120-Day Assignment

The Need for Community Schools

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120 Day – Revision of Original Draft

1. Revise your argumentative essay according to your Professor's recommendations. Submit the second draft to DIAL by the end of 120 days.

2. Include the sentence outline and headings developed for the 60-day and 100-day assignment with any changes received from professor feedback.

3. Additional drafts may be required before you will be allowed to present your paper in the Forum during Core 4.

4. Review the syllabus for the milestones that will need to be met in Core 3.

5. The submission of the forum paper (COM 822-62 Milestone #4) for consideration of presentation is a condition of attending Core 4.

6. Your Core 4 grade for this course will be the average of the grades submitted by the Faculty Dais.

7. The forum paper must be presented in Core 4 before being admitted to Core 5.

8. Any exceptions due to extenuating circumstances must be requested in writing to the Chief Academic Officer/Dean (dean@ogs.edu).

Thesis Statement

Despite objections to more financing and organizational changes, community schools are essential to meet the vast variety of social-psychological, health-related, and socio-economic needs of students and their families.

The Need for Community Schools

Despite objections to more financing and organizational changes, community schools are essential to meet the vast variety of social-psychological, health-related, and social-economic needs of students and their families. The Coalition for Community Schools defines community schools as a "place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community Resources" (McDaniels, A., 2018; Jacobson, R., 2019). Community schools create partnerships with outside agencies to address complex student needs and have evolved since the mid-1800s (Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018; Mayger, L. K., & Hochbein, C. D.,2019, p.226; Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020; Provinzano, K., et al, 2018; Jacobson, R., 2019).

History and Funding of Community Schools

After its initial onset in 1800, Community School gained in popularity over time as schools attempted to address the needs of children living in poverty. Community Schools emerged again in the 1930s and in the 1960s. Due to the Non-profit organizations of the Coalition of Community Schools, the Children's Aid Society, the National Center of Community Schools, and the research of Joy Dryfoos (1994, 1998), Community Schools expanded widely in the mid-1990s (Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020). "What makes community schools unique is the combination of four key pillars (or features) that together create the conditions necessary for students to thrive. The pillars are: 1) integrated student support; 2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities; 3) active family and community engagement; and 4) collaborative leadership and practices" (Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2023).

Because public school districts are locally controlled and funded through local property taxes, funding schools this way can perpetuate structural inequities in poorer school districts. "Public schools largely have not been reimagined and retooled to educate children living in poverty to high levels. On international assessments, the nation's most affluent students perform first in the world, while students in poor communities perform on par with Romania or Chile" (McDaniels, A., 2018). Students living in poverty have minimal access to critical resources. Community schools are resurfacing as a mechanism for addressing the systemic and structural inequities plaguing students, schools, and communities" (Provinzano et al, 2018).

Community schools exist to enhance the success of marginalized students by supplying resources, services, and support through community partnerships. This is done by collaboration and establishing ties with stakeholders. Community schools also offer chances for extended day learning and culturally appropriate instructional strategies to reduce systemic access obstacles. In order to satisfy the needs of students and families and to lessen achievement gaps and disparities, these schools offer a platform for partnerships with community stakeholders. The approximate 5,000 Community schools not only give over two million students access, but they also improve all-around student achievement in over 150 communities nationwide. (Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020; Daniel et al, 2019; Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2023).

Community Schools Are Necessary For Increased Social-Psychological Demands

Social-psychological needs impact students' mental health and behavior (Báez et al, 2019; Hoover, S. A., 2019; Coleman et al, 2020). In its Annual Report, The State of Mental Health in America 2022, "Nationally, only 27.2% of youth with severe depression receive some consistent treatment (7-25+ visits in a year)... While rates of mental health treatment are low for all youth with major depression, youth of color are significantly less likely to receive depression treatment than white youth. Asian youth were least likely to have seen a health professional or received medication for their depression (8.30%), followed by Black or African American youth (9.40%) and Hispanic youth (9.50%)" (Reinert, M. et al, 2021).

Understanding the negative impact of systemic policies and laws in helping to create and continue cycles of poverty, the social-psychological needs of students are astounding. Community schools are necessary to address the students' social-psychological needs, which impact academic performance (Coleman et al, 2020; Daniel et al, 2020; McDaniels, A., 2018; Walkley, M., & Cox, T. L., 2013). These schools provide students with access to enrichment programs to raise academic performance and close the achievement gap; thus, improving student achievement, lessen achievement gaps and disparities (Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020; Daniel et al, 2019; Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2023; Daniel et al, 2020).

Community Schools are also training staff to become trauma-responsive schools to increase students' coping skills and graduation rates. It is estimated that nearly half of all

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Commented [2]: I see a closer connection in this paragraph and the next one between "needs" and "demands." However, you still need be more clear in your specific identification of them to help the reader.

children in the United States have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience or ACE. Understanding that these children's needs pay off in a number of ways is crucial. Trauma-responsive schools have improved attendance, and classroom behavior, and created emotionally and physically safe environments. The foundation of all these components is a comprehensive school mental health system that requires collaboration between schools and the community, in partnership with students and families, to provide a multi-tiered system of support and services (MTSS). MTSS "promotes positive school climate, social emotional learning, and mental health. MTSS also assesses and addresses the social and environmental factors that affect mental health, including public policies and social norms that shape student mental health outcomes" (Hoover, S. A., 2019).

Students provided with mental health care through community schools reduce school suspensions, disciplinary referrals, and risk behaviors and help to improve school grades, personal responsibility, future aspiration, and family engagement (Olubiyi et al, 2019). However, the Practitioners at Seneca Family of Agencies, a nonprofit organization that partners with schools specifically around mental and behavioral health support and intervention, warn of the temptation to just refer students out of the classroom to receive specialized attention (Kimner, H., 2020). The dispositional number of referrals for interventions for students of color is often perceived as a resource but can also contribute to feelings of inefficacy for both teachers and students as well as an erosion of the trust between the two (Kiner, H., 2020). Developing a "push-in" version of student support demands explicit teacher capacity building. Schools and districts must create and maintain strong systems for identifying student and teacher needs as well as for developing the human capital resources (including expertise from partner

organizations, agencies, and community institutions) needed to create a comprehensive and effective system of support and care (Kimner, H., 2020).

Community Schools Help Meet Health-Related and Socio-Economic Needs

There is a direct correlation between child poverty and short and long-term health and well-being. Through the experience of deprivation, poverty affects child health directly through food insufficiency or lack of housing, but also indirectly through the availability of parental or community resources. A lack of economic resources, like education, childcare, parental leave, and health care, affects children's access to health-promoting policies and affects both current and later-life health and mortality. Children's health improves through income support policies which also help to reduce poverty and improve economic well-being (Pilkauskas, N. V., 2023). One such policy is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which helps 40 million Americans afford food for their families; 90% of which are families with children, elderly, and people with disabilities. Food insecurity and a poorer diet are linked to chronic health conditions such as hypertension and diabetes and overall poorer health (Keith-Jennings et al, 2019).

The health and socio-economic well-being of students in American classrooms is a mirror to the greater society. The poverty rate in America was at 11.6% in 2021, which translates to about 38 million Americans, 3.7 million of whom are children (Census Bureau, 2022). Food insecurity currently affects nearly 50 million people nationwide: 87% of which are households with children under the age of 18 (USDA, 2022). Furthermore, one in six households reported the inability to afford food (Census Bureau, 2021; Food Research and Action Center as cited in American Youth Policy Forum, 2015) (Normandin, B., 2022). It is imperative that we invest in

giving our children the best resources and opportunities to reach their full potential. “This means going beyond the needs of education and ensuring that children are healthy for school. One way to do this is to support community schools which partner with stakeholders and were developed to respond to the needs of a child as a whole, including physical and mental health services and resources for after-school care and enrichment (Normandin, B., 2022; Wynns, 2021). Community schools are necessary to address the students’ social-economic needs (Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020; Daniel et al, 2019; Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2023; Daniel et al, 2020).

Community schools are necessary to address students’ health-related and socio-economic needs at school to help students to be available for learning. Community school and agency partnerships support families in administering medications and treating and monitoring the student’s health at school for increased academic success (Coleman et al, 2020). Children in schools whose families qualify for SNAP also qualify for free or reduced lunch, which helps with food insecurity at school. Many schools in districts across the nation share a nurse, school psychologist, or school social worker. Working with community agencies and health professionals helps ensure that more students and families have access to the services they need during the school day (Roche, M. K., & Strobach, K. V., 2019).

Community Schools can also meet socio-economic challenges through their early childhood programs. Pre-Kindergarten initiatives “bring together elementary schools and preschool centers along with (depending on the site) libraries, museums, hospitals, early intervention providers, home visiting organizations, and family child-care networks.” (Jacobson, D., 2018). Pre-Kindergarten partnerships address the gap between preschool and early

elementary education, aligning standards and expectations to improve the transition to kindergarten. These partnerships deepen their work by providing joint professional learning experiences to early childhood and early elementary teachers on literacy, math, and/or social-emotional skill development (Jacobson, D., 2018).

School administrators need to make sure that teachers, students, and families know ways to ask for help and what support is available. Community schools should prioritize integration, alignment, and coherence through interdisciplinary Coordination of Services Teams (COST)—or comprehensive implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)23—and include families and community partners" (Kimner, H., 2020). By developing strategic partnerships to address health and socioeconomic needs, community schools can help marginalized families get ahead when aligned with community resources (McDaniels, A. (2018); Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C., 2020; Daniel et al, 2019; Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2023; Daniel et al, 2020)**.**

Community Schools Need Long Term Funding and Organizational Structure

Community Schools are often challenged by a lack of political support, wealth, or resources to advance their student population. They also must struggle against racial bias which fails to acknowledge the history and contributions of people of color, African American contributions, and history. There is a need for strong community engagement to challenge these beliefs and to lobby for resources (Medina et al, 2020). Diversified funding can be a problem in sustaining community schools. There needs to be a detailed plan for long-term sustainability. Funding for Community School Coordinators in district-directed community schools often shares the same school district employer as the educators and staff in the school building **(**Mayger, L.

K., & Hochbein, C. D., 2019). In University-assisted community schools or in lead-partner community schools, the Community Schools Coordinators are employed by community-based organizations **(**Mayger, L. K., & Hochbein, C. D., 2019).

Community Schools infrastructure needs to include a strong and clearly defined organizational structure with regular partnership meetings to review progress, examine challenges, explore emergent needs, and brainstorm solutions. School-level teaming structures are also essential, especially the Care Team wraparound structures that allow for team problem solving related to individual student needs. Key programs and partners were noted, particularly ones involving academic interventions, school-based mental health services, and parent–family educational programs" (Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018)

Despite the fact that community schools are beneficial for students, Mayer and Hochbein's research shows that working across various organizational borders and authority structures is difficult for community school coordinators. The study also showed that uneven funding might have a significant impact on the work. Although the Community School Coordinator's job is essential to the school's success, there isn't a set procedure for how the coordinators should go about bringing different organizations together to collaborate with the school. Positions for Community School Coordinators are frequently financed by a variety of sources. Without consistent funding, the job security of the Community School Coordinators and the programs in the Community Schools that depend on funding are in jeopardy. (Mayger and Hochbein, 2019).

Working in community schools with various titles, including the Community Schools Coordinator, is a new category of labor, and few universities have set up courses to prepare

people for this new profession. Having courses to understand educational systems and human service systems along with education and community psychology, social work, public administration, and public health would be crucial for the Community Site Coordinators. In schools of education, principals and teachers need curriculum courses to learn about starting community schools and community school models, along with child, youth, and family development as part of their training. For youth workers coming in from community agencies, they need to learn about what goes on in schools and how they can play a role in creating new kinds of institutions (Dryfoos, J., & Maguire, S., 2019).

From the very beginning, Community School partnership plans to maintain sustainability across multiple schools and fiscal years should be created to avoid inadequate infrastructure for the community and school stakeholders to collaborate efficiently (Anderson-Butcher et al, 2018). All efforts should be made to create a diversified funding stream to support service delivery work from multiple funders (Roche, M. K., & Strobach, K. V, 2019)**.** Funding plans often do not include long-term funding for the Community School's Coordinators. "No matter who employs them, Community School Coordinators' job security may be precarious, as many community schools rely on a patchwork of short-term funding streams that undermine a school's ability to maintain programming over time" **(**Mayger, L. K., & Hochbein, C. D., 2019). The funding in community schools may be from a combination of public and private sources, employers vary **(**Mayger, L. K., & Hochbein, C. D., 2019).

Community Schools Must Have Strategic Professional Development Including Self-Care

Community Schools must also address teachers' practices, professional development, and support. If teaching and learning is not a central focus for all stakeholders, Community

Schools' stakeholders will not realize their potential as sites for improving the educational opportunities of underserved students. Besides removing barriers to learning through service integration and family and community engagement, these schools need highly qualified teachers who are enabled to engage in culturally relevant and responsive practices that advance academic excellence and social change (Sanders et al., 2021). One of the findings of this study was that professional development was more focused on community school objectives in a university community school (Sanders, M. G., & Galindo, C. (Eds.), 2020). This study may have demonstrated that university community schools can work with professional development, but it should be in collaboration with school staff. Understanding the mindset of educators, a collaboration for professional development would build capacity within the school.

This collaborative mindset needs to expand to include the students and families. As Community School leaders plan professional development, they will need to be mindful of preconceived notions or assumptions about families in poverty made by school staff or community partners. The body of research with community schools primarily focuses on the wraparound support with community agencies, rather than considering the numerous ways the schools could support racial equity (Daniel et al, 2020; McKinney de Royston & Madkins, 2019; Jacobson, R., 2019). While wraparound supports are important components of the community schools strategy, overemphasizing them can reinforce deficit ideas about low-income communities and communities of color (Daniel et al, 2020; McKinney de Royston & Madkins, T. C., 2019; Sanders et al, 2018). "An increasing body of research pushes back on this tendency, to define community schools as a strategy that includes integrated student supports; expanded learning opportunities; ways to engage families and community members from marginalized backgrounds in shaping curriculum and the running of the school; and collaborative practices in

schools" (Daniel et al, 2020; McKinney de Royston & Madkins, T. C., 2019; Sanders et al, 2018).

As a part of developing a culture of collaboration and respect, school and community stakeholders need to understand that poverty is not the fault of people living in low-income neighborhoods; nor are they the fault of educators who staff the neighborhoods' schools. Beyond their control are other challenges facing these neighborhoods such as high rates of unemployment, rapid population turnover, and changes in the job market. All these factors exacerbate the effects of poverty and weaken community institutions and informal social norms that support conventional behavior—or behavior consistent with expectations that are broadly socially acceptable, like having children in marriage. Historically, policies at all levels of government have helped create neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, and they too often facilitate disinvestment in these communities (McDaniels, A., 2018).

We desperately need education leaders who are compassionate, empathetic, and willing to facilitate processes in schools that positively support students and staff who are coping with a complexity of issues, including trauma, but over-caring can produce burnout. Too often the education staff overextend themselves and neglect their own well-being, needs, wants, and feelings. "This form of caring can be self-destructive and reinforce patterns of self-neglect. Self-neglect then becomes fertile ground for the exhaustion, overwhelm, and resentment that are core elements of compassion fatigue" (Johnson, M. M., 2020). It is easy to get depleted doing good, but God wants us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31). Self-care then becomes necessary for sustainability in giving of ourselves to help and serve others.

Children are vital to maintaining a thriving society. Schools can no longer be solely responsible for meeting the complexity of the needs of today's students. Community school partnerships organize collaborations to address the immense needs of underserved students and their families. Jesus summed up his love for the poor by saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did *it* for one of the least of these brothers *or sisters* of Mine, you did *it* for Me" (Matthew 25:40). Community Schools provide necessary resources to underserved students and families. Jesus also summed up his love for children by saying, "Behold, children are a gift from the LORD, The fruit of the womb a reward" (Psalm 127:3). As a society, we need to take off the price tag and remove all barriers when it comes to taking care of all of our children.

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