

Finding Common Ground:

COORDINATING HOUSING AND EDUCATION POLICY TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION



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Framing the Connections: Integrating housing, transportation and education in city and regional planning

BY DEBORAH MCKOY AND JEFFREY M VINCENT

For the past eight years, UC Berkeley's Center for Cities & Schools (CC&S) has engaged in action-oriented research focused on the challenges and promise of integrated and inclusive planning practices and policies. The Center has learned by doing that overcoming a century of siloed institutional practices is no small task. However, the benefits of bringing together city and regional planning agencies, on the one hand, and school districts/local educational agencies (LEAs), on the other, far outweigh the costs of maintaining the status quo.

In any given case the challenges are multiple: high concentrations of poverty and racial segregation in schools as well as neighborhoods; a growing achievement gap as reflected in test scores and high school graduation rates between more affluent, mostly white and Asian students and African American and Latino students; years or even generations of systemic neglect in infrastructure investments in school facilities and neighborhoods; and well-intended educational and planning policies that in many cases did more harm than good.

For CC&S and its allies, "integration" is both a means and an end: integrated and inclusive planning practices and policies are the means to truly sustainable communities; communities that are racially and economically integrated are more likely to survive and thrive. What is perhaps unique about the Center's work is that it grows out of an understanding that the educational environment has enormous yet often unrecognized consequences on a community's capacity to overcome the

sorts of challenges listed above. CC&S was in fact founded on the belief that coordinating planning and education policy and practice is a critical and too often overlooked means of creating communities that are equitable, healthy and truly sustainable.

Neighborhoods, cities and entire regions can structure inequality long before students and teachers even arrive at school. Planning represents a unique opportunity to drill down to these root causes of unequal and segregated schools: on the one hand, by repeatedly drawing attention to problematic housing and transportation policies that can structure inequality through land use plans and zoning policies that lead to fragmentation and urban sprawl;¹ and, on the other, by supporting efforts for planners and educators to work together to create "win-win" situations. This approach has meant

framing the profound connections between housing, transportation and education in ways that do justice to the complexity of the situation while keeping in mind that policy-makers, planners and educators need very practical ideas and tools that they can use to make a difference today.

The aim of this chapter is, first, to frame some of those connections with reference to the Center's work and the work of others in the areas of housing, transportation and collaborative city-school-region initiatives; and, second, to explain how the lessons learned from this work is starting to inform regional, state and federal policy.

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HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND CITY-SCHOOL-REGION INITIATIVES

In this section, we offer a snapshot of the challenges and the promise of integrated and inclusive planning and policy making in the areas of housing, transportation and city-school-regional initiatives by describing some of our work with municipalities and school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area as well as a number of promising practices from around the nation identified in a recent survey and CC&S report.²

Housing: from Affordability to High Quality Homes and Schools.

CC&S has worked with some of the largest housing authorities in the Bay Area region and around the nation. Whether in San Francisco or the East Bay, this work often comes down to providing families and their children with choices that support integrated and diverse neighborhoods and schools. Over the past several years, for example, the Center has been involved with HOPE SF, an effort led by the San Francisco Mayor's office and San Francisco Housing Authority to create mixed income developments modeled on the federal HOPE VI housing program. Our 2009 study entitled *Creating*

Pathways of Educational and Neighborhood Success lays out how the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) can work with HOPE SF to align planning and education policies and practices. After decades of a court ordered desegregation policy that had largely decoupled residence from school attendance, SFUSD school assignment policies now have a closer relationship between where families live and the schools they are assigned to by creating "zones". The District, however, has maintained a priority for students in areas of concentrated poverty and low performing schools to choose a higher performing school anywhere in the city. To increase low income students' choices further, HOPE SF is now coordinating and aligning its efforts with SFUSD to support mixed-income communities that have access to nearby high quality housing and schools. The goal over time is that revitalized neighborhoods will not only retain but attract new residents whose children are given greater access to good schools that are racially and economically integrated.³

In the East Bay, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) also have joined forces by finding new ways to include housing within educational policies, development, and decision-making. In the past, the district would rely largely on test scores as a measure of academic achieve-

"Yes but how do we get school folk to the planning table"

3 key points to finding the "win-win":

1. **Housing:** Regional and local planning offer important data/insight regarding population shifts and ability to strategically align housing and school planning development/siting
2. **Transportation:** New transportation plans/strategies (e.g., TOD) can include educational opportunities across "0-16" continuum – residential/workforce childcare centers – magnet schools - ...
3. **Collaborative Projects:** Start small, build relationships, create systems change



Promising Practices



Local: Different strategies aligned goals

- **HOPE SF and SFUSD** – Redevelopment and Selected School Choice Options
- **Oakland Unified/OHA** - Full Service School and Public Housing Aligned

Regional:

- **Rochester’s Regional Transit Service** partners with LEAs – business subsidies, coordinated transfers,



- **ABAG – Sustainable Communities Strategies** integrates education data and planning

State:

- **CDE partnering with Governor’s Strategic Growth Council (SGC)**

ment. Today, however, OUSD's research department is also responsible for gathering data on students whose families have Section 8 vouchers (federally funded rental housing assistance for low-income households) and other forms of assisted housing. As a result, the district is able to better understand how it is supporting students based on where students are living. This understanding in turn informs OUSD's efforts to work with OHA. Here, as in San Francisco, local educational agencies are not only coordinating efforts with housing authorities. They are using every means available to understand the complexity of the local situation knowing that there is no one right way to achieve the goal of providing high quality educational opportunities for all. For example, in 2010 OUSD declared a district wide “full-service school” strategy that brings greatly needed social services and health care to support what superintendent Tony Smith calls “the whole child”.⁴

Similar efforts to connect housing and education can be found in many communities around the country. While the federal housing policy HOPE VI was a success in many respects, it also proved the point that it is (at best) shortsighted to try and develop mixed-income housing without addressing the issue of access to quality schools

in a comprehensive way.⁵ Today, federal programs such as HUD's Choice Neighborhoods and the Education Department's Promise Neighborhoods recognize that education and cross-sector policy making must play a greater role in mixed-income housing strategies, locally and regionally. Housing policies ranging from the revitalization of HOPE VI neighborhoods to inclusionary zoning policies (like those used in Montgomery County, Maryland since 1974) now address the issue of schools and integrated schooling in particular, recognizing that without structures and incentives for all families to access high quality schools, reversing patterns of concentrated poverty, fragmentation and urban sprawl is not likely.

Other promising developments in the field of coordinated housing and education planning include Washington,

D.C., where a city-wide analysis shed new light on the complex relationship between residential and enrollment patterns. In 2007, the Washington D.C. Office of the State Superintendent commissioned a study to understand the causes and implications of rapidly declining school enrollment and how to retain and attract families. The 21st Century School Fund, the Brookings Institution, and the Urban Institute collaborated on the research, bringing together diverse expertise on educa-

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tion, housing, and neighborhood change. The partners developed a sophisticated framework utilizing student, school, and neighborhood level quantitative data; focus groups with parents and high school dropouts; and meetings with city, education and housing officials in order to better understand the complex and dramatic changes occurring in the city. The 2010 report *Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods and the Future of DC* now supports a more informed dialogue on enrollment retention and attraction strategies, school closure options, and school assignment policy changes. Moreover, the process and findings of the report shed new light on the oft-overlooked relationship between residential patterns and school assignment, effectively building bridges between city, neighborhood, and educational stakeholders' interests.⁶

In Baltimore, housing vouchers are being used to increase access for very low income families to quality suburban schools. The Baltimore Housing Mobility Program (BHMP) provides families from high-poverty, disadvantaged urban communities with a new home and school in a lower poverty neighborhood. As a regional voucher program, BHMP significantly expands housing choices for low-income families. BHMP has overcome some of the biggest obstacles to using housing vouchers in neighborhoods with high-quality schools by increasing voucher rents and providing full-service housing mobility counseling to families (including information on educational choices). Previously, voucher holders in the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (otherwise known as Section 8) were typically limited to living in "voucher submarkets" where racial and economic segregation is high and educational opportunities are limited. However, since 2004 more than 1,500 families from Baltimore have re-located to lower-poverty, more racially diverse suburban and city neighborhoods. To date, 88 percent of these families have chosen suburban counties. As a result, more than 1,200 low-income children are now attending high performing, mixed-income suburban schools. On average, only 33 percent of the students in these schools are eligible for free and reduced lunch compared with 83 percent in the original schools. Academically, from 69 to 76 percent of students scored proficient or higher on state math and reading tests after taking advantage of the voucher program compared with 44 to 54 percent in the original schools.⁷

Families, Schools, and Transit-Oriented Development: Ten Core Connections

1. *School quality plays a major role in families' housing choices.*
2. *A wide housing unit mix is needed to attract families.*
3. *Housing unit mix, school enrollment, and school funding are intricately related.*
4. *Children often use transit to get to and from school and afterschool activities.*
5. *Multi-modal transit alternatives support access to the increasing landscape of school options.*
6. *Mixed-income TOD provides opportunities for educational workforce housing.*
7. *TOD design principles support walkability and safety for children and families.*
8. *TOD brings amenities and services that can serve families closer to residential areas.*
9. *When schools are integrated with TOD planning, opportunities emerge for the shared use of public space.*
10. *TOD offers opportunities for renovating and building new schools in developments, which draws families.*

Source: CC&S *Putting Schools on the Map*, p.3

Transportation: Trends like Transit-Oriented Development and Smart Growth Can Be a Boon for Schools and Families with Children

Like recent developments in housing, transportation planning is also beginning to pursue strategies to reverse decades of urban sprawl that resulted in greater racial and economic segregation. Like many other promising practices around the country, the Center's work in the Bay Area and other parts of California has focused on transit-oriented development (TOD)⁸. Agencies such as the California Transportation Department define TOD as development that results in mixed land uses, higher than usual densities, and pedestrian friendly designs without being anti-automobile.

The rise of transit-oriented development largely has been driven by environmental and economic concerns. However, when it comes to the role that transportation plays in building family friendly communities with high quality schools, issues of social equity and integration invariably arise. Our focus has been on the connections between this important trend and a community's ability

an effort to increase student ridership and expand transit services. Rochester's Regional Transit Service (RTS) receives subsidies from local businesses and schools allowing it to maintain service while facing systemic funding reductions from the state. Today, 95 percent of students who use public transportation to get to and from school take advantage of the RTS Express Transfer Service, allowing students to travel directly from their school to their neighborhoods by bypassing downtown transfers. As a result, students and their families have come to see RTS as a more affordable and reliable option for getting to school as well as getting to work. Moreover, the school district is saving money as a result of the transit service: "Public transportation is also 30-40 percent less expensive for us than yellow school bus service. Those are dollars we can redirect to our schools and classrooms, where they can have the biggest impact on student achievement."¹¹

In Baltimore, Maryland, the school district and transit provider partnered to provide free bus service to students. Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) has a long-established contractual agreement with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to provide no-cost bus service to eligible middle and high school students. BCPS pays MTA for the service, which costs far less than what it would spend operating and maintaining its own school buses. Between 25,000 and 28,000 students use the program.

Addressing the needs of our youngest students and residents, several diverse, multiagency partnerships have formed to support families by creating childcare centers in transit-oriented developments. In San Jose, California, the Tamien Child Care Center opened at the Tamien CalTrain and light rail stations in 1995. The center enrolls nearly 150 children from 6 weeks to 12 years old. Incentives for families to use the childcare and transit include rail and bus discounts, priority enrollment, and tuition discounts for children of transit users. The collaboration was San Jose's first working relationship between childcare and transit. Similarly, in Columbus, Ohio, the South Linden Transit Center opened in 1999 and includes a bus depot, daycare center, children's health clinic, bank, and medical office. The 24-hour facility is

designed to assist parents who work nontraditional hours and encourage their use of transit on their daily commute. The co-location of childcare with transit encourages parents to use transit by making drop-off to childcare easy and safe.

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

We conclude this short report by offering the reader our latest thinking on integrating housing, transportation and education by drawing on our new report entitled

Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Aligning High Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development (prepared for the What Works Collaborative).

This report offers the following recommended steps to coordinate school, housing and transportation planning more effectively at local and regional levels:

TOD has nothing to lose and everything to gain by recognizing the connections between transportation, schools and families' efforts to make good decisions on behalf of their children.

1. **Just as Families Make Housing Choices Based on Perceptions of School Quality and Long Term Educational Opportunities for their Children, Planners and Policy Makers Need to Know the Educational Landscape Before They Can Effectively Support the Future of Neighborhoods, Cities and Entire Regions**

Families with school-aged children seek out communities that offer quality schools and access to high-quality educational opportunities. As a result, housing unit mix, school enrollment, and school funding are intricately related. In California, as elsewhere in the United States, schools are funded based on enrollment, so changes to nearby housing can positively or negatively impact the amount of money school districts receive. As such, planners and policy makers must understand local educational policies and demographics, account for the region's inventory of educational and workforce assets, and thoroughly assess physical school infrastructure.

2. Planners and Policy-makers Have Everything to Gain and Nothing to Lose by Fully Engaging School Leaders, Families and Young People in Planning and Redevelopment Projects

Identify multiple avenues for school district (“Local Education Agency (LEA)”) personnel to engage in the planning process – and planners to engage in school planning and policy making. Opportunities for students and parents to similarly engage in local planning process are also important and can be especially powerful when connecting young people’s participation to classroom learning.

3. The Planning and Development Process Must Establish a Shared Vision and Metrics Linking High Quality Education to Economic Prosperity at Both the Community and Regional Levels

Cultivate leadership and champions, adopt the vision statement formally across institutions, develop common indicators to measure change, foster shared accountability, and increase the effective use of scarce resources. When schools are integrated into complete communities, opportunities emerge for shared use of public space. Community use of public school buildings and outdoor space (often called “joint use”) is an attractive amenity to families and residents with and without children. Partnering with school districts can leverage additional capital resources to improve existing school buildings and/or to create small, charter, magnet, or other specially focused schools.

4. Support the Whole Life of Learners and their Families through Design Principles that Promote Healthy and Safe Life Styles as well as Access to Services and Amenities

Provide comprehensive social services aligned to educational needs and opportunities, provide quality amenities to attract families and enrich students’ lives, and harness public and private funding to align program operations for efficiency. Complete communities support walkability and safety for children and families. Complete communities’

good design principles inherently address concerns of distances between home and school, traffic, and “stranger danger,” which may help increase walking and/or bicycling. Complete communities provide services and amenities that attract and support children and families, such as childcare centers, preschools, and parks located in walking distance to work, home, or transit.

5. Align Bricks and Mortar Investments to Support Mixed-Income Communities and Regional Prosperity

Establish schools as centers of opportunity-rich communities, ensure family-oriented, mixed-income housing, and pursue joint development. A wide housing unit mix is needed to attract families. Unit mixes that include 3- and 4-bedrooms, apartments, and townhomes offer family-friendly options. Mixed income communities provide opportunities for educational workforce housing. The combination of modest teacher salaries and high housing costs form a constant challenge for many in the Bay Area. Complete communities could be an attraction for area public school teachers and their families.

6. Design Schools, Neighborhoods and Transportation Systems to Maximize Access to Opportunity and Promote Healthy Life Styles

Align transit options to support school choice and extracurricular opportunities, create incentives for multi-modal transportation choices by students and families, and site schools to maximize multi-modal transportation access. Multi-modal transit alternatives in complete communities support families’ access to the increasing landscape of school options. Children do not always attend their closest neighborhood school; access to these educational options hinges on access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation. Children often use transit to get to and from school and afterschool activities. Access to safe, reliable, and affordable transit facilitates students’ on-time and consistent arrival at school (reducing problems of truancy and tardiness) and to afterschool activities that enhance their educational experience.

7. Institutionalize What Works to Secure Gains and Ongoing Innovation

Support formal communications and streamlined collaborative decision-making, measure change, assess impact, and leverage diverse resources to support families and create sustainable communities while balancing “what works” with “what could be”.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Compare, for example, the connection that John Powell makes between urban sprawl and the civil rights movement: "Despite [a] growing body of work, few have made the connection between these negative consequences and the severe limitations that sprawl and fragmentation have placed on the civil rights movement." *Achieving Racial Justice: What's Sprawl Got to Do with It?*, POVERTY & RACE (Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Washington, D.C.), Sept./Oct. 1999.
- 2 DEBORAH L. MCKOY ET AL., WHAT WORKS COLLABORATIVE, OPPORTUNITY-RICH SCHOOLS AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: SEVEN STEPS TO ALIGN HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION WITH INNOVATIONS IN CITY AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (2011), available at <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412348-opportunity-rich-schools-sustainable-communities.pdf>.
- 3 See also Creating Pathways of Educational and Neighborhood Success, Ctr. for Cities & Sch., Univ. of Cal., Berkeley (June 4, 2009), http://hope-sf.org/PDFs/CCS_Hunters_View_Report.pdf.
- 4 Creating a Full-Service Community School District, Coal. for Cmty. Sch. (Oct. 2010), <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Tony%20Smith%20Interview%20Template.pdf>.
- 5 For more information on changes to HOPE VI that recognize the need to address schools and other social factors, see Shaun Donovan, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Hous. & Urban Dev., Remarks at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program's Discussion: From Despair to Hope: Two HUD Secretaries on Urban Revitalization and Opportunity (July 14, 2009), available at <http://www.hud.gov/news/speeches/2009-07-14.cfm>.
- 6 Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods, and the Future of D.C.: Policy Report, D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Educ. (Sept. 2008), <http://www.21csf.org/csf-home/publications/QualitySchoolsResearchReport/QualitySchoolsPolicyReport9-18-08.pdf>.
- 7 LAURA ENGDahl, BALT. REG'L HOUS. CAMPAIGN & POVERTY & RACE RESEARCH ACTION COUNCIL, NEW HOMES. NEW NEIGHBORHOODS, NEW SCHOOLS: A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BALTIMORE HOUSING MOBILITY PROGRAM (2009), available at <http://www.prrac.org/pdf/BaltimoreMobilityReport.pdf>.
- 8 ARIEL H. BIERBAUM ET AL., CTR. FOR CITIES & SCH., UNIV. OF CAL., BERKELEY, PUTTING SCHOOLS ON THE MAP: LINKING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT, FAMILIES, AND SCHOOLS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA (2010), available at http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/Putting%20Schools%20on%20the%20Map_Final_Jul10_noappendices.pdf.
- 9 See, for example, our use of this term in DEBORAH L. MCKOY ET AL., *supra* note 2.
- 10 ARIEL H. BIERBAUM ET AL., *supra* note 8.
- 11 2010-2011 Comprehensive Plan, Rochester Genesee Reg'l Transp. Auth. (2010), http://www.rgrta.com/pdf/33207_RGRTA.pdf.