder facilitation of partnerships and implementation of recommendations within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

CO-R2: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must collaborate with appropriate partner organizations to create a unified, accessible, data-driven system to identify and address student, family, and caregiver needs within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

Moreover, the Stakeholders in Health, Wellness, and Safety and Infrastructure call for an ongoing assessment of implementation of the Blueprint recommendations:

HWS-R4: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must conduct an impact and outcomes assessment focused on implementing recommendations for this enabling factor within 12 months of adoption of the Blueprint.

IS-R12: All schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis must annually evaluate and revise use of resources to ensure adherence and compliance to CWPE goals.



VIII. EVALUATION, LESSONS LEARNED AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS



VIII.A. Evaluation

Purpose

As part of their evidence-based, quality control procedures, the Carter Team contracted with Educa Consulting to conduct an evaluation of its management of the engagement process for the Stakeholders involved in the development of the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE).

At the onset of the project, the evaluator conducted a content analysis to gain a fuller understanding of the CWPE initiative, its aims, key stakeholders, and their roles, including the Carter Team's role as the manager and master facilitator of the project. From this initial analysis, the evaluator understood the project as a collaborative, co-creational endeavor consisting of the following interdependent stakeholders:

- The Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis (the Board). They introduced the CWPE concept through a resolution in February 2022. The Board leads the CWPE process.
- Ad Hoc Citywide Planning Committee (Ad Hoc Committee) selected by the Board
- Five (5) workgroups formed by the Board and a Saint Louis Public Schools Leadership Team
- Champions- volunteer Chairpersons and Facilitators of each of the five workgroups selected by the Ad Hoc Committee Chairperson
- Community members and residents of the City of Saint Louis, who, according to the Board informed their decision to embark upon the CWPE Blueprint Process.
- The Carter Team, whose role it was to guide the CWPE process, through the following tasks (1) project management, (2) management of the workgroup activities and outcomes, (3) management of the Ad Hoc Committee activities and outcomes, and (4) reporting and community accountability.

Overview of Evaluation Questions

The evaluation team developed an evaluation plan consisting of a methodological approach to determine efficacy across each of the Carter Team's contractual tasks: (1) Project Management, (2) Management of the Workgroup Activities and Outcomes, (3) Management of the Ad Hoc Committee Activities and Outcomes, (4) Reporting and Community Accountability. **Table 1** provides an overview of each evaluation question and supporting indicators, classified by task.

Table 1.
Key Evaluation Questions and Indicators

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Project Management.

Outcomes: The Engagement process is well managed and documented and there is a system for immediately responding to inhibitors and challenges.

E.1. Do project management activities facilitate actionable outcomes that result in a blueprint and strategic vision for a new education Ecosystem in the City of Saint Louis?

Indicators:

1. Are meeting agendas co-created with all relevant stakeholders?
2. Do weekly meetings with Ad Hoc Committee Chair and SLPS prioritize and advance CWPE stakeholder goals and objectives?
3. Do monthly meetings with Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Workgroup Champions, and Workgroup Coaches prioritize and advance CWPE stakeholder goals and objectives?

Management of the Workgroup Activities and Outcomes.

Outcomes: The 10 (the final number is nine) Champions are guided through facilitating 50+ stakeholders to respond to the five respective overarching questions and related sub-questions; A Citywide Plan for Education focused on enabling factors, recommendations and justification points that will offer a Blueprint for a new Education Ecosystem system that is complete and ready for a strategic action plan.

E.2. Did the Workgroups' activities and strategies result in enabling factors, recommendations and guiding principles.

Indicators:

1. What Workgroup activities facilitated developing the blueprint?
2. What Workgroup activities presented challenges to developing the blueprint?
3. What is the process for ensuring alignment of Workgroups' overarching questions and sub questions throughout the Phase I process?
4. What is the process for ensuring comprehensive integration of community voice through ought the Phase I process?
 - Are meetings being held at a time where all workgroup team members can attend?
 - Is inclusive language being utilized (language that is non-technical, etc.)?

**Table 1 continued**

<p>Management of the Ad Hoc Committee Activities and Outcomes.</p> <p>Outcomes: The Ad Hoc Committee has ongoing full information and knowledge of the Engagement Process and Outcomes and can provide intermittent feedback on the process and recommendations to the Carter team and the Champions.</p>
E.3. Did the Ad Hoc Committee Meetings provide valuable input and feedback on the process?
Indicators:
1. What is the process for obtaining and including all stakeholders' input in meeting preparation?
2. Are meeting agendas co-created with all relevant stakeholders?
3. Are all stakeholders able to easily access and utilize meeting materials?
4. Is the communication strategy adequate to meet the needs and contextual realities of all participants?
<p>Reporting and Community Accountability.</p> <p>Outcomes: There is full written documentation of the engagement process, outcomes, and recommendations on an ongoing basis. There is transparency of the process and accountability to all stakeholders and the community.</p>
E.4. Was the Reporting and Dissemination process comprehensive, transparent, and reflective of all stakeholders' wisdom?
Indicators:
1. How was the reporting and dissemination strategy developed?
2. Was the reporting and dissemination process inclusive?
E.5. Was the public engagement process inclusive and open to all stakeholders in the City of St. Louis Education Ecosystem?
Indicators:
1. What strategies were used for outreach and promotion of the meetings?
2. Did Champions, Stakeholders and Design Team members contribute to the design of the agenda and activities for the meeting.
3. What consideration is given to meeting materials being language-friendly and culturally appropriate for all members of the public?
4. What strategies were used to receive authentic public feedback?

Methodology

To answer each of the evaluation questions, the evaluation team utilized quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches. **Table 2** lists the details for each data collection activity:

Table 2. Data Collection Methods	
Data Collection Activities	Date of Activity
Surveys	
CWPE Tuning Up Meeting with Champions and SLPS Leadership	June 8, 2022
Kick-Off Meeting with Workgroup Stakeholders	July 27 th , 2022
Stakeholder Assessment	August 2022
Monthly Workgroup Evaluations	August 2022- May 2023
Public Forum Evaluation	September 2022; November 2022; Jan-Feb 2023; March 2023, May 2023
Content Analysis of Basecamp Documents and Emails	July 2022 -May 2023
Semi-structured Interviews	September 2022-February 2023
Participant Observations	
Workgroup Convenings	September 2022, February 2023, March 2023, April 2023, May 2023
Champions Meeting	September 2022, February 2023, March 2023, April 2023, May 2023
Public Forum	September 2022
Weekly Team Meetings	August 2022-May 2023
Winter Champions' Retreat	February 2023



Findings

Project management activities facilitated actionable outcomes that resulted in a Blueprint and strategic vision for a new education ecosystem in the City of Saint Louis. Findings from the content analysis concluded that the Carter Team utilized a meeting planning strategy that was collaborative, transparent, and highly iterative. Both incoming and outgoing communication documents indicate that the Carter Team engaged Champions in the development and refinement of meeting agenda items. Additionally, outside of their contractual obligations, the Carter Team established and trained more than 80 stakeholders on a project management and communications cloud-based platform – Basecamp™.

As early as June 13, 2022, the Carter Team established regular check-ins with each set of CWPE Workgroup Champions (2:1) to establish open and constructive dialogue at the beginning of the engagement. Given the Champions' critical role as workgroup facilitators, the Carter Team felt it imperative to start "the work of cultivating collaborative and trusting working relationships as early as possible" – Dr. Laverne Morrow Carter. This would prove to be a worthy strategy, as the feedback from Champions and workgroup members resulted in a tactical decision to recruit and employ policy analysts and policy writers to further assist workgroups in refining recommendations and writing justifications, forces of change, and promising practices.

The monthly activities and strategies over a 10-month period yielded a strong set of enabling factors and 62 recommendations across the five workgroup domains. The Carter Team co-created monthly workgroup activities structured to facilitate developing the Blueprint. The evaluator assessed all monthly workgroup activities. These findings were then analyzed and disseminated to the Carter Team as a monthly workgroup evaluation report. Month to month, the prevailing sentiment among workgroup participants was that the Carter Team designed workgroup activities that enabled them to accomplish their goals: developing enabling factors, recommendations, and justification points.

Figure 6 illustrates the trend in workgroup participants' sentiment regarding overall effectiveness of activities and strategies over time.

Each month, workgroup participants were asked to evaluate their meetings, which consisted of the following domains: (1) morning plenary activities to prepare workgroup members to effectively contribute to their workgroup activities, (2) workgroup activities, which were designed to assist team members in developing enabling factors, recommendations, and justifications, and (3) afternoon plenary activities, which provided team members the opportunity to reflect on the incremental progress within their own workgroup, as well as a more holistic understanding of accomplishments across all of the workgroups. Workgroup members responded to a series of questions about each of these three meeting elements. To ascertain workgroup participants' perceptions of workgroup meeting effectiveness in helping them to achieve their ultimate goal of Blueprint development, the evaluator aggregated workgroup respondents' monthly survey feedback for each survey item in domain 2 – workgroup activities.

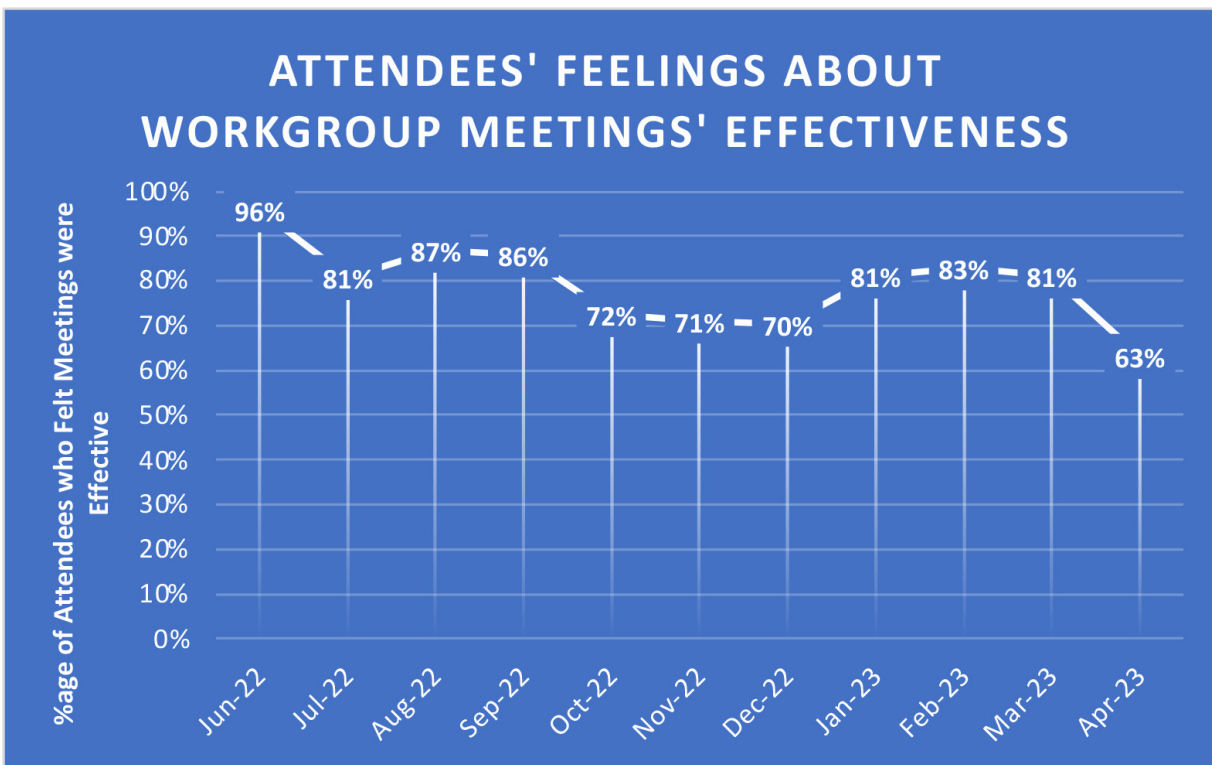


Figure 6 – Summary of Feedback on Workgroup Meetings

Figure 6 represents this aggregated monthly data that measured workgroup activity effectiveness. Workgroup members overwhelmingly agreed that activities and strategies were appropriate and helped them to achieve their goals. With the exception of the April 2023 survey, we see an overwhelming majority of workgroup attendees expressing confidence in meetings' effectiveness, with no fewer than 70% workgroup members regarding the activities as efficacious in meeting their goals. This was consistent for each month in which the Carter Team planned and facilitated convenings.

Even in the month when workgroup sentiment was at its lowest, nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents regarded the planned activities as effective. Furthermore, it is important to note that by the time of the April 2023 workgroup meeting, team members were working to finalize recommendations and justifications, with the assistance of policy analysts and writers. Given the fact that they were being asked about deliverables that were still forthcoming, workgroup team members may not have felt they could accurately assess overall efficacy at that time. Empirical support of this concept can be found in the sharp increase in the proportion of workgroup team members who responded neutrally. Unlike previous monthly workgroup meetings, where neutral responses were infrequent and tended to range between 9% and 18% of respondents for a particular question, 25%-50% of workgroup team members responded neutrally across each survey item for domain 2 workgroup activities.

While Ad Hoc Committee Members appear to have been an underutilized resource and therefore unable to provide the level of input and feedback they (and the Carter Team) would have liked, their experience does provide insight about the engagement process. The Board experienced challenges with timely recruiting and onboarding a full Ad Hoc Committee. Additionally, early in the engagement, the Board decided that it would serve as the primary point of contact for Ad Hoc Committee members and be wholly responsible for primary engagement. However, only five meetings were convened.



Both content analysis and interview data suggest possible strategic challenges with planning and recruitment. However, the Carter Team did coordinate the bi-monthly meetings with the Ad Hoc committee and used Basecamp™ as a check-in process.

The reporting and dissemination process was comprehensive, transparent, and reflective of Stakeholder wisdom. The Carter Team developed a reporting and dissemination process which allowed for transparency and equitable engagement. All email correspondence was maintained in a secure, cloud-based file hosting service known as Dropbox™, where all Stakeholder communications were stored and accessible, from email transmittals to monthly reports. In addition, project management activities were trackable through Basecamp™. This allowed for comprehensive access to all archival data by Champions, workgroup members, Ad Hoc committee members, the Carter Team, and the external evaluation team.

The public engagement process was not comprehensively inclusive and promoted to all residents and stakeholders in the City of Saint Louis. As part of their effort to incorporate the voices of the most proximal and vulnerable stakeholders, the Carter Team convened a series of public forums as part of the Blueprint for the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE). The purpose of the planned events was to present the work of the CWPE team (Champions, workgroups, and The Carter Team) to the public and solicit community input, feedback, and involvement going forward. While these events were regarded very favorably by the public members who attended, community members did voice ongoing concerns that their involvement was limited solely to the public forums. There were numerous inquiries and calls for deeper, more comprehensive participation among parents, caregivers, and SLPS students themselves, not only in public forum participation, but also in the design of the Blueprint. Many community members voiced concerns that there were too few SLPS parents and no SLPS students participating in workgroup activities, an observation made by the evaluator during a site visit.

VIII.B. Lessons Learned: Hoped-For Outcomes versus Reality

When the Carter Team accepted this call from the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis to establish, guide, and facilitate the Citywide Plan for Education (CWPE) process, we saw it as a perfect fit for our business ministry and one of our two corporate pillars – edifying children, youth, and emerging adults. The Board’s 2021 Citywide Plan Resolution and similar declarations issued by the Saint Louis Board of Alderman (October 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (January 2022) formalize the idea that the Stakeholders’ progress together can only come through a unified vision, a common set of commitments, and clear guidelines of engagement. As the Carter Team started this project, its aim was the timely delivery of a set of strategic and futuristic goals and objectives (recommendations) established by each workgroup, shaped by a set of guiding questions, specific to each workgroup. We understood that these outcomes needed to impact community trust, key policy decisions, and subsequent implementation steps. As illustrated in our contract proposal to the Board, we saw the engagement as a Phase I project with the endpoint being a written Blueprint and strategic vision for a new education system in the City of Saint Louis. The outcomes of this engagement provide the “what and the why,” which will need to be followed by Phase II, which will define the “how and when,” inclusive of policies and implementation. We consistently reminded the Champions and Stakeholders that they are the “architects not the builders.”

Moreover, our goal was to lead and guide the Champions and Stakeholders through highly intentional and strategic monthly activities, moving beyond fixing “broken pieces” of an obsolete system to reimagining how operations, systems, and structures could be more aligned with the future of education. We also challenged the groups to think wider than the schools and education support systems in the City of Saint Louis to a broader education ecosystem that is cross-sectoral. The Carter Team also recognizes that issues that have led to the current education crisis are complex and deeply ingrained, requiring a major overhaul in the system’s structure to have a sustained impact on positive outcomes for children, families, caregivers, and staff.

More than 50% of the CWPE stakeholders are current staff and leaders in schools in the City of Saint Louis. They are living daily with a plethora of “broken pieces” in their respective systems and are intuitively attracted to proposals that are close and immediate to their pain and experiences. Consequently, the 62 recommendations across the five workgroups are a mix of (1) focus on how to fix failing processes and structures in the current systems, and (2) macro-level recommendations that may be innovative for the education ecosystem in the City of Saint Louis. It is our hope that the strategic action process in Phase II will yield implementation plans focusing more on disruptive innovation in future systems and operations, opposed to repairing obsolete systems and operations. Strategic action of this magnitude can only be realized through a collective impact process as discussed later.

Finally, a common theme from the recommendations across workgroups is authentic community and Stakeholder engagement. The Carter Team was not tasked with supporting the Board with the Stakeholder engagement process or the strategies for public outreach and engagement. However, the Board can greatly benefit from establishing and following very intentional and well-documented engagement strategies.

Some lessons for stakeholder engagement are to:

1. Create a Stakeholder Advisory Team.
2. Establish specific goals and outcomes for the work.
3. Prepare a checklist for the skills, experience, and competencies needed for Stakeholders to carry out goals and outcomes.
4. Establish written descriptions of role(s).
5. Establish a structured Stakeholder recruitment process.
6. Identify specific individuals to contact and confirm desired Stakeholders.
7. Determine a written confirmation process for Stakeholders.
8. Plan and conduct a Stakeholders’ orientation meeting.
9. Evaluate Stakeholder engagement quarterly and adjust processes based on feedback.

Some lessons for public outreach are to:

1. Create a campaign using multiple media venues (i.e., Radio, TV, Billboards, Social Media, Websites) to announce a project or engagement.
2. Disseminate information internally to all school personnel, students, parents, and caregivers across schools and education support systems.
3. Disseminate information externally to broad sector organizations in the education ecosystem.



Figure 7 – Adapted from Harvard University – Scott, 2022

VIII.C. Proposed Next Steps – The Benefits of Collective Impact

The Carter Team designed the Blueprint process to be followed by strategic implementation. The proposed recommendations cannot be fully actualized without the engagement of key leaders across the education ecosystem of the City of Saint Louis. The image in **Figure 7** illustrates the Education Ecosystem model from the Harvard College of Education. The audience for the recommendations is this ecosystem.

We strongly propose to the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis the deployment of a Collective Impact Process. This process was successfully used by Greater Cincinnati to improve student success in dozens of key areas across three large public school districts (<https://www.strivetoegether.org/what-we-do/collective-impact/>). Neither one school system nor agency can actualize the recommendations proposed in this Blueprint.



Figure 8 – Collective Impact Elements

As shown in **Figure 8**, the five key elements of Collective Impact are a (1) common agenda – all collaborative members have a shared vision for change, (2) continuous communication –consistent, authentic and open channels for communication (meetings, Basecamp, mobile app), (3) mutually reinforcing activities – Collaborative member activities are separate but coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action established by the Collaborative, (4) backbone function – coordinating entity with dedicated staff and resources, and (5) shared measurement system for collecting data and measuring results consistently for the project and across collaborative members to assure that efforts are aligned and ensure accountability.

Finally, our team strongly suggests the nine CWPE Champions serve two key roles – (1) an advisory group to the Board for the transition to Phase II and (2) key informants for the selected backbone institution. Outside of the Project Director and the Senior Research Associate for the Carter Team, these individuals, collectively, have the greatest understanding of the Blueprint process and outcomes.



REFERENCES

Chapter 1 | Background

- Baum, F., MacDougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Participatory action research. *Journal of epidemiology and community health*, 60(10), 854.
- Crosby, R., & Noar, S. M. (2011). What is a planning model? An introduction to PRECEDE-PROCEED. *Journal of public health dentistry*, 71, S7-S15.
- Glasgow, R. E., Harden, S. M., Gaglio, B., Rabin, B., Smith, M. L., Porter, G. C., ... & Estabrooks, P. A. (2019). RE-AIM planning and evaluation framework: adapting to new science and practice with a 20-year review. *Frontiers in public health*, 7, 64.
- Scott, I. (2022). A new PK-12 education ecosystem framework for a new normal. Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative-Social Impact Review. <https://www.sir.advancedleadership.harvard.edu/articles/a-new-pk-12-education-ecosystem-framework-for-a-new-normal>

Chapter 2 | School Experience

- Bierbaum, A. H. (2020). Managing shrinkage by “right-sizing” schools: The case of school closures in Philadelphia. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 42(3), 450-473.
- Cain, C., Natay, Q., Patton, K., & Price, N. (2022, February 18). How are staffing shortages affecting schools during the pandemic? Perspectives from 4 superintendents. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2022/02/18/how-are-staffing-shortages-affecting-schools-during-the-pandemic/>
- Chandler, P., & Cleveland, B. (2020). Schools as community hubs development framework. In Workshop 1. Emerging themes & insights.
- Children’s Aid Society. (2018). Leading with purpose and passion: A guide for community school directors. https://www.nccs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NCCS_CS_Directors_Guide_compressed.pdf
- Cleveland, B. (2023). A Framework for Building Schools as Community Hubs: If It Were Simpler Would It Happen Everywhere?. In *Schools as Community Hubs: Building ‘More than a School’ for Community Benefit* (pp. 11-28). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Collier County Public Schools. (n.d.). “Grow your own” career development programs. <https://www.collierschools.com/Page/14595>
- Communities in Schools and Learning Policy Institute. (2019). A whole-child approach to school improvement under ESSA: Supports for students in low-performing schools. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_CIS_ESSA_RESOURCE.pdf
- Dary, T. & Pickeral, T. (2013). School climate practices for implementation and sustainability. *School Climate Practice Briefs* 1.
- Deich, S. & Neary, M. (n.d.). Financing community schools: A framework for growth and sustainability. Future for Learning. <https://futureforlearning.org/2020/04/16/financing-community-schools/>

REFERENCES

- Delaney, R. (2021, January 12). Saint Louis public schools will close 8 schools, sparing 3. Saint Louis Public Radio. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/education/2021-01-12/st-louis-public-schools-will-close-8-schools-sparing-3>
- Duncan, A. (2018). How schools work: An inside account of failure and success from one of the nation's longest-serving secretaries of education. Simon & Schuster.
- Farnham, L., Nothmann, E., Tamaki, Z., & Daniels, C. (2020). Field building for population-level change: how funders and practitioners can increase the odds of success. The Bridgespan Group. <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/6d7adede-31e8-4a7b-ab87-3a4851a8abac/field-building-for-population-level-change-march-2020.pdf>
- Institute for Educational Leadership. (2018). Community school standards. <https://www.communityschools.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/Community-School-Standards-2018-1-1.pdf>
- Jacobson, R. (2022). Starting and sustaining community schools: 10 tips for district leaders. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/starting-and-sustaining-community-schools-10-tips-for-district-leaders/>
- Jargowsky, P.A. and El Komi, M. (2009). Before or after the bell? School context and neighborhood effects on student achievement. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/33271/1001430-Before-or-After-the-Bell-.PDF>
- Lieberman, M. (2022, June 15). How staffing shortages are hurting students. EdWeek. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/whos-at-risk-when-schools-staffing-shortages-persist/2022/06>.
- McDaniels, A. (2018, August 22). Building community school systems: Removing barriers to success in U.S. public schools. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/building-community-schools-systems/>
- McShane, I., & Wilson, C. K. (2017). Beyond the school fence: Rethinking urban schools in the twenty-first century. Urban Policy and research, 35(4), 472-485.
- National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (n.d.). School climate improvement: Implementation. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/program-implementation>
- National Education Association. (2021). Community schools 101: A primer on the future of public education. <https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Community%20Schools%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- National Governors Association. (2022, September 27). Strategies for parent, family, student, and community engagement with k-12 schools. <https://www.nga.org/webinars/strategies-for-parent-family-student-and-community-engagement-with-k-12-schools/>
- Navigate STL Schools. (2022, February 14). A timeline of Saint Louis Public Schools. <https://navigatestlschools.org/news/a-timeline-of-saint-louis-public-schools>.
- Noha, E. (2022, December 30). Marinette highlights rightsizing effects on teachers, students. Eagle Herald. https://www.ehextra.com/news/marinette-highlights-rightsizing-effects-on-teachers-students/article_821270fe-8186-11ed-99f7-0778bf8ac12e.html



REFERENCES

- Phillips, N. (2022, February 28). The turnaround strategy inside Saint Louis Public Schools that maybe working—and may get discontinued. Saint Louis Magazine. <https://www.stlmag.com/longform/balancing-the-equation-SLPS-consortium-partnership-network-CPN-autonomy/>
- Quinn, J. & Blank, M. (2020). Twenty years, ten lessons: Community schools as an equitable school improvement strategy. *Voices in Urban Education* 49(2). pgs. 44-53.
- Rohde-Collins, D. (2022, July 4). Losing faith in Saint Louis. Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/rohde-collins-losing-faith-in-st-louis/article_39e770db-3190-5bad-808e-0fb5206029ee.html
- Slavic, M.L. (2019). Rightsizing a district experiencing enrollment decline. [Unpublished doctoral Dissertation]. The University of Pittsburgh.
- Student Experience Research Network. (2023). Priorities for the student experience field. <https://studentexperiencenetwork.org/priorities-for-the-student-experience-field/>
- Woods, E. (2022, August 15). Opinion: community schools promote equity: we need more of them. The Hechinger Report. <https://hechingerreport.org/opinion-community-schools-promote-equity-we-need-more-of-them/>
- Chapter 3 | Community**
- American Psychological Association Practice Organization. (2012). Partnership agreements: memorandum of understanding. <https://www.apaservices.org/practice/business/collaboration/partnership-agreements.pdf>
- Butler, S.M., & Grabinsky, J., & Masi, D. (2015). Using schools as clinics and hubs to create healthy communities: The example of Briya/Mary's center. The Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/using-schools-and-clinics-as-hubs-to-create-healthy-communities-the-example-of-briyamarys-center/>
- Chiefs of Change. (2022). The implementation engine: A guidebook to support leaders from initiative planning to execution. <https://www.chiefsforchange.org/download-media/the-implementation-engine-a-guidebook-to-support-leaders-from-initiative-planning-to-execution/>
- Cohen, A., & Eyal, O. (2021). Cross-sector Alliances for Democratic Civic Education: Do They Serve the Common Good?. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 96(3), 319-329.
- Cohen, A. K., Pope IV, A., & Wong, K. K. (2021). Civic Education and Civic Capacity in Public Schools: The State of the Field and Directions for the Future. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 96(3), 229-234.
- Council of Chief State School Officers, National Implementation Research Network, and the American Institutes for Research (2018, August). ESSA implementation planning tool. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/essa-implementation-plan-508.pdf>.
- Curacubby. (2022, May 23). The importance of enrichment in school & 2022 best practices. <https://www.curacubby.com/resources/enrichment-in-school/>
- Daly, C. (2022, June 13). How Community involvement with schools will help students prosper. Thought Exchange. <https://thoughtexchange.com/blog/community-involvement-in-schools/>

REFERENCES

- Delaney, R. (2021, March 9). Closing Sumner High School is ‘erasing American history’, supporters say. Saint Louis Public Radio. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/education/2021-03-09/closing-sumner-high-school-is-erasing-american-history-supporters-say>
- Delaney, R. (2021, April 21). Many schools, few kids: Saint Louis plagued by too much unused building space. Saint Louis Public Radio. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/education/2021-04-21/many-schools-few-kids-st-louis-plagued-by-too-much-unused-building-space>
- Diem, S., & Welton, A. D. (2020). Anti-racist educational leadership and policy: Addressing racism in public education. Routledge.
- Digital Promise. (n.d.). Innovation Portfolios: Compton unified school district. https://portfolios.digitalpromise.org/ip/Portfolio_snapshot?id=a351G000000USzbQAG
- District of Columbia Public Schools. (n.d.). Family engagement. <https://dcps.dc.gov/node/994252>.
- Flamboyant Foundation. (2018). Academic parent-teacher teams. <http://flamboyantfoundation.org/focus/family-engagement/academic-parent-teacher-teams/>
- Flores, T. & Pinkston, C. (2022, May 23). Let’s advance racial justice through community schools. EdSource. <https://edsources.org/2022/lets-advance-racial-justice-through-community-schools/672879>
- Goodall, J. S. (2016). Technology and school–home communication. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 11(2), 118–131.
- Emerging Wisdom LLC. (2020). Saint Louis Public Schools community visioning workshops: Report of findings. <https://www.slps.org/workshops>
- Homeland Security (n.d.). Writing guide for a memorandum of understanding (MOU). <https://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/docs/clearinghouse/DHS-MemorandumOfUnderstanding.pdf>
- Horn, M.B., Freeland, J., & Butler, S.M. (2015). Schools as community hubs: Integrating support services to drive educational outcomes. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Horn-Freeland-Paper-FINAL.pdf>
- Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling. Routledge.
- Jacobson, R. (2022, November 10). Starting and sustaining community schools: 10 tips for district leaders. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/starting-and-sustaining-community-schools-10-tips-for-district-leaders/sustaining-community-schools-10-tips-for-district-leaders>
- Jacques, C., & Villegas, A. (2018). Strategies for equitable family engagement. State Support Network, Partnering for School Improvement. https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/equitable_family_engag_508.pdf
- Johnston, W.R., Engberg, J. Oppen, I.M., Sontag-Padilla, L. and Xenakis, L. (2020). Illustrating the promise of community schools: An assessment of the impact of the New York City community schools initiative. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html.
- Koonce, A. J. (2022). Recovering Lost Learning Due to COVID 19: Expanding Enrichment Opportunities in an Urban School District. Education and Urban Society.



REFERENCES

- Laho, N. S. (2019). Enhancing School-Home Communication through Learning Management System Adoption: Parent and Teacher Perceptions and Practices. *School Community Journal*, 29(1), 117-142.
- Learning Heroes. (2022, March). Unlocking the how: Designing family engagement strategies that lead to success. https://bealearninghero.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Learning-Heroes_Parents-report22_Appendix_v6.pdf
- Learning Heroes. (2022, June). Hidden in plain sight: A way forward for equity-centered family engagement. https://bealearninghero.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/LH_Parents-Research-Deck-2022.pdf
- Mansfield, K.C. & Lambrinou, M. (2022). "This is not who we are": Students leading for anti-racist policy changes in Alexandria City Public Schools, Virginia. *Educational Policy*, 36(1). 19-56.
- Mapp, K. L., & Bergman, E. (2021). Embracing a new normal: Toward a more liberatory approach to family engagement. Carnegie Corporation. https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/f6/04/f604e672-1d4b-4dc3-903d-3b619a00cd01/fe_report_fin.pdf.
- Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and U.S. Department of Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>
- Morel, D. (2021). How community engagement helped transform the Union City public schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 96(3), 330–340.
- National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. (n.d.). Implementation. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/education-level/higher-education/implementation>
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission (n.d.). Communication plan: for the memorandum of understanding between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0527/ML052710252.pdf>
- Patrikakou, E. N. (2016). Parent involvement, technology, and media: Now what? *School Community Journal*, 26(2), 9–24.
- PennState Global. (n.d.). Types of agreements. <https://global.psu.edu/article/types-agreements>
- Promote Prevent. (2013). How do we create an agreement for working together? http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/How%20Do%20We%20Create%20an%20Agreement%20for%20Working%20Together-MOAs%20%26%20MOUs_0.pdf
- Rhinesmith, E., and Cupito, E. (2021). School size in Saint Louis: How average enrollment in the River City compares across Missouri & nationally. *Prime Center: Saint Louis University* 3(2). <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c8a78c9e5f7d15aab22c61c/t/6078a6462990f664cbbde778/1618519623086/SLPS+School+Size.pdf>
- Robins, K. N., Lindsey, D., Terrell, R., & Lindsey, R. (2007). Culturally Proficiency Tools for Secondary School Administrators. *Principal Leadership*, 8(1), 16-22.
- Shah, S. & Costa, K. (2013). Social finance: A primer. Understanding innovation funds, impact bonds, and impact investing. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/social-finance-a-primer/>

REFERENCES

- Squash and Education Alliance. (2018, June). Academic enrichment: Planning and facilitation. <https://squasheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Best-Practices-Academic-Enrichment.pdf>
- Strauss, V. (2016, September 7). The sad story of public education in Saint Louis. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/09/07/the-sad-story-of-public-education-in-st-louis/>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2022, October 5). Guidance on creating an effective memorandum of understanding to support high-quality inclusive early childhood systems. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/guidance-on-creating-an-effective-memorandum-of-understanding-to-support-high-quality-inclusive-early-childhood-systems-oct-5-2022>
- Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds. (2017). Family and community engagement recommendations. <https://www.oeo.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/1408ReportRevisedFinal.2017.03.10.pdf>
- Chapter 4 | Health, Wellness, and Safety**
- Alameda-Lawson, T., Lawson, M. J., & Lawson, H. A. (2010). Social Workers' Roles in Facilitating the Collective Involvement of Low-Income, Culturally Diverse Parents in an Elementary School. *National Association of Social Workers*, 32(3), 172–182.
- Babinski, L. M., Corra, A. J., & Gifford, E. J. (2016). Evaluation of a public awareness campaign to prevent high school dropout. *The journal of primary prevention*, 37, 361-375.
- Banker, A. (2022, February 16). Parts of Saint Louis area see economic boom, while others struggle during pandemic. FOX 2. <https://fox2now.com/news/missouri/parts-of-st-louis-area-see-economic-boom-while-others-struggle-during-pandemic/>
- Berges Family Foundation. (2021, September 7). Chads Coalition for Mental Health – Saint Louis Youth Suicide Prevention. <https://bergesfamilyfoundation.org/newsroom/success-stories/chads-coalition-for-mental-health/#:~:text=Every%20year%20in%20Saint,%20die%20by%20suicide%2C%20yearly>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Improving access to children's mental health care. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/access.html>.
- Childs, J., & Grooms, A. A. (2018). Improving school attendance through collaboration: A catalyst for community involvement and change. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 23(1-2), 122-138.
- Childs, J., & Lofton, R. (2021). Masking attendance: How education policy distracts from the wicked problem(s) of chronic absenteeism. *Educational Policy*, 35(2), 213-234.
- City of Saint Louis. (n.d.). Education Quality. [StLouis-Mo.gov. https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/mayor/initiatives/resilience/equity/youth/education-quality/index.cfm](https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/mayor/initiatives/resilience/equity/youth/education-quality/index.cfm)
- Darling, S., Dawson, G., Quach, J., Smith, R., Perkins, A., Connolly, A., ... & Oberklaid, F. (2021). Mental health and wellbeing coordinators in primary schools to support student mental health: protocol for a quasi-experimental cluster study. *BMC public health*, 21(1), 1-14.
- David-Ferdon, C., Vivolo-Kantor, A.M., Dahlberg, L.L., Marshall, K.J., Rainford, N., & Hall, J.E. (2016). A comprehensive technical package for the prevention of youth violence and associated risk behaviors. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



REFERENCES

- Delahanty, J., Ganz, O., Bernat, J. K., Trigger, S., Smith, A., Lavinghouze, R., & Rao, P. (2020). Awareness of “The Real Cost” campaign among US middle and high school students: National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2017. *Public Health Reports*, 135(1), 82-89.
- Duran, F. et al. (2009). What Works?: A Study of Effective Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Programs. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. https://gucchd.georgetown.edu/products/ECMHCStudy_Report.pdf
- Edwards, D. S. (2022). How Does School Bus Transportation Affect Student Attendance and Achievement? Policy Brief. National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice.
- Edwards, E. B., Singer, J., & Lenhoff, S. W. (2023). Anti-Blackness and Attendance Policy Implementation: Evidence from a Midwestern School District. *Educational Researcher*, 0013189X221079853.
- Greenberg, M. T., Domitrovich, C. E., & Bumbarger, B. K. (2001). The prevention of mental disorders in school-aged children: Current state of the field. *Prevention & Treatment*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/1522-3736.4.1.41a>
- Irwin, V., Wang, K., Cui, J., and Thompson, A. (2022). Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2021 (NCES 2022-092/NCJ 304625). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022092>.
- Jennings, P. A. (2019). Teaching in a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom: What Educators Can Do to Support Students. *American Educator*, 43(2), 12.
- Jimaa, S. (2011). The impact of assessment on students learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 28, 718-721.
- Kataoka, S. H., Zhang, L., & Wells, K. B. (2002). Unmet need for mental health care among US children: Variation by ethnicity and insurance status. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 159(9), 1548-1555.
- Kearney, C. A., & Childs, J. (2021). A multi-tiered systems of support blueprint for re-opening schools following COVID-19 shutdown. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 122, 105919.
- Kearney, C. A., Childs, J., & Burke, S. (2023). Social forces, social justice, and school attendance problems in youth. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 27(1), 136-151.
- Keller, K. (2021). This Is How Childhood Trauma Affects Students and What You Can Do. Texas Association of School Boards. <https://www.tasb.org/members/enhance-district/how-childhood-trauma-affects-students/>
- Khanli, M. R., Daneshmandi, H., & Choobineh, A. (2014). The students’ viewpoint on the quality gap in educational services. *Journal of advances in medical education & professionalism*, 2(3), 114.
- Kolbe, L. J. (2019). School health as a strategy to improve both public health and education. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 40(1), 443-463.
- Kret, JE, Tutlam, NT, Dalidowitz Dame, L, Wang, E. (2017). Leading Causes of Death Profile, Saint Louis County Missouri. Chronic Disease Epidemiology (CDE) program profile, no 6. Saint Louis County, MO. Department of Public Health.
- Lapp, J. D. (2022, June 30). The Impact of Trauma on Students & Learning. Council for Exceptional Children. <https://exceptionalchildren.org/blog/impact-trauma-students-learning>

REFERENCES

- Lenhoff, S. W., Edwards, E. B., Claiborne, J., Singer, J., & French, K. R. (2022). A collaborative problem-solving approach to improving district attendance policy. *Educational Policy*, 36(6), 1464-1506.
- Lenhoff, S. W., Singer, J., Stokes, K., Mahowald, J. B., & Khawaja, S. (2022). Beyond the Bus: Reconceptualizing School Transportation for Mobility Justice. *Harvard Educational Review*, 92(3), 336-360.
- Low, S. K., & Kok, J. K. (2020). Parent-school-Community partnerships in mental health. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*.
- Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center. (2021). Data Gap Analysis. https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/egov/Publications/BoardAgenda/MeetingMaterials/2021/March/05_Memo_Data%20Gap%20Analysis_2021.03.pdf
- McGill, Monica M., et al. (2019, February 19). "A Gap Analysis of Noncognitive Constructs in Evaluation Instruments Designed for Computing Education." *Proceedings of the 50th ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education*. par.nsf.gov/servlets/purl/10099398
- Mental Health America (2021). How trauma impacts school performance. <https://mhanational.org/how-trauma-impacts-school-performance>
- Miller, C. (2017, May). How Trauma Affects Kids in School. Child Mind Institute. <https://childmind.org/article/how-trauma-affects-kids-school/>
- Montell, G. (2020, January 8). Getting To & Through College: The Benefits of Taking Advanced Coursework. The Education Trust. <https://edtrusaint.org/the-equity-line/getting-to-through-college-the-benefits-of-taking-advanced-coursework/>
- O'Brennan, L., Furlong, M. J., & Yang, C. (2018). Promoting collaboration among education professionals to enhance school safety. In M. J. Mayer & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.), *School safety and violence prevention: Science, practice, and policy driving change* (chap. 11). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Oliver, R. J., Spillsbury, J. C., Osiecki, S. S., Denihan, W. M., Zureick, J. L., & Friedman, S. (2008). Brief report: Preliminary results of a suicide awareness mass media campaign in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 38(2), 245-249.
- Patel, H. H., Messiah, S. E., Hansen, E., & D'Agostino, E. M. (2021). The relationship between transportation vulnerability, school attendance, and free transportation to an afterschool program for youth. *Transportation*, 48, 2315-2333.
- Randhawa, A. P. (2021, May 4). "We're just praying that our kids don't come home with lead poisoning": Hidden lead dangers inside and out at Saint Louis Public Schools. KSDK. <https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/investigations/lead-poisoning-hidden-dangers-st-louis-public-schools/63-d52da353-4f68-4c2e-971e-ee95eacfcda8>
- Shaughnessy, A. (2023). Staggering rates of suicide among Saint Louis County youth. <https://andrewshag.com/2023/01/07/staggering-rates-of-suicide-among-st-louis-county-youth/>
- Sadler, K. (2021, September 7). Chads Coalition for Mental Health – Saint Louis Youth Suicide Prevention. Berges Family Foundation. <https://bergesfamilyfoundation.org/newsroom/success-stories/chads-coalition-for-mental-health/#:~:text=Every%20year%20in%20Saint,%20die%20by%20suicide%2C%20yearly>

REFERENCES

- Saint Louis County Department of Public Health and City of Saint Louis Department of Health (2019). Saint Louis Regional Mental Health Data Report. Think Health Saint Louis. https://www.thinkhealthstl.org/content/sites/stlouisco/Reports/Mental_Health_Profile_Final_5_17_19.pdf
- StriveTogether. (2020). Learning from Proof Point Communities // Promise Partnership of Salt Lake, Salt Lake City Utah. https://strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/StriveTogether-Case-Study_PromisePartnership_Web.pdf.
- StriveTogether. (2020). Learning from Proof Point Communities // Seeding Success, Memphis, Tennessee. https://strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Case-Study_SeedingSuccess_online.pdf.
- StriveTogether (2022). Changing disciplinary practices to improve academic outcome. https://www.strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ST-UP-Partnership-Case-Study-ChangingDisciplinary_Final.pdf.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Key substance uses and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsqreports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>
- United States Department of Education-Office for Civil Rights. (2021). Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf?tpcc=nlcapsu>
- Williams, N.J., Scott, L., & Aarons, G.A. (2018). Prevalence of serious emotional disturbance among U.S. children: A meta-analysis. *Psychiatric Services*, 69(1):32-40.
- Wolfenden, L., Nathan, N. K., Sutherland, R., Yoong, S. L., Hodder, R. K., Wyse, R. J., ... & Williams, C. M. (2017). Strategies for enhancing the implementation of school-based policies or practices targeting risk factors for chronic disease. *Cochrane database of systematic reviews*, (11).

Chapter 5 | Infrastructure

- Adams, K. (2020). Building a better Saint Louis City School System. Saint Louis Public Schools. https://www.slps.org/cms/lib/MO01001157/Centricity/Domain/8808/BuildingaBetterSTLCitySchoolSystem_20201201Final-4.pdf
- Alexander, D., & Lewis, L. (2014). Condition of America's public school facilities: 2012-13. First look. NCES 2014-022. National Center for Education Statistics.
- American Educational Research Association. (2019). Research on Equity and Sustained Educational Improvement. <https://www.aera.net/Research-Policy-Advocacy/Equity-and-Educational-Improvement>
- Barrett, P., Treves, A., Shmis, T., Ambasz, D., & Ustinova, M. (2019). The impact of school infrastructure on learning: A synthesis of the evidence. World Bank Group.
- Barrett, P., Zhang, Y., Moffat, J., & Kobbacy, K. (2013). A holistic, multi-level analysis identifying the impact of classroom design on pupils' learning. *Building and Environment*, 59, 678-689.
- Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Stone, M. M. (2015). Designing and implementing cross-sector collaborations: Needed and challenging. *Public Administration Review*, 75(5), 647-663. doi: 10.1111/puar.12328

REFERENCES

- Butterfoss, F. D., & Kegler, M. C. (2009). The community coalition action theory. In M. Minkler (Ed.), *Community organizing and community building for health and welfare* (3rd ed., pp. 45-64). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Catterall, J. S., Dumais, S. A., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012). *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291-309.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(86), 1-31.
- Dumont, H., Istance, D., & Benavides, F. (2010). The nature of learning. *Educational Research and Innovation*, 233–245. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264086487-en>
- Filardo, Mary and Jeffrey M. Vincent. (2017). *Adequate & Equitable U.S. PK–12 Infrastructure: Priority Actions for Systemic Reform*. Washington, D.C.: 21st Century School Fund, Center for Cities + Schools, National Council on School Facilities, and Center for Green Schools.
- Gay, M. (2007, March 23). State Takes Control of Troubled Public Schools in Saint Louis. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/23/us/23missouri.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>.
- Hajiheydari, N., & Moeini, M. (2014). Impact of Physical Space on Learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 1695-1699.
- Haynes, C. (2016). Collaborative learning spaces: Designing environments that work. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 51(4), 40-56.
- Heitin, L. (2020, July 22). Many public schools are poorly ventilated, and pandemic-era fixes may be tough to find. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/many-public-schools-are-poorly-ventilated-and-pandemic-era-fixes-may-be-tough-to-find/2020/07>
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.
- Knezek, G. A., & Christensen, R. (2008). Impact of Classroom Design on Student Perceptions of Campus Learning Environments. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 31(1), 14-22.
- Kohl, H. W. (2013). *Educating the student body taking physical activity and Physical Education to school*. National Academies Press.
- Lance, K. C., & Hofschire, L. (2012). The impact of school libraries on academic achievement. *School Library Research*, 15, 1-12.
- Lubienski, C., & Lubienski, S. T. (2013). *The public school advantage: Why public schools outperform private schools*. University of Chicago Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)*. <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/>



REFERENCES

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). Community resources for educational excellence: A national review of school-based community resource centers. U.S. Department of Education
- National Education Association. (2015). Collaboration and teamwork in the 21st-century workplace. NEA Today.
- National Education Association. (2018). School Budgets 101: A Guide to Resource Allocation. <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/school-budgets-101-guide-resource-allocation>
- National Research Council. (2015). Identifying and supporting productive STEM programs in out-of-school settings. National Academies Press.
- National School Climate Center. (2015). School climate and learning. <https://www.schoolclimate.org/topics/learning/>
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Wang, K., Rathbun, A., ... & Mann, F. B. (2018). The Condition of Education 2018. NCES 2018-144. National Center for Education Statistics.
- McGowen, R. S. (2008). The impact of school facilities on student achievement, attendance, behavior, completion rate and teacher turnover rate in selected Texas High Schools (dissertation). Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.
- RAND Corporation. (2013). Leveraging Community Resources to Support Student Success. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR400.html
- Reardon, S. F., & Portilla, X. A. (2016). Recent trends in income, racial, and ethnic school readiness gaps at kindergarten entry. AERA Open, 2(3), 1-24.
- United States Government Accountability Office. K-12 education school districts frequently identified multiple building systems needing updates or replacement. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-494.pdf>
- Woolner, P. (2010). The design of learning spaces. A&C Black.
- World Bank. (2017). Overview: Learning to realize education's promise. https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/full/10.1596/978-1-4648-1096-1_ov
- Wulfhorst, E. (2017, September 28). The state of America's public school buildings. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/09/the-state-of-americas-public-school-buildings/541168/>

Chapter 6 | Education Workforce

- Akiba, M., & Liang, G. (2016). Effects of teacher professional learning activities on student achievement growth. The Journal of Educational Research, 109(1), 99-110.
- An, Y., & Koedel, C. (2021). How do teachers from alternative pathways contribute to the teaching workforce in urban areas? Evidence from Kansas City. AERA Open, 7, 23328584211026952.
- Anglum, J. C., Manion, A., Varkey, S., Gontram, J. S., & Rhinesmith, E. (2022). Reforming Missouri's Minimum Teacher Salary.
- Anglum, J. C., & Rhinesmith, E. (2022). Red for Ed? Heterogeneous support for increased school spending in a conservative state. Social Science Quarterly, 103(4), 845-854.

REFERENCES

- Ashiedu, J. A., & Scott-Ladd, B. D. (2012). Understanding teacher attraction and retention drivers: Addressing teacher shortages. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, 37(11), 23-41.
- Barnes, B. C. (2023). Leading the Initial Implementation Phase of TandemEd in Relationship with the Pittsburgh Public Schools. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 7(2), 10.
- Bartanen, B., & Grissom, J. A. (2023). School principal race, teacher racial diversity, and student achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, 58(2), 666-712.
- Bernard, H. (2022, May 23). Saint Louis Public Schools approves record high raises for teachers, staff. *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*. https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/st-louis-public-schools-approves-record-high-raises-for-teachers-staff/article_5756ed19-82e6-59d9-a9ee-72f2d37bcf72.html
- Branch, R. M., & Kritsonis, W. A. (2006). National Agenda: Minority Teacher Recruitment, Development, and Retention. Online Submission, 3(1).
- Bryner, L. (2021). The teacher shortage in the United States. *Education and Society*, 39(1), 69-80.
- Buchanan, R., Scott, J. A., Pease-Alvarez, L., & Clark, M. (2022). Common ground is not enough: The situated and dynamic process of collaboration in a multiagency teacher professional development project. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, 103764.
- Cheng, A., Henderson, M., Peterson, P. E., & West, M. R. (2019). Public support climbs for teacher pay, school expenditures, charter schools, and universal vouchers: Results from the 2018 EdNext poll. *Education Next*, 19(1), 8-27.
- Chernykh, S., & Borisenko, I. (2021, November). Changes in the Ecosystem of Education in a Turbulent Society. In *Second Conference on Sustainable Development: Industrial Future of Territories (IFT 2021)* (pp. 674-680). Atlantis Press
- Childs, J., & Lofton, R. (2021). Masking attendance: How education policy distracts from the wicked problem (s) of chronic absenteeism. *Educational Policy*, 35(2), 213-234.
- Creagh, S., Thompson, G., Mockler, N., Stacey, M., & Hogan, A. (2023). Workload, work intensification and time poverty for teachers and school leaders: a systematic research synthesis. *Educational Review*, 1-20.
- Cummings, T. (2022, September 27). Saint Louis public schools push attendance incentives for teachers as shortage continues. *KSDK*. <https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/education/st-louis-public-schools-push-attendance-incentives-for-teachers-as-shortage-continues-in-the-st-louis-area-and-in-the-rest-of-the-country/63-8cac1b38-32cd-499b-82ce-fbbeaacadb4>
- De Jong, L., Meirink, J., & Admiraal, W. (2022). Teacher learning in the context of teacher collaboration: connecting teacher dialogue to teacher learning. *Research Papers in Education*, 37(6), 1165-1188.
- Duncan-Shippy, E. M. (2023). Shuttering Schools in the Gateway City: School District Viability and Black Community Relations After Mass K-12 School Closures in Saint Louis, MO. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 98(2), 223-249.
- Dung, D. T. H. (2020). The advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 10(3), 45-48.



REFERENCES

- Edwards, D. S., Kraft, M. A., Christian, A., & Candelaria, C. A. (2022). Teacher shortages: A unifying framework for understanding and predicting vacancies. EdWorkingPaper No. 22-684. Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. <https://doi.org/10.26300/8t5b-2302>
- Ewing, E. L., & Green, T. L. (2022). Beyond the headlines: Trends and future directions in the school closure literature. *Educational Researcher*, 51(1), 58-65.
- García, E., & Weiss, E. (2020). A policy agenda to address the teacher shortage in U.S. public schools: The sixth and final Report in the 'Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' series. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/a-policy-agenda-to-address-the-teacher-shortage-in-u-s-public-schools/>
- García, E., & Han, E. (2021). The impact of changes in public-sector bargaining laws on districts' spending on teacher compensation. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-impact-of-changes-in-public-sector-bargaining-laws-on-districts-spending-on-teacher-compensation/#:~:text=Across%20all%20districts%2C%20we%20find,benefit%20expenditures%20falling%20by%209.7%25.>
- Greaves, E., & Sibieta, L. (2019). Constrained optimisation? Teacher salaries, school resources and student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 73, 101924.
- Kilag, O. K. T., & Sasan, J. M. (2023). Unpacking the Role of Instructional Leadership in Teacher Professional Development. *Advanced Qualitative Research*, 1(1), 63-73.
- Labaree, D. F. (2022). The fraught connection between state and school. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 104(4), 34-40.
- Lentini, V., Gimenez, G., & Valbuena, J. (2023). Educational Inequality and the Poverty Trap in Teacher Recruitment. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 59(5), 716-738.
- Loeb, S., & Myung, J. (2020). Economic approaches to teacher recruitment and retention. In *The economics of education* (pp. 403-414). Academic Press.
- Manion, A. (2022). Reforming Missouri's Minimum Teacher Salary. PRIME Center Publications.
- Manion, A., & Varkey, S. (2021). The Impact of Four-Day School Weeks on Teacher Recruitment in Missouri. Prime Center-Saint Louis University.
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). District Incentives. <https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality>
- Nazareno, L. (2015). Teacher leaders in Denver Public Schools. *National Association of State Boards of Education*, 15(3), 32-36.
- Nguyen, D., & Ng, D. (2020). Teacher collaboration for change: Sharing, improving, and spreading. *Professional Development in Education*, 46(4), 638-651.
- Njiku, J., Maniraho, J. F., & Mutarutinya, V. (2019). Understanding teachers' attitude towards computer technology integration in education: A review of literature. *Education and Information Technologies*, 24, 3041-3052.
- Paesani, K. (2020). Teacher professional development and online instruction: Cultivating coherence and sustainability. *Foreign Language Annals*, 53(2), 292-297.

REFERENCES

- Pankovits, T. (2022). Autonomous schools can help solve the problem behind the teacher shortage problem. Progressive Policy Institute. <https://www.progressivepolicy.org/publication/autonomous-schools-can-help-solve-the-problem-behind-the-teacher-shortage-problem/#:~:text=One%20solution%20to%20this%20problem,accountability%20measures%20for%20such%20schools.>
- Phillips, N. (2022, February 28). The turnaround strategy inside Saint Louis Public Schools that may be working—and may get discontinued. Saint Louis Magazine. <https://www.stlmag.com/news/solutions/balancing-the-equation-SLPS-consortium-partnership-network-CPN-autonomy/>
- Prieto, L. C., Phipps, S., & Vincent, V. (2023). Alternative Compensation, Teacher Performance, and Policy Implications: An Equity Theory Approach. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, 55(1), 19-30.
- School District Salaries in the Saint Louis Region. (2021, September 23). Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. Retrieved May 11, 2023, from https://graphics.stltoday.com/apps/payrolls/salaries_2021/group/4/
- See, B. H., Morris, R., Gorard, S., Kokotsaki, D., & Abdi, S. (2020). Teacher recruitment and retention: A critical review of international evidence of most promising interventions. *Education Sciences*, 10(10), 262.
- Shah, V., Aoudeh, N., Cuglievan-Mindreau, G., & Flessa, J. (2023). Tempering applied critical leadership: The im/possibilities of leading for racial justice in school districts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 59(1), 179-217.
- Shuls, J. V., & Flores, J. M. (2020). Improving Teacher Retention through Support and Development. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*, 4(1), n1.
- Sparks, S. D. (2019). More education studies look at cost effectiveness. Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/more-education-studies-look-at-cost-effectiveness/2019/04>
- Sulit, A. (2020). Leadership Can't Stand Alone: Why School Districts Need Policy to Increase Teacher Retention. *eJEP: eJournal of Education Policy*, 21(2), n2.
- Syeed, E. (2019). "It just doesn't add up": Disrupting official arguments for urban school closures with counterframes. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27, 110-110.
- VanGronigen, B. A., Young, M. D., & Rodriguez, K. (2022). Who governs? Blank spots and blind spots in state boards of education in the United States. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*.
- Verger, A., Moschetti, M. C., & Fontdevila, C. (2020). How and why policy design matters: understanding the diverging effects of public-private partnerships in education. *Comparative Education*, 56(2), 278-303.
- Wall, H. J. (2023). Student Outcomes and Spending on Teachers in the Aftermath of Recession. *Missouri Policy Journal*, 1(12), 4.
- Warner, S. R., & Larbi-Cherif, A. (2022). Educator diversity matters: Strategies for charter leaders to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color. National Charter School Resource Center. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625529.pdf>
- Weiner, J., Francois, C., Stone-Johnson, C., & Childs, J. (2021, January). Keep safe, keep learning: principals' role in creating psychological safety and organizational learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 5, p. 618483). Frontiers Media SA.



REFERENCES

- Yin, J., & Partelow, L. (2020). An Overview of the Alternative Teacher Certification Sector Outside of Higher Education. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/overview-teacher-alternative-certification-sector-outside-higher-education/>
- Young, J., & Easton-Brooks, D. (2020). Present but unaccounted for: Practical considerations for the recruitment and retention of Black women teachers. *Theory Into Practice*, 59(4), 389-399.
- Zimmerman, J. (2022). *Whose America?: Culture wars in the public schools*. University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 8 | Evaluation, Lessons Learned and Proposed Next Steps

- City Wide Plan Overview, Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis, 2022.
- City Wide Plan for Education (CWPE) Workgroup Descriptions, Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis 2022.
- CWPE Monthly Reports from the Carter Team May 2022 – May 2023.
- Gretchen Ennis & Matalena Tofa (2020) Collective Impact: A Review of the Peer-reviewed Research, *Australian Social Work*, 73(1), 32-47, DOI: [10.1080/0312407X.2019.1602662](https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2019.1602662).
- Harris September 2022 site visit to Saint Louis for CWP
- Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter), 36–41. Retrieved from: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact.
- Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2013). Embracing emergence: How collective impact addresses complexity. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January, 1–16. Retrieved from: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_progress_through_collective_impact.
- Meaningful Local Engagement Under ESSA: A Handbook for LEA and School Leaders (2017). Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Public Forum Status Reports from the Carter Team – 2022-2023.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are exceedingly grateful to the Champions for their boundless commitment and efforts and “trusting the process”. You were the centrifugal force and “joy” of this engagement.



WORKGROUP

PURPOSE

CHAMPIONS

COMMUNITY

To establish recommendations for how to build strong and effective connections between schools and their communities.



Ms. Wray Clay
Vice President
United Way of
Greater Saint Louis



Dr. Katrice Noble
Deputy Director
Lift For Life Academy

EDUCATION WORKFORCE

To establish recommendations for how the education labor market can meet the needs of the school body and students.



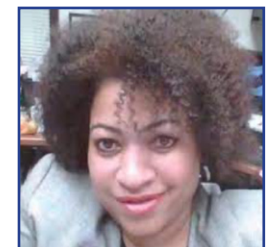
Dr. Tanisha Stevens
Vice Chancellor for
Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion
University of Missouri –
Saint Louis

HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SAFETY

To develop recommendations to ensure that students, families, caregivers, and staff are healthy and safe across physical, mental and emotional domains.



Major Ryan Cousins
Acting Lieutenant
Colonel Over
Operations



Dr. Deidra Thomas-Murray
Homeless and Foster
Care Liaison - SLPS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS *continued...*



WORKGROUP	PURPOSE	CHAMPIONS	
INFRASTRUCTURE	To develop recommendations on how to build an efficient and effective school system to meet the community’s current and future needs and challenges.	 Ms. Marlene Davis Retired Saint Louis City Alderwoman for Ward 19 and Public Policy Expert Consultant	 Dr. Gerry Kettenbach Director of Charter School Operations University of Missouri
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE	To develop recommendations on how to ensure citywide, systemic, equitable access and opportunity for an excellent educational EXPERIENCE for all students.	 Dr. Candice Carter-Oliver CEO - Confluence Academies	 Dr. Jere Hochman Retired Network Superintendent SLPS

*We offer special acknowledgements to
Dr. Kacy Seals Shahid and Ms. Serrita Sydnor for their
time, efforts, and commitment early in the process.
You are valued and appreciated.*

WORKGROUP STAKEHOLDERS

Thank you to the core group of stakeholders who were sold-out on the process and always there through sunshine and rain.



COMMUNITY

Yulanda Brady – Metropolitan Saint Louis Sewer District

Roshaunda Cade – Saint Louis Public Schools

Kesha Chatman – Urban League

John Fallah – Saint Louis Community College

Avis Funches – Parents of Color Committee

Larry Morris – Kranzberg Arts Foundation

Gloria Nolan – Saint Louis Public Schools

Lakesha Robinson – Children, Youth, & Families,

City of Saint Louis Mayor's Office

Norah Ryan – Roosevelt Community Council

Alisha Sonnier – Alderwoman for Ward 07



EDUCATION WORKFORCE

LaTonya AnNoor – Walmart

Tamiko Armstead – Cardinal Ritter College Prep

Clarissa Buckley – Saint Louis Public Schools

Byron Clemens – American Federation of Teachers, Saint Louis Local 420

Kiara Franklin – Harris Stowe State University

Dorothy Rohde-Collins – Saint Louis University School of Education

Teresa Seals – The Academic Journey Childcare Center LLC

Ann Taylor – University of Missouri, Saint Louis



HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

Donna Baringer – Missouri House of Representatives

DeAndre Davis – Saint Louis Public Schools

Michelle Grimes – CARESTL

Carron Johnson – American Federation of Teachers,
Saint Louis Local 420

Charles Norris – Saint Louis Metropolitan Clergy Coalition

Kay Royster – Saint Louis Public Schools

Tara Williams – Saint Louis Public Schools



INFRASTRUCTURE

Donna Aronoff-Smith – City Garden Montessori School

Todd Cyrulik – BLDD Architects

Jay Delong – The Soulard School

Mike Jones – Public Policy Expert Consultant

Isaac Pollack – Saint Louis Public Schools

Damien Schlitt – BLDD Architects

Square Watson – Saint Louis Public Schools



SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Sarah Christman – The Soulard School

Maureen Clancy-May – Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Matt Davis – Saint Louis Public Schools Board of Education

Amelia Garcia – Saint Louis Public Schools

Jay Hartman – Saint Louis Public Schools

Samantha March – Saint Louis Pre-K Cooperative

Susan Reid – Saint Louis Public Schools

Darwin Young – Saint Louis Public Schools



The Saint Louis Public Schools Leadership Team

Thank you for your ever-present support and good vibes.

Dr. Nicole Freeman-Williams

Interim Superintendent

Dr. Isaac Pollack

Associate Superintendent of School Turnaround and Innovation

Ms. Lori Willis

Deputy Superintendent of Institutional Advancement



THE CARTER TEAM

Laverne Morrow Carter, Ph.D., MPH, MAEd

Lawrence W. Carter

Leah Richardson, M.A.T., M.A.

Ruthie Marker, MSRC, RRT, RRT-NPS, AE-C, LSSYB

Joshua Childs, Ph.D.

Kimberly Harris, Ph.D.

Darry Young-Powell, Ph.D.

Caroline Adams, Ph.D.(c), M.A.T., M.A.

DeBran Tarver, Ph.D.

Robin Boyce, MBA

Elaine Young, Creative Consultant/Graphic Designer

Joshua Rhodes

Sydney Brown, M.A.





Please reach out to us:

Antionette “Toni” Cousins

Board President

Antionette.Cousins@slps.org

Matt Davis

Board Vice President

Chairperson of the Citywide Plan
for Education Ad Hoc Committee

Matt.Davis@slps.org