

Chapter 15

Community Schools: Local and National Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This closing chapter is about community schools from both local and national perspectives. This chapter adheres to the Penn Concepts that the most important work of Universities is the solving of social problems, and that universities should deal with the universal problems of local communities. The concept of community schools based on Kronick's model of systems theory, collaboration, and prevention is presented. The importance of theory and practice is discussed using the Chicago School of Sociology as an exemplar of the contributions of George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley, William I. Thomas, Everett Hughes, and Erving Goffman. These scholars opened the doors to engaged research and set a path that Kronick has followed since 1971.

INTRODUCTION

Community Schools – what are they, where did they come from? How do they compare to charters, accelerated and other alternatives to existing public, private, and parochial schools? How well are America's schools doing in contemporary American society? What are the non-academic factors that correlate to education and schools? Cultural epochs often determine problems that confront the educational system—problems that influence teaching and learning in pre K-12 schools. Poverty is a critical systemic issue that flares out into problems that fall under housing, crime and delinquency, mental illness, alcohol and drugs, and others. It is important to keep in mind that children and families must navigate systems every day. Systems-thinking focuses on rules, roles and responsibilities (Parsons, 1959), and alerts community school folks to systemic impacts such as third graders not reading on grade level resulting from a parent losing their job or a sibling losing their asthma inhaler keeping the family awake and causing short tempers. Those different systems impact the child's ability to read. The following, often played out in school, illustrates that identified behaviors such as reading result from behaviors that are in other and different systems, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner saw systems like Russian dolls in nested

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-0280-8.ch015

Community Schools

systems. In 2005, Kronick's model of community schools stressed systems, collaboration and prevention. Collaboration includes trust, clear agreements, communication, decision-making, mentoring and evaluation, recognition, and leadership, (Kronick & Daniels, 2018). Collaboration is far more intricate and involved than coordination or cooperation. It requires more than simple agreements and requires that one give up something and that often is turfism. Prevention is designed to keep students in school, prevent them from dropping out and prevent dropouts from coming into state custody. Too often children coming into state custody don't come out. They often end up in the custody of the Department of Corrections, which is an expensive proposition, and these children may come out worse than they went in. Systems, collaboration, and prevention are at the heart of community schools based on the work of Kronick as he first developed it in 2000, (Kronick, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2017). While working in isolation, Kronick first met Joy Dryfoos at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting (AERA) in San Diego, California. Dryfoos may be considered the modern-day creator of community schools. She saw the community school as a revolution in mental health and other services. She saw clinics as a key facet of what she termed full-service schools. Later the term full-service community school came into vogue. The Coalition of Community Schools termed community schools a place and a system of relationships (2017). Intermediaries could be libraries, human service agencies, etc. Ira Harkavy and Bob Kronick, along with JoAnn Weeks, Karen Quartz, Jim Grim, et al., are proponents of universities as intermediaries. The Penn Group, Harkavy, Weeks, Hodges, Johnson and Puckett, and Kronick have been, and continue to be, proponents of University Assisted Community Schools (UACS). The Penn Group believed universities had the resources to make community schools seats of democracy. Kronick's work at its inception focused on the school as a human service agency more akin to Dryfoos' full-service model.

As Kronick's model evolved it currently supports the school as a seamless organization where day school is shift one and the community school, 3-7:30 p.m., is shift two. This has led to communication that is top down, bottom up and lateral. This has led to a philosophy where the children are seen as all our children. Initially the kiddos were seen as full service or day school. If something went wrong, it was the full-service students who were responsible. Keep in mind that the community school students are among the most challenged in challenged schools.

Maslow, Admission to the Program and Collaboration in Action

Maslow (1970) said it, and it lives on as a guiding force in understanding human behavior and formulating programs by meeting the basic needs of all people of food, shelter, and clothing. It seemed at the outset of the project that academic success could not likely happen if these basic needs were not being met. So, the obvious set of solutions was to make the school the site of meeting these basic needs. It is the philosophy of our UACS that non-academic needs are to be met at and by the school. Clearly put, the program was school based as opposed to school linked. Kronick (2005) put school-based programs into place as these could not be organizational problems due to coupling. In comparison, school-linked programs have couplings where each program interfaces with schools. Hal Lawson is an eloquent voice for school-linked programs. Stigma in providing services such as counseling was minimized by offering them at schools. Jerry Morton remarked in a personal communication with this author that, "It was no longer a question of whether the school would be a parent, it was would [the school] be a good parent." Following Morton's prescient quote the following services were initially offered and are today:

Food – Snacks are provided at 2:45 before the beginning of shift two. Dinner for children, families, and community members is provided. In title one schools such as ours, dinner was cereal without milk

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