

Full-Service Schools: Involving the Urban University in School Improvement and Community Redevelopment

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Abstract

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) has developed close partnerships with public schools and community organizations to improve urban student performance in two key ways: teacher education and full-service schools. One helps develop seamless progress for students from school to college by collaborating to coordinate performance standards and expectations. The other helps develop a seamless wrap-around of services to eliminate or minimize socioeconomic or health-related barriers to urban students' learning progress. Although the projects have a different focus, the methods for approaching them and making them successful are much the same. Both require an intense and sustained three-way commitment by the urban school, its surrounding community, and the university to establish and maintain trust and to make optimal use of the resources available to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is the major urban campus of Indiana University. It offers professional degrees in law, medicine, dentistry, nursing, and social work as well as an array of more than 180 undergraduate and graduate degrees. IUPUI, through an agreement dating to its establishment in 1969, also offers Purdue University degree programs in science, engineering, and technology.

IUPUI, with more than 28,000 students, is located in central Indiana, in downtown Indianapolis, the state's capital. Two neighborhoods adjoin the IUPUI campus. IUPUI has focused its university/community collaborative efforts for urban education reform on these areas and their schools.

Brief History of Our Neighborhood Partners

To the north is a neighborhood that lies between the hospitals on our campus (Indiana University Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children) and the Methodist Hospitals, Inc., which were consolidated under the management of Clarian Health Partners in 1997. With Clarian, IUPUI has focused on helping with economic development and neighborhood revitalization in this area. The community is represented in our collaborations by the United Northwest Association (UNWA). Crispus Attucks Middle School, founded in 1927, was Indiana's first all-black high school. Many African

Americans at the time were attending predominantly white schools, where athletics and other extracurricular activities were largely segregated. Some classrooms even had segregated seating, so an all-black high school, though controversial, was attractive to many African American families. Crispus Attucks Middle School is now part of the desegregated Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) system, and currently serves some 600 children in the area. Nearly 60 percent of the sixth through eighth grade pupils are African American, 35 percent are white, and 3 percent are Hispanic.

The Westside Cooperative Organization (WESCO) represents the community to the west of campus, known as the Haughville/Stringtown neighborhood, both historically white, working-class communities. Haughville, annexed by Indianapolis in 1897, was named for the Haugh iron foundry established there. The close-knit community was settled predominately by Eastern European immigrants. By 1992, however, an estimated 60 percent of the residents were African American. Stringtown, annexed the same year, was an agricultural community until the railroads came. Mainly German and Irish immigrants settled there. Today, the fastest growing population in Haughville/Stringtown is Hispanic. George Washington High School was built to serve the area's students in 1927, the same year Crispus Attucks opened. During the 1960s, the community declined as industries closed and immigrants left. Racial tensions increased. A landmark federal court decision in 1968, but not implemented until 1981, called for the busing of black students from IPS to six of the eight Marion County townships. By the end of the 1980s, a 24 percent drop in the community's population had occurred. In 1995, with IPS enrollments at an all-time low, George Washington High School was closed to cut costs.

Bridges to Success, “Better Together,” and the Community Schools Movement

Meanwhile, a growing awareness of the centrality of schools to a community's quality of life began to emerge. A “Joint Statement on School Health,” issued in 1994 by Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, and Donna E. Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services declared: “Schools are the only public institutions that touch nearly every young person in this country. Schools have a unique opportunity to affect the lives of children and their families, but they cannot address all of our children's needs alone. Health, education, and human service programs must be integrated, and schools must have the support of public and private health care providers, communities, and families.”

Local awareness was emerging, too. In 1992, Bridges to Success (BTS), a collaboration between United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) and IPS began. Funded by a Dewitt-Wallace Readers Digest grant, BTS partners include a variety of social and health service agencies and several IUPUI schools and programs. Initially, four elementary schools and two middle schools were involved, but over the past ten years the collaboration has expanded to include 43 IPS schools. The goal of BTS is “to increase the educational success of students by ensuring that children come to school

ready to learn; by meeting their basic needs; by eliminating barriers to academic achievement; and by creating/enhancing safe places for children after school.”

Bridges to Success was a starting point for IUPUI’s involvement in full-service community schools. This growing national movement is based on the premise that “the school building [is] the one piece of real estate in declining communities that is publicly owned, centrally located, and consistently used” (Dryfoos 1998).

Full-service schools offer education, nutrition, health services, counseling, tutoring, mentoring, recreation, and social skills development—just to name a few. At their best, they are mutually beneficial to the community and the university. They are supportive of family and neighborhood cohesion and address quality of life issues important to the community at large. It is generally agreed that the best full-service school collaborations engage the concerns of all those involved, foster team building and continuity through a clearly articulated shared sense of purpose, and are committed to continuous improvement by gathering the information and data needed for planning and evaluation. A bonus for IUPUI is that they broaden college students’ experience outside the classroom.

In 1994, the Indiana University Schools of Education, Nursing, and Social Work at IUPUI teamed up as the “Better Together Working Group” to provide interprofessional services at four Indianapolis public schools, one of which was Crispus Attucks Middle School, a Bridges to Success school. Through discussions with school principals, teaching staff, leaders of community centers, social service providers, and university faculty, plans were laid not only to address logistical questions but also to develop principles of interprofessional practice. This would lay the foundation for an interdisciplinary professional learning community consisting of pre-service and in-service teachers, administrators, nurses, and social workers—all of whom are primed to approach community collaborations in a holistic way and with maximum positive impact on the urban communities they serve.

Through the Community Health Nursing course at IUPUI, senior nursing students may choose to perform their required community service in Crispus Attucks or another participating IPS school, which generally, due to budgetary restraints, can only offer a hired nurse to students one hour each week. The senior nursing students spend seven to 12 hours per week providing first aid and routine scoliosis and vision screenings. Student teachers in the IU School of Education complete 20 hours of required field experience in the selected school by tutoring, mentoring, or student teaching, thus lowering the student-to-adult ratio in the classroom and giving children more individual attention. Students seeking a bachelor’s or master’s degree in social work may also choose to complete their internships in these schools, either leading groups or working with children individually.

The IUPUI “Better Together Working Group” received a three-year, \$350,000 grant through an intra-university competitive funding process designed to encourage implementation of the recommendations set forth in the *Indiana University Strategic*

Directions Charter: Becoming America's New Public University, initiated by Indiana University President Myles Brand. It called, among other things, for a renewed emphasis on university/community partnerships. The funding gave new momentum to the full-service schools movement and allowed for expansion to more schools in the IPS system.

Augmenting the services provided by the “Better Together Working Group” is the fact that the near northside and near westside neighborhoods and their schools are a particular strategic focus with respect to community engagement for the campus in general, including IUPUI’s Center for Service and Learning, which coordinates and makes placements in the neighborhood schools for service learning classes, student volunteers, America Reads and the AmeriCorps programs.

Education for Collaboration

In developing and expanding IUPUI’s involvement with full-service schools, it became apparent that new educational programming was needed to prepare professionals from diverse disciplines for collaboration with each other and with community representatives. First, it is important that teachers, nurses, social workers, and service providers know more about the principles and frameworks guiding the other disciplines. Second, they need training in the principles of team building to create successful collaborations in a complex and diverse community setting.

At IUPUI this is accomplished for pre-service nurses, social workers, and teachers through a special course that has been developed for undergraduate or graduate credit in all three professional schools titled “Collaborative Practice in the Twenty-First Century.” For in-service professionals, IUPUI offers a summer seminar titled “Interprofessional Collaboration in Urban Schools and Communities,” the purpose of which is to assist practitioners in integrating their subject matter expertise with strategies for effective interprofessional collaboration. Both the course and the summer seminar are conducted jointly by faculty in all three disciplines and share similar purposes and methods. Participants become skilled at more effective communication with other professionals as well as at the student/family/community level. They also learn to be aware of personal cultural biases and to develop the capability of analyzing the impact of these beliefs on one’s interprofessional practice and engagement with community partners. A key component is integrating critical inquiry with reflective practice.

Currently under development is an 18 credit hour Graduate Certificate Program in Community Building and Urban Education—designed for teachers, administrators, human service professionals, and policy makers—which may be offered as early as the spring semester 2003. The rationale for such specialized educational programming is that the conditions in our schools are tied to the overall quality of life in a community, and there are many stakeholders and service providers who can or should play a role.

The result of these collaborative educational efforts has been threefold: (1) improved cultural competency and experience for graduates and practitioners in all professions involved, (2) more and better-informed public policy awareness/advocacy, and (3) enhanced coordination of community resources.

The Rebirth of the George Washington Community School

A recent triumph of the Indianapolis experience in terms of better public policy awareness/advocacy and better coordination of community resources has been the rebirth of the George Washington Community School on the near westside of campus. For 18 months, School of Education faculty worked with WESCO community leaders to plan the reopening of the former Washington High School. When closed in 1995, it left the neighborhood without a public school in operation. In Fall 2000, it reopened as a middle school and has already expanded to include the first two years of high school. It, like Crispus Attucks, is a Bridges to Success school and a particular focus of IUPUI's role in the full-service school concept.

Among the many challenges facing this neighboring community are (1) 20 percent of the families in the George Washington Community School tract are below the poverty line, set at \$13,359 in 1990, and (2) up to 17 percent of the students (about 100 of 600) suffer from asthma, likely a legacy of the neighborhood's manufacturing focus. Crime, gang activity, high unemployment, lack of adequate housing, and changing ethnic demographics have also had an impact on students and their academic progress. Thus, the wrap-around services offered at the school include not only the usual (teaching, tutoring, mentoring, health care, counseling) but also an After-School Program and Alternative-to-Suspension Program (in collaboration with a neighborhood community center), a Teen Health Clinic, Peace Initiative (conflict resolution training), GED/English Language Learner Classes, Hispanic Social Service Club, Parent Enrichment Program, Gang Prevention/Community Policing, and a College Prep Program.

Although the wrap-around services mentioned reflect a coalition of several community partners, IUPUI is heavily involved in many of them. IUPUI School of Education faculty not only were members of the Westside Education Task Force, which played a central role in getting the school reopened as a middle school in the fall of 2000, but IUPUI continues to support the newly reopened facility. Health, mental health, and drug and tobacco-use prevention services are staffed largely by the IU medical school. IUPUI AmeriCorps members are among those leading a peacekeepers program at the school, which features conflict resolution and peer mediation. AmeriCorps members also provide tutorial assistance and facilitate youth programming as well as mentor the Twenty-First Century Scholars who, upon successful completion of their pledge to academic excellence, drug abstinence, and responsible citizenship, receive a four-year education at any Indiana state-funded college. Reading tutors are made available through IUPUI's America Reads Program and student athletes, who must fulfill a

community service expectation. Coaches and players also have addressed student convocations to talk about the importance of academics and character to a good athlete's chances of getting into college. Parent Enrichment Sessions routinely take place at the school. The sessions have included an educational dialogue sponsored by IUPUI with author Jonathon Kozol, a champion for the cause of quality public education for America's poorest children and author of *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*. Social workers from IUPUI also convene a support group and offer monthly workshops specifically designed for Hispanic girls and their mothers to help them with social and academic issues, life skills, and opportunities for academic growth. IUPUI provides a College Preparatory Initiative program for sixth- and seventh-graders that pairs them with college students for mentoring and on-campus enrichment activities. IUPUI has also been involved in fundraising activities that benefit the school. Our University Library and School of Library and Information Science program held a four-day Scholastic Book Fair on campus at which patrons bought books for the George Washington Community School library. The annual "Back Pack Attack" held in the fall provides school supplies to needy children at Washington and other IPS schools.

Professional Development for Urban School Teachers and Teachers-to-Be

Full-service schools work to remove barriers to student learning, but teacher preparation is also necessary to maximize academic achievement and set young people on the path to future learning. The School of Education and other academic units at IUPUI have developed initiatives to better prepare future teachers and help current teachers improve their skills. In so doing, they maintain relationships between university and school faculty which ensure that students' progress is not impeded by gaps or lack of coordination in the system of education—preschool to baccalaureate and beyond—that is provided by our community.

Among the most important of these efforts, because of the large scope of collaborations involved, is Project SEAM, which lives up to its name by seeking to promote seamless student transitions between high school and college education. Its purpose is to close gaps that exist between secondary and postsecondary curricula in math, language arts, and the sciences. Funded by the Lilly Endowment, Project SEAM brings together public school teachers with their subject-matter counterparts among the faculty of colleges in the Indianapolis region. Fifteen school districts are participating, including Indianapolis Public Schools. The six area colleges and universities involved are IUPUI, Ivy Tech State College, Marian College, University of Indianapolis, Franklin College, and Butler University. It was in meetings of the presidents and chancellors of these Indianapolis-based higher education institutions that the initial plans that led to Project SEAM were first developed.

Scott Evenbeck, the dean of the IUPUI University College, played a leading role in convening the partners and coordinating the community-wide initiative to review the

curriculum in K–12. Biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and writing college faculty met with colleagues from other campuses in central Indiana and with teachers in these disciplines from every public high school. Three-day retreats, monthly meetings, electronic communication, and individual conversations and consultations resulted in the identification of serious gaps between the K–12 and higher education curricula. This careful school-by-school analysis had the added benefit of fostering a stronger commitment to working together in supporting student learning. The university faculty’s outreach to teachers has resulted not only in progress toward a seamless K–12 college preparatory curriculum but also enhanced inter-institutional cooperation on achievement standards.

On June 11, 2002, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige issued a “call to action” for states to “radically transform their teacher certification systems by raising standards and lowering barriers that keep many highly qualified candidates from pursuing teaching careers.” In keeping with such local, state, and national efforts to attract more and better-prepared teachers to urban school districts, School of Education faculty at IUPUI have put in place curricula leading to more rapid completion of such credentials as a Post-Baccalaureate Secondary Science Teacher Certification. This accelerated course of study is intended for students who already have a bachelors degree in life sciences (biology), physical sciences (physics and chemistry), or earth-space science (geology, astronomy, etc.). A similar course is being developed for certification of math teachers.

Other efforts at improved teacher preparation are direct outgrowths of, or are informed by, IUPUI’s community engagement experiences with Bridges to Success and full-service schools. At IUPUI, all aspects of pre-service teacher education—curriculum development, field experience, and assessments—are developed in collaboration with K–12 personnel in the School of Education’s new Learning to Teach/Teaching to Learn program.

Some education reformers complain that “most teacher education programs give little or no attention to the social, political, and cultural context of schooling” (Liston and Zeichner 1990). To address this concern, education students at IUPUI take a course titled “Diversity and Learning,” that mirrors the campus emphasis on diversity reflected in the State of Diversity Message delivered each year by the IUPUI chancellor on Martin Luther King Day. Unlike traditional introductory courses in educational psychology, which are primarily surveys of theoretical approaches and definitions, this instructional approach calls for students to be active in their own learning and connect the subject matter to their own experiences. It avoids imparting simplistic solutions in favor of developing a critical understanding of the complexities of race, class, ideology, politics, and gender in a socioeconomic context. The first phase of the course takes place in the college classroom and entails readings about, and class simulations of, cultural conflict culminating in an improved understanding of personal biases and strategies for overcoming them.

In the second phase of the course, students are exposed to urban schools in their communities through a series of guided field experiences. Students first use personal observations (termed “windshield surveys”) from visits to the neighborhood to fill out a community assessment instrument, which includes what kind of transportation residents use; the conditions of streets, stores, and homes; the presence of churches, libraries, and community centers; and where people find recreation. Then they divide into teams to examine written documentation of population characteristics, employment opportunities, and the quality of public transportation, police and fire protection, the environment, and education, health, and social services. Each team prepares written reports and shares highlights of their findings in a PowerPoint presentation to the class.

In the next phase of the course, known as the early field experience segment, students begin to spend considerable time in the urban school getting to know students, parents, and teachers, observing classes, and tutoring students in informal sessions.

In all phases of the course, students maintain reflective e-mail journals in which they react to their readings and experiences. With this method, even the most reticent are free to discuss sensitive issues with the faculty, who then respond to the entries, creating an ongoing dialogue. After this carefully calibrated exposure to an urban school and its challenges, students are much better prepared for their capstone field experience: their traditional student teaching apprenticeship. (For more information, see Morrone, Medina, and Anderson 2002.)

Measuring the Results

Measures of performance help increase the body of knowledge for all community partners involved as to best practices and can lead to increased support and resources for further progress.

In the final analysis, student performance, teacher performance, and community satisfaction will be the true tests of the success of these university/community collaborations. With most projects fewer than 10 years old, however, only short-term or anecdotal results are available. The implementation of the full-service schools proposal funded for three years through IU’s strategic directions planning process, for example, was reviewed annually before the subsequent year’s funding was authorized, but formal progress reports ceased when the requirement was no longer necessary. Yet, each of the schools involved continues to report progress on full-service schools objectives as part of the IUPUI campus annual performance report. Assessing success is difficult, but these difficulties must be overcome.

Many of the most important measures of success are dependent on the individual’s needs and desired outcomes, which may not reveal much in the aggregate. This dilemma can be illustrated by the following series of questions and answers:

Is the child hungry? No.

Is the child now ready to learn? Maybe.

Have we been successful in meeting this child's immediate need? Yes.

Have we given this child the opportunity to achieve all of which he or she is capable over his/her lifetime? To be determined.

As can be seen, two distinct levels of performance measures, short term and long term, are needed:

1. *Was the service successfully provided?*
2. *Was the desired impact achieved?*

The two levels can also be seen in a different way. A current trend in the provision of social services is “person-centered plans,” in which the individual and the agency together develop desired outcome measures. *But how does success in achieving person-centered plans translate into societal impact?* Sometimes, it may be as necessary to measure “effort” as it is to measure “effect” in determining the success of a program.

Another example of the difficulty involved in measuring success, particularly of college students' performance, is the amorphousness of some of the outcomes desired, such as assessing the development of humanitarian and civic values. One theory is that the failure to document the impact of service learning on long-term social responsibility results from the difficulty of identifying the appropriate learning outcomes. A suggestion is to use short-term predictors (e.g., whether a strong sense of personal commitment and effectiveness exist both before and after the service learning experience) (Giles and Eyler 1994).

The interdisciplinarity of the full-service school enterprise further complicates gathering measurable results. To assess the true impact of the students' learning through the field experiences provided in the community schools, each of the academic disciplines (education, nursing, and social work) must devise problem-based learning outcomes that are broader than the individual school's curriculum objectives. Despite the difficulties, IUPUI faculty are currently involved in developing a framework for a comprehensive longitudinal assessment of *Bridges to Success*.

However, two other important measurements of the success of university/community collaboration exist: national recognition and philanthropic support. Sometimes these can serve as short-term indicators, maybe even predictors, of long-term success.

The Coalition for Community Schools, an alliance of more than 170 organizations, is about to release *A Handbook for State Policy Leaders: Community Schools, Improving Student Learning/Strengthening Schools, Families, and Communities*. Prominently cited as a success story is the George Washington Community School. Joy Dryfoos, author of *Inside Full-Service Community Schools*, has frequently described

Indianapolis's pioneering Bridges to Success initiative as an exemplary model of school/community collaboration.

Today, 43 of 79 Indianapolis Public Schools have implemented Bridges to Success, and more than \$9 million in services for students and families has been leveraged by BTS and its community partners in the past school year (Grim 2002). Funders seeking the broadest possible impact with their philanthropic dollars are drawn to collaborations that focus on the more complex and intractable issues, thus their support constitutes a vote of confidence in the quality and viability of the efforts being made. This factor has certainly characterized the support that has come from the Lilly Endowment, which funds Project SEAM as well as a host of other interinstitutional collaborations involving education reform and student retention.

Lessons Learned

With 10 years experience in the full-service schools movement coinciding with a decade's evolution of a new teacher preparation curriculum tailored to the urban school environment, we have found that certain necessary or desirable components are common to each.

First, there must be leadership and commitment at the dean's level. Faculty must feel comfortable taking the personal and professional risks necessary as they attempt the delicate process of interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement. Similarly, the school principal must be prepared to encourage acceptance of change and commitment to collaboration. "To succeed, full-service schools depend on a stable group of people committed to the process" (Dryfoos 1996).

We have also learned that there must be an ongoing commitment to the relationship on all sides: university, school, and community. The establishment of interprofessional relationships is key and time-consuming. It involves trust as well as commitment to continuity. Few people will have the stamina to sustain an effort that is not likely to last the school year or that is dependent on the participation of certain individuals whose roles may cease or change. Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Nursing Sharon Farley at IUPUI has written: "Professionals sabotage partnerships when they promise more than they deliver [and] when citizens see projects come and go without making any improvements in their lives" (Farley 1993).

As has often been said, the outmoded concept of university "outreach" is not the optimal way to establish community partnerships. Instead, community involvement must be intense and present at the creation. At Crispus Attucks Middle School, and even more so with George Washington Community School, parents and community leaders were consulted and valued on the same par with teachers and administrators. Clearly, parents must be on board early to gain lasting community support. In the case of GWCS, the alumni of the former Washington High School were instrumental in reviving the use of the abandoned building for this model community school. Also important were neighborhood organizations and community centers. The Mary Rigg Neighborhood Multiservice Center, a United Way-funded agency, employs the

community school coordinator for GWCS with funding support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

It is necessary to plan together at all levels of the collaboration—from the front ranks to the supervisory and administrative. Equally important is that processes must be devised to resolve conflict and maintain trust. Even if well versed at the outset, professionals and service providers can become disconnected from the realities of the neighborhood, or place too much store in the importance of their credentials over the knowledge and opinions of community activists. Health and social service providers may be skeptical about the capacity of community people to be equal partners, and there may be resistance to sharing power and decision making on the part of the citizens involved. Other barriers to successful collaboration that must be resolved are governance and turf issues, controversy over opinions expressed in public forums, and determining fairly the distribution of funding when multiple sources are involved. Both professionals and community advocates must know how to resolve conflicts and make sure that policy making and decision making are shared equally among the collaborators.

Conclusion

As one of IUPUI's most successful faculty/community team builders says: "Professionals should enter communities with the goal of mobilizing the capacities of people to respond to issues" (Farley 1997). IUPUI's experience with full-service schools and teacher preparation reform has revealed that being a mobilizing agent for change is not a matter of imposing remedies on communities as though the institution had brought to the table all the expertise that mattered. Learning the delicate dance of university/community engagement has increased awareness of our neighborhood partners as mobilizing agents in their own right. In recognition of this awareness, IUPUI's statement of values for strategic planning purposes reads:

Community collaborations ... build on the resources and expertise of both campus and community to enhance the quality of life in Indianapolis and Central Indiana. Civic engagement, influenced by community needs and resources, serves the community and informs the disciplines and professions.

Evidence of cultural transformation in an institution can be gauged by a set of cultural markers to show that "it had developed new capacities and a new set of beliefs and assumptions regarding what it should be doing" (Eckel 2002). According to Eckel, those cultural markers include:

- Changes in the ways groups or individuals interact with one another
- Changes in the language the campus uses to talk about itself
- Changes in the types of conversations (who is at the table)
- New relationships with stakeholders

During the past 10 years, IUPUI has developed a culture of evidence through the collection and dissemination of performance measurements that guide planning and resource allocations. In terms of gauging improvements in urban schools, for the short-term at least, the cultural evidence, if not the culture of evidence, shows that a transformation has taken place that shows great promise. At the very least, we are better positioned than we were 10 years ago for future problem solving through effective university/community engagement.

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