

Place-Based School Reform as Method of Creating Shared Urban Spaces: What is It, and What Does it Mean for Universities?

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Abstract

In this article, a layered conceptual framework for “place-based school reform” is presented as a way to link the concept of school reform and neighborhood development. Because many universities have been involved in community-school-university partnerships, the university community engagement literature will be connected to this increasingly attractive concept that seeks to both improve academic outcomes and to link a schooling system to a neighborhood. Implications for universities seeking to co-create urban shared spaces are discussed.

Keywords:

School reform; University community partnership; Neighborhoods; Social inequality; Community schools.

Introduction

Anchor institutions are an increasingly attractive framework to leverage large institutions in community development work in localities across the United States. By definition, anchor institutions are “large, spatially immobile, mostly non-profit organizations that play an integral role in the local economy” (Taylor & Luter, 2013, p. 8). Higher education is one major anchor institution within localities across the country because of its ability to purchase large amounts of local goods and services, its role as a major employer, capacity for research and development, and contribution to the local tax base (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999). Further, there is an element of “shared value” (Porter & Kramer, 2011) and ultimately shared space, when anchors engage in community development work. On one hand, the locality benefits when an anchor institution such as a university invests in a place through increased property values, more employment opportunities for residents, or increased prestige of the locality. On the other hand, the university is better able to achieve its mission when doing such work, whether it is through educating students to engage in real-world problem-solving or through mission-driven public service activities. The anchor institution paradigm frames how universities seek to co-create new urban shared spaces with other social institutions within target places (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999; Institute for Competitive Inner Cities & CEOs for Cities, 2002), specifically neighborhoods (Clinch, 2009).

These “place-based” approaches linked to universities have not been complete up to this point because the literature and practitioners have failed to recognize the connection between neighborhood improvement and school improvement, given that school reform and neighborhood development are inextricably linked (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007; Black,

1999; Chung, 2002; Shirley, 1997; Taylor, 2005). In a similar way that neighborhoods act to “fix” residents in class positions across generations, schools perform a similar function. Therefore, the issue of underperforming schools and underdeveloped neighborhoods should be addressed in tandem. The literature is thin on how exactly to link these concepts. Further, the notion of bringing together school reform and neighborhood development *facilitated by universities* has been even further under theorized. This article seeks to push the theoretical literature further by contributing a thorough conceptualization of the concept of “place-based school reform” (PBSR) in order to expose everything embedded in this term so that practitioners and researchers understand how to best co-create new shared urban spaces with anchor institutions. PBSR is a new concept in the literature, distinct from community schools, because it frames school reform as something that attempts to address both internal-to-neighborhood conditions, as well as external-to-neighborhood conditions.

Many university administrators, faculty, staff, and students are increasingly involved in place-based approaches that include a dimension of school reform, such as Promise and Choice Neighborhoods efforts. Trying to create shared urban spaces is a complicated task in itself, but it becomes even more complicated when schools become involved because of the relationship between schools, neighborhoods/places, and social stratification (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Hauser, 1970). If university stakeholders are not clear on the frameworks driving PBSR efforts, there will be missed opportunities to do this work in a meaningful way that accounts for the structural forces that create underdeveloped neighborhoods and low-performing schools. This paper argues that school reform for so-called failing schools in underdeveloped neighborhoods cannot be reformed within the current paradigm of school reform in which many universities are involved, known as comprehensive school reform (CSR), because these approaches ignore the structural forces that continue to (re)produce low-performing schools. In order to make this argument, this paper will clarify terms associated with place-based efforts, especially “neighborhood”, “comprehensive school reform”, “community schools”, and “place-based school reform.” If university administrators and their partners cannot clearly define neighborhood and other terms, then it will be difficult for them to work on place-based strategies that seek to link school and neighborhood improvement. While concepts like “community schools” and “place-based strategies” and “school-centered community revitalization” have been defined in the practitioner-oriented literature (e.g. Children’s Aid Society, 2013; Jennings, 2012; Kronick, 2005; Khadduri, Schwartz, & Turnham, 2008), “place-based school reform” has evaded such a clear conceptualization. The purpose of the paper is for university stakeholders to have a clearer sense of how they might actually go about co-designing a school improvement strategy that is in coordination with (or, is linked to) a neighborhood development strategy. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to create shared urban spaces with schools if university stakeholders involved with school reform continue to ignore the structural forces that have created low-performing schools and underdeveloped neighborhoods

This article presents a layered conceptual framework for “place-based school reform.” While the existing literature has provided clues to the nature and definition of this concept, an actual conceptualization does not exist. Interestingly, the empirical research literature has essentially left this concept out of the research vernacular with the exception of some scholar/practitioners who have written about community schools (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997) and Promise Neighborhoods (Hudson, 2013; Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013). First, “place” and

“neighborhood” are defined, drawing on urban planning and sociology literature. Then, the paper explores why neighborhood interventions need to address issues internal to the neighborhood (within the control of residents and social institutions) and those external to the neighborhood (outside of the control of the residents). Then, the dominant community schools intervention is critiqued because it cannot, as currently conceived, address the deep-rooted social structures that cause school poor performance. PBSR is then defined and conceptualized. This review of literature and concepts leads to several important reflection questions related to university involvement in school reform: What would it take for universities to become involved in these efforts to create shared spaces as authentic partners? What should universities take into consideration when entering into such community-school-university partnerships? Why are universities uniquely positioned to enter into these arrangements?

Neighborhood and Place

The concept of place-based school reform cannot be understood without an examination of “place” and “neighborhood.” While this may seem obvious, the concept of “place” or “neighborhood” in the literature on place-based school reform is not well defined. Indeed sociologists, urban planners, and geographers have defined “place” (Gieryn, 2000; Johnson, 2012) and “neighborhood” (Jargowsky, 2005; Sampson, 2012); yet no consistent definitions dominate.

Some school reform efforts are considered to be place-based if services are offered to neighborhood residents (Potapchuk, 2013), but this is a shallow conceptualization because it misses the tight connection between the neighborhood transformation strategy and the school reform effort. Just because services are offered does not mean that a school reform effort is linked to a “place.” While “place” on the surface means neighborhood or a particular physical geography within the city, the concept of place is deeper. Neighborhoods are not necessary “places,” though it can be if there has been a process of placemaking (Sutton & Kemp, 2002). Should universities attempt to assist in connecting school improvement and neighborhood development and create shared spaces, the definition of “neighborhood” needs to be clear. There are at least six different components to a neighborhood:

- The Physical (Built) Environment (Chaskin, 1997): The start point in understanding the neighborhood as place is to know that the neighborhood geography is composed of buildings, houses, and structures, including shops and stores, vacant lots, and spaces that are in varying levels of physical conditions and organized in specific ways. Collectively, these things form a physical environment and a visual image of the neighborhood.
- The People (Chaskin, 1997): This includes the residents, stakeholders, employees, elected officials, and visitors which are the people who live and work in the neighborhood and has responsibly for shaping and influencing policies that impact its development.
- The Organizational Network (Chaskin, 1997): This refers to the web of organizations that are found in the neighborhood, both formal and informal, which the residents create to help them grapple with myriad problems and difficulties, along with enhancing their social life. Examples include formal coalitions and groups (block clubs, tenant councils) and informal associations (e.g. social groups). Organizations reflect the idea of the neighborhood as a social unit that is organized through voluntary associations.

- The Institutional Network (Patterson & Silverman, 2013): This network consists of all of the supportive services, including the schools and police, which are located in the neighborhood. Here, it is important to understand their individual and collective impact on the development of the neighborhood. The institutional network plays a significant role in mitigating the challenges that residents face and solving the problems they encounter.
- The Neighborhood Economy (Informal and Formal) (Sharff, 1987; Williams & Windebank, 2001): This component is comprised of the combination of opportunities for residents to participate in the exchange of goods and services. The formal economy is the group of exchanges that happen in the regulated environment. These can range from when residents patron businesses and commercial establishments to opportunities for formal employment. The informal economy refers to the set of unregulated transactions that occur between residents in order to secure goods and services. One example is childcare provided by a friend who is paid in cash (under the table) or in another commodity.
- The Neighborhood proximities and access (Maclennan, 2013): This is defined as ease of access to other city services and city institutions, both private and public. If residents must struggle to access city services or shops/stores, then this becomes an additional burden (the burden of “proximity”) that residents encounter because of the neighborhood space.

Places are socially constructed, multi-layered, and dictate certain life outcomes for its residents (Gordon-Larsen, Nelson, Page, & Popkin, 2006). In other words, places are not neutral spaces that are fixed at one point in time. People derive meaning from a place based on everyday interactions with other people, with the built environment, with organizations and institutions, and with the economy (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Further, the place carries with it a reputation within the metropolis. When people living in an undesirable place disclose their place of residence, it can result in a stigmatization of the individual or group (Wacquant, 2008). These stigmas sometimes even become manifest when residents from underdeveloped neighborhoods attempt to participate in the formal economy. Job seekers from particular ZIP codes fight the stigmatization of being from that neighborhood, which may decrease their chances of securing a job.

The specific neighborhood of interest in this study is an underdeveloped (Rodney, 1972) neighborhood. One sociological definition of underdeveloped neighborhood is the spatial expression of social processes such as social exclusion, exploitation, abandonment, disinvestment, and racial stigmatization/domination (Kasarda, 1993; Sharkey, 2013). These places have been the result of decisions made in the development of cities and are byproducts of the capital investment and disinvestment process, thus they have been created by a series of forces beyond the control of one neighborhood (Slater, 2013). In particular, underdeveloped neighborhoods have been sites where the results of the intersection of race and class manifest. For example, once banks partnered with governments to offer loans for home mortgages, some banks engaged in “redlining,” or the practice of not giving home loans to people of color, thus creating an exclusionary housing market (Taylor, 2011). Compounding the least desirable residential space is the economic oppression of blacks and Latinos in the labor markets (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Wilson, 1987). These limited resources prohibit low-income people from

enjoying the same comforts that middle- and upper-class people have: maintain their housing units, be able to purchase extracurricular activities for their children, purchase (or have access to) high-quality health care, and have connections with institutions that help navigate life issues (Duncan & Murnane, 2014).

Underdeveloped neighborhoods can either be siloed or collective/unified. When considering the variety of groups (“communities”) of people and institutions within the neighborhood, it is important to understand the level of cohesion because it helps to show the neighborhood’s chances of being a desirable place within the city. Distressed neighborhoods can also be siloed. In other words, groups within the neighborhood operate completely independent from one another. While there may be contact between groups through capital transactions (e.g. storeowner, customer), there is no unified sense of camaraderie. Groups within the same space are in competition with each other for resources in the city (Wilson & Taub, 2011). Institutions, while part of the neighborhood environment, are actually disconnected from the people, especially youth, living in the neighborhood which in turn makes individuals disconnected from the very institutions that exist to serve them (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2013; Roy & Jones, 2014). Unified communities, in contrast, are defined by higher levels of social cohesion and social capital (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Struggles of different groups as they attempt to improve their life and neighborhood conditions are thought to be common to everyone within the neighborhood. Planning for the future of the neighborhood happens in conjunction with the many different groups (Sirianni, 2007). Groups within this particular place know and understand that improving neighborhood conditions cannot happen without a shared vision for a better place to live.

While factors within the neighborhood are important to determining life outcomes for residents, individuals are beholden to forces from outside the neighborhood. It is important to make clear these distinctions because they dictate the appropriate policy responses and interventions that attempt to ameliorate the factors that contribute to the level of distress of a particular place. Further, no strategy that seeks to fundamentally transform a place can ignore one category or the other, which is essential for universities to understand when they attempt to create shared spaces. Essentially, comprehensive place-based strategies must seek to address both issues internal and external to the neighborhood if they have a chance at being successful.

Internal and External Forces

Two distinct kinds of forces that shape distressed neighborhoods: internal and external forces (Figure 1). With the addition of the internal and external lenses, it becomes more clear that within-building, or building-based, school reform models do not provide a sufficient framework to address the variety of factors that could impact student performance. These factors are hidden, though, when using the individual student or the individual school as the unit analysis. Factors internal to the neighborhood suggest a set of factors that can hypothetically be manipulated in the context of the neighborhood environment. The “neighborhood environment” represents the set of factors, practices, and cultural norms that people (children and families) within neighborhoods directly see, hear, and breathe on a daily basis as they engage in public activities, referred to as micro- and meso-system influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Internal factors are concerned with the happenings within a neighborhood on a daily basis that can be studied, measured, and potentially manipulated. A combination of individual, familial,

neighborhood and institutional characteristics are located internal to the neighborhood. When looking at neighborhoods through the “internal” lens, a particular set of interventions become apparent and necessary to overcome these challenges. For example, some interventions seek to increase individual family income in hopes that it will help child development, in particular school performance (Duncan, Magnuson, & Votruba-Drzal, 2013).

The neighborhood effects literature has sought to explore the ways that neighborhoods exert an independent influence on the life outcomes of residents, thereby elevating the level of analysis to that of the neighborhood—not the individual. In the words of Patrick Sharkey (2013), these studies attempted to explore “the ways that structural disadvantage and aspects of social organization within neighborhoods can influence patterns of behavior within the boundaries of the neighborhood, thereby influencing the life course trajectories of neighborhood residents” (p. 20). However, the conceptual framework proposed here goes a step further and seeks to view external factors that actually shape the neighborhood environment as a result of processes that are independent of any one neighborhood. Looking at the external environment, involves examination of the various mechanisms that shape neighborhoods, yet cannot be directly impacted by residents within a given neighborhood. These external components shape experiences and constrain choices of residents within neighborhoods, yet are not easily manipulated through traditional place-based interventions. These represent various social processes that usually result in the distribution of resources between neighborhoods and/or cities and contribute to the stratification between them. For example, the land tenure system and the private land market dictate the cost of land and therefore who can purchase and control the land. Landlords further set prices that constrain who can live in their property.

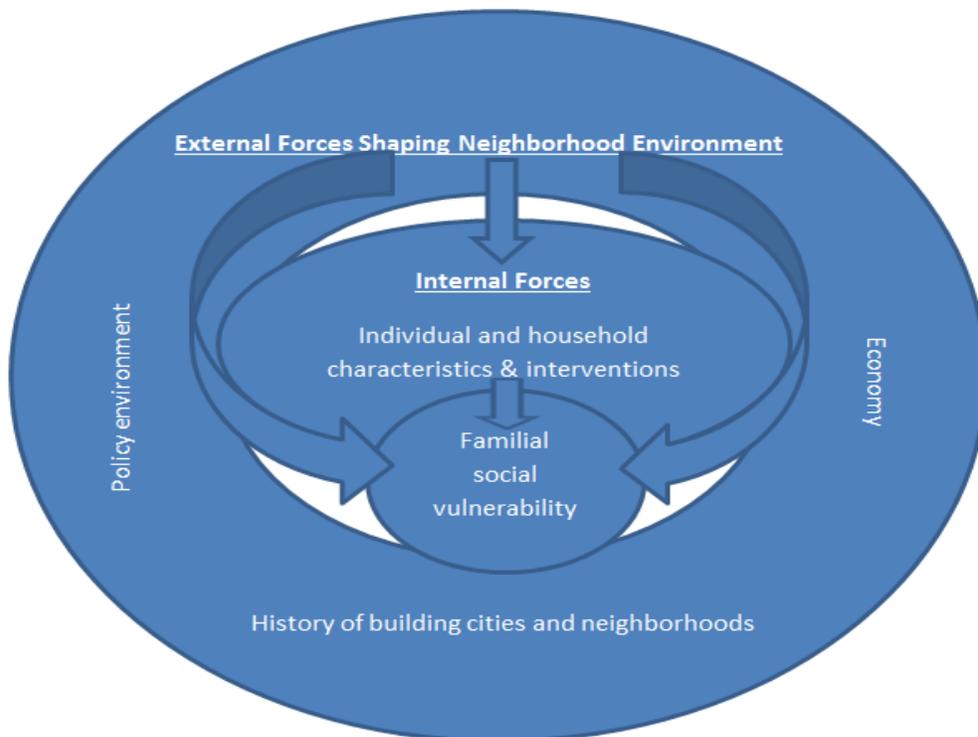


Figure 1: Path of social vulnerability

The “internal vs. external” framework suggests that place-based (internal) interventions will always be incomplete because they cannot penetrate the social processes (external) that have impacted (and continue to impact) neighborhood development (Table 1). If a family’s level of social vulnerability is a product of both external and internal forces, then this level of vulnerability will not be fully addressed without both levels. Sharkey (2013) calls for a “durable” urban policy in this country that would attempt to ameliorate social vulnerability, which would involve actions at all levels of government. This requires confronting the mass imprisonment paradigm, a history of urban disinvestment, and the unfriendly-to-low-wage-workers world economy, among other things.

With the concept of place extensively explained, attention will turn to one particular component of a comprehensive place-based strategy anchored in one target neighborhood: place-based school reform.

Table 1

Mechanisms of Social Vulnerability Emanating From...

Internal to neighborhood	External to the neighborhood
<p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family / home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Social capital o Family structure o Educational infrastructure (home, neighborhood) o Family social characteristics (SES, educational attainment) - Social networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Peers o Kinds of role models o Risky behavior exposure o Drug activity o Prevalence of violence - Elected officials <p>Built Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing quality - Crime / perceived social disorder - Social institutions - Medical facilities - Road conditions - Green space - Water purification systems - Environmental issues (as a result) <p>Institutions and Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amenities (commercial activity, food 	<p>Policies (National, State, Local)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing policy - Education policy (curriculum, school staff) - Health policy - Transportation policy - Welfare policy - Transportation policy <p>Political economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor market - Hiring practices of companies - Financial institution locations across the metropolitan area - Criminal justice system - Anchor institutions (across the city and region) - Land tenure system <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City governance - Regional governance - Special purpose governments (housing authorities, utilities, school boards, etc.) <p>Social phenomenon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Racism - Classism - Mass incarceration

<p>access, entertainment, gyms, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education (schools / child care) - Community building institutions - Extracurricular activities available to children/opportunities available to residents - Anchor institutions (in n’hood) - Fire/Police - Trash / recycling <p>Neighborhood Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jobs available - Formal sector - Businesses / commercial activity - Informal sector <p>Neighborhood Proximity and Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel routes and modes - Physical location of neighborhood in relation to other city/private services - Environmental hazards of neighborhood location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental degradation <p>City planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of development within the city - Community development efforts - Exclusionary zoning laws - Suburbanization - City master plans - Other neighborhoods in the city <p>Metropolitan housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Segregation - Residential mobility patterns <p>Ideology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neoliberal - Progressive
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Place-Based School Reform

As mentioned earlier, both neighborhoods and schools act to “fix” residents in class positions across generations. The contribution of schooling to the reproduction of the current status and economic hierarchies (a process called social reproduction) has been documented in the educational stratification literature (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Entwisle & Alexander, 1993; Hauser, 1970; Kao & Stephen, 2003; Weis, 1990). Serious disparities in educational attainment and achievement have been documented between racial groups, with upper-income whites and Asian Americans experiencing more success and blacks and Latinos experiencing less success in the educational system. These differences in educational attainment and achievement have an impact on later-in-life outcomes. The exact social processes that lead to educational disparities has been a source of considerable amounts of scholarship, but there is a broad agreement that school effects and neighborhood effects interact to reinforce one another (see Figure 2). In other words, students from low-income / working class neighborhoods tend to go to school with children from similar backgrounds. Because (a) school and neighborhood effects are conceptually difficult to unravel and (b) schools tend to reinforce (perhaps create) labor market disparities between racial and class groups, any attempt to improve one cannot be done absent the other. Neighborhoods and schools are both subject to external pressures that are beyond their control. So, efforts that attempt to reform one of these entities are beholden to certain factors that they will not be able to change when working in isolation.

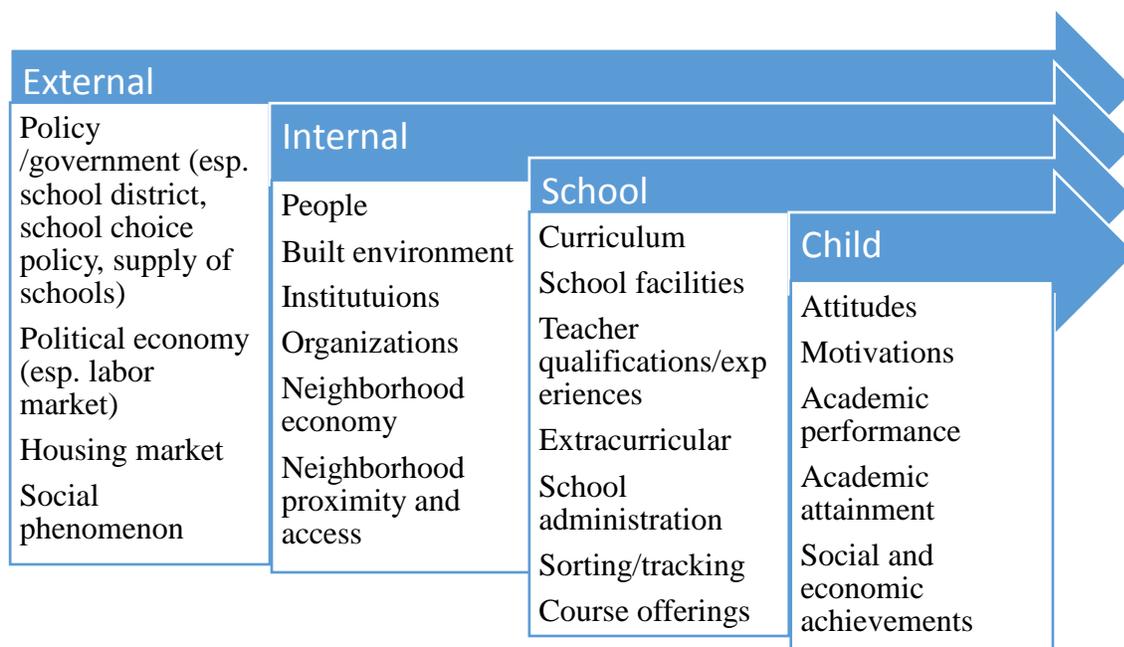


Figure 2. Basic path diagram showing how neighborhoods and schools impact child educational and social outcomes (inspired by Hauser, 1970)

Because of the complexity of this task, it requires new models that can address both school and neighborhood improvement. There have been some school-based and school-linked interventions that attempt to address the observable symptoms that children carry with them to schools, such as community schools which are associated with school-based and school-linked services (Kronick, 2005; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997). The Children’s Aid Society (2013) considered a community school one that has a strong instructional core, expanded learning opportunities for enrichment, and a full range of physical health, mental health, and social services available to children and families. Kronick (2005) conceptualized the theory driving what he calls “full service community schools” as collaboration between diverse stakeholders, a vision for promoting systems change between schools, community partners, and public systems, and preventing children from entering juvenile and criminal justice systems. These interventions are mainly service-based and ameliorative in that they operate with a theory of change claiming that students will be able to succeed academically and socially if they receive an intensive mix of service delivery (Say Yes to Education, 2012). Observable symptoms are stressed because any system set up to offer services to students who need it rely on the system’s ability to “diagnose” a student’s difficulty. If a system of service providers cannot tell (observe) a student is struggling with a particular challenge, it will go unaddressed. Further complicating the issue, these systems sometimes lack the capacity to help all students who they observe struggling with a particular challenge. Usually, community schools strategies operate within this framework because they operate individual programs usually at the building level. These efforts will sometimes reach out to parents of children to offer them services on an individual or case-by-case basis to families who show up to participate in these interventions. Their theory of change does not involve the

neighborhood because, as the theory goes, fundamental transformation of the neighborhood is not necessary if a student is offered an appropriate mix of services.

These efforts are likely to fail because they do not account for all factors that impact educational achievement (see Figure 2). While these efforts may produce a few “wins” in the short term (e.g. students who overcome neighborhood barriers), they will ultimately fall short of true transformation for entire populations of disenfranchised groups. These efforts are likely to fail because they ignore the root causes of the children’s educational difficulty: the neighborhood, which has been created by a long history of exploitation, disinvestment, racism, and uneven development. A new model will be required to jointly tackle the challenges of schooling and neighborhoods. This new model necessarily requires partnerships beyond traditional school professionals (e.g. teachers, administrators). This new model will require a change of thinking that conceptualizes the school as a neighborhood anchor—the driving force behind the improvement of the neighborhood. This new model is place-based school reform, which can happen with other anchor institutions such as universities. This new model of school reform would create a new kind of shared urban space between universities and schools.

Place-based school reform (PBSR) embraces the comprehensive school reform model because it acknowledges that inner-city school curriculum needs to be transformed. New pedagogical strategies will be required to transform how students learn, but it does not stop there. Staff need to be equipped with different tools in order to teach in new ways that connect classroom learning to real-world problems. PBSR also accepts the service model because it acknowledges that students are facing difficult challenges that will require service interventions for families and children. Service providers in schools and neighborhoods should be linked in order to provide a coordinated service mix. PBSR goes a step further by confronting the challenges faced in the neighborhood. The place-based school reform strategy is a comprehensive approach to improving a particular *neighborhood’s* educational infrastructure (Taylor, McGlynn, & Luter, 2013). The primary goal is not necessarily comprehensive school reform, as conceptualized in the literature. However, depending on the particular strategy, school reform may be a primary goal. Such strategies are concerned with creating interactive linkages and connections between neighborhood-based institutions with the goal of bolstering the educational outcomes for all children. These strategies can be characterized by getting institutions to align their work (e.g. programming, supports) with the mission, goals, and policies of the local schooling system. It places education in a broader context than just the school building, though schools are seen as important neighborhood institutions that shape the consciousness of children attending it. Instead, attention is paid to bringing together a multi-sector institutional collaborative anchored in a specific place, and these institutions commit to developing the educational opportunities for children in a particular neighborhood. Institutions located within a particular neighborhood come together to offer their services to residents who live in a particular place. Education happens through both formal programming and informal socialization of adults who live in the neighborhood, but also supportive and caring adults who work there. Further, these strategies advance work alongside neighborhood-based community groups and residents to infuse the home environments with tools necessary to support education for children. Examples of building educationally supportive home environments include desks in the home, a quiet place to study, a computer connected to the internet, ample school supplies, and someone in the family able to help children with homework. The commentary above is a vision created by using a PBSR lens.

Schools cannot engage in this work alone so must examine the university's role in creating shared spaces in neighborhoods using the PBSR approach.

Universities and Place-Based School Reform

Approaches to addressing underperforming schools can be placed into at least two categories: internal-to-school and external-to-school (Brighthouse & Schouten, 2011). Internal-to-school reforms, sometimes called “comprehensive school reform” (CSR) approaches, are associated with strategies within a school building that are “most likely to affect student achievement: curriculum, instruction, assessment, grouping, accommodations for struggling students, parent and community involvement, school organization, and professional development” (Slavin, 2008, p. 256). External-to-school reforms, on the other hand, view that “background institutions” and the lack of social supports are the root causes of underperforming schools. Therefore, approaches to reforming schools need to include community development, health services, childcare, adult education, and other social supportive services (Noguera, 2011).

Up to this point, universities have mostly been associated with the internal-to-school reform efforts associated with CSR. For example, Success for All and Talent Development are two CSR efforts driven by Johns Hopkins University. Reading Recovery is another similar effort driven by researchers at Ohio State University. Universities also have curricular materials they produce and sell to schools, such as the University of Hawaii's Curriculum Research and Development Group. These efforts operate under the paradigm of researcher/experts having knowledge that can be distributed to schools to address the issues “most likely to affect student achievement,” such as curriculum, professional development, and school organization. These efforts have been shown to achieve modest gains under certain circumstances and over long periods of time (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Borman, 2005), but are insufficient because the root causes of educational underperformance are deeper than the school can handle alone (Noguera, 2011; Rothstein, 2004), such as family background (Goldhaber, 2002) and neighborhood context (Crowder & South, 2003; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Sharkey 2010). As a result, universities looking to truly impact education reform might consider expanding their scope to consider more equity-minded school reform (Renee, Welner, & Oakes, 2011) such as place-based school reform.

The nascent movement of university-driven projects that seek to engage external-to-school efforts has struggled to gain a foothold in research, practice, and policy. Probably the most notable example of universities attempting to link school reform and neighborhood development comes in the form of the university-assisted community schools (UACS) movement, driven by the work of Ira Harkavy (Benson et al., 2007; Harkavy, 1998). In this model, the university links itself to both the school reform and neighborhood improvement goals established by the school and neighborhood, respectively. However, and ironically given the Deweyian public problem-solving framing of Harkavy, this movement has paid decidedly more attention to the internal-to-school mechanisms of change. Efforts that have attempted to incorporate neighborhood improvement explicitly into the work of the UACS effort (e.g. IUPUI, Grim & Officer, 2010; University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships; University of Buffalo's Center for Urban Studies, Taylor, McGlynn, & Luter, 2013; University of Maryland's School of Social work, Olson, 2014) have experienced some successes and some challenges. These efforts

typically fall under the “community schools” “service delivery” (e.g. extra programs available to the public, additional supportive services) frameworks. In Philadelphia’s case where the UACS model was linked to a broader effort by the University of Pennsylvania to improve the west side of the city (known as the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps), concerns have been raised about gentrification (Etienne, 2012). These efforts might have benefitted from thinking about land use protections (see Policy Link’s Equitable Development Toolkit, found online at <http://community-wealth.org/content/anchor-dashboard-aligning-institutional-practice-meet-low-income-community-needs>). Attempts to control against this kind of development can be found, for example, in the Duke-Durham Partnership (found online at <https://community.duke.edu/>) and the Durham Community Land Trustees (found online at <http://www.dclt.org/>).

Conclusion

For the place-based school reform movement to become commonplace in practice, changes in approach are needed. First, more universities might consider seeking out opportunities to build a neighborhood-linked school reform approach with existing partnerships in the community. Seattle University’s Choice Neighborhood effort grew out of the university’s Youth Initiative that was looking to connect with additional partners. The Seattle Housing Authority had been looking for ways to rejuvenate the public housing footprint, and then they connected with Seattle University’s interest in advancing the Youth Initiative (see here: <https://www.seattleu.edu/suyi/youth-initiative-in-action/engaging-neighborhood/choice-neighborhood-grant/>). Yamamura (2014) recalled that Seattle University could not have done the work associated with the Choice Neighborhood effort had they not already developed relationships with the local housing authority and embraced a commitment to place. Seattle University “was thinking about education in the neighborhoods before anyone thought about applying for a Choice grant” (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d., p. 3). Buy-in and support from community partners for these efforts only goes so far, as Yamamura also noted the importance of the broader university’s support—from the president’s verbal support to new funding sources available at the university to incentivize faculty to get involved. On the other hand, through dissertation research, the author (2015) studied a Promise Neighborhood effort in the northeast, which was geographically located adjacent to a major research university. The university’s involvement was minimal because that university had not previously built a major presence in that local neighborhood. An opportunity to create shared urban space was missed because sustained relationships were not part of the university’s history.

Second, place-based approaches might consider resisting the temptation to “fall back” on CSR models. Again, the author (2015) found that, when a Promise Neighborhood lead organization designed a school reform strategy to complement the neighborhood development strategy, they contracted with a university-based CSR consultant from another state. The university-developed CSR model was a curricular innovation centered on a new reading curriculum and intensive professional development for teachers. The strategy had little to do with linking neighborhood to the school. Further, the consultant later pulled out of the effort. As a result, the lead organization resorted to trying to take the most talented students from the high school and get scholarships for them to private schools (the stated logic offered to explain this decision was because these schools guaranteed path to college and/or a career). This strategy arguably was tone deaf to the

surrounding neighborhood and seeking ways to link their school reform strategy to a broader neighborhood-based effort.

Third, universities might consider becoming more comfortable engaging in the everyday politics of the localities in which they reside. The education world is riddled with politics, making universities reticent to become involved. However, if universities want to create new shared spaces, where they attempt to link their work and identity with a comprehensive place-based school improvement effort, it is impossible to dismiss or avoid these political realities. In fact, even some community engagement literature has suggested that universities be considered neutral conveners of discussions and should avoid the perception that they carry values about how to proceed toward public solutions (Kellogg Commission 1999): “The question we need to ask ourselves here is whether outreach maintains the university in the role of neutral facilitator and source of information when public policy issues, particularly contentious ones, are at stake” (p. 12). Creating the kind of school system that is rooted to a neighborhood requires that universities take a vocal stand on behalf of equity-minded policy that is willing to shift the “zone of mediation” (Renee et al., 2009).

Fourth, universities might consider adopting an anchor institution mission (Hodges & Dubb, 2012), which is “the conscious and strategic application of the long-term, place-based economic power of the institution, in combination with its human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the community in which it resides” (147). Such an orientation also means a commitment to measuring progress toward social justice goals embodied by projects like the Anchor Institution Dashboard, which can be accessed online (<http://community-wealth.org/content/anchor-dashboard-aligning-institutional-practice-meet-low-income-community-needs>). This is all in the name of co-creating shared spaces with schools, with a vision for a more socially-just neighborhood.

The university community engagement movement has been around arguably for over 100 years beginning with William Rainey Harper’s comments: “It is in the university that the best opportunity is afforded to investigate the movements of the past and to present the facts and principles involved before the public” (Harper 1898, p. 686). School-university partnerships have been around since the 1980s (Holmes Group, 1986; Goodlad, 1990). The Broader, Bolder Approach to Education has been advocating since 2008. The UACS model has been implemented since the early 1990s (Benson et al., 2007). Full service community schools rose to prominence in the mid-1990s (Dryfoos, 1994). None of these ideas are new, but the field has yet to integrate the different perspectives. Acknowledging that universities *actually do* share urban space with communities outside their walls is a bold step. It will require leadership within universities to co-create these shared spaces with a place-based frame, which ultimately moves cities in the direction of creating spaces that are democratically designed with equality and justice in mind. Universities indeed need to be bold if they are to become meaningfully involved in school reform that actually has a chance of improving lives for the most marginalized members of our society.

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