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ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL IN
CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP
FOR LOW INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR: A CASE STUDY

By

Suzanne P. Kelly

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Thesis Title: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Community School Model in Closing the Achievement Gap for Low Income Students of Color

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Thesis Title: **Assessing the Effectiveness of the Community School Model in Closing the Achievement Gap for Low Income Students of Color: A Case Study**
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Abstract

Most urban public school districts, including Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), are committed to closing a persistent and entrenched achievement gap between White and middle class students and low income students and students of color. As resources remain stagnant or diminish educators need to determine where to invest District resources to maximize academic gains and quickly close gaps for the largest number of students. One option being considered in SPPS and nationally is to invest greater resources in the community schools model. “The heart of the community school is a set of partnerships between the school and community organizations to create an integrated program that combines academic and family support (Fratt, 2006, p. 67).”

This research is designed to assess the effectiveness of the community schools model in improving academic achievement for low income students of color, both nationally and in Saint Paul Public Schools. Using a mixed methodology including an electronic review of national research, collection, synthesis and analysis of Saint Paul Public Schools specific comparative trend data and supplemental interviews with Saint Paul educators, this research also seeks to clarify whether the model as an independent variable is enough to close the gap or whether it is a critical component in a multi-dimensional approach to this national dilemma.

Based on a survey of the current and historical research done on the effectiveness of the community school model in improving achievement and closing the learning gap for low income students of color, it is clear that this model holds promise for Saint Paul Public Schools leaders.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Community Schools – Kelly Thesis

In making a recommendation to Saint Paul Public Schools leadership on whether the investment in additional community schools to support its goal of closing the achievement gap for low income students of color, the research findings suggest support for an investment in the community schools model for that purpose based on comparisons of achievement data.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The city of Saint Paul - like many urban cities of its size - is home to two disparate populations that co-exist within its borders. The city has a significant population of middle income and upper middle income families, mostly White, who have been able to maintain family stability despite the economic recession that has plagued the United States for the past three years. The city is also home to ethnically and racially diverse groups that are mostly low income. Since the mid-1990s, Saint Paul has experienced increased numbers of immigrant families with language and cultural barriers, a high number of families of color who live in poverty, unemployment, and a scarcity of affordable housing. Saint Paul is unique because, due to the large influx of immigrants over the past decade, the city has also had to create infrastructures to accommodate multiple languages and often competing cultures.

In Saint Paul, that reality created an intense need for a comprehensive community resource center that is equipped to provide a full range of services and bridge the divide between the city's bifurcated populace. For all practical purposes the city's public school district, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), has become that center.

Owen (2010) found the following:

A recent report released by the Foundation for Child Development estimates that in 2010, 21.5 percent of children are in families living below the poverty line. In addition, the study found that when the general trend is one of deteriorating child well-being—as will be the case during the 2008-2010 period—children from most minority racial and ethnic groups, of lower socioeconomic strata, and in communities that have

lesser economic resources and reserves experience rates of deterioration that are greater than the national average.

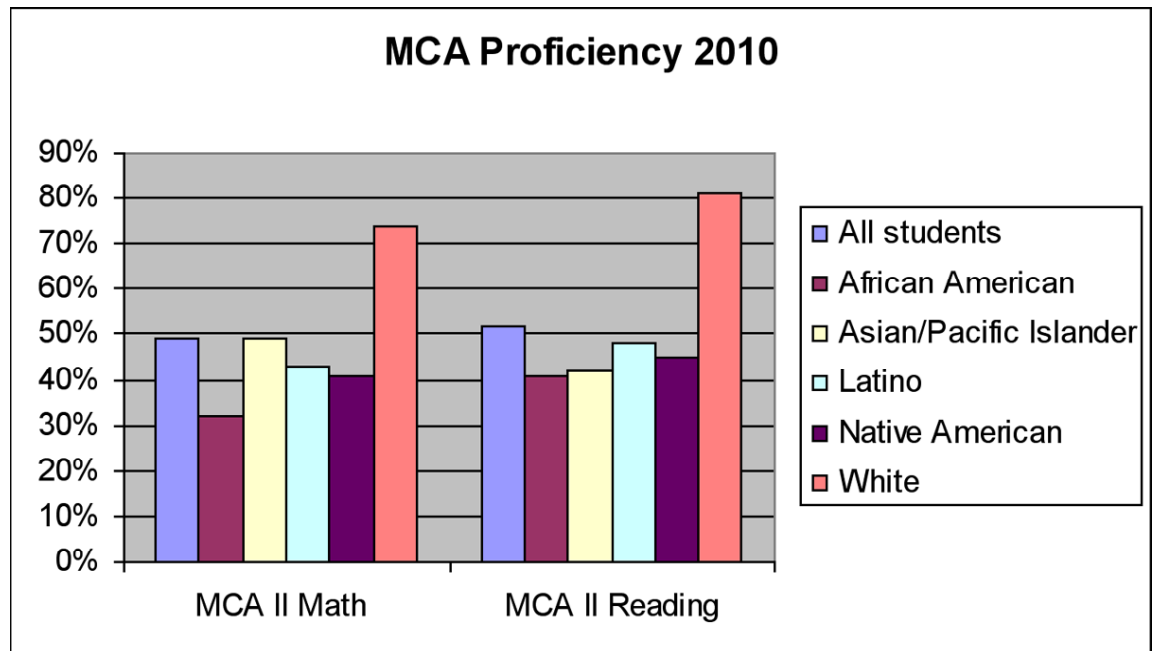
In SPSS and in public school districts across the nation, children from these families most in need have also been shown to be "at-risk" academically. This has been demonstrated by an historic and significant achievement gap between Black and White students and particularly the chronic under-achievement of Black boys. This gap is pernicious because while no one factor can determine long-term life success, there is an overwhelming body of research that demonstrates that the best predictor is school success. This is particularly true for children of color and students who come from impoverished backgrounds (Wilder Research, 2006).

In Saint Paul, while the academic achievement gap is widest between Black and White students, it is also significant for other children of color and is exacerbated by poverty. Traditionally, there has been a strong correlation between achievement and a student's race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and language proficiency. For purposes of this research the achievement gap is defined as the disparity in test results between White students and students of color and between students who receive a free or reduced-price lunch and those who do not (Olfus, 2007).

A 2007 report issued by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) found that "eighty percent of White students in the state of Minnesota graduate from high school in four years, compared to 40 percent of American Indian students, 68 percent of Asian students, 38 percent of Black students and 39 percent of Hispanic students" (MDE, 2007, p. 27).

The assessments used to measure proficiency in the state of Minnesota are called the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-IIs). All fifty of the states that receive federal education funds similarly offer a standardized assessment and report results annually for each school district as well as disaggregated data for various demographic groups.

In 2010, the State of Minnesota released its disaggregated data and again there was evidence of a persistent achievement gap between White students and other racial groups; White students performed higher than all of the other groups as measured by the MCA-IIs. In SPPS, the widest gaps continued to be between White students and African American and Native American students. This gap holds true regardless of income. The chart below (SPPS, 2010) shows the academic disparities between demographic groups in Saint Paul based on the MCA-IIs for the most recent testing cycle.



On March 15, 2011 the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education adopted the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Strategic Plan recommended by Superintendent Valeria Silva. The plan is driven by the District's commitment to close the persistent and entrenched achievement gap between its White students and its low income students and students of color. Using the plan as a framework, district leaders must now determine where to invest the district's limited resources to maximize academic gains and quickly close gaps for the largest number of students.

One option being considered in SPPS is to invest greater resources in expanding the community schools model. "A community school is a public school that acts as the hub of its community by engaging community resources to offer a range of on-site programs and services that support the success of students and their families" (Federation for Community Schools, 2011).

While the community school model has shown success in several communities, including mixed success in at least three SPPS sites, it is a costly model to implement with fidelity. "Martin J. Blank, the director of the Coalition for Community Schools (CCS), estimates that a total of \$100,000 is needed to facilitate and sustain a single school's transformation into a community school" (Fine, 2010, p. 2).

Estimates from the Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) indicate that there may be as many as 5,000 community schools in this country and they note at least five medium to large school districts have adopted the model as their school reform strategy (The Children's Aid Society, 2009).

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the community schools model has demonstrated better effectiveness in improving and accelerating academic

achievement for low income students of color in urban school districts, than the traditional school model. Accelerating the achievement of underperforming student groups is the most effective way to close the achievement gap between White students and students of color, or low income students.

For purposes of this study race was selected as a dominant driver with income as a secondary driver based on a recently concluded year-long study that determined in Saint Paul Public Schools there is a predictability of lower achievement for students based on race and income, with race being the dominant variable. For African American students in Saint Paul Public Schools, as an example, whether the student's household income was \$10,000 or \$90,000 on average their rate of proficiency as measured by the MCA-IIs was not measurably different and was likely to be in the non-proficient range.

Additionally, this research examines more closely the success of Saint Paul's most effective Achievement Plus community school, Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School, when compared to one of the District's traditional neighborhood schools that serves a similar student population, Bruce Vento Elementary School.

The relevance of this research question for decision makers in Saint Paul Public Schools and by extension other similar urban district, is that it may contribute to their understanding of best ways to close the achievement gap and whether, given similar student demographics, academic results are appreciably better for students in community schools when compared with students who attend traditional neighborhood schools. If the research bears that out, it may provide sufficient data to support the expansion of full-service community schools to additional sites in the Saint Paul Public Schools. This research may also be relevant for use in a cost-benefit analysis of the community school

model. Academic achievement results should be weighed against the financial investment necessary to launch and sustain the model at a time when the District is facing a projected budget deficit for the 2011-2012 school year of between \$19 and \$40 million. Currently each of the District's Achievement Plus schools requires an additional \$100,000 per year to sustain. Star-up costs can be much more, especially if they involve a capitol outlay to reconfigure the school site to accommodate community partners.

Blank conducted a meta analysis and found (2004, p. 63):

Research underscores the commonsense connection among school, home, family, community, and student achievement. Barton identified 14 factors that correlate with student achievement. Six of the 14 factors relate to the school environment, such as rigor of the school curriculum, teacher preparation, and school safety. The remaining eight factors speak to the importance of family and community to student success and include parent availability and support, student mobility, TV watching, and parent involvement. Barton concludes that 'the education system cannot succeed in greatly reducing the gaps by going it alone.'

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Community schools take on many forms. The most common definition of an effective describes community schools as public schools in which learning is extended beyond the school day; families and community members are actively engaged in the life of the school and its students; and the school is operated in partnership with at least one external community organization. The community school model engages the entire community in an on-site collaborative network designed to promote student achievement and healthy youth and family development. The community schools model varies because by its nature it is designed to adapt to fit the specific community it serves. There are, however, commonalities across most models. They are defined by the Federation of Community Schools (2011) as:

1. Partnership between the school and at least one community-based organization;
2. Development of an advisory board with broad representation from the community;
3. Programs and services that support the academic success of students, and;
4. A full-time community school director or coordinator to manage all out-of-school time activities.

Community schools are different than neighborhood schools. Neighborhood schools are schools located in a specific geographic area, whose attendance boundaries are typically drawn to only include students from a contiguous area around the school. Neighborhood schools may or may not offer extended hours and they usually do not have

a formal partner relationship with an external community agency or funder that participates in the development and direction of the school.

Wilma Peebles-Wilkens, Dean of the Boston University School of Social Work, observed that the basic community school model varies by locale and is ideally designed to meet the needs of the specific community and population it serves (2004, p. 131). She notes, however, that “those interested in the psychosocial and education well being of children are encouraged to learn more about the benefits of structured collaboration among schools, and human services professionals, families, and communities (2004, p. 133).

A review of the literature suggests that the community schools movement is experiencing a steady, albeit slow, expansion across the United States. The movement may have stalled due to recent economic constraints as the model is relatively expensive to launch and relies heavily on philanthropic funding. Despite that challenge, however, educators, social service professionals, parents and youth advocates in various communities have begun coming to the table in a collaborative fashion to fashion new school/community partner schools that directly attack barriers to learning that disproportionately impact poor children and children of color. The premise of community schools is that students cannot achieve at their highest academic potential if their basic needs, food, shelter, healthcare, safety are not addressed. Conversely, addressing family needs absent a focus on learning and education is short-sighted. This belief has fueled local, state and national community schools models which have been buoyed by the success and acclaim of the Harlem Children’s Zone, perhaps the most celebrated example

of the community schools model. Other models have names like: Achievement Plus, Beacons, Bridges to Success, Caring Communities, and University-Assisted Schools.

“The sum of these efforts is impressive. What is most remarkable about these initiatives is that they seem to fall outside the domain of school reform and are rarely referenced in the school reform literature. Yet community schools are committed to school transformations that lead to improved academic achievement along with other goals related to youth development and family and community well-being (Dryfoos, 2002, p. 393).”

Britain long ago adopted the idea of reimagining how its schools fit into the communities they serve. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair pushed the concept of extended schools, which offer extended hours and house programs ranging from health services to business-management classes with strong results for students (Fine, 2010).

“Student performance at every level is up and some of the schools that were some of the worst performers have been turned round,” Mr. Blair said recently, “by the beginning of this year, all British government-run schools were required to qualify as extended schools” (Fine, 2010, p. 31).

In the United States, too, the foundation of what are now called community schools could be seen in Chicago, IL more than 100 years ago, in the work of educators John Dewey and Jane Addams. Both promoted the notion of collaboration between schools and communities and introduced the concept of schools serving a dual role as centers of both education and social support (Dryfoos, 2008).

Researcher Joy Dryfoos (1995) was among the early researchers of community schools in the United States. In particular, she attempted to determine whether there was

evidence to suggest that the “full service” school model might show improvement in areas ancillary to student achievement such as attendance, dropouts and teen pregnancy. She determined even at that point in the evolution of the model that the “new programs have shown some potential.”

Dryfoos posited whether the early activity around creation of full service community schools might “add up to a revolution. Implementation of the concept of full service schools would surely lead to a major transformation in the use of school facilities for improving the lives of disadvantaged children, youth and families” (1995, p. 167).

In May of 2005 United States Senator Ben Nelson, a Democrat from Nebraska, joined Congressman Steny Hoyer, a Democrat from Maryland to introduce legislation to fund the expansion of the community schools model. In introducing the legislation, Nelson (2005) said, “Full-Service Community Schools are more than just after-school programs. Their objective is to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students and to foster community involvement in school improvement efforts.”

According to research compiled by The Federation for Community Schools, the community school model, when implemented with fidelity has had demonstrable positive impacts for students. The Federation describes implementation with fidelity to include extending the traditional school day and providing on-site academic and extracurricular enrichment opportunities after-school, on Saturday and during the summer months.

Suzanne Armato, executive director of the Federation, testified before the Illinois legislature (2010) that “Research on community schools demonstrates the following outcomes:

- Children’s student achievement gap is closed;

- Children’s academic test scores are improved;
- Children receive access to vital social services and supports;
- Children have intensive learning time and more opportunities to learn;
- Children are re-engaged in school and perform better; and
- Children are safe at schools from 3 – 6pm.”

While longitudinal data has only recently become available to determine the comparative academic gains of students who participate in community schools, a survey of research on the school model shows nearly unanimous endorsement. “The capacity to do more of what is needed to ensure young people’s success, and to do it effectively, makes community schools both different and better” (Blank, Johnson and Shah, 2003, p. 108).

An early adopter of the community schools model was the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) which is based in New York City. In 1987, CAS had done a needs assessment focused on one particular neighborhood in New York called Washington Heights. The results of the assessment were troubling, though not uncommon in large, urban cities: high drop-out rates, struggling populations of new immigrant families, crumbling, densely populated public schools, and myriad health and social contrasts with a lack of service providers in the immediate community. Yet despite those challenges the residents of the community were resilient and wanted better options for themselves and their children.

Two years after that needs assessment was done, CAS joined in an “unprecedented partnership” with the New York City Public Schools and other

community-based organizations to create a comprehensive and collaborative response to the formidable needs of the Washington Heights community (CAS, 2001). What started as a plan to develop a community center quickly morphed into the opening of Community School I.S. 218.

In a preface to *The Complete Community Schools Manual – 3rd Edition* (CAS, 2001), CAS Executive Director, Philip Coltoff said that the development of these partnership community schools “answered the calls of many policy experts who have contended for years that services for disadvantaged families are too fragmented to meet their multiple and interconnected needs, that educational achievement cannot occur if children and their families are in crisis, that teachers are too often required to serve as social workers and that parents were being left out of the educational picture, often alienated from the schools their children attend” (pp. 8-9).

Since the launch of its first schools, CAS has released ongoing evaluations of the schools it sponsors and benchmarks comparative data in three critical areas: achievement, attendance and school climate/behavior. The latter two categories have been shown to influence the first and most important category, achievement.

In its document, *The Complete Community Schools Manual – 3rd Edition* (CAS, 2001), the Children’s Aid Society examines and contrasts these indicators for its nine community schools in the New York City area. At the time of the Manual’s release, those schools annually served nearly 10,000 students and their families. Among the academic findings in the report were clear indications that academic acceleration was taking place for students attending the Children’s Aid Society schools.

“In the third grade class that entered P.S. 5 in 1993, its first year in operation, only 10.4 percent of students were reading at grade level. In that same class, 16.2 percent of students were reading at grade level by the fourth and 35.4 percent by the fifth grade. Math achievement at P.S. 5 increased from 23.4 percent at grade level in the third grade class of 1993, to 32.1 percent in fourth grade and 56 percent in fifth grade” (CAS, 2001, pp. 56-57).

In the area of attendance, two of the CAS schools reported higher average attendance rates for both students and staff, than non-CAS schools with similar demographics in the New York City Public Schools system. One school, I.S. 218 actually recorded the highest rate of attendance in the city at 92 percent. Finally, in the area of school climate/behavior evaluators found that, “while the suspension rate for all New York City middle schools stood at 6.8 per 100 students, I.S. 218 averaged 2.2 suspensions per 100 students” (CAS, 2001, p. 58).

In its 2010 national review of community schools now in operation, CCS sited a 2009 study comparing Children’s Aid Society community schools to other New York City schools. That study documented higher math scores among CAS student when compared with other city students in similar grades and significant academic improvement for students who scored in the lowest 33 percent on standardized tests. The CCS report went on to document that all of the Society’s elementary schools bested the citywide mean on progress/growth and all of the CAS middle schools outperformed the yearly growth for like schools.

In the Midwest, then Chicago Schools Superintendent Arne Duncan, believed that the benefits demonstrated by the CAS partnership might help turn around his struggling

district. Duncan created the Chicago Community School (CSI) Initiative, which now has 150 schools, and more than 400 partners. Results from those schools have shown that using standardized test results as a measure, the community schools have made steady progress toward closing the achievement gap when compared to other Chicago schools (CCS, 2010). The District has plans to expand the model to all of its 500 elementary schools with a goal of removing potential barriers to success for all Chicago Public Schools students in their formative years (Fratt, 2006).

In 2006, the University of Illinois at Chicago conducted an evaluation of 96 of Chicago's community schools. At that time they found that those 96 schools offered, on average, a dozen after-school options for their students ranging from academic supports and tutoring to sports and arts/music enrichment. Many of the programs also provided a cultural component which served to strengthen the connectedness between children of color and their learning. The community schools also offered services and adult learning opportunities for family members. For instance, some schools offered English as second language classes, while others offered classes in parenting, nutrition and the like. Many of the 96 schools evaluated had also successfully leveraged private and public dollars to add such things as medical and dental clinics in the buildings (Annenberg, 2009).

At George Washington High School, a community school, in Indianapolis 70 percent of 12th graders graduated in 2007 compared to a graduation rate of only 30 percent at the high school prior to its conversion to a community school approach (Casey, 2008). Of the nearly 900 7-12 grade students at Washington most are students of color and 90 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, which is a sign of low family income.

George Washington Community School opened as a 7-12 secondary school in 2000 and operates six days a week, providing wrap-around services for students and families on site. It serves a community where only five percent of the adults have a college degree. The community's average household income is around \$20,000. While the school has a principal just as other public schools in Indianapolis, Washington's principal also answers to a community advisory board made up of representatives from many of the schools 50 parents, students, teachers and other staff, parents and community members (Casey, 2008). This is consistent with one of the tenets of community schools which is collaborative school-community leadership and ownership of student success. The model is sometimes a difficult one for school leaders to embrace. George Washington's principal, Keith Burkner, said in the Casey research (2008) that he had to shift his notion of leadership, describing it as the difference between an athletic coach and a facilitator.

Still, research suggests that this more collaborative decision-making model does contribute to better student outcomes. Casey (2008) found that having 50 school partners invested in a single vision – 100 percent high school graduation and a 95 percent college matriculation forced a culture shift at George Washington. After just seven years, in 2007, 84 percent of the school's graduates attended a post-secondary institution. The school's attendance rate for the 2006-2007 school year was 89 percent.

One of the community school models being considered in Saint Paul is the model developed by the Harlem Children's Zone in Harlem, New York. Specifically, results were studied for the Promise Academy Charter School which requires its students to participate in longer school days and year, tutoring layered on top of extended time for

students in need, Saturday school, student incentives for achievement results, parent involvement requirements and partnership including an in-house clinic that provides free medical, dental and mental health care. Research conducted by Harvard University's Dobbie and Fryer (2009) report completing the first empirical data related to the causal impact of the Harlem Children's Zone approach on student achievement in that city.

Doobie and Fryer's research was designed to address the question of whether schools acting in isolation could close achievement gaps or whether any successful approach must combine educational and social service delivery. Their research study found that the Harlem Children's Zone is accomplishing what Saint Paul is trying to do.

“Taken at face value, the effects in middle school are enough to close the Black-White achievement gap in mathematics and reduce it by nearly half in English Language Arts. The effects in elementary school close the racial achievement gap in both subjects. We conclude by presenting four pieces of evidence that high-quality schools or high-quality schools coupled with community investments generate the achievement gains (Doobie and Fryer, 2009, p. 1).”

Saint Paul Public Schools has had some experience with implementation of the community school model at three sites. Each school is patterned after the Achievement Plus community school model, which attempts to meet the needs of student in a holistic approach that considers academics, but also the effects of poverty, high mobility, health care access, and family stability on the students it serves (SPPS, 2008). In order to remove barriers to student achievement, the model focuses on three basic components: 1) academic, 2) extended day programming, and 3) an array of learning supports provided through community partnerships.

“In St. Paul, the number of students testing above proficiency in math and reading rose an average of 43 percent in one school and 36 percent in another from 2002-2005 (Fratt, 2006, p. 28).”

Even for students who have shown little academic success and are plagued by high absenteeism, suspensions and other obstacles to school success, the community school model appears to be effective. Project Propinquity is a community school model being used for the highest risk students in Atlanta Public Schools. They are identified for the program based on “a proven need for social services, chronic absenteeism, and general low achievement levels” (Branch, 1977, p.1). Branch evaluated the program and found that when students entered they were “severely retarded in their achievement. Through project participation, some students improved their attendance markedly and with this improvement came increased passing grades and increased learning of math skills (p. 1).”

The national research speaks to many benefits of the community schools model. For purposes of this study for benefits are most relevant:

- Community schools students show appreciable academic gains when compared to students in traditional schools;
- A holistic approach to student learning produces long-term academic and social-emotional gains.
- The model works best when it is tailored to fit the needs of the particular community being served; and
- The model is not only good for the student and the school, but for the community as well.

Dryfoos' early research (2002) found that the most successful community schools impacted "more than one outcome, reflecting the design and comprehensiveness both of the research and of the program." She specifically noted, the Caring Connection Program in Marshalltown, Iowa, which reported positive academic outcomes and improvement in the broad umbrella of youth development. "Children's Aid Society had an impact on school performance as well as on parent involvement and community safety and Elizabeth Street in Los Angeles also improved school performance, lowered the dropout rate, and brought parents into the school," Dryfoos found (2002, p. 397).

According to research conducted by Blank and Shah (2004) 75 percent of the community schools they studied reported improved academic gains either in course grades or on standardized tests. Nearly 50 percent reported student attendance gains, fewer discipline problems, more positive school interaction, better adult student relationships and student and parents reporting a positive impact on the family.

Another example of the holistic benefits to students can be found in research out of New York City, where participants in the Beacons Community School were found to be less likely to steal, fight, commit bodily harm or participate in vandalism (Blank, 2010). Such benefits can be found across the breadth of the research.

Dobbie and Fryer (2009) documented nearly two dozen community service partners engaged with Harlem Children's Zone schools. They describe the creation of a "tipping point" of wrap-around services designed to expose all the children to enriching experiences and mentors and other caring adults that can encourage them to see a future beyond high school.

Researchers with the Annie E. Casey Foundation found strong relationships among schools, communities, and families are necessary if schools that serve low-income children are to close the achievement gap and help young people graduate ready to succeed in life. “We tend to take these types of connections for granted, but they don’t exist in disinvested neighborhoods,” said Bruno Manno, senior associate for education at the Foundation (2008).

Community schools research uniformly suggests that it is the lack of access to these coordinated services, particularly health care services, that presents obstacles for students and families in low income minority neighborhoods. The introduction of these services, particularly within the school “can provide substantial benefits to adolescents dealing with or at risk for serious health problems” (Grossman and Vang, 2009, p.4). Grossman and Vang cited an array of studies that found, “adolescents with access to health services in school show greater health knowledge and take significantly greater advantage of mental and physical health services while depending far less on emergency care. Effects are especially significant for minority youth” (2009, p.4).

It is clear that access to high quality health care options, socio-economic resources and support as well as enriching after-school and out-of-school time opportunities can all contribute to a child’s physical, social and emotional well-being, and in turn support improved learning outcomes. Therefore, many cities have recognized the need to provide better access to these services, particularly in impoverished urban communities. Locating one, or all, of these beneficial services within a school heightens the effectiveness and strengthens the beneficial outcomes for students and their families.

In 1998, Thomas Edison Elementary School in Port Chester, New York, adopted the community schools model. Like many of its urban school counterparts, suburban Edison's school population was mostly low income [80 percent eligible for free and reduced price lunch] and half the school's population was comprised of recent immigrant families whose first language was not English. In 2008, a 10-year progress report on the school found that despite these challenges, the school had improved teaching and learning as evidenced by student outcomes. Staff reported that this model helped them demonstrate how schools can effectively help student and families overcome the challenges of poverty.

Staff at Thomas Edison Elementary indicated that one of the biggest obstacles the model helped them navigate was student health. A school nurse handles the more common ailments students face, like colds, ear aches or other minor sicknesses. Many of the families had not previously sought treatment for these conditions and rather let them run their course, leading to prolonged absences. Those instances have been greatly reduced. Likewise a weekly visit to the school by a local dental clinic means dozens of students no longer sit in class suffering from the pain of an untreated toothache.

According to a report, authored by Santiago, Ferrara and Blank (2008, p. 225), "all Edison students can receive health care at the center, including screenings, vaccinations, and prescription medication. Open Door staff members provide nutrition and wellness education to parents and help families obtain federally funded medical insurance. As a result of the health centers services, 94 percent of Edison's students are now medically insured and receive ongoing medical and dental care. The success of this

model has led the district and Open Door to expand this kind of program to other schools.”

Emerging research sponsored by an organization called Public/Private Venture (P/PV) also appears to support the idea that benefits associated with combining these services in a collaborative way within the school “can be multiplicative, rather than merely additive. By surrounding youth and their families with a constellation of activities and supports dedicated to improving students’ well-being, integrated services in schools can improve not only the frequency and ease with which students use services but the nature of that use. Ultimately, many of the obstacles that hinder disadvantaged youth will be diminished, setting young people on a positive trajectory toward the future (Grossman and Vang, 2009, p. 7).”

A survey of the research does indicate that there are challenges inherent in the community school model that must be addressed if student outcomes are to be impacted.

The research suggests that leadership matters. The Harlem Children’s Zone is widely deemed among the most successful examples of the community school model in practice, and appears to owe much of its success to the charisma and passion of its leader, Geoffrey Canada. For the many school districts wishing to emulate Canada’s success, there must be a consideration of whether the model would be as successful with someone different at the helm. “There is also the danger of a “savior” mentality being perpetuated by organizations that fail to appreciate that Canada’s success owes much to the intimate first-hand understanding he and his staff have of the community they work in (Hernandez, 2009, p.1).”

The model's design also requires a school leader and school board that are comfortable with a distinct governance structure for community schools that allows for decision making not just by the school principal but by the major community or philanthropic partners. How this separate governance structure intersects or acts independently from a traditional public school board of education appears to be critical to an individual school site's ability to tailor change to meet the needs of the community it serves. Partner organization must also relinquish sole "ownership" of children and instead pool resources to maximize benefit for the student and his/her family.

Blank (2004, p.65) writes, "To overcome this mind-set, we need to provide professional preparation and in-service training experiences that help educators and others in child, youth, and family professions understand the multiple factors influencing student learning and the importance of multiple pathways to success"

Given the current economic climate another challenge to the implementation of full-service community schools is the potential fight over resources. Start-up and implementation costs for community schools are significant. To effectively replicate many of the models deemed most successful nationally may be prohibitive in a cash-strapped district like Saint Paul Public Schools. The Harlem Children's Zone model spends an average of \$6,000 more per student than the typical New York City public school. "The New York Department of Education provided every charter school, including the Promise Academy, \$12,443 per pupil in 2008-2009. HCZ estimates that they added an additional \$4,657 per-pupil for in school costs and approximately \$2,172 per pupil for after-school and "wrap-around" programs. This implies that HCZ spends \$19,272 per pupil (Dobbie and Fryer, 2009, p. 30).

Additionally, there has been an historic competition for local, state and federal funding for schools and social service support agencies. Likewise, collaborative sharing of service personnel can be compromised as agencies are forced to cut budgets [usually staff] and require more from those who remain. Community schools are antithetical to that notion, relying on partner agencies to truly be child and family-focused and align their resources to meet those immediate needs. Blank suggests that success is found in identifying common results that cut across programs, and getting incentives to collaborate from public and private funders (2004).

“In the Propinquity Program, at least the kid is no longer wrenched apart in eight different directions when there is a need for a variety of social services. Under the usual approach to education and social services, often there is a centrifugal struggle and the client becomes the object of number checking and record keeping. The model presented here demonstrates an integrated instructional-social service model (Branch, 1977, p.16).”

Still Blank and others suggest that there remains no substitute for greater investment in high quality education at all forms of government.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research was conducted to determine whether the community schools model, which supplements the traditional neighborhood school framework with strong partnerships, wrap-around services and extended hours, plays a significant role in increasing academic achievement and closing achievement gaps for low income students of color. In order to answer this research question, the researcher chose first to conduct a comprehensive review of community schools outcome research using electronic internet searches. Only studies which reported an evaluative component were included.

To supplement the review of existing research the investigator conducted a critical appraisal, data synthesis and analysis of academic, attendance and behavior (suspension) data for two demographically comparable elementary schools – one of which used the community schools model and the other that did not. This comparison was to further determine the validity of the research question by attempting to identify any significant academic outcome disparities between similar racial and income demographics at the sample schools.

Finally, to add perspective and depth to the data analysis the secondary investigator also conducted individual interviews with self-selected school staff that have experience working within a community school model to ascertain whether the data analysis was sufficient to identify any causal relationships that may exist or fail to exist between the school model and the student outcomes.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology of this study, to elaborate on the three data gathering approaches used and to provide an explanation of the procedures used to analyze the data.

The interview portion of this research was conducted following the review of the existing research and the analysis of student outcome data for the two comparative schools.

“Frey and Oishi define the interview process for purposes of research as a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions and another answers them. This is done to gain information on a particular topic or a particular area to be researched” (Oatey, 1999).

In this context the use of interviews is considered to be qualitative methodology. According to Oatey (1999), this type of methodology is characterized by a smaller sample than in quantitative methods and views each interview subject as unique. The research is “more interested in the depth of the data rather than breadth and requires the researcher to play an active role in the data collection.”

Using interviews is considered to be a more difficult research method because much of its success is dependent on the interviewer’s ability to put the subject at ease, develop a sense of trust with the interviewee and to be adept at asking follow up or clarifying questions to ensure information clarity.

In a study of the various types of interview styles and methods Oatey (1999) found that in most instances researchers who used the interview method, “also use another methodology as well to allow for more accurate results and greater understanding.”

For purposes of this research, an attempt was made to put the interviewees at ease by first explaining the purpose of the research study, explaining that participation in the interviews was completely voluntary, and by sharing both a consent form and a list of the

interview questions in writing. After reviewing the questions and the consent form, staff were asked to volunteer if they wished to be interviewed.

The interviewer made use of standardized, open-ended questions meaning that the same, open-ended questions were asked of all interviewees in the same order. This approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared (Oatey, 1999). The data collection method for the interviews was written note taking, because the interviewer is a former journalist trained to take notes without the use of a recording device. As such, the interviews were not tape recorded.

Once the interviews were transcribed the materials were synthesized and assessed for their relevance to the other data findings. Quotations were used to designate verbatim use of the subject responses. In other cases material was grouped and paraphrased thematically.

Because a portion of this research involved the participation of human "subjects," specifically teachers, staff and administrators at Dayton's Bluff Elementary School, it was necessary in the methodology to address certain ethical issues. In particular, steps were taken to ensure that all participants were informed regarding the intent of the interview, how the respondents answers would be used, and what steps would be used to protect the privacy of the interviewees.

Consistent with best practice when conducting research involving human subjects, the first step was to ensure informed consent for all potential participants. The secondary investigator provided potential respondents with the purpose of the research and why it was believed that their participation would enhance the other research being conducted. By explaining the purpose of the research and how the research would be

used, potential respondents were able to decide whether they wanted to participate. The respondents were also advised that they could end the interview if at any time they felt uncomfortable with the questions or reconsidered their participation. This provision reinforced the initial statement that participation was voluntary and no one was forced to sit for an interview.

The privacy of participants who did not want their names used was insured by not disclosing their names or personal information in the research. Only relevant details that provided clarity in reporting the interview findings were included in the published report.

Very few definitive conclusions about the independent effectiveness of the community schools model could be drawn from either the currently available research or the independent data analysis and interviews conducted by the secondary investigator. What can be reasonably proven is that when the community schools framework is implemented with fidelity and led by a strong principal leader student academic outcomes and ancillary measures are generally better than at comparable schools that do not use the model. Whether those outcomes could be replicated absent strong leadership or without implementation fidelity could not be established. These limitations were noted in the findings and informed the conclusions.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

For many children, the ability to experience academic success requires more than quality instruction or intellectual stimulation. Children also need a myriad of social, physical, and psychological/emotional supports. This is particularly true for low income students of color who often have limited access to these contributors to success. The National Research Council has cited the presence of these supports as important predictors of future adult success (Eccles and Gootman, 2002). A strong community that meets the needs of all children, families, and individuals provides a safety net to ensure that children grow to become a contributing, positive part of that community. In addition to identifying individual needs and providing high quality services, all members of the community need open and convenient access to those services.

Achievement Plus, a private-public partnership between the Saint Paul Public Schools and the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, focuses on three components - academics, extended learning (after-school program), and student and family supports. These three components support the major goal of Achievement Plus, which is to assist school staff in making certain that students are able to attend school every day, ready and eager to learn, and to help remove any existing barriers which may prevent students from learning to the best of their ability.

The Achievement Plus partnership has as its goal to strengthen community schools to improve achievement for low income students in Saint Paul. In Saint Paul, most low income students are also students of color. The model was launched in 1977 and now is used in three SPPS schools: Dayton's Bluff (the original site); John A.

Johnson Elementary (launched in 2000) and North End (launched in 2008). Each school has high numbers of students of color and high poverty rates; significantly higher than the district and state (See demographic profile table below). Table 1 compares the demographic profiles of each school and for comparison purposes also includes data from a traditional Saint Paul elementary school, Bruce Vento Elementary School, which service a similar student population but does not offer wrap-around services as do the Achievement Plus Schools.

Table 1

Student Demographic Profile 2009-2010 (based on the official count on October 1, 2009)

Characteristics	Dayton's Bluff	Bruce Vento	John A. Johnson	North End	SPPS	State of Minnesota
Total Enrollment	315	471	324	275	37,324	823,826
Race Ethnicity						
American Indian	2%	0.4%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Asian	19%	53.7%	21%	31%	30%	6%
Black	43%	27.6%	46%	39%	30%	10%
Hispanic	19%	15.3%	14%	19%	14%	7%
White	17%	3%	16%	9%	25%	75%
ELL	30%	67%	30%	47%	37%	8%
Free and/or Reduced Lunch Price Eligibility	92%	96%	94%	93%	74%	36%
Special Education	13%	13%	17%	19%	16%	13%
Attendance Rate	95%	96%	95%	94%	94%	95%

(SPPS, 2010 and Wilder, 2010)

Results and focus vary across the three Achievement Plus sites. For purposes of this research, direct comparison will be made between Dayton's Bluff Elementary School (the original Achievement Plus site) and Bruce Vento Elementary, which is a traditional neighborhood school. Data comparisons will be made in the areas of disaggregated test scores, attendance and suspension rates to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in outcomes for this two different school models. As appropriate, secondary analysis of Dayton's Bluff and the other two Achievement Plus Schools in Saint Paul, John A. Johnson and North End, will be noted to either support evidence of effectiveness of the Achievement Plus model or to point out where inconsistencies exist between the Achievement Plus Schools that may suggest that the model alone is not the primary cause of the achievement results.

Student achievement and attendance results presented in these findings are based on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments - Series II (MCA-II) for reading and math. These assessments are required by the state and are used to determine whether individual schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the aggregate, and in disaggregated demographic categories mandated under the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act. These assessments are required for students attending Minnesota schools that receive federal funding and are administered to students in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. These tests have been given in Minnesota since 1995.

Henry contends (2007, p. 50) "To take the one reliable instrument which has always privileged well-to-do students and make it the basis of comparison and academic achievement for every kid in America is simply to lock in place existing inequities. Poor

children are also least likely to be interested in or motivated by abstract questions or the need to score highly on an instrument far removed from their personal experience."

Therefore, these findings also include attendance and behavior outcomes which research has shown are predictors of student academic success. The results consistently indicate positive and statistically significant relationships between student attendance and academic achievement for both elementary and middle school students (Gottfried, 2009).

An analysis of publicly available data from Saint Paul Public Schools and the Minnesota Department of Education for Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento does indicate a higher level of positive student outcomes for Dayton's Bluff.

In addition to comparing achievement, attendance and behavior data for each school, a series of interviews were conducted with a cross-section of staff from Dayton's Bluff to gain their assessment of the model's impact on student.

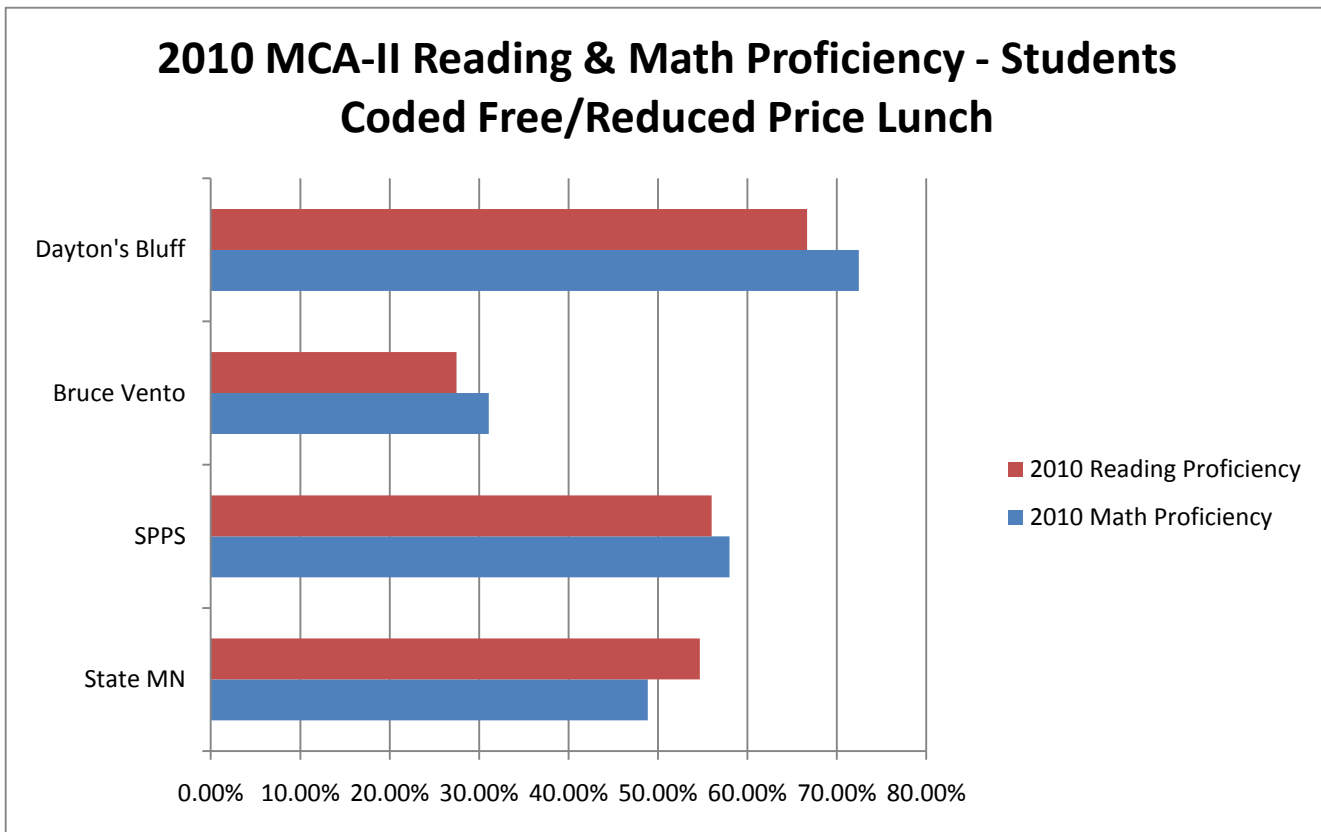
Achievement

An analysis of MCA-II achievement data over the past three years shows that on average, students of color and low income students at Dayton's Bluff have outperformed similar students at Bruce Vento. Not only that, but they have also outperformed similar students statewide. As test cases, I ran proficiency rates for both Reading and Math for two combinations: low income, ELL and low income, non-ELL which accounts for just about everyone in each of the two schools.

Examining the 2010 MDE report cards for Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento finds that for students eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch, which is considered a designation of a low income household, 67 percent of the Dayton's Bluff students taking

the Reading MCA-II assessment scored proficient versus just 27 percent at Vento and 54 percent of the state's low income test takers. Similarly, when looking at proficiency rates for low income students taking the Math MCA-II assessment, a higher percentage of Dayton's Bluff students who took the test (72 percent) were proficient versus 31 percent at Vento, and 49 percent of the state's low income test takers. These results are depicted in Graph I.

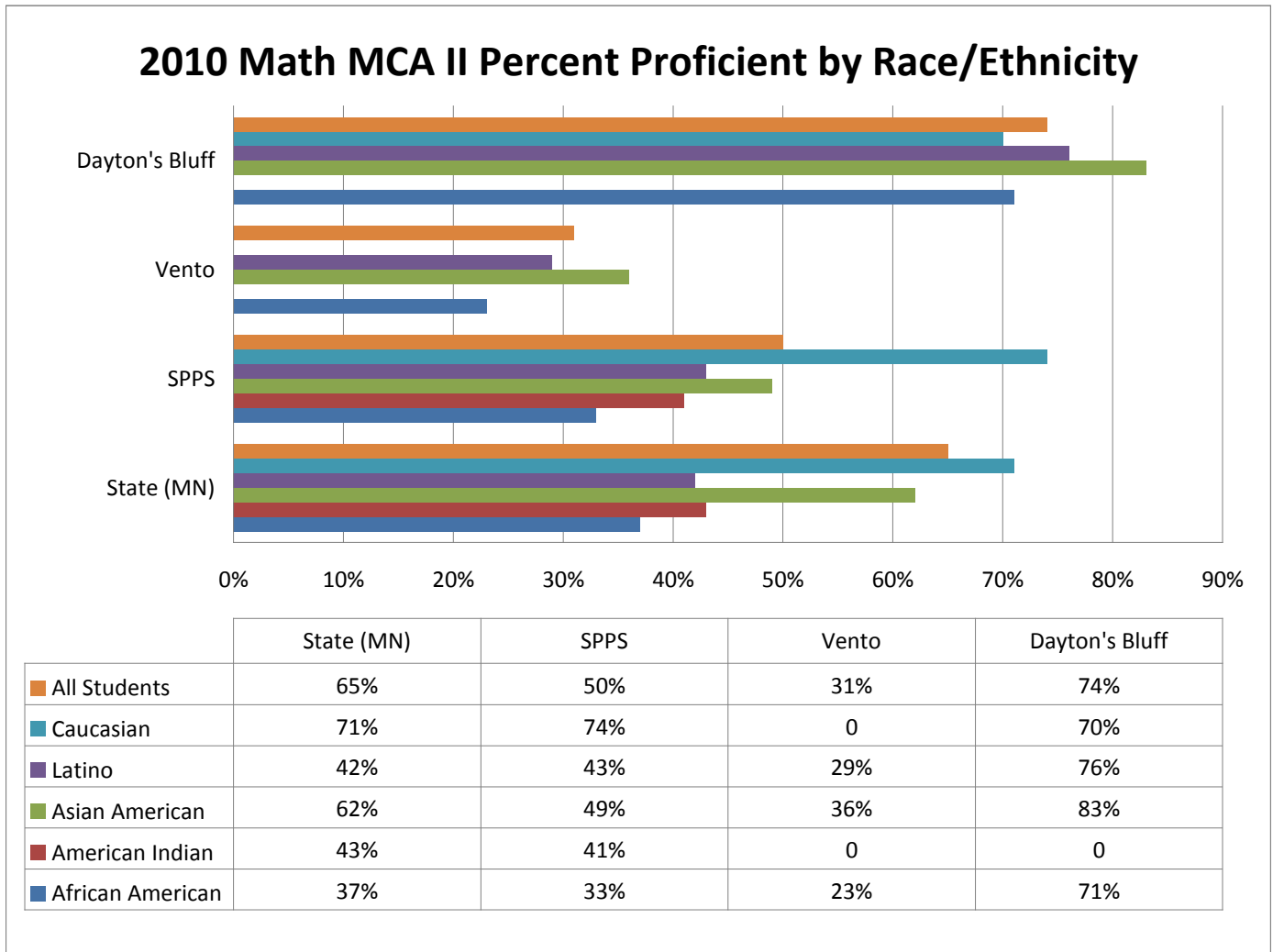
Graph I
2010 MCA-II Reading and Math Proficiency Rates Disaggregated by student's Family Income



Similarly a comparison of Reading and Math Proficiency as measured by the MCA-II results for all racial demographic groups identified for the State of Minnesota and federal reporting mandates shows that Dayton's Bluff students out-perform their like peers when compared with Bruce Vento, Saint Paul Public Schools and the state. As

depicted in Graph II, Dayton's Bluff more than doubled the rates of Mathematics proficiency for Latino, Asian and African American students at Vento and significantly outpaced the results for those groups when compared to the District and the State. It should be noted in the following graphic that the value of "0" indicates a sample size to small to record.

Graph II
2010 MCA-II Math Proficiency Comparison Disaggregated by Student Race/Ethnicity



A comparison of reading proficiency for 2010 for those same categories of students showed similar results. African American students for example had a proficiency

rate of 33percent at Vento in 2010 and at Dayton's Bluff the rate was 70 percent. For a complete comparison of 2010 Reading proficiency by racial/ethnic group at Dayton's Bluff, Vento, SPPS and the State (MN) see Appendix A.

For both Reading and Math, the percent of students testing proficient at Dayton's Bluff increased each consecutive year from Spring testing in 2008 to Spring testing in 2010. For that period there was a 10 percentage point gain in reading proficiency and a 14 percentage point gain in math proficiency for all students. While proficiency for Latino students stayed statistically flat over the three year period in math and dipped slightly in reading, proficiency rates for African American and low income students increased significantly from 54 to 70 percent in reading and 49 to 71 percent in math for African American students; with the percentage increase for low income students rising from 56 to 67 percent in reading and 59 to 71 percent in math over the same period. This data is illustrated in Appendix B.

A comparison of similar three year trend data for Bruce Vento Elementary showed flat or declining proficiency rates in all demographic categories. This data is detailed in Appendix C.

Data comparisons between Dayton's Bluff Elementary, which uses the Achievement Plus community schools model, and Bruce Vento, which is a traditional neighborhood school, show higher student outcomes for all demographic groups as measured by Minnesota standardized tests at Dayton's Bluff. However, a direct correlation between the use of the community schools model and higher student achievement on standardized tests should not be assumed.

A comparative review of 2010 only data and three-year trend data for the other two Achievement Plus Schools operating in Saint Paul do not show results that are comparable to those at Dayton's Bluff. In a data analysis conducted by Wilder Research (2010) and replicated for purposes of these findings, three year trend results for John A. Johnson and North End Achievement Plus Schools did not match those of Dayton's Bluff and, in fact, more closely resembled those of Bruce Vento, which does not use the community schools model.

In 2008, John A. Johnson's rate of reading proficiency for all students was 45 percent, in 2009 that percentage was 47 percent and in 2010 the percentage went back to 46 percent. In math, over that same three year testing cycle, the “percent proficient” actually declined from a high of 57percent in 2008, to 49 percent in 2009, and only 39 percent in 2010. Results at North End were mixed. While North End's math proficiency rose from 41percent in 2008 to 52 percent in 2010 [a decline from a high of 58 percent proficient in 2009], the school's reading proficiency rose markedly in 2009 from 40 to 47 percent, the percent proficient in reading declined to 41 percent in 2010.

In a summative report issued by the Children's Aid Society (2006), researchers noted that the evolution of community schools has inevitably resulted in an evolution in the way community schools are evaluated and the rigor with which that research is conducted. The Society's own research over the course of 13 years found, “that [the] findings have consistently shown that the comprehensive, coordinated services offered in schools as part of a community schools strategy are most effective when partnering schools have stable leadership and a strong core instructional program. Support services

cannot compensate for weaknesses in these areas, however when integrated into a school with a stable leader and a strong instructional program, they add great value."

Principal leadership is deemed to supersede the school structure, i.e. community school versus neighborhood school, and cannot be dismissed as a variable in an examination of student outcomes at the above referenced schools.

"Research has shown that of school related effects on student achievement, principal quality is second in importance only to teacher quality. Principal leadership affects student achievement through its influence on school conditions such as expectations for staff and student learning, staff quality, and organizational structures and culture (CPRE, 2007, p.1)."

For the three year period for which data was reviewed; only Dayton's Bluff had consistent principal leadership for each of the testing cycles. North End's principal went on medical leave at the end of the 2007-08 and a permanent principal was not selected until just prior to the start of the 2008-09 school year. That principal was replaced at the end of the 2009-10 school year right and the week that the MCA-II 2010 test administration took place it was announced that North End would be co-located with another Saint Paul Elementary School. Principal leadership also changed in 2009-10 at both Bruce Vento and John A. Johnson.

Attendance

As previously noted, test scores are a valuable indicator of student academic achievement but they cannot be considered in isolation. Other predictors of student success include: consistent attendance, the ability to establish positive relationships with teachers and other caring adults in the school, exposure to culturally relevant curriculum and whether

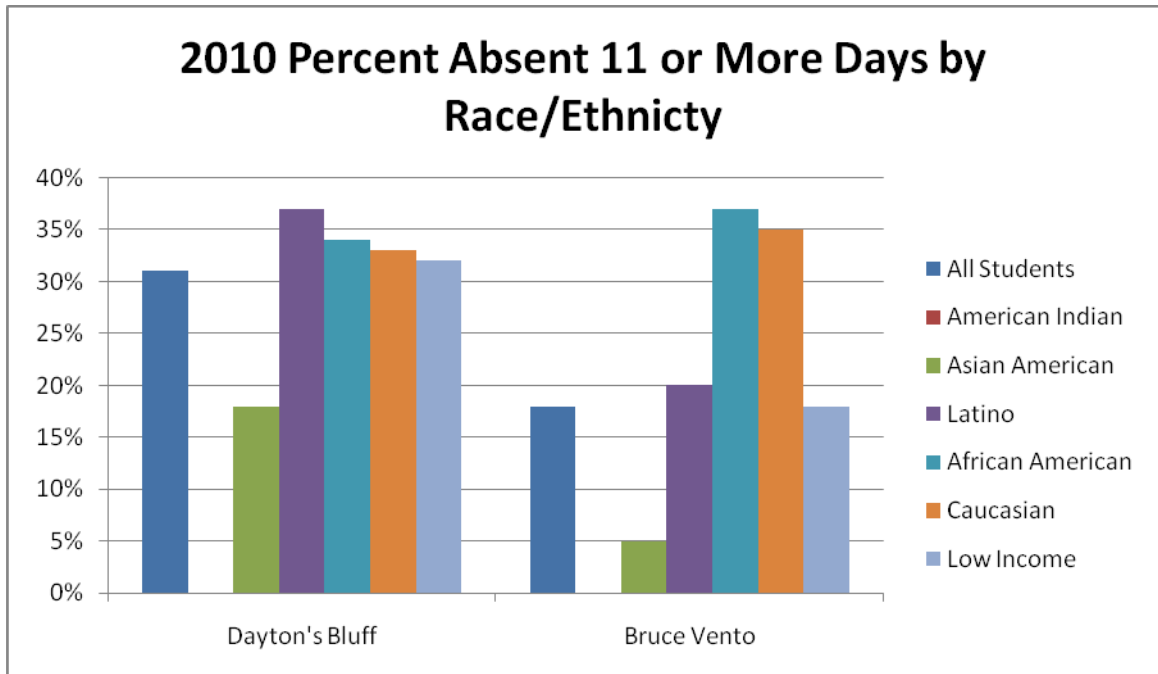
the student has a significant number of behavior incidents, which lead to suspension or extended time away from classroom instruction.

To supplement the analysis of achievement data for this study, attendance and behavior data was also examined for both Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento.

Both the State of Minnesota and Saint Paul Public Schools report attendance data as the "percent of students absent 11 or more days."

As the following bar graph indicates, despite its significantly higher test scores for all demographic groups, in 2010 Dayton's Bluff reported higher rates of absence for almost all demographic groups than Bruce Vento. Overall, Dayton's Bluff reported 31percent of its students overall having 11 or more days absent, compared to only 18 percent of "all students" having 11 or more absences at Vento. Dayton's Bluff also had higher absentee rates for its Asian, Latino, and low income students than Vento; while rates of absence for African American and Caucasian students were slightly lower at Dayton's Bluff, 34 versus 73 percent and 33 versus 35 percent respectively.

Graph III
Comparison of 2010 Student Absences at Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento
Disaggregated by Student Race and Ethnicity



(Data Source SPPS, 2010)

This comparison of attendance rates would suggest that for Dayton's Bluff there does not seem to be a direct correlation between the rate of absence and student achievement. It is unknown based on this analysis whether the community schools model is a mitigating factor that helps the school overcome the relatively high rate of absence and still achieve high student academic outcomes.

Behavior

A number of research studies have recognized a correlation between student behavior and student achievement. A commonly accepted measure of student behavior for public school is suspension rates. Typically students are suspended for a range of behaviors deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment; from subjective infractions such as defiance and disrespect to more objective measures such as fighting or substance use.

Li and Armstrong (2009) found the following:

The balance of evidence from long-standing research suggests that problematic behavior and academic failure are clearly associated both concurrently and predictively. Generally the link between the two variables is explained from two points of view. The first is that underachievement leads to problematic behavior. Thus, low academic achievement leads to a loss of self-esteem, low commitment to school, and frustration, which in turn, results in delinquency, and antisocial behavior. The second is that problem behavior precedes and causes underachievement (pp. 3-4).

Examining three-year trend data for Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento Elementary Schools there is not a statistically significant difference in suspension rates in the aggregate or when disaggregated by race/ethnicity or income. The only exception is in the suspension rate for African American students, which is consistently higher at Bruce Vento than at Dayton's Bluff [see table below]. As with the attendance data presented earlier a direct correlation cannot be made between the rate of suspensions at either school and their student achievement data. It should be noted, that the rate of suspensions at Dayton's Bluff and Vento for 2010 were consistent with the district average of six percent of total students suspended.

Table II
Trend Data for Percent of Student Suspensions
at Dayton's Bluff Elementary and Bruce Vento Elementary
Disaggregated by Race and Income

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Dayton's Bluff			
All Students	6%	5%	6%
American Indian	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asian American	0%	1%	0%
Latino	5%	2%	6%
African American	8%	9%	10%
Caucasian	11%	2%	5%
Low Income	6%	5%	7%
Bruce Vento			
All Students	7%	6%	5%
American Indian	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asian American	2%	1%	1%
Latino	5%	4%	6%
African American	16%	15%	13%
Caucasian	15%	8%	0%
Low Income	7%	6%	5%

(Data Source: SPPS, 2010)

Staff Perspectives

To further understand the raw data it was necessary to supplement the analysis with interviews of administrative and teaching staff who have worked in a community school. Such staff are able to add important insight as to whether there are other variables that must exist within a community school to achieve positive student academic outcomes. Such interviews, also offer additional information to explain why there may be inconsistencies in outcomes even among different schools that use the same community school model.

For purposes of this research staff at Dayton's Bluff were asked a series of interview questions to shed further light on the research question. An opportunity to participate in the interviews was extended to all staff to ensure that multiple perspectives were captured. The following individuals accepted the request to be interviewed: the former principal, the current principal, the school's Achievement Plus Coordinator, the

school's literacy coach, the school clerk, the school's pediatric nurse practitioner and five classroom teachers. There are 35 licensed staff at the school and nine of those interviewed were licensed staff, for a representative sample of 25 percent. A list of the interview questions asked of each interviewee is provided in Appendix D. The primary question asked of each interviewee was whether they believe the Achievement Plus model is an effective strategy to help close the achievement gap for students.

Wraparound Services

The former Dayton's Bluff Principal, who now serves as an Assistant Superintendent for Leadership and Turnaround Schools for Saint Paul Public Schools said he "absolutely," believes the Achievement Plus model was effective in helping to close the achievement gap at Dayton's Bluff. He cautioned, however, that the model cannot be viewed as a one-size fits all solution. He talked about the need for a proper "match" or alignment to the specific needs of that group of students, their families and the community served by the school. This comment was echoed across the national research on the full service community schools model. "The effectiveness of this model is directly aligned with providing specific services and supports to remove barriers that inhibit a student ability to maintain high levels of learner engagement," the former principal said. "However, the addition of services must also support the specific needs of the community."

He indicated that a broader needs assessment and community focus groups were completed prior to the initiative's inception in 1997 to ensure appropriate levels of programmatic applicability.

Additionally, the former principal stressed that to see the student achievement results Dayton's Bluff has achieved school leaders had to build and maintain a high-quality rigorous curriculum for students that "includes clear and high expectations for all learners." He said the wrap-around supports must be aligned to that curriculum and that the transition between the classroom and the before and after school supports must be seamless.

The current Dayton's Bluff Principal said the Achievement Plus model is effective because it helps educators address and in some cases eliminate barriers to student success.

He described an array of services offered at the school such as: mental health, dental, and health services for students. "This therefore eliminates the need in most cases for students to miss school due to these issues," said the current principal. "We know that frequent student absences also contribute to the achievement gap. Preventative medical care in the form of early intervention also helps students to not miss school."

The current principal's comments are consistent with the findings at Thomas Edison Elementary School in Port Chester, NY (Zastrow, 2010). In an interview with that school's principal, Zastrow reported that when they made the transition to the community school model less than a quarter of the school's students have access to adequate healthcare. Fourteen years later more than 94 percent of the student body was enrolled in a health care program; most receiving on site at the school. "We immunize children for H1N1 and for the regular flu. Parents do not have to leave work, which is important because many of our parents do not have 'sick days.' If they don't go to work, they don't get paid. So their children are immunized right within the building" (Zastrow, 2010).

The Achievement Plus Coordinator at Dayton's Bluff identified three areas in which she believes the model supports closing the achievement gap: academics, extended learning and what she calls learning supports. In the area of academics, the Achievement Plus Coordinator cites her role in data collection and analysis as critical to addressing the academic needs of students by providing the principal, literacy coach and teachers with "data pertinent to individual student achievement and areas that are not up to standard. This in turn is used to provide extra academic focus on main areas and to help determine the direction of the PLCs."

The Achievement Plus Coordinator said the school's extended learning program is a team effort. At Dayton's Bluff the students are referred for participation by their classroom teacher. Often they are students who are just shy of proficiency standards of the MCA-IIs who are able to become proficient with targeted interventions. Finally, said the Achievement Plus Coordinator, there is the area of learning supports. "Many of our students come to school with various problems - i.e. no water, no heat, homeless, toothache, etc. Achievement Plus has put a system in place at our school that can help not only these students but their families. Students are able to come to school and not worry about food on their table or a toothache, which in turn, allows them to focus on their academics. As proven by our test scores this model is effectively closing the Achievement Gap."

When asked what the full-service community school model offers that could not be found at traditional neighborhood schools staff and administrators all pointed to the comprehensive constellation of services provided all under one roof.

Classroom teacher 1 said, "I have worked at other schools that don't have this model and with this model, it helps take care of the families and students physical needs and emotional needs, so I can take care of their educational needs."

Said the former principal, "the comprehensive nature of this model allows a school to meet the needs of the 'whole child' on a local level." It is anecdotally understood that if certain needs go unmet (e.g. physical), this would impact a student's ability to come to school each day prepared and ready to learn. Offering these services on-site increase efficiency and access, while also reducing levels of absenteeism."

The school clerk discussed the necessity of providing this service in a community that is largely poor. She said, "Many of our families and community members do not have telephones or means of transportation. Being able to come to the school and receive help related to basic needs through the East Side Family Center is crucial."

The school's literacy coach likewise discussed their school's unique ability to lessen the distractions caused by poverty for their families that does not readily exist in traditional school settings. The literacy coach discussed the tier-services provided on-site such as job counseling, mental health, dental services, housing assistance and tutoring, which meet the needs of their diverse students and families. He said, "A significant by-product of this model is that it builds trust between the school as an institution and a community which often has been wary and skeptical of traditional centers of authority. Conference attendance rates of nearly 100 percent confirm that there has developed a high level of trust between the community and the school."

This is a salient point because there is a substantive body of K-12 research that suggests higher parent involvement impacts positively a variety of student cognitive and

affective outcomes. According to research conducted by the National Middle School Association (2005) parent involvement has been linked with "student outcomes including increased achievement test results, a decrease in dropout rate, improved attendance, improved student behavior, higher grades, higher grade point average, greater commitment to schoolwork, and improved attitude toward school."

Support for Teachers

Nationally, teachers in community schools report having additional time to work with students in class as well as more time to prepare for class, which they attribute to not having to take time during class to deal with students' nonacademic issues (Owen, 2010).

Teachers interviewed at Dayton's Bluff were asked whether working in a school that uses the Achievement Plus model offered them support as a teacher, similar to what was shown in the national research. In fact, they all alluded to being helped as an extension of their students being helped because of the byproducts of greater student stability.

The literacy coach referenced a Student Assistance Team that provides an opportunity to look at a struggling child's needs through multiple lenses, thus giving the teachers a variety of options to effectively reach that child. That approach means the teacher feels supported in seeking solutions.

The school's pediatric nurse practitioner agreed that if a student or a family needs something it is almost always available "in house."

"Often academic problems stem from some outside stress that can be helped by the East Side Family Center, Wilder support or a health-related issue that the Nurse Practitioner can assist the family to eliminate," she said.

When asked to describe more specifically the impact of the community schools model on students in their school who were low income students of color, each interviewee readily cited examples of students who benefitted academically, socially and/or emotionally from the model being in place.

For the former principal the most important measure is student success and he points to many low income students of color how have achieved at high levels at Dayton's Bluff. "Overall the best example from my perspective has been the high trajectory of achievement on high stakes assessment that have or almost surpassed state and district averages regardless of the barriers (e.g. socio-economic) that existed in our student population (see Appendix B)," he said.

The current principal talked about an incident in February when students were playing outside on the playground and one child ran into a pole and broke his two front teeth. Because the dentist and the nurse were in the building they were able to call the parent, treat the child and the student only missed an hour of instruction.

Classroom teacher 2 talked about a student in her class whose was in crisis due to her family splitting up. "She was depressed that she was no longer allowed to see her father. The grief was impairing her learning and she spent time crying. She was connected to Wilder and began seeing a therapist. Her learning is now back on track and she has continued to make great gains."

The literacy coach reported a litany of examples of students whose academic performance has been improved due to supports provided by the Achievement Plus partnership. He said, "Without violating privacy laws I can state that I know families who have suffered extreme levels of violence, drug abuse, involvement with the police, etc.

and yet, with the support of our services, have continued to keep their children here. They could have left to start fresh elsewhere but gave us a vote of confidence in keeping their children here. This is not an isolated event but happens on a regular basis."

Combating External Factors That Negatively Affect Achievement

National research concludes that low income children of color disproportionately live in communities punctuated by high-crime and violence, societal stress, and trauma associated with behavioral and mental disorders that are either undiagnosed or not treated sufficient (Kilkenny, 2009, p. 1).

According to Kilkenny (2009, p. 2) "untreated trauma is associated with behavioral and mental health problems such as anxiety, aggressive behavior, poor impulse control, and alienation. Untreated mental health disorders can lead to school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence, and suicide."

A third classroom teacher at Dayton's Bluff, experienced firsthand the research cited by Kilkenny. He described a student who had, from a young age, experienced emotional trauma, including loss and depression. The child lived in a family where the mother and the siblings suffered from myriad mental health issues that were largely untreated. The student eventually began to present signs of mental health issues. The student had attendance concerns and lacked desire and motivation to come to school.

Classroom teacher 3 said, "Project KOFI has worked in collaboration with me as a teacher to make the situation positive. Through counseling and working with the parent, this student is producing more in the classroom and also seems to enjoy being in school more often. In my opinion, mental health support given to these students has

given them more confidence in their ability to perform in school and manage feelings they experience from external factors outside the school.”

Finally, classroom teacher 5 was able to rattle off a bulleted list of students helped just in the past few months:

- Toothache, student wants to go home, I call the office and the dental team is here today so they fit the student in and no more toothache!
- Student with complicated emotional needs is able to see a licensed therapist during the school day so they do not miss a day of school.
- Child is worried because there is no electricity - I call the Family Center, pass on this news and they make a "courtesy" call to offer assistance.
- Parent at a conference is sharing the struggles of not enough clothes, I send her to family resource center where she is given what she needs on the spot
- Student whose family is heading towards eviction is able to find new place to live with help from Family Recourse Center - this keeps the child in school and no absences

Alignment

According to the research, the most effective community school models create alignment between what happens in the classroom and what happens after school. To that end, interviewees were asked about the extent to which teachers have an opportunity to influence after school programming and ensure alignment with what happens in the classroom.

The former principal said that at the beginning of the process all services and programs were chosen and staffed with great intentionality and that he decided that the

most effective approach at Dayton's Bluff was to staff the after-school program, summer school program, etc. with existing teachers. Everything that we did or created was done through the lens of supporting the school day instruction. The current principal also reported that he rarely makes a building wide decision, without getting teacher input because he believes that the teachers and their instruction is what drives the school.

The comments of the principal and former principal are supported by the teachers interviewed. Classroom teacher 3 said, “Teachers do have an opportunity to influence this process by inviting students that need extra support to participate in the program. Also, teachers can collaborate with after school staff to align the school day activities and offer suggestions for individual students. The program is most effective when a majority of students who need additional support are in the program and teachers at the school teach in the program. I have taught in both the after-school program and the summer school program and know what a difference than makes.”

Professional development at community schools is essential to allowing teachers and school administrators to learn how the support services and academic components of the school can be used together to the advantage of both students and teachers (Owen, 2010).

Staff at Dayton's Bluff talk about the importance of professional development in three key areas: academic improvement, alignment of services and developing peer trust and respect. The professional development model was heavily site-based, job-embedded and focused first on increasing the level of instructional rigor and professionalism at the school. The professional development is also, to the extent possible, real-time, meaning

providing support to teachers relative to current student needs. It is also offered in a variety of ways to accommodate both teacher learning styles and schedules.

Quality Teaching

During the former principal's tenure he said he also offered professional development to help educate teachers on the additional services that were located in the building. He facilitated workshops and discussions designed to help staff understand how to look for "warning signs" in students and their families and then how to access the appropriate services.

The current principal describes professional development as "vital to our survival as a successful and effective community school."

Said the current principal, "The key to this is the level of connectedness the training has to what the professional is seeing in the classroom. For example: By using the book, *Teach like a Champion*, our building wide staff development this year is focusing on specific instruction strategies [tied to the student population] As our class numbers rise, teachers must be extremely intentional with every moment of their instructional time. By strengthening our "Teacher Moves", we can maximize the subject content for students, while minimizing wasted instructional time. This literally increases instructional time we have in the classroom throughout the school year."

The literacy coach reported that a key piece of the staff's professional development is receiving updates on enhancements and developments to the umbrella of services within the A+ model. He said that school staff have heard from their partner organizations about the important role that teachers play in providing access to these services. Conversely, the participation of A+ staff at school events such as parent-teacher

conferences, and family night, helps to create a visible presence and a reminder of the services we have available.

The Achievement Plus Coordinator reported that at Dayton's Bluff there are multiple opportunities for the staff to be trained together which makes it possible to have building-wide collaboration and implementation of all models [behavior, academic, etc]. "This provides a consistency throughout the school which makes it possible for students to recognize various practices and procedures as they advance from grade to grade," which she said enhances achievement.

Classroom teachers interviewed all valued their professional development model, citing it as crucial to student success, the implementation of best practices and the foundation of the school's data driven decision making. All echoed the sentiment of the teacher who said that the more staff know "the better they can teach and support students and their families. Staff development is not only academic-based but also focuses on the services available to help the students, their families, and the classroom teachers."

Said Classroom teacher 2, "Professional development is one of the critical factors for closing the achievement gap, but with that comes accountability for that learning. This does not mean handing a teacher curriculum and expecting them to follow it day by day. It means teaching teachers how to know what their children know and take them farther using whatever means necessary. It means teaching teachers to pull from many academic ideas to produce the rigor that each of their children needs."

Parent and Community Involvement

A report issued by the Michigan Department of Education (2002), titled *What Research Says About Parent Involvement In Children's Education In Relation to*

Academic Achievement, documents years of research that consistently found that when parents are involved in their children's education there are a range of benefits that are both directly and indirectly tied to achievement. Students whose parents were involved were more highly motivated to do well in school and generally felt better about themselves and their ability to achieve at high levels. The research indicated that these students generally had higher test scores, higher graduation rates and higher grades. And they reported fewer instances of negative indicators such as suspension, bad behavior, drug use and fighting.

According to the Michigan report (2002, p. 1), research showed that "family participation in education was *twice* as predictive of student academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were *10 times* greater than other factors."

This research is relevant in an examination of community schools including the Achievement Plus schools in Saint Paul, because one of their foundational tenets is that of parents and families as key partners.

Most community schools, including Dayton's Bluff, employ Epstein's Framework for Parent Involvement (Epstein, n.d.) which includes a specific goal around integration of community resources into the school's programming. To wit, Epstein's Step 6 is for schools to, "Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development (Epstein, n.d.)."

Often, parental involvement has been a challenge at schools like Dayton's Bluff with high percentages of low income students of color. Implementation of the community schools model has shown mixed results at increasing involvement.

The school clerk assesses the situation this way, "While the majority of parents in low-income area schools are working one and sometimes two jobs, and with many students coming from one-parent families, it's often difficult for those parents to be involved at the school." She said events at Dayton's Bluff are better attended because of the collaboration that exists between school and partners. 'School staff and the Achievement Plus community partners work together to plan and hold events. A+ community partners also assist school staff with outreach to parents, encouraging them to participate in their children's education."

Both the former principal and the literacy coach discussed the school's need to first build trust with families and community members before tackling parent involvement directly. Said the former principal, "Rather than focusing on the traditional definition of parental involvement, I focused my energy on building a greater a degree of trust within the community, the relationships we had with families and prioritizing opportunity for parents in the building. Family events were planned deliberately to ensure an environment of low risk and high success for parents. Many of our parents have had negative school experiences, so as the administrator of the building all I would ask of parents would be pick-up the phone when I or the classroom teacher called, attend their child's conferences and participate in other school-wide family events."

The literacy coach echoed those sentiments. In recalling his 12 year history at Dayton's Bluff, he said, "When I first came here 12 years ago there was a palpable feeling

of mistrust and tension. Having the supports provided by A+ (and the increased scores that came with these supports) convinced many families that they should give us the benefit of the doubt. Families now know that we are not only about meeting the academic needs of their children but also the needs of their whole child. While we struggle to find parents able to take time from their day to participate in school activities, there is a strong level of parental support for our mission."

Both the current and former principals reported that participation in parent teacher conferences is in excess of 90 percent, high by most standards, given the school's population. They said that they attribute the high turnout to required professional development for staff that helped teachers better understand how to specifically speak to parents, chose language and structure the format of the conference to maintain active engagement. The current principal added that even though the parents still don't agree with everything the teachers and staff do, in most instances the parents accept that the school staff does care about their children. He cites the increased efforts to build mutual respect and trust as key factors in their improved conference attendance.

Still, this is one area where teachers interviewed had differing views about the school's success in really engaging parents.

The Achievement Plus Coordinator said, "Parental involvement has been very difficult at Dayton's Bluff. The family events are always very well attended - usually over 300 people per event. Conference attendance is usually above 90 percent. However, the stumbling block seems to be getting parents to commit to consistently attend a monthly committee meeting or group. This year is the first time we have had

parents volunteer in classrooms, hopefully this welcome change will continue into the future.”

A fourth classroom teacher, who transferred into Dayton's Bluff after the Achievement Plus model had been instituted, said no matter what the model - community school or traditional school - the bottom line for parent engagement is about the individual teacher being able to connect with the parent and build a rapport built on mutual interest in their child's success. “I have not met a parent yet that does not want their child to excel. I believe the success lies within having parents as team members in their child's learning. It is reassuring to parents that we have high expectations for their children and can show/explain the scaffolding to have their children improve academically.”

Classroom teacher 4 said one way to build that team approach is something that the community school model dictates, instructing parents on how to advocate for their children and giving parents strategies to use at home with their children.

Another classroom teacher was not convinced that parent involvement has actually improved in a substantive way. "I think parents have used many of the services that Achievement Plus offers, but I am not sure that it has increased our overall parental participation," Classroom teacher 2 said.

The school's pediatric nurse practitioner also mentioned in her interview that parent involvement may be more a result of the additional services offered in the building. But, she added that those services have resulted in parents trying to keep their children enrolled at the school even if they have to move out of the community.

Dayton's Bluff, like other schools that serve mostly low income students, has a lower stability index [indicates how many students were in the school for the whole year] than the district average. For the 2009-10 school year Dayton's Bluff had a stability rate of 82 percent while the District average was 91 percent (SPPS, 2010). High student mobility can have a direct negative effect on achievement.

"Often when parents tour the building they are drawn to all the "extra" services we provide in school and during the school day," said the school's pediatric nurse practitioner. "Even parents who move out of our attendance area but have means to transport decide to keep their students enrolled here instead of switching them to a more convenient school location."

The comments of Classroom Teacher 3 capture the school's ongoing challenges and hopefulness in the critical support area of parental involvement. He said, "In some ways we have high parental involvement. In other ways we would like to see more involvement. This is our biggest struggle year to year. I know that parents are more involved through the primary project, project KOFI, and the ESFC. I also know that more and more families are making a conscious decision to come to Dayton's Bluff. For example, I have a child in my classroom this year whose very involved parents pulled her from our sister school and brought her here because they had heard of our reputation for achievement. Since this reputation couldn't have developed without Achievement Plus support, I see positive connections between parental involvement and Achievement Plus."

Achievement

Ultimately the question remains, whether adoption of the community schools model makes a difference academically for students who attend those schools. While data indicates some tangible benefits as measured by test scores, attendance and behavior, Dayton's Bluff staff members were asked whether they believed that their work with students would be different without the wrap-around services provided through Achievement Plus.

The former principal, who led the work at Dayton's Bluff as principal and now serves as the Assistant Superintendent who supervises that school along with the District's two other Achievement Plus schools, said unequivocally that the achievement gains experienced at Dayton's Bluff would have been much more difficult to attain.

"I am certain that if these services didn't exist at Dayton's Bluff, many needs would have gone unmet and levels of student achievement would have not risen to current levels," said the Assistant Superintendent. "In conversations with parents, there always seemed to be a perspective of genuine gratitude, appreciation and relief. This aided in our ability to build a trusting relationship with our families and meet the needs of students to ensure that they were ready to learn as they entered the classroom each and every day."

The current principal, who has served as principal at Dayton's Bluff for almost one year and previously served as an assistant principal at the school, said "The big difference with the services Achievement Plus offers is that we can help families knock down some of the barriers that tend to keep them down. Physical health, mental health, [and] dental health are just a start; but all can be difficult to overcome without help."

The school's literacy coach agreed that the work would be "immensely" more difficult with the wrap-around model. "We rely on these services almost to the point of taking them for granted to support us in the classroom. Without this assistance though, our already difficult jobs would be that much more challenging," he said.

Challenging, is how classroom teacher 4 described how she believes her work would be without the community schools approach at Dayton's Bluff. "The 'excuses' that most educators have in why their children do not meet standard [poverty, low income, etc.] would be more prevalent in being used as an excuse," she said.

Classroom teacher 3 agreed that his work would be noticeably more difficult without the supports offered as a result of the Achievement Plus community schools infrastructure. He said, "I really can't imagine a day without support from the services provided. I feel comfortable with the surrounding support. Students are given many opportunities here to feel safe and respected. If they feel safe physically and emotionally, they will be more likely to succeed in school. I truly believe this school would not be as successful without the services provided through Achievement Plus."

Staff all alluded to that fact that having a school that serves a significant number of students in crisis is difficult even with the services offered on-site through Achievement Plus. Having to navigate referrals to off-site support resources would add a layer of complication that would detract from teaching and learning. At Dayton's Bluff many of those referrals are initially handled by the school's office staff, commonly referred to as school clerks.

The school clerk commented, "It would be more time-consuming to try to assist families get the services they need if they weren't already offered right here in the school.

It would also be less successful because of transportation and follow-up issues with the families. Students would probably have increased absences, dismissals, and referrals if we didn't have the extra support to assist them in being successful in school.”

Summing it up, Classroom teacher 1 said, "If we didn't have all these services to offer our students and families, more of it would fall on the classroom teacher." Through these resources we can find out what needs to be done and work on eliminating them instead of having it come into the classroom and affecting the learning."

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Based on a survey of the current and historical research done on the effectiveness of the community school model in improving achievement and closing the learning gap for low income students of color, it is clear that this model holds promise for Saint Paul Public Schools leaders who have considered transforming at least two more of the District's lower performing schools into community schools. It should be pointed out, however, that most research attempting to document the effectiveness of the community school model most often relies on descriptive or case student methodology.

This research found, consistent with a 2010 evaluation of Achievement Plus Schools conducted by Wilder Research, that "without rigorous research designs that control for other positive factors, such as changes in curriculum or teachers," it is impossible to draw a direct correlation between positive outcomes and the community school model.

"Although there is little rigorous research to support community schools, they are almost always described in a positive manner. Community school advocates often rely on related research regarding the importance of meeting children's basic needs to promote community schools (Wilder Research, 2010, p.14)."

Rigorous longitudinal studies have been conducted in New York City for community schools sponsored by the Harlem Children's Zone and the Children's Aid Society and in Saint Paul at the Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School. Research findings for each of these schools were examined to inform conclusions about the effectiveness of the community school model.

In making a recommendation to Saint Paul Public Schools leadership on whether the investment in additional community schools to support its goal of closing the achievement gap for low income students of color, the research findings suggest support for an investment in the community schools model for that purpose based on comparisons of achievement data.

An analysis of the Saint Paul Public Schools data on Dayton's Bluff and Bruce Vento does support the preponderance of national research that suggests that low income students of color who attend schools using the community schools model show higher rates of academic success and similar or lower incident rates for variables that negatively impact student success. However, it was not possible to distinguish whether the model as an independent variable was alone sufficient to produce the more positive student outcomes.

Findings also support an investment in the community school model as long as there is a simultaneous investment in what the Coalition for Community Schools calls the "Six Conditions for Learning." The six conditions the organization says must be supported are:

- Early childhood development programs that nurture learning and development
- School has: qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, high standards, and high expectations
- Students are motivated and engaged
- Physical, social, and emotional needs are met for youth and families
- Collaboration and respect between families and schools staff
- Community is engaged with the school

What those components look like must be unique to the specific community being served; however, these variables were consistently referenced in all the research as necessary to the model's success. The variables were also supported in interviews with staff at Dayton's Bluff community school.

In a follow-up to his original interview, the former Dayton's Bluff principal said it is the combination of targeted professional development, an aligned curriculum, accountability for teachers and administrators linked to student achievement, combined with the supports offered by the Achievement Plus model that has made the difference at the school. Similarly, he cites an absence of one or more of these factors as the reason that all of Saint Paul's Achievement Plus schools do not show consistently high academic outcomes.

"Educators at Dayton's Bluff are guided by a belief that all students can achieve at high standards," he said. "Clear and high expectations are consistently set for all students early on."

The six conditions cited above must be supported by a general structure or framework under which most community schools are established. This framework appears critical to the successful operation of the model.

Blank (2010) describes the framework in terms of four critical elements which revolve around community and philanthropic resource partnerships, district level leadership, site level leadership and parent and community partnerships. An illustration of this framework [see Appendix E] as implemented in the Province of Saskatchewan demonstrates again the interconnectedness of all pieces to ensure success.

"These four components work together to provide the comprehensive range of supports required for the education and well-being of children, youth and their families. While the learning program is at the forefront of Community Schools, its success depends on the effectiveness of the other three components, which together provide the foundation for critical supports to its effectiveness and to the success of the students in the school" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011).

The model is not without challenges, as evidenced by mixed results nationally and uneven commitment in the district's own implementation of the Achievement Plus schools model.

"Although the potential benefits of community schools are great, transforming traditional schools into this model is no easy task. Several factors present barriers that schools must overcome to become community schools. Too many leaders seek narrow solutions to complex problems. As Barton writes, we tend to put considerations of family, community, and economy off-limits in education-reform policy discussions. However, we do so at our peril. (2001, p. 20)"

One important challenge is shifting a long-held paradigm that has teachers operating only within the sphere of their classrooms and external service providers detached from the significant impact of the school in the life of their clients. Such territorial behavior has been evident in the relatively spotty success of North End Achievement Plus School in Saint Paul.

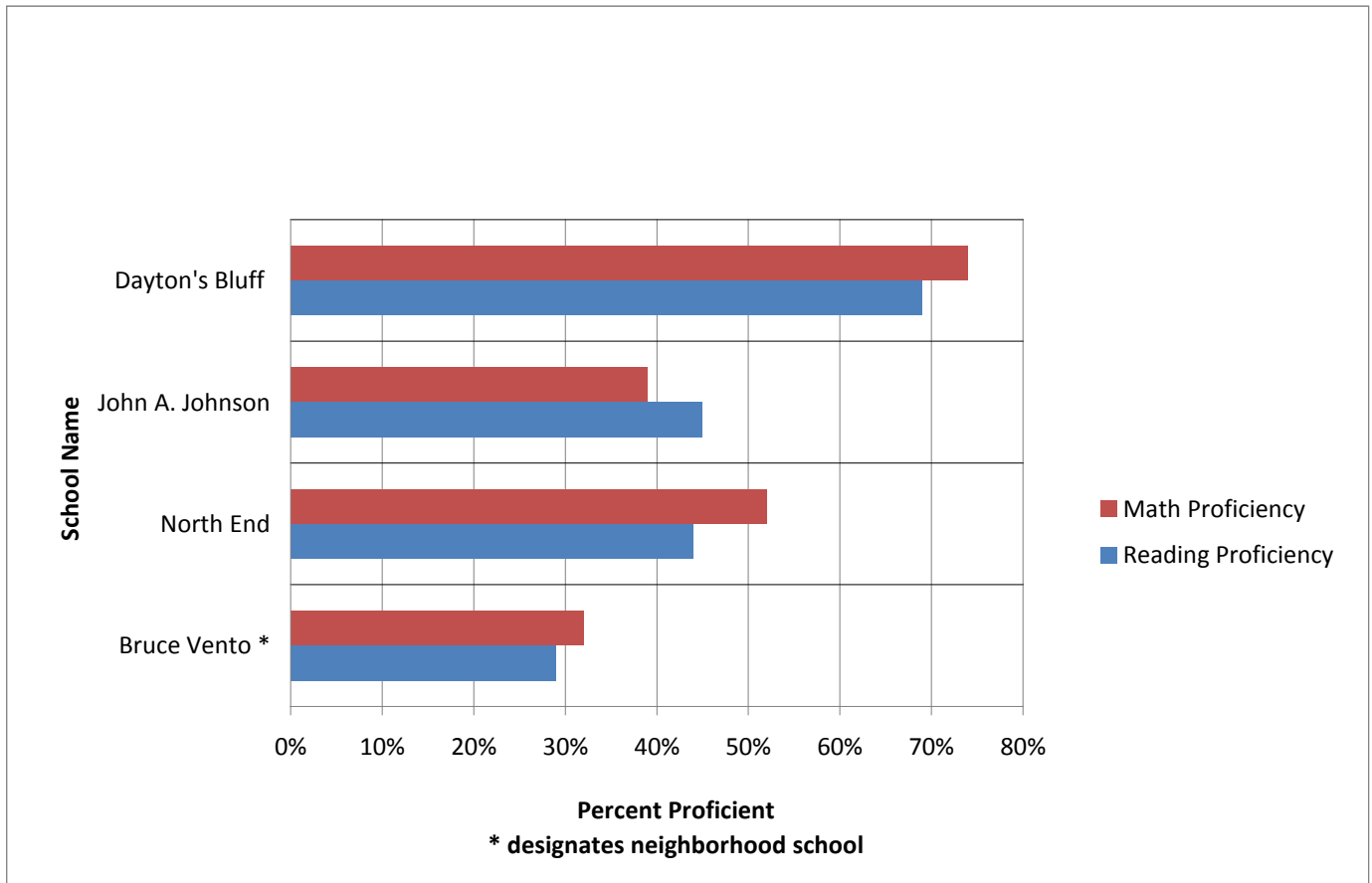
Berrick and Duerr (1994, p. 53) suggested that, "Teaching staff, whose primary identity has been locked into the sole role of educator, must change to accommodate a fuller identity as child-serving professionals. Similarly, mental health and social services

professionals, whose primary role since the establishment of social work and psychotherapy has been that of the therapeutic professional, must change to see themselves as part of an educational community whose mission is to see children grow and thrive both intellectually and interpersonally."

If indeed Saint Paul is willing to "think outside of the box" to systemically improve the achievement of its low income students of color, the research generally supports the community school model's ability to accomplish that goal when there is fidelity of implementation. "In the end, results adhere to a common pattern. Districts report positive academic, social and health results—outcomes that benefit the district and the community (Fratt, 2006, p.68)."

However lack of fidelity to implementing and resourcing the framework and underlying principles, as can often happen in heavily site-based school districts like Saint Paul Public Schools, has proven to produce less than even achievement results. It should be noted that while there was disparity between rates of proficiency among the three Achievement Plus community schools, each showed higher proficiency rates than the comparable traditional neighborhood school. Graph IV below shows the reading and proficiency rates for the three Achievement Plus schools and the traditional neighborhood school, Vento.

Graph IV
Comparison of 2010 Math & Reading Proficiency Rates for SPPS
Achievement Plus Schools & Comparison Neighborhood School



While the cost of transforming a traditional school into a community school is estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$200,000, proponents of the model suggest that new governmental support for community schools may allow greater flexibility for federal funding to school districts to cover such start-up cost. “During his tenure as the chief executive officer of the Chicago public schools, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan transformed 150 schools into community schools, and saw achievement levels and graduation rates jump—prompting him to later reflect that the project was the best money I spent (Fine, 2010, p. 31).”

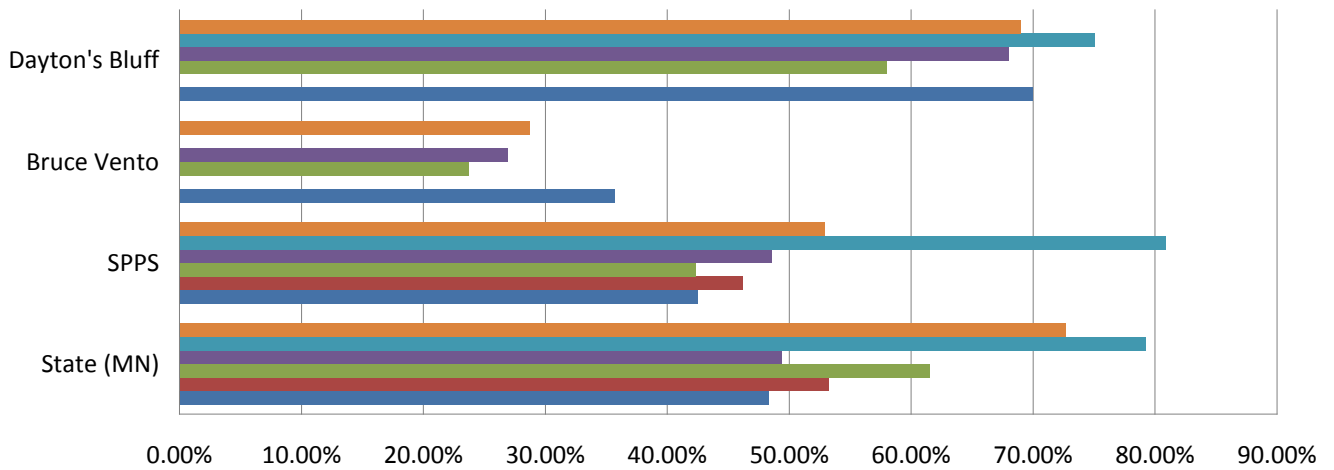
The research suggests that similar sentiment can be found in districts around the country who have also adopted this academic model. Indeed, the ongoing support of the Wilder Foundation for Achievement Plus Schools is evidence of local support.

Funding is often tied to sustainable outcomes. Based on this research it is reasonable to conclude that investment in the community school model is wise for urban districts wishing to close their achievement gaps. That investment must include not only infrastructure costs, but must also include people resources such as hiring a highly skilled principal leader and providing ongoing professional development for staff. Without this holistic investment in building and classroom leadership, the model as a stand-alone answer to the achievement gap is not likely to deliver the desired results.

APPENDIX A

2010 MCA-II READING PROFICIENCY BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP
 COMPARISON OF DAYTON'S BLUFF ACHIEVEMENT PLUS ELEMETARY
 WITH BRUCE VENTO ELEMENTARY, SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 AND THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

2010 READING MCA II PERCENT PROFICIENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY



	State (MN)	SPPS	Bruce Vento	Dayton's Bluff
All Students	72.70%	53%	29%	69%
Caucasian	79.20%	80.90%	0	75%
Latino	49.40%	48.60%	26.90%	68.00%
Asian American	61.50%	42.30%	23.70%	58%
American Indian	53.20%	46.20%	0	0
African American	48.30%	42.50%	35.70%	70%

(Data Source: MDE, 2010)

The racial/ethnic groups identified in this graphic were chosen because they are consistent with the reporting groups proscribed by the State of Minnesota Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education to determine whether school districts and individual schools are making adequate yearly progress (AYP).

**APPENDIX B
TREND DATA FOR MCA-II READING AND MATH
DAYTON'S BLUFF ACHIEVEMENT PLUS ELEMETARY
PERCENT PROFICIENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP**

READING PERCENT PROFICIENT					MATH PERCENT PROFICIENT		
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
ALL STUDENTS	59%	68%	69%		60%	64%	74%
AMERICAN INDIAN *	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
LATINO	71%	57%	68%		77%	55%	76%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	54%	66%	70%		49%	60%	71%
CAUCASIAN	77%	81%	75%		59%	78%	70%
LOW INCOME	56%	65%	67%		59%	61%	71%
ELL	47%	57%	58%		61%	56%	77%

(Data Source: SPPS, 2010)

Proficiency on the MCA-II is considered to be a student scoring at Level III or IV. The

MCA-II assessments have four levels:

- Level I - Not Meeting Standard
- Level II - Partially Meets Standard
- Level III - Meets Standard
- Level IV - Exceeds Standard

APPENDIX C
TREND DATA FOR MCA-II READING AND MATH
BRUCE VENTO ELEMETARY
PERCENT PROFICIENT BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP

READING PERCENT PROFICIENT					MATH PERCENT PROFICIENT		
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
ALL STUDENTS	31%	31%	28%		39%	30%	31%
AMERICAN INDIAN *	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
LATINO	43%	36%	29%		40%	24%	29%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	32%	44%	33%		30%	25%	23%
CAUCASIAN	73%	36%	N/A		64%	36%	N/A
LOW INCOME	29%	30%	27%		39%	29%	31%
ELL	22%	22%	19%		39%	30%	32%

(Data Source: SPPS, 2010)

Proficiency on the MCA-II is considered to be a student scoring at Level III or IV. The

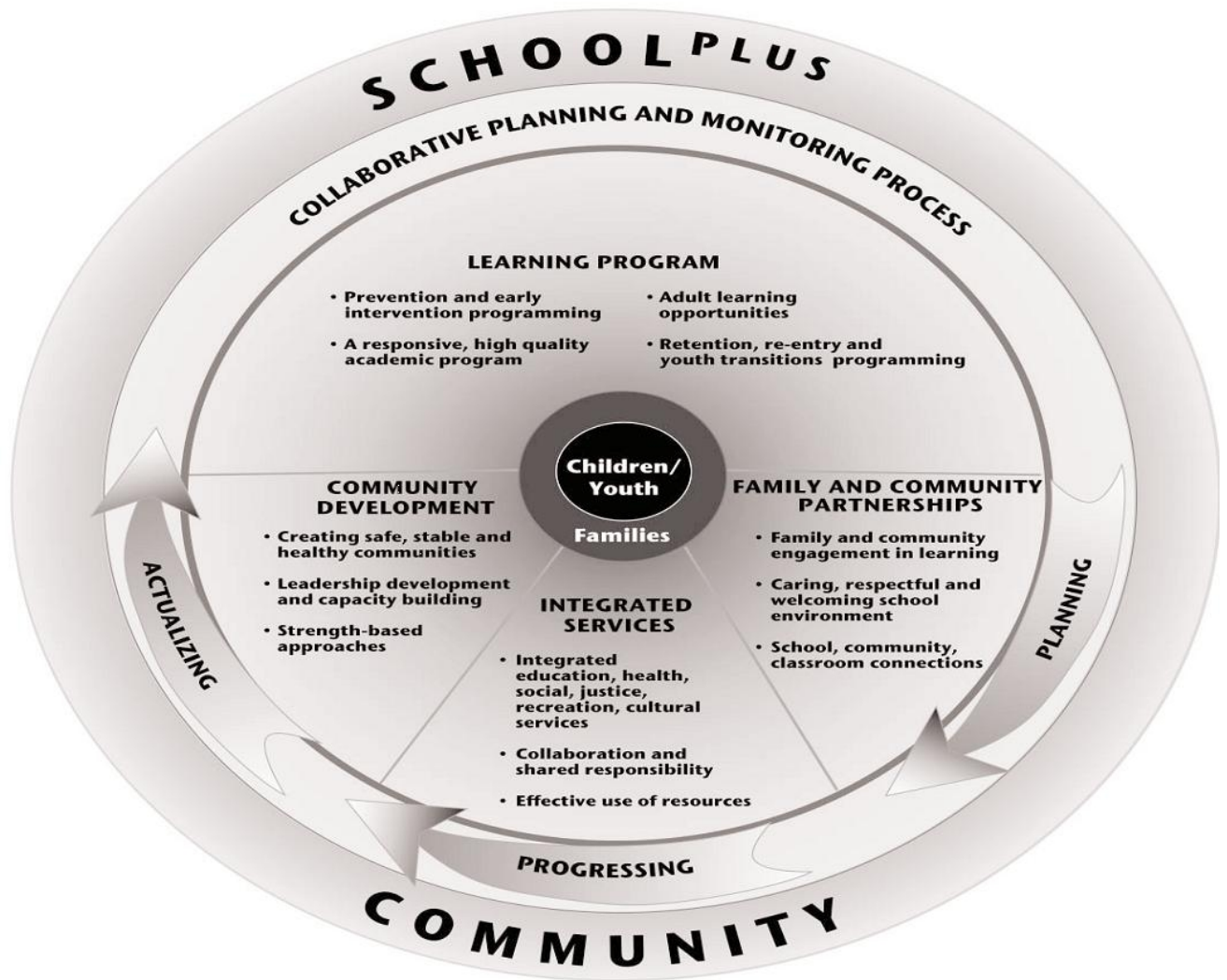
MCA-II assessments have four levels:

- Level I - Not Meeting Standard
- Level II - Partially Meets Standard
- Level III - Meets Standard
- Level IV - Exceeds Standard

APPENDIX D
INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ASKED OF
DAYTON'S BLUFF ACHIEVEMENT PLUS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFF
BY SECONDARY INVESTIGATOR
SUZANNE P. KELLY

1. It is my understanding that Dayton's Bluff serves what is commonly described as a high needs student population comprised of predominately low-income students of color. Do you believe that the Achievement Plus model is an effective strategy to help close the achievement gap for your students?
2. What does this model contribute/offer that could not be found at a regular neighborhood school?
3. Specifically, how does working in a school that uses the Achievement Plus model support you as a teacher?
4. What role, if any, does professional development play in the success of the Achievement Plus Model at Dayton's Bluff?
5. Do teachers at Dayton's Bluff have an opportunity to influence after school programming and support services to ensure that these offerings are aligned with what is being taught in the classroom?
6. Can you cite one or more specific examples that you are personally aware of in which the existence of the Achievement Plus model at Dayton's Bluff made a difference in a student's achievement?
7. Do you believe that the existence of the Achievement Plus model at Dayton's Bluff increased parental involvement or participation? In what ways?
8. Describe how you believe your work with students at Dayton's Bluff would be different without the wrap around services provided through Achievement Plus?

APPENIDIX E
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OPERATING FRAMEWORK



(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011)

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