

# Typologizing School–Community Partnerships: A Framework for Analysis and Action

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## Abstract

School–community partnerships are currently in the forefront of place-based urban reform efforts. But the literature on these partnerships indicates a variety of models that require different commitments and resources. Through a close review of the literature, we developed a typology of four partnership categories organized from the least to the most comprehensive in purpose and design. This typology reveals different theories of action as well as the conditions that facilitate or obstruct various models of partnership implementation. We argue that such a typology is a useful tool in guiding systemic educational reform, research, and evaluation.

## Keywords

school–community partnerships, community schools, full-service schools

A promising school reform idea to re-emerge in recent years, especially for distressed urban areas, focuses on school–community partnerships. In these partnerships, schools expand the traditional educational mission of the school

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to include health and social services for children and families and to involve the wider community. Advocates argue that students' educational prospects will improve if the school can attend to a broad array of needs of students, their families, and—sometimes—the entire neighborhood, and that this is done best by partnering with community groups, government agencies, and social services. Various organizations have worked to scale-up quality partnerships, conducting research and disseminating “how to” manuals and tool-kits to groups throughout the country (see Coalition for Community Schools, 2012; Epstein, 1995 as examples). Individual schools and school districts have joined forces with community organizations to improve opportunities for their students (see Weiss & Siddall, 2012). There has also been a resurgence of interest in school–community partnerships and place-based reform efforts at the federal government level with Choice Neighborhood, Full-Service Community School (FSCS), Promise Neighborhood, and most recently Promise Zone initiatives.

Although current, the idea of school–community partnerships is far from new. During the Progressive Era, educators saw the school as the community's central institution, a place where citizens could gather for social activities, where adults could be trained for jobs, and where community members could learn from and about one another (Dewey, 1902). Social reformers from outside the school system, including public health doctors and settlement-house workers, sought to improve the lives of children and families in the school setting. Over the next 100 years, different community associations, government institutions, and faith-based groups worked closely with and within these community schools (Tyack, 1992).

The reception of Dryfoos's (1994) influential book, *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families*, is indicative of the resurgence of interest in school–community partnerships that occurred in the 1990s. Through her work in the public health sector, Dryfoos concluded that schools could not meet the challenges that students bring to school on their own and that education and service systems must work together to address children's many needs. Dryfoos argued that events in society encouraged schools to incorporate health and social services into school operations and that the phenomenon of full-service schools are the “wave of the future” (p. 206).

Today, community schools and similar place-based initiatives rely on numerous types of partners to support their efforts. But do reformers mean the same thing when they talk about school–community partnerships, full-service schools, and community schools? Are these reform ideas essentially the same in structure and intent? As Dryfoos (2002, 2005) has asked, are

these partnerships reform strategies, collaborative programs—or new institutions? Are the same dimensions of partnerships studied? And what does the cumulative evidence tell us about the factors that hinder or facilitate their success and survival?

Because each of us was working, in different capacities, with neighborhood groups or associations to build effective, sustainable partnerships, we sought answers to these questions. We had started our review of the literature by looking at (a) the conditions that facilitated partnership success and (b) evidence of positive outcomes. But in the course of that review, we became increasingly aware that authors used different terminology to describe the same phenomenon—or the same terminology to describe quite different phenomena. Seeing a need to untangle the array of terms used for school–community partnerships, we began to search for typologies in the sources we reviewed. Two, in particular, were helpful: Melaville’s (1998) mapping project of 20 school–community initiatives and Warren’s (2005) case studies of partnerships between three urban public schools and community organizations. But neither of these classification systems wholly captured the full-range of partnerships we found in our own, more extensive literature review. In addition, their goals were somewhat different from ours: mapping out and illustrating different approaches to partnerships versus examining implications for organizational change and conditions for success. Therefore, as we read through the literature, we added a third and overarching purpose to our review: the development of a typology. Doing so enabled us to determine more systematically the specific types of reforms that have been put in place.

In revealing different theories of action and obstacles that need to be overcome to pursue often-ambitious goals, the typology can serve as a useful guide for further analysis and action. We do not claim that each of our examples is a perfect fit, but rather that the *written accounts* of the partnerships illustrate particular characteristics of that reform model.<sup>1</sup> Because articles are written for different purposes, authors often attend only to those dimensions of the partnership that are relevant to their purpose (e.g., evaluation of after-school programs vs. description of decision-making structures). Therefore, we are unlikely to get a full picture of any partnership from the written materials available to us. In addition, national organizations, such as Communities in Schools (CISs), can include hundreds of affiliate members that, collectively, are unlikely to fall into only one category. Individually, partnerships are also likely to change over time—taking on the characteristics of more complex or simpler models. For these reasons, and as shown in Table 1, we do not draw lines between the partnership categories.

**Table 1.** Typology of School–Community Partnerships.

	Scope and purpose	Requirements	Theory of action	Documented impact (no. of sources)
Family and Interagency Collaboration	Coordinate service delivery	Organizational commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship building</li> <li>Resources</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>evaluation</li> </ul>	Coordinating the delivery of educational, health, and social services helps families and supports the learning and developmental needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved student achievement (6)</li> <li>Higher attendance and graduation rates (5)</li> <li>Increased use of school buildings, community pride, and engagement (2)</li> <li>Improved student behavior and attitudes (1)</li> <li>Increased teacher satisfaction (1)</li> <li>Increased parent satisfaction (1)</li> <li>Greater family and neighborhood stability (1)</li> </ul>
Full-Service Schools	Deliver school-based, coordinated services	Organizational commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Silos broken down</li> <li>Social services viewed as essential</li> <li>Joint governance structure</li> </ul>	Providing integrated on-site, comprehensive services strengthens the support network essential to meeting the needs of children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved student achievement (8)</li> <li>Improved student behavior and attitudes (6)</li> <li>Higher attendance and retention rates (5)</li> <li>Increased parent satisfaction and family improvements (4)</li> <li>Increased teacher satisfaction (2)</li> <li>Improved school climate (1)</li> </ul>
Full-Service Community Schools	Deliver school-based, coordinated services and democratize the school with community input	Organizational and cultural commitment and change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Democratic decision making</li> <li>Value community voices</li> <li>Develop new forms of leadership</li> </ul>	Incorporating community and family voice in partnership decision making will further strengthen the Full-Service School model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved student achievement (5)</li> <li>Increased parent and community engagement (4)</li> <li>Improved student behavior and attitudes (3)</li> <li>Increased no. of partners and activities (3)</li> </ul>
Community Development	Transform the community	Inter-organizational and cultural commitment and change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simultaneous renewal</li> <li>Tipping point</li> <li>Leadership development</li> <li>Collective ownership</li> </ul>	Strengthening the community infrastructure and improving schools are interdependent goals that need to occur simultaneously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved student achievement (4)</li> <li>Higher attendance rates (3)</li> <li>Increased parent engagement and leadership (2)</li> <li>Improved communication, trust, participation (3)</li> <li>Greater neighborhood stability (1)</li> </ul>

## Typology of School–Community Partnerships

Not wanting to overlook any relevant sources, we used numerous descriptors in our literature search. Beyond the obvious choices, we searched on *school–community collaboration*, *wrap-around services*, *integrated services*, and *community–school linked services*. We then narrowed our sources to (a) peer-reviewed articles of (b) school–community partnerships in the United States that (c) moved beyond the traditional educational mission of the school, (d) involved an institutional commitment, and (e) included the broader community. We also contacted several partnership organizations to identify relevant studies and documents that they wrote or commissioned but did not appear in peer-reviewed journals.

Using a grounded theory approach to our review of the literature, we found that there were two areas in which the various partnerships differed from one another most significantly: (a) their overall scope and purpose, and (b) implications or requirements for partnership success. This focus led to a comparative analysis of their theories of action, a term used by Argyris and Schön (1974) to describe what an individual or organization should do to achieve certain results. More specifically, theories of action “are governed by a set of values that provide the framework for the action strategies chosen” (Argyris, 1995, p. 20). A general theory of action for school–community partnerships, then, would value partnerships as a way of increasing the school’s capacity to engage in strategies (e.g., health clinics, after-school programs) that met the needs of children and their families. To increase capacity, the scope and organization of school services would need to change. As one would expect, as each model becomes progressively more complex, so too do their theories of action. Using the proposition suggested by Argyris and Schön (1974)—*in situation S, to achieve consequence C, do action A*—the models’ theories of action would vary somewhat to address the elements specific to their goals.

This comparative framework of purposes, requirements, and theories of action enabled us to develop four categories that encompassed all the initiatives we reviewed. Moving from the least to the most comprehensive, and requiring increased degrees of commitment and change, the categories are as follows: *Family and Interagency Collaboration*, *Full-Service Schools*, *FSCSs*, and the *Community Development* model. The Family/Interagency Collaboration model has the primary goal of coordinating services among institutions. The Full-Service School goes beyond coordinating to delivering these services at or near the school site. It also attempts to provide a comprehensive set of academic, health, and social services to both students and families. Although this model requires organizational changes in the school to

accommodate these services, FSCSs require an additional, substantial cultural shift because of the implications for community input and decision making. The fourth and most ambitious model, Community Development, seeks substantive change not only in the school, but in the neighborhood community (see Table 1).

In the sections that follow, we review the literature on each type of partnership, their theories of action, challenges in establishing and maintaining them, and what we know about their impact.<sup>2</sup> Given their increased complexity and the cultural shifts required, we anticipated that the last two models would likely be more challenging to sustain and more difficult to study. This assumption was born out by the number of sources we found for each type. For the first two—Family/Interagency Collaborations and Full-Service Schools—we found 25 sources that met our selection criteria. For the last two types—FSCSs and Community Partnerships—we found only 13 sources (see Table 2).

### *Family and Interagency Collaboration*

Our analysis indicated that the most basic form of a sustained partnership was, what we call, the Family and Interagency Collaboration model. In this model, schools and agencies commit to extending the traditional work of the school (teaching and learning) by coordinating the delivery of other services (health, social, or further educational) that would support students and their families. Efforts are also made to increase parent involvement in their children's education. Although these collaborations are "intentional efforts to create and sustain relationships among a K-12 school or school district and a variety of both formal and informal organizations" (Melaville, 1998, p. 6), their scope is less ambitious than that of a Full-Service School. These partnerships differ from that model in two ways: (a) they do not attempt to offer a comprehensive range of family and student services, and (b) they do not necessarily offer these services *at* or near the school site. Additional services are offered to students on a case-by-case basis. Although the sources we have placed in this section often use the label "full-service schools" or "community schools," they do not require the organizational change demanded of the other models. They do, however, require a commitment of time and resources.

**Sources.** We found 12 articles or sets of studies, mostly empirical, which illustrate this partnership category. The one descriptive article (Walker & Hackmann, 1999) provides an overview of the School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) supported in 29 Iowa communities. The four research syntheses were commissioned by the sponsoring organizations to evaluate the programs they were supporting: Community in Schools (CIS, 2010; Porowski

**Table 2.** Sets of References in Each Category.

	Descriptive/ conceptual studies	Empirical studies	Research syntheses	Total
Family and Interagency Collaboration	1 Walker and Hackmann (1999)	7 Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon (2011); Henrich, Sayfi, and Malikina (2007); Kirkner and O'Donnell (2007, 2008); Krenichyn, Clark, and Benitez (2008); Leonard (2011); Sanders and Harvey (2002); Weiss and Siddall (2012)	4 Blank, Melville, and Shah (2003); Communities in Schools (CIS, 2010); Porowski and Passa (2011); Henderson (2011); Melville (1998)	12
Full-Service Schools	4 Adelman (1996); Comer (1984, 1988); Dryfoos (1994, 1995, 2002, 2005); McMahon, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, and Griffith (2000)	9 City Connects (2010, 2012); Comer (Cook et al., 1999; Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000; Millsap et al., 2000; Einspruch, Grover, Hahn, & Guy, 2004a, 2004b, 2005); Linkages to Learning (Fox et al., 1999; Leone & Bartolotta, 2010; Leone, Lane, Arlen, & Peter, 1996); Hartford (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2011a, 2011b); Kent (Public Policy Associates [PPA], 2009); LaFrance Associates (LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006); LFA (2008); Whalen (2007); Whalen, Fujimoto, and Xiong (2008); Whalen, Jenkins, Xiong, and Klekotka (2008)	0	13
Full-Service Community Schools	3 Keith (1999); Melville (2004); Williams (2010)	4 Abrams and Gibbs (2000); Adams (2010); Castrechini (2011); Castrechini and London (2012); Whalen (2002)	0	7
Community Development Model	2 McKoy, Vincent, and Bierbaum (2011); Proscio (2004)	4 Dobbie and Fryer (2011); Gold, Simon, Mundell, and Brown (2004); Oppenheim (1999); Warren, Hong, Rubin, and Uy (2009)	0	6
Total	10	24	4	38

& Passa, 2011), the National Education Association (NEA; Henderson, 2011), and the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), home of the Coalition for Community Schools (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Melaville, 1998).

The seven empirical studies included a broad mix of methodologies and research questions, with four being multi-site studies and three single-site studies. One multi-site study, Weiss and Siddall, 2012, surveyed principals to gather baseline data on the types of partnership services that were provided in the 135 participating Boston Public Schools (BPS). A second survey study used hierarchical linear modeling to examine the influence of both school- and district-level leadership on the quality of family and community programs in 407 National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and 24 school districts (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011). Through gap analysis, the authors compared schools with consistent leadership at the district level with those lacking this level of leadership. Two multi-site and one single-site school-level studies looked at a variety of data sources to determine the impact of out-of-school partnership programs by comparing outcome measures for participating versus non-participating students (Henrich, Sayfi, & Malikina, 2007; Kirkner & O'Donnell, 2007, 2008; Krenichyn, Clark, & Benitez, 2008). Qualitative case studies—one of an elementary school (Sanders & Harvey, 2002) and one of a high school (Leonard, 2011)—examined characteristics of successful partnerships.

*Theory of action.* Krenichyn and colleagues (2008) make explicit the theory of action behind the Family and Interagency Collaboration model in their study of the Children's Aid Society's (CAS) partnership work: because the different aspects of a child's life are interconnected, schools, families, and community agencies need to be collaboratively involved in the development of the whole child. Collaborative activities, such as after-school programs, "encourage students to be actively engaged in learning activities and promote strong and positive development" (p. 23). Although strengthening families and the neighborhood community is sometimes part of the overall goals of these partnerships, primary emphasis is on student learning. This can be seen by the types of activities described in the reports. Partnerships in the BPS, for example, were notably more prevalent in the areas of mentoring, tutoring, and after-school programs (in 60%-90% of schools) than they were in adult education or health services (in only 15%-25% of schools). In contrast, 90% of BPS report the capacity to "refer families to communities agencies" (Weiss & Siddall, 2012, p. 9). Referring families, rather than actually providing the services, is indicative of partnerships within this category and a marked difference from the Full-Service School approach.

*Conditions for success.* Our analysis of the sources indicated that the most significant factor needed for successful Family and Interagency Collaborations was the commitment of partners, and that this commitment had implications for leadership, relationship building, resources, and evaluation. Leadership was called on to communicate and evaluate the benefits of the partnership, foster positive relationships, and ensure that the necessary resources were in place to maintain productive collaborations. NNPS, for example, found leadership at both the school and school district levels to be key factors in the quality and sustainability of partnership programs (Epstein et al., 2011; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). And from their external comparison and case studies, CIS (2010) reported a strong link between leadership and desirable outcomes such as increased attendance and graduation rates.

Moreover, the failure of leaders to devote sufficient time for relationship building would likely undermine these collaborations. NEA's review of 16 Family–School–Community Partnerships culminated in 10 strategies deemed essential for success. Half were about relationship building (Henderson, 2011). And from his examination of 60 years of extensive partnering in a Boston high school, Leonard (2011) similarly concluded that partnering is primarily a relationship to be cultivated, not merely an exchange of goods. Over that time period, some minimally funded ventures thrived due to partners' efforts at maintaining mutually respectful relationship whereas some heavily funded investments met limited success.

Nonetheless, relationships were not enough, in-and-of themselves, to sustain these partnerships. Resources also mattered—especially time, funding, site-based coordinators, and capacity for ongoing evaluation. Although schools could redirect some resources to partnership efforts, they relied on government (local and state) and non-profit agencies for human and material support (CIS, 2010; Epstein et al., 2011; Melville, 1998). One vital support was a site-based partnership coordinator (Melville, 1998; Weiss & Siddall, 2012). All CIS schools had site coordinators and those with full-time coordinators had a slightly larger impact on desirable student outcomes than those with a part-time coordinator (CIS, 2010). In addition, sponsoring organizations such as the NEA, NNPS, and CIS provided network support and expertise, including a theory of action and evaluation framework for guidance (CIS, 2010; Epstein et al., 2011; Henderson, 2011; Sanders & Harvey, 2002).

*Outcomes.* As in the partnership models that follow, the most frequently examined outcome of the Family and Interagency Collaborations model was student achievement, with evaluators generally relying on standardized achievement test results in the areas of mathematics and reading. All six of the studies that reported outcome data included measures of academic

achievement (Blank et al., 2003; CIS, 2010; Henrich et al., 2007; Kirkner & O'Donnell, 2007, 2008; Krenichyn et al., 2008; Walker & Hackmann, 1999). Some of these studies showed conditional or mixed results such as improved test scores *if* parents were also involved in the partnership (Kirkner & O'Donnell, 2008) or differences in mathematics but not reading gains (Krenichyn et al., 2008). Although effect sizes were often small, the overall direction of findings was positive: Involvement in partnership programs improved student achievement. The strongest of these studies was conducted on the CIS collaborations. Using a quasi-experimental design that compared 602 CIS schools with 602 matched schools, as well as a natural variation design that compared 368 high versus low-implementing schools, researchers consistently found that CIS schools, and specifically high-implementing CIS schools, out-performed comparison schools on state achievement tests (CIS, 2010).

In addition to student achievement, five studies looked at a wide range of additional outcomes. The Blank et al. (2003) review of 20 multi-site program evaluations was the most comprehensive, with positive findings for students in the areas of attendance, graduation rates, educational aspirations, cooperation, and homework completion. The researchers also found increased teacher and parent satisfaction with the school, increased community use of school buildings, improved sense of safety in the area, and increased community pride and engagement. Four other studies reported similar outcomes in attendance or graduation rates (CIS, 2010; Kirkner & O'Donnell, 2008; Krenichyn et al., 2008; Walker & Hackmann, 1999), and stakeholders interviewed for the CIS study believed that better coordination of service delivery reduced duplication of services, that the community would be better able to attract businesses, and that the economy, in general, benefitted by getting students into college or trade school (CIS, 2010).

### *Full-Service Schools*

Similar to the collaborative model described above, Full-Service Schools seek fruitful partnerships with community agencies to serve the needs of the whole child and his or her family. But going beyond the previous model, a Full-Service School attempts to integrate a full-range of academic, health, and social services and is, thus, often referred to as a “wrap-around” school. By expanding the school day and setting aside space within the school, a Full-Service School literally wraps social, family, and health services around the educational time and space dimensions of the school and, in so doing, becomes a different type of institution from the traditional school.

*Sources.* We found four descriptive sources (Adelman, 1996; Comer, 1984, 1988; Dryfoos, 1994, 1995, 2002, 2005; McMahon, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, & Griffith, 2000) and nine sets of empirical studies on Full-Service Schools, suggesting the prominence of this model in the field. Each set of studies examined desirable outcomes of the partnerships. All but two were multi-site studies; and all but two used a quasi-experimental comparison group design. The multi-site, Comer studies looked at implementation of the School Development Program (SDP) in 45 schools across three school districts, namely, Prince George's County, Maryland (Cook et al., 1999); Chicago, Illinois (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000); and Detroit, Michigan (Millsap et al., 2000), comparing them with control schools over a number of years. Evaluations of the Chicago Public Schools' Community School Initiative (CSI) similarly examined model implementation across a number of schools, first comparing all 110 with the remaining Chicago Public Schools and then comparing the 68 participating elementary schools with one-to-one matches of non-participating schools (Whalen, 2007; Whalen, Fujimoto, & Xiong, 2008; Whalen, Jenkins, Xiong, & Klekotka, 2008). City Connects (2010), a Boston partnership, looked at fidelity of implementation indicators and, in a follow-up study (City Connects, 2012), compared 13 elementary schools with 7 matched schools to determine the model's student impact. Evaluators of both the Hartford and the San Mateo partnerships used a different comparative strategy—participating versus non-participating students—to examine outcomes (LaFrance Associates [LFA], 2008; OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2011a, 2011b).

In addition to these five multi-site evaluations were two others that lacked a comparison group: Washington State's Readiness to Learn (RTL) program, which examined success indicators at 24 project sites (Einspruch, Grover, Hahn, & Guy, 2004a, 2004b, 2005), and the Kent School Services Network (KSSN), which looked at change in desired outcomes across a 3-year time frame (Public Policy Associates [PPA], 2009). Finally, two sets of studies compared individual Full-Service Schools with matched comparison schools: three middle-school Eisenhower Grant recipients (LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006) and a Title I elementary school that piloted the Linkages to Learning program, established by a Maryland school district (Fox et al., 1999; Leone & Bartolotta, 2010; Leone, Lane, Arlen, & Peter, 1996).

*Theory of action.* The theory of action in this model is laid out in explanations of the Comer SDP. Focusing on the development of the whole child—behavior and attitudes as well as academic success—the SDP model is pictured as intervening between external factors that negatively affect the school's organization and climate and child development. Both the external environment

and the school environment are viewed as “psychosocial climates” that positively or negatively affect students (Comer, 1984, 1988). Proponents argue that if Full-Service Schools are implemented well, the school’s capacity increases and the school climate for student learning and growth becomes more positive, pointing to the necessity of organizational change. This model goes beyond the previous model’s emphasis on building positive relationships with and garnering resources from community partners that accomplish specific goals. In that model, the traditional school is left intact. In contrast, the Full-Service model actually creates a new type of institution. Emphasizing the need for structural change, Dryfoos (1994) writes of the responsibility of school systems to reorganize and, with community agencies, produce a new, “seamless” type of institution that allows maximum responsiveness and accessibility to service. Advocates of this model contrast it with piecemeal attempts, which they argue only ameliorate individual problems rather than solve large-scale, complex problems, resulting in parallel rather than integrated structures (Adelman, 1996; McMahon et al., 2000).

*Conditions for success.* As one would expect in the Full-Service literature, then, much emphasis is on ways of breaking down silos between schools and partnering agencies. To accomplish this, Dryfoos (1995) recommends that Full-Service Schools require a joint governance structure in which partners agree on a shared vision, goals, and resources; participate in collaborative decision making; and use their institutional power bases to effect change. This governance structure, such as a steering committee, would be vested “with the authority to oversee the whole comprehensive program” (p. 157). It would manage activities such as emergency assistance, support for transition, family assistance, and community outreach that enables the school to achieve its primary mission: teaching and learning (Adelman, 1996).

Many of the programs in this set of articles describe their restructuring efforts. Comer’s SDP, for example, is basically an integrated process model, requiring schools to have three program structures, three process goals, and three school operations. Principles underlying the Linkages to Learning program include interdisciplinary teams and an integrated, seamless service delivery to minimize redundancies and efficiencies. Organizationally, Linkage programs are directed at the school district level and have a school-based Resource Team that works closely with a broad-based Advisory Group (Leone & Bartolotta, 2010) and site-based coordinator. Other Full-Service programs similarly require indicators of “institutionalization” such as memoranda of understanding, collaborative decision-making structures, an evaluation system, and clearly defined methods of communication (LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; PPA, 2009).

Based on the reports of these initiatives, Full-Service Schools have not been easy to put into place. Each of the models left some elements of the Full-Service School only partially implemented. Cook et al.'s (2000) study of 10 Comer elementary schools in Chicago, for instance, indicated considerable variation in implementation of the model, and Millsap et al. (2000) found that only 3 of the 11 Comer schools in Detroit were full implementers, whereas 4 were moderate and 4 were weak implementers. Comparing the Prince George's County Comer schools to their matched control schools, Cook et al. (1999) found few governance differences. Implementation and sustainability problems seemed to fall into four general areas: organization, communication, resources, and leadership. Surveys, on-site observations, and interviews with staff at various project sites indicated a host of problems in these areas, including lack of central decision making, ad hoc role specifications, redundancy of data requests, absence of Memoranda of Understanding, high turnover of key staff, a disconnect between teachers and Full-Service staff, lack of alignment between in- and out-of-school learning goals, and desire for increased parent involvement (LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Leone et al., 1996; PPA, 2009).

*Outcomes.* Despite these implementation challenges, Full-Service Schools generally had positive outcomes, especially for student achievement. All of the sets of empirical studies analyzed achievement gains in mathematics, with eight of the nine citing improvements and seven of those eight having comparison groups. A smaller group of articles included positive gains in reading achievement as well (City Connects, 2010, 2012; Cook et al., 1999; Cook et al., 2000; LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Millsap et al., 2000; OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2011a, 2011b; PPA, 2009; Whalen, 2007), with two of these also citing improvements in writing (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, 2011a, 2011b; PPA, 2009). The follow-up CSI study of elementary schools to their matched pairs, however, showed no differences at the school level on reading and mathematics assessments (Whalen, Fujimoto, & Xiong, 2008).

After student achievement, the next most-cited outcome was improved behavior and attitudes, with six of the nine sets of studies describing less disruption and/or fewer misbehaviors, write-ups, or detentions (City Connects, 2010; Cook et al., 1999; Cook et al., 2000; Einspruch et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Fox et al., 1999; LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Leone & Bartolotta, 2010; Leone et al., 1996; Millsap et al., 2000; Whalen, 2007; Whalen, Fujimoto, & Xiong, 2008). Two sets of studies also described positive changes related to motivation, emotional stress, self-efficacy, and/or self-esteem (LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Fox et al., 1999; Leone & Bartolotta,

2010; Leone et al., 1996). In addition, several of the models in this section cited positive attendance outcomes (Cook et al., 1999; Cook et al., 2000; Einspruch et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Millsap et al., 2000; PPA, 2009; Whalen, 2007; Whalen, Fujimoto, & Xiong, 2008) or lower retention rates (City Connects, 2010).

In this more complex partnership, the types of outcomes being examined reflected its more inclusive, wrap-around focus. Studies took parent and teacher satisfaction more seriously than did the previous model and investigated outcomes related to the full spectrum of involved participants. Four sets of studies examined and found increased levels of parent satisfaction (Cook et al., 1999; Cook et al., 2000; Einspruch et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Fox et al., 1999; LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Leone & Bartolotta, 2010; Leone et al., 1996; Millsap et al., 2000). Parents in the Linkages to Learning program reported decreased depression over time, an increased sense of family cohesion, greater consistency in parenting practices, and less reliance on physical punishment than parents in the control school (Fox et al., 1999).

Four sets of studies also examined teacher satisfaction, but only two found positive results (City Connects, 2010; LFA, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Although researchers did not find greater satisfaction among Linkages to Learning teachers, they had hypothesized that these teachers would actually have “higher levels of emotional exhaustion . . . and lower feelings of personal accomplishment due to the significant population of students with multiple and severe psychosocial stressors,” (Fox et al., 1999, p. 38). The fact that they did not was regarded as a sign of success. Similar to indicators of teacher satisfaction were survey responses from teachers in the KSSN participating schools that reported an improved teaching environment and a more welcoming environment for both parents and students (LFA, 2008).

## FSCSs

Differing from Full-Service Schools, FSCSs stress the importance of changing the culture of the school in addition to organizational change. Advocates of this model seek to democratize schools by opening them, not only to greater involvement, but to greater decision making on the part of the neighborhood community. The school’s normative requirements change. Whereas the models described above draw community resources into the school, FSCSs “open themselves to the community” (Schutz, 2006, p. 704). No longer are families simply clients to be served, but essential, vocal partners. FSCSs would be places that offer a full range of services to students, families and communities, as well as places that incorporate a full range of voices in decision making.

*Sources.* We found three conceptual and four sets of empirical studies that illustrate this combined model. The three conceptual articles (Keith, 1999; Melaville, 2004; Williams, 2010) describe the process of building and benefits of these schools. Of the four sets of empirical studies, two were multi-site comparisons of FSCSs with demographically matched non-FSCSs, looking primarily at student achievement differences. Adams (2010) used multi-level modeling on student achievement scores and numerous survey measures (e.g., leadership, services, engagement) to compare 18 elementary schools in the Tulsa Area Community School Initiative (TACSI) with matched non-participating schools. Whalen (2002) compared trends in service provision and student achievement in three Chicago public elementary schools in the Full-Service Schools Initiative (FSSI) with non-participating schools over a 3-year period of time. The third multi-site study drew on a range of quantitative measures (e.g., demographic, attendance, achievement) to determine the relationship between participation in FSCS services and student outcomes in five high-poverty elementary schools in the Redwood City, California school district (Castrechini, 2011; Castrechini & London, 2012). The last empirical study in this group, a qualitative case study of an ethnically diverse urban elementary school, took a close look at the way in which an FSCS's governance board functioned (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000).

*Theory of action.* Pushing beyond the goals of coordinating services and strengthening networks in the models above, the theory of action behind FSCSs calls for equal voice among partners. As summarized by the Coalition for Community Schools, the learning and developmental needs of students are best met when family, school, and community members partner "to articulate the community's goals for its students, and to help design, implement and evaluate activities" (Blank et al., 2003, p. 2). Proponents argue that in addition to a coordinated or school-based set of full services, students' learning and development are best served when there is a cultural shift toward democratic decision making through community input. Williams's (2010) description of three successful FSCSs contains similar, strong democratizing language: "Engagement in community schools occurs when parents, students, school staff, and neighbors invest in the school, co-creating and owning it" (p. 10).

So in these models, community and parental *engagement* replace the more traditional ideas of service provision and parental *involvement*, which typify the previous models. Calling parent and community engagement essential to FSCS success, Williams (2010) cautions that schools often reduce involvement to superficial levels and urges a more robust partnership that provides multiple opportunities and varied venues for parents and community

members to become involved in decision making and interact with children in academic, social, and cultural contexts” (p. 29). This approach to school–community partnerships rejects a deficit perspective of parents and communities as simply needing services. It uses, instead, an asset perspective that values and builds on the contributions families and community members can make to their children’s learning.

*Conditions for success.* Key to the success of FSCSs, then, is deliberate focus on change that goes beyond the organization of the school to change that occurs in the deeper normative and cultural dimension. In contrast to the previous models, considerably more emphasis is put on the intertwined cultural themes of democratizing the school with community input, bridging culture and power gaps between parents and educators, transforming school leadership, and fostering leadership in parent and community members. To that end, a variety of forums and committees were used to develop and sustain a partnership model based on trusting relationships and shared decision making. Schools partnered with groups that had community roots, credibility, and the capacity to bring in a large, diverse part of the community.

In her analysis of a successful example of a Children’s Aid Society partnership, for example, Keith (1999) highlights the importance of the professional educator’s role shifting from simply “bringing specific skills and knowledge to the table” to “recognizing that others at the table also have contributions to make” (p. 231).<sup>3</sup> This shift was needed to cultivate reciprocity and trust but also required difficult work: “building alternative mediating institutions that are truly democratic; intensive personal interaction, including one-on-one meetings; a strategy of social action that understands the importance of conflict properly addressed; and a long-term commitment to broad-based community empowerment” (p. 232).

One clear implication for FSCS leadership in this set of studies relates to school administrators, the other to parents and community members. Adams (2010) uses the term “cross boundary” to describe the structural and cultural changes in leadership that successful FSCS initiatives require. Members of site teams come from the business and civic community, the neighborhood, and the school (administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students). As Adams states, “An active and diverse community site team and a full-time community school coordinator are structural features of cross-boundary leadership; whereas, a culture of shared influence and responsibility is a normative condition that facilitates effective interactions across role boundaries” (p. 12). The study found that effective cross-boundary leadership fostered collective responsibility, that the site team structure legitimated shared leadership, and

that principals were able to work within this model and still focus on their primary responsibility: teaching and learning.

Based on his evaluation of the three schools in the Polk Bros. Chicago initiative, Whalen (2002) recommends assistance for principals in developing more collaborative leadership styles, and both he and Williams (2010) emphasize the necessity of active support for parents and community members to take on leadership roles. From their study of a problematic FSCS planning year, Abrams and Gibbs (2000) emphasize the importance of both community members and school staff receiving training about the new roles these schools require. In addition to training, the authors mention taking time to set specific and realistic goals, acknowledging the challenge, and clarifying power sharing boundaries and responsibilities.

**Outcomes.** Similar to the outcomes found for the previous models, student achievement in the areas of mathematics and reading was the most frequently examined in this model. All five sets of studies reporting outcome data included measures of academic achievement (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000; Adams, 2010; Castrechini, 2011; Castrechini & London, 2012; Melaville, 2004; Whalen, 2002), although one of these (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000) only described perceptions of student achievement from school staff and community members. In addition, some of these studies showed conditional or mixed results. For example, the studies of the Redwood City FSCSs indicated that test scores improved only *if* students were involved in more than one type of activity (e.g., combinations of extended learning, support programs, and/or family engagement) *and* for certain periods of time (Castrechini, 2011; Castrechini & London, 2012). The TACSI model was effective—finding significant differences between full-service schools and their matched pairs—only at the participating schools that had achieved high levels of implementation (Adams, 2010).

In keeping with the scope and purpose of FSCSs, the next most evaluated outcome for this model related to community, family, and student participation. Four of the five described increased parental engagement (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000; Castrechini, 2011; Castrechini & London, 2012; Melaville, 2004; Whalen, 2002), with Melaville (2004) detailing specific types of engagement: visiting classes, making programming decisions and/or participating in programming surveys, participating in educational classes, and/or life skills workshops. Three of these sources referenced an increase in the number of community partners, sponsored activities, and participation rates (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000; Melaville, 2004; Whalen, 2002). And three studies reported outcomes related to behaviors and attitudes, detailing improvements such as decreased suspensions (Melaville, 2004), higher levels of student

confidence (Castrechini, 2011; Castrechini & London, 2012), and higher levels of collective trust among all participants (Adams, 2010).

### *Community Development Model*

The most expansive and inclusive model in our typology is that of Community Development. As evident in our choice of title, this model is considerably broader than the others in its scope and vision. Not content merely to serve students and families, the aim of initiatives in this category goes beyond transforming schools to transforming whole neighborhoods and communities. Melaville (1998) described the Community Development approach to school–community partnerships as enhancing “the social, economic and physical capital of the community” by “focusing on economic development and job creation, and emphasizing community organizing, advocacy and leadership development among community members, parents and students” (p. 15). Evoking Dewey’s (1902) century-old conception of the school as a social center, schools become points of contact for community members to deal with pressing political, economic, and cultural matters. Because they are still seen as “one of the most important social institutions in impoverished neighborhoods” (Schutz, 2006, p. 723), schools are a primary site of and for reform.

*Sources.* Our literature search surfaced six sources that illustrate the Community Development model: two conceptual and four empirical. The two conceptual articles (McKoy, Vincent, & Bierbaum, 2011; Proscio, 2004) describe lessons learned in linking school reform and neighborhood transformation efforts in inner cities and metropolitan areas around the country. Three of the four empirical articles (Gold, Simon, Mundell, & Brown, 2004; Oppenheim, 1999; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009) are detailed, case-based qualitative studies from which the authors derive principles and lessons to guide future Community Development initiatives. The one quantitative study, Dobbie and Fryer (2011), is a causal design that compares standardized test scores of students who attended the Harlem Children’s Zone’s (HCZ) Promise Academies based on lottery selection with a matched set of lottery losers. Unfortunately for our purposes, the study did not look at the impact of HCZ’s “ambitious social experiment” on the wider community.

*Theory of action.* The theory of action in the Community Development model retains all the components of the previous model, but adds a two-way causal relationship. Instead of viewing community development or transformation as simply the result of the success of school–community partnerships, it

views that transformation holistically and reciprocally. This theory of action is based on the notion that the conditions of distressed communities must be changed for the educational and developmental outcomes of students to improve, and that thriving, sustainable communities need high-quality neighborhood schools (Noguera, 2003; Payne, 2008; Rothstein, 2004). As noted in the Center for Cities and Schools report, “The question is . . . no longer *whether* HUD and other agencies should seek to align new programs with efforts to provide high-quality education, but rather *how* these agencies can best achieve this goal” (McKoy et al., 2011, p. 2).

*Conditions for success.* Success factors from the other models—commitment (including resources and leadership), organizational change, and cultural change—begin to answer that question. But from the literature we reviewed in this area, the clearest answer seems to be simultaneous renewal itself, with the goal of achieving a “tipping point.” Consistent with social capital theory, the idea is that children do better if those around them are doing better. If a critical mass of families believe and behave in ways that enhance their life prospects, “participation would come to seem normal, and so would the values that went with it: a sense of responsibility, a belief that there was a point to self-improvement, a hopefulness about the future” (Tough, 2009, p. 4).

So, looking beyond wrap-around school services, community developers invest in a broad array of services in and around the school. In addition to its Promise Academies, the HCZ, for example, has created more than 20 programs, including Community Pride, Baby College, Harlem Gems Head Start, Harlem Peacemaker, TRUCE® Fitness and Nutrition Center, a Community Center, and a “Single Stop” walk-in service that provides free financial, tax, family, and legal counseling and referrals ([www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org)). By simultaneously addressing essential features of strong communities (e.g., employment, housing, schools, transportation), community developers seek both to improve the life prospects of low-income neighborhood residents and to halt the flow of middle-class families from these neighborhoods (Proscio, 2004).

The convergence of themes across the articles that dealt with the process of building effective partnerships for Community Development was striking. Community and education leaders discussed the importance of strategies such as inventorying resources and harnessing funding, establishing mechanisms and occasions for regular interactions among stakeholders, and planning with efficiency and sustainability as priorities (McKoy et al., 2011; Proscio, 2004). They also believed that engaging parents in school reform was a key aspect of community development (McKoy et al., 2011; Oppenheim, 1999; Warren et al., 2009). Based on his analysis of four neighborhoods in three urban areas, Proscio (2004) argues that, although school system support

is helpful, change efforts should build toward, but not wait for, that: “In some ways, the most remarkable conclusion to be drawn from these stories is how much difference a community can make in its children’s education without simultaneously trying to reform public education as a whole” (p. 23).

The complexity of enacting this Community Development model has obvious implications for leadership. The importance of leadership is captured by the variety of levels and dimensions discussed in the articles. Authors see the need for both a seasoned school-based leader and a “catalytic” partnership leader who can anticipate opposition and build consensus around viable, research-based theories of change (Proscio, 2004). They discuss the development of leadership within local communities (Gold et al., 2004; Warren et al., 2009) with the goal of helping communities become more self-reliant through this leadership development (Oppenheim, 1999). Such leadership is seen as a collective investment that “bridges the gap in culture and power between parents and educators” (Warren et al., 2009, p. 2211).

Central to bridging this gap is a commitment to developing a collective vision by providing space for shared dialogue and consensus building. Connecting his findings to Senge’s (1992) concept of learning organizations, Oppenheim (1999) talks about the value of “collective ownership over an organization,” noting that a shared vision “attracts commitment, reinforcing and supporting individual vision that is united under a common purpose” (p. 153). McKoy et al. (2011) similarly views shared vision as essential in cultivating leadership and building capacity. The authors recommend the “formal adoption of a vision statement by governing bodies” to ensure “the sustainability of and commitment to that shared mission” and view “shared metrics” as a key component and extension of that shared vision (p. 25). Proscio (2004) found that successful partnerships started the evaluation process early—in the planning stage—so that baseline data were collected and reformers could evaluate and revise their efforts.

**Outcomes.** Unlike sources for the other models, sources for the Community Development model only minimally address outcomes, tending instead toward recommendations for future initiatives. Some authors did, however, reference successful outcomes of the partnerships they studied. As with the other three models, academic achievement was the primary outcome measure. One of the conceptual articles (Proscio, 2004) and two of the empirical (Oppenheim, 1999; Warren et al., 2009) described improvements in reading and/or mathematics. In the only quantitative study, researchers used a causal design that compared students who were “lottery winners” within the HCZ to “lottery losers” (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011). The study found that the lottery winners performed higher on measures of mathematics and English language arts

and had lower rates of absenteeism. This absenteeism finding was echoed in two other articles. Oppenheim (1999) reported that students had one of the highest attendance records in the state; Proscio (2004) found that student attendance in participating schools rose from 80% to 94%. Second to academic achievement and attendance, articles focused on the ways that parents were engaged in the partnership. In several of the participating schools and organizations, parents held or were trained to take on leadership positions (Oppenheim, 1999; Warren et al., 2009).

The authors in this section found several other positive outcomes of schools within the Community Development model, such as increased trust (Warren et al., 2009), open communication (Oppenheim, 1999), and schools operating as hubs or community centers (Oppenheim, 1999; Proscio, 2004; Warren et al., 2009). Only one source listed outcomes related to the community rather than the school, which is surprising given the scope and purpose of the Community Development model. In it, the author described how the neighborhood in which the initiative was located experienced a surge in homeownership, increases in median family incomes and property values, and declines in vacancy, unemployment, and crime rates (Proscio, 2004).

## Discussion and Implications

We return to the questions posed at the beginning of this article regarding the nature of school–community partnerships (e.g., reform strategies, collaborative programs, new institutions), dimensions studied, factors that obstruct or facilitate success, and evidence of positive outcomes. Although we did not begin our review of the literature with typology development as a goal, our experience in comparatively analyzing partnerships has convinced us that it is a useful tool for this reform agenda. The indiscriminate use of labels to describe partnerships obscures meaningful similarities and differences in requirements for success. In contrast, a typology can illuminate the possibilities and constraints of the varying approaches that remain hidden if partnerships are not differentiated by purpose, implementation requirements, theory of action, or other key analytic dimensions. We do not claim to have studied all possible dimensions. Our approach was to draw out key factors from the extant studies and conceptual sources, through a grounded theory approach, as a start for a shared language about partnership types. We focus here on the implications of this review for partnership development and outcomes.

As shown in our comparative analysis, the typology was particularly useful in highlighting the increased requirements as partnerships took on a broader purpose and scope. Successful implementation of even the most basic partnership depended on a commitment among partners to devote time

and resources, such as a site-based coordinator, to mutually agreed-on initiatives. Leaders were needed who cultivated positive relationships and developed clear communication and evaluation systems. More complex partnership models had additional requirements: putting joint governance structures in place, involving community members in decision making, fostering parent and community leadership, and working on simultaneous renewal of the neighborhood's infrastructure. As purposes expanded and theories of action became more complex, researchers and evaluators increasingly wrote about challenges in maintaining the partnerships and accomplishing collaboratively established goals.

The prominence in this literature of the challenges that schools and community groups face in maintaining viable partnerships indicates the importance of activists and evaluators attending to conditions for success. Although the research provides helpful guidelines, acting on this knowledge requires ongoing work. No individual partnership is guaranteed success, which depends heavily on the quality of implementation. And although it is often seen as the responsibility of grass-roots users, reformers themselves can help with implementation efforts. As external evaluators of the Comer SDP schools argued, a "practical theory of school reform has to be specific enough that schools can follow the substantive theory and implement its details with 'reasonable' fidelity" (Cook et al., 1999, p. 581).

As noted in the "Typology of School–Community Partnerships" section, level and fidelity of implementation as well as longevity and intensity of treatment were, in fact, predictors of positive outcomes (Adams, 2010; Castrechini, 2011; City Connects, 2010; Henrich et al., 2007; Krenichyn et al., 2008). The CIS (2010) study, as an example, indicates that implementing the whole model has a stronger impact on outcomes than does implementing just part of the model. Simply providing services, one component, was not significantly correlated with outcomes and actually had a negative direction. Also needed were a needs assessment, collaborative planning, and a site coordinator. Cook et al. (1999) came to a similar conclusion in studying the SDP model in one school district: improving the social climate of the school, in and of itself, did not necessarily aid student achievement. In fact, it could have a negative impact unless it was accompanied by a strong academic climate.

The typology also revealed useful similarities and differences in outcomes of the various models. What stands out immediately is the common focus across the four models on student achievement indicators such as test scores, attendance, motivation, and behavior. This focus is not surprising given the school's central mission to facilitate student learning and the relatively common availability of standardized test scores. But broader interests in

improving student and family health, for example, so often seen as critical to student learning, often went unexamined. The lack of outcome data in these areas is particularly ironic given the subtitle of Dryfoos's (1994) early book on the Full-Service School model: *A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families*. Similarly, few studies in the last two models, FSCSs and Community Development initiatives included data on outcomes specific to their broader goals, such as increasing democratic decision making or improving neighborhood stability.

In terms of methodological rigor, a number of studies across all four models used a quasi-experimental design, with either a school- or student-level comparison group and reported findings when they were positive, negative, or mixed. Other studies used a simple interrupted time-series design to measure change, typically did not use a comparison group or report levels of significance, and seemed to limit their reporting to positive findings (e.g., Einspruch et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2005). Often effect sizes were small or results of studies were mixed. In addition, much of the research we reviewed was qualitative, self-reported, or correlational. Although these research designs can inform the development of initiatives, they are less useful in establishing causal claims about the effectiveness of community schools. Although implementation studies are essential for the continual improvement of school–community partnerships, the increasing demand for more and better evidence makes expedient increased attention to rigorously designed outcome studies.

Typologizing school–community partnerships is an important first step in assessing their success. Each model has a distinct purpose that necessitates certain types of commitment or change. One model is not necessarily better than another, but there are advantages and disadvantages to each. Knowing these trade-offs in advance can help those who want to embark on school–community partnerships make wise choices. So, for example, although the Family and Interagency Collaboration model is regarded by some as a piecemeal approach to reform, facilitating positive outcomes for individual families but not institutions or neighborhoods as a whole, its more limited scope makes its goals more measurable and achievable. In fact, little difference is evident in their documented impact when compared with the more ambitious models. Nonetheless, the Full-Service School model has the potential to provide a more comprehensive array of services to a broader clientele, creating a tightly knit web of support for students and families. Critics of that model, coming mostly from those who support the FSCS model, object to terms like clientele and services as positioning families as passive, deficient recipients rather than full partners in the life of the school and community. But the sources we reviewed—partly by being so few in number—suggest that the egalitarian vision of this model is particularly difficult to achieve.

And although there is evidence that all four of the models can promote academic success and meet targeted family and community needs, there is not yet compelling evidence that sustainable models have been developed with enough power to transform communities. As evidenced by the Dobbie and Fryer (2011) study of the HCZ, although the general purpose of the organization under investigation might be Community Development, the scope of the research might be much narrower. As Castrechini (2011) pointed out in his review of just four schools, the fact that partnerships

involve programs and services from a variety of service providers who may collect data differently, input those data into different systems, and do not have an infrastructure for sharing data with other providers makes gathering consistent and complete data complicated. (p. 7)

Fortunately, a few initiatives (e.g., City Connects, 2010, 2012; CIS, 2010; Walker & Hackmann, 1999) have created the type of integrated databases that enable systematic and rigorous evaluation of comprehensive reform agendas that can be a model for others and are worth emulating.

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### **Notes**

1. Based on their experience, actors within these partnerships might well have categorized themselves differently.
2. See Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson (2013) for a more detailed analysis of each study.
3. This example illustrates our earlier “classification” caution. Based on an after-school program evaluation of six schools (Krenichyn, Clark, & Benitez, 2008), we classified CAS partnerships as Family and Interagency Collaborations. In contrast, Keith (1999) described a single CAS school with the purpose of illustrating “new discourses” in partnerships—one that fundamentally changed partner roles and meets our criteria for a Full-Service Community School.

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