

# JOINT USE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

A Framework for a New Social Contract



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## **Authors**

Mary Filardo, Jeffrey M. Vincent, Marni Allen, and Jason Franklin

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## ABOUT THIS PAPER

In this paper, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund and the Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California Berkeley provide a conceptual frame for the joint use of PK-12 public schools. There is a growing conversation about and demand for joint use as a way to provide services to children and families in convenient locations, improve opportunities for physical activity by increasing use of school recreational and outdoor spaces, leverage capital investments, and more. However, engaging in joint use, particularly intensive sharing of space or use by multiple parties, presents ongoing challenges to school and community leaders. In this paper, we frame the basic challenges and opportunities for joint use to facilitate better conversations and planning for these type of collaborations.

This conceptual paper serves as a companion to a set of tools for practitioners and policymakers for implementing and sustaining joint use and joint development of public school facilities. Other tools available from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund and the Center for Cities and Schools on joint use and development include:

- Examples of joint development and joint use;
- Catalogue and analysis of state policies and model school district and state level policies to support joint use and development (See: <http://www.BestSchoolFacilities.org>);
- A “joint use calculator” tool for computing the real costs associated with the use of school facilities; and
- A database template for including community use data and information in a facility information management system.

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## A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

In addition to the primary responsibility of school districts to provide high quality teaching and learning, schools are increasingly being called on to help create and sustain active, healthy communities and vibrant neighborhoods. These new demands suggest a need to examine the relationship between public schools and their community and the need for new policies to guide the school-community relationship. With new policies and practices, public school facilities can become more vibrant public spaces where public education is the primary—but not only—user.

Across the country, school districts are increasing the utilization of their buildings and grounds by extending access to non-school users, particularly during non-school hours. Consequently, both public and private parties are increasingly exploring the possibility of joint development of school buildings and grounds.

**With new policies and practices, public school facilities can become more vibrant public spaces where public education is the primary—but not only—user.**

However, entities seeking to use school buildings and grounds or partner in their development often find that school districts are difficult partners. Too often, school districts are not governed, managed, or funded to navigate the complexities and opportunities inherent in school joint use and joint development. To help facilitate joint use arrangements, school districts need a greater understanding of the benefits to an expanded use of our public schools. School districts and the non-school parties interested in access to school buildings and grounds need a common language to address the barriers to and benefits of joint use. To facilitate this, we provide a conceptual framework for the joint use and joint development of PK-12th grade public school buildings and grounds. From the conceptual framework, more robust policy, planning, and management infrastructures can be established.

Specifically, in this paper we:

- Define a **typology** for joint use and joint development and provide definitions;
- Describe the factors that underlie **demand** for joint use and joint development;
- Present the **benefits** possible from joint use and development; and
- Identify the **challenges** to expand access to and development of public school buildings and grounds.

We propose that a fundamental shift is needed in how we view our public school buildings and grounds; a new social contract for the use of our public school infrastructure.



*Savoy and Thurgood Marshall Sports and Learning Center*

## DEFINING JOINT USE

With regard to their facilities, a school district's first responsibility is to provide an adequate environment for compulsory elementary and secondary education programs and the administrative functions that support them. Districts must also balance the space and schedule needs of school-sponsored extra-curricular and athletic activities with the demands of the normal school day and calendar. These primary uses for public school buildings and grounds will be referred to as "public education use."

The use of school district controlled, owned, or utilized facilities by a non-district entity is joint use. There are five types of entities that constitute the joint users:

- *Individuals:* Persons, generally residents of a community, who have access to exterior spaces, such as play equipment, athletic fields or courts, and open space for personal use.
- *Civic Groups:* Individuals, groups, or organizations, who seek occasional use of school buildings and grounds for activities or events such as polling stations, community meetings, and special events.
- *Other Public Agencies:* A public agency that is not part of the school district that may offer programs, need to lease space and offer no program connection to the school, and/or may seek joint development with ongoing joint programming.
- *Private Non-Profit Organizations:* The use of school buildings and/or grounds by a non-profit organization such as after-school programs, health clinics, or adult education classes.
- *Private For-Profit Corporations:* The use of school building and/or grounds by a private for-profit corporation, either for education-related work like a private testing service or unrelated work like private offices.

Spaces inside a school dedicated for joint use could either be spaces used part-time by the school and part-time by other users or be dedicated exclusively for use by an outside entity. Joint use is “shared” when the space is used by the school during school hours, a classroom, for example used in an after school program, or “dedicated” when a school space is exclusively available to the outside entity, for example, an after-school office or storage area.

## Reasons for Joint Use

Non-school district entities seek joint use of public schools for a myriad of reasons. As public entities, most school districts currently have obligations, in law or in practice, to allow some levels of general public use of grounds for recreation and to support civic uses of public schools, such as voting, community meetings, and special events. The occasional joint use of school buildings and grounds

by individuals, groups, or organizations, for individual or community activities or events will be referred to as “civic use.”

**Few states or school districts have adequate policies, guidelines, budgets, plans, expertise, or governance systems to take full advantage of the complex landscape of joint use and joint development possibilities.**

Public and private entities seek joint use in schools because of the need for the specialized spaces found in school buildings and grounds, as well as the desire of program providers for convenient access to the child, youth, and family populations they serve. School facility use may explicitly connect to the school mission, such as when other agencies or non-profits offer social services specifically for the families of the schools’ students which enable families to provide better home environments to support their children. The joint users providing school-support have intended to advance student achievement, primarily by addressing social, emotional, economic, and health barriers to school success for children. This is joint use for youth development. In joint use for community wellbeing, while the families of students may be welcome, the joint user has the overall community or neighborhood as its focus; for example, a primary care health clinic located in a school. Joint use with a public charter school would be a community-related joint use even if it has an educational mission because, by definition, it is not linked to the school in which it may be co-located, and because it would be open to students from the entire community.

Finally, there is joint use, either shared or dedicated where the user seeks no relationship with the school or its families but desires access to the location and space in the school. This is real estate joint use. For example, some churches regularly use school auditoria for services and government agencies sometimes locate offices in under-utilized schools.



*Community art exhibit at Cardozo High School*

Related to each of these types of joint use is an interest in joint development. Joint development of new or existing public school facilities enables the site, building plan and design to better support the joint use of the building and land. Successful joint development requires the public education, civic, school, community and real estate users to collaboratively articulate a vision, develop a plan for design, agree on a schedule, and agree on how building and site costs will be paid for and maintained. Ongoing joint use agreements are necessarily a part of joint development agreements. Other public agencies, as well as private developers, may be interested in joint development—particularly of school property in desirable locations given their size, scale, amenities and/or proximity. Public agencies may be interested in locating affordable housing, recreation centers, libraries or elder service centers on school sites. Private developers may be seeking to take advantage of existing public infrastructure to address pent-up demand for housing, commercial, or retail space not already available. Similar to joint use, joint development may be school, community, or real estate driven.

Few states or school districts have adequate policies, guidelines, budgets, plans, expertise, or governance systems to take full advantage of the complex landscape of joint use and joint development possibilities. Current policies and guidelines often leave school district staff unprepared to navigate the competing pressures or requirements for extensive joint use of their facilities, or to evaluate and engage in joint

development. In the absence of adequate policy infrastructure, getting access to public school buildings or grounds for non-school use can be difficult or even impossible — especially for non-district organized programs and services. Not harnessing joint use and development strategies to achieve mutually-beneficial development or programming is a missed opportunity for schools and communities.

## **FACTORS DRIVING DEMAND**

Demographic patterns, housing, community character and wealth, and school district capital infrastructure combine to drive the demand for joint use and joint development of public school buildings and grounds.

### **Demographic Patterns**

Demographic patterns affect the enrollment in schools and thereby the needs that the school district has to meet. Our country's public schools are one of the most utilized public assets in our communities. On most weekdays, there are nearly 55 million students and staff in public schools; about one-sixth of the total U.S. population. Nearly 90 percent of all school-age children are enrolled in public schools. This concentration of school children and facilities in communities throughout the country creates an opportunity to expand both the reach of direct service provision and the utilization of centralized recreational and educational spaces to a larger group of users.

**Not harnessing joint use and development strategies to achieve mutually-beneficial development or programming is a missed opportunity for schools and communities.**

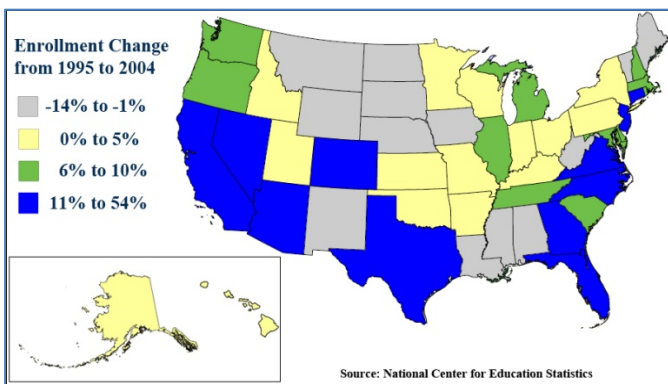
Not just the number of students a school district serves, but the economic condition of their families and the neighborhoods they come from affect the demand for



joint use and the ability of school districts to respond to these demands.

First, fewer families today have children, and those that do tend to not have as many as in the past. In 1960, 47 percent of all households had children under 18 years old. By contrast, in 2008, only 31 percent of all households had children.<sup>1</sup>

These trends relate to school facilities by lessening school space demands during school hours and potentially weakening public support for educational issues. Fewer school-age children in communities result in steady or declining enrollments, thereby reducing demand for school space by students. Consequently, in communities with fewer school-age children there is often space within schools that is under-utilized and so could be available for joint use. However, when fewer families in a community have children, voters may be less likely to support taxes to fund education, particularly costly expenses such as capital programs.



Second, because of the country's overall population growth, U.S. public school enrollment has increased in recent years and continues to do so, even though the share of households with children has declined since the 1960s and the number of children in each household is down. In the decade between 1995 and 2004, public school enrollment increased more than it did between the 30 years previous from 1965 to 1995. Public school enrollment is projected to increase by 2 million students by 2015 (from 2009 projected enrollment).<sup>2</sup> Where enrollments are rising, crowding is often a problem. In crowded schools, the building and grounds are so intensely used by the school and students that it is difficult for non-school users to get access to the fully utilized space, even after school hours, as extra curricular and athletic activities fill up the school after hours and on weekends. Additionally, joint development

is difficult, if not impossible, because school sizes tend to be large to support high enrollments and so added use on the site cannot be accommodated.

Finally, demographic changes have led to entrenched patterns of poverty concentration in some schools, but not others.<sup>3</sup> Schools differ greatly in the types of students they serve, creating different demands and challenges to ensuring educational quality. The effects of the last half-century of metropolitan expansion and demographic change have increased racial and economic segregation, with poverty often concentrated in older neighborhoods and their schools.<sup>4</sup> In many urban centers, the proportion of school-age children is low and the children in the public schools are from low-income families living in distressed neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup> Schools in low-income communities are under enormous pressure to not only educate children but also to battle conditions of poverty such as the lack of health care, poor nutrition, and little homework or other educational support or enrichment from families.<sup>6</sup>

To assist their students, some schools provide services to address these challenges, often partnering with community-based organizations and other public agencies to run programs inside schools. These "out-of-school interventions" can be seen in "Full-Service Schools," the "Community School" model, and the Beacon Initiative, altering the space use demands inside schools.<sup>7</sup> In schools serving children from low-income families, the demand by non-profit service providers is high, in part driven by foundation funding to provide academic supports. For example, San Francisco Unified School District, which has approximately 70 percent of its more than 55,000 students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch, has more than 400 non-profit organizations operating programs in one or more of the city's 134 public schools.

**The density of housing and the character of the neighborhood and community affect the need and demand for joint use.**

## Housing & Community Development

The density of housing and the character of the neighborhood and community affect the need and demand for joint use. Nationally, in the 2007-2008 school year, elementary and secondary public school students were enrolled in about 97,196 public schools in 17,899 school districts, including 4,561 public charter schools.<sup>8</sup> Public schools, particularly those built before the 1970s, tend to be located in residential neighborhoods, close to the children, youth and families they serve.

Schools located in the center of dense neighborhoods with suitable housing for families will likely face the most demands for joint use, both school-support and community-related joint use. However, even where schools are more distant from population centers, they will be in demand for joint use, primarily school-support joint use as they provide a desirable concentration of children to serve for afterschool and other enrichment programs.

**There are more public school buildings than any other public facility in the United States; the buildings contain an estimated 6.6 billion square feet of space on more than 1 million acres of land.**

With significant amounts of the high density public housing that dominated cities for the past half-century being abandoned, demolished, or redeveloped under the banner of urban redevelopment, public schools in many urban areas that were once extremely overcrowded have experienced significant enrollment declines.<sup>9</sup> For example, a public elementary school in Washington, DC that packed in nearly 1,000 students in 1968, currently enrolls a comfortable 350 students. In the past decade, many deteriorated housing units were torn down and not rebuilt, or redevelopment programs such as federally-supported HOPE VI and other local initiatives led to the construction of mixed-income housing that was less affordable or appealing to families. These changes in housing composition have directly impacted local public school enrollment shifts. A

2006 study by the Urban Institute looking at housing patterns and public school enrollment in Washington, DC, found that housing density and type of housing has a major effect on composition of the household. Existing single-family homes in the District of Columbia had 46 public school children per hundred homes; multi-unit rental housing had 27 children per 100 units; and condos had 7 children per 100 units. Housing and neighborhood redevelopment decisions on affordability and type of housing will affect school enrollments.

In urban and suburban communities where households once included more families with children and more children in each family, the utilization of schools necessarily declines. This has been offset somewhat by the expansion of early childhood education.

Half-day kindergarten, while still a fixture in some communities, is essentially gone in most urban school districts, replaced not only by full-day kindergarten, but also all-day pre-kindergarten and even the expansion of public pre-school for three-year-olds. This has been possible, in part, because of the presence of unused space in school buildings where the number of school age children has declined. These underutilized school spaces also serve as potential sites for the expansion of school-support joint use, as well as community-related joint use, especially for the location of services such as adult education, job training, or sports leagues that can enhance opportunities and outcomes for under-privileged communities.



*Las Vegas, NV Sprawl*

On the flip side, in new growth communities, developers are typically required to set aside land for public schools and other public infrastructure. The location of the school within the development will have a significant effect on how much demand there will be for joint use. The National Association of Realtors has been a proponent of joint development and joint use as a way to limit the acreage requirement for how much land must be provided by the developer for public schools or other public amenities. Minimizing acreage for new schools enables developers to generate more income from the private development

Low-density development, particularly with the declining number of children per household, means students typically must be bussed to school to fully enroll a school to capacity. Once bussing has been incorporated into its operations, longer bus rides for students are of marginal concern to school districts. To support schools with larger enrollments, which generate some economies of scale in staffing and operations, districts will extend travel time for students.

These longer travel times have negative educational and health outcomes for students, with the increased transit time to and from school reducing the time available to students for academic and recreational activities. When students and families live far from school, long travel distances make it less likely that the school will serve as an appealing site for joint use activities, as it is not conveniently located as a school located in a densely-populated community.

## School District Capital Investments

There are more public school buildings than any other public facility in the United States; the buildings contain an estimated 6.6 billion square feet of space on more than 1 million acres of land.<sup>10</sup> Schools have highly desirable spaces for joint use, such as meeting rooms, auditoria, gymnasias, swimming pools, playgrounds, and sports fields, and in the decade between 1994 and 2005 about \$500 billion was spent by school districts on new school construction and building improvements.<sup>11</sup> About half of this was spent on new construction and additions, but the other \$250 billion was spent on improvements to existing facilities.

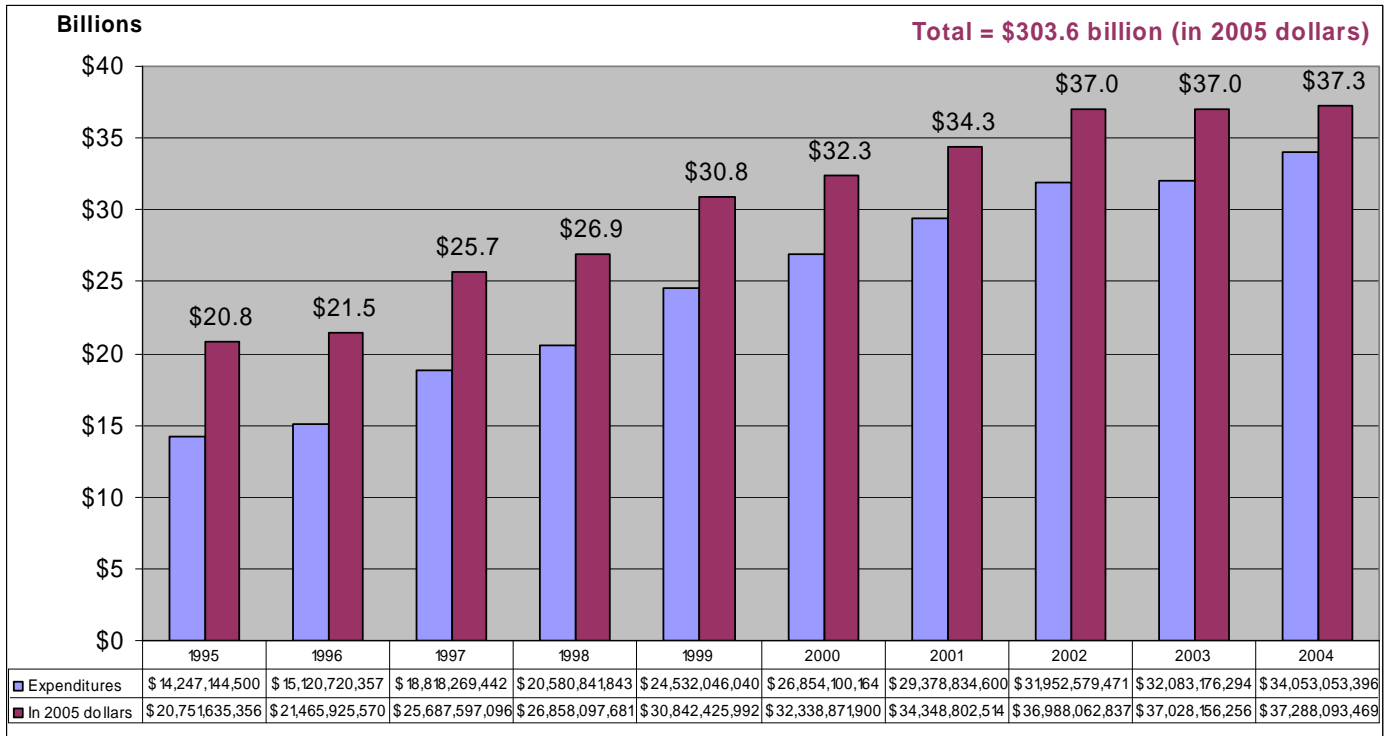
The condition and design of public school buildings and grounds affect the demand for their use by individuals, civic, other agency, non-profit and for profit users.

Various sources have documented the widespread prevalence of poor quality public school facilities.<sup>12</sup> When a school has no air conditioning, poor ventilation and temperature control, or limited natural light, the demand for this space is minimal. School-support users may seek it, because the students they are serving are in these spaces during the day, but demand by civic, community or real estate users is minimal. However, as public school districts and their communities have improved the conditions of their schools, the buildings and grounds have become more desirable.

**The prospect of community use helps secure support for the tax increases required to repay the school construction bonds.**

With recent capital investment, new schools have been built with modern amenities to meet current codes, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, air quality, and security standards. The capital spending was also used to make improvements to existing schools. Bond referenda are often promoted based on the possibility that there will be civic and community joint use opportunities with the new or improved facility. The prospect of community use helps secure support for the tax increases required to repay the school construction bonds. Thus, in more and more communities, there is an expectation that these newly improved spaces will be available for community use.

Taken together, these complex and intertwined demographic, housing, and financial conditions pose enormous challenges for public school districts, but they must be addressed for schools to meet their basic responsibilities. Extensive state and local laws exist related to enrollment, school utilization, site selection, and school planning, design and construction. However, the existing state and local laws generally address public education use only. There are few state or local policy roadmaps for other types of joint use or development. The result is that joint use and joint development are being applied on an ad-hoc basis, with strategies differing from district to district, from school to school and from time to time. However, the demands to increase programs, services, and amenities



within our schools through joint use strategies will only grow, and the need for fiscal efficiencies in asset and land management will also persist.

**The demands to increase programs, services, and amenities within our schools through joint use strategies will only grow, as will the fiscal efficiencies in asset and land management.**

## BENEFITS OF JOINT USE

Demographic shifts, changing housing patterns, and new school capital investments present an unprecedented opportunity to reshape the ways local government and schools work together to provide for the people who depend on them and the resources they manage. This is especially important for low-income, low-resource urban communities who disproportionately struggle to meet community needs.

The macro changes described above create a variety of needs in different local communities. Recently, policy leaders, educators, and advocates have increasingly turned to the joint use of public schools to assist in remedying numerous local concerns. Coming from a variety of perspectives, each brings a unique rationale for joint use of school facilities. Interest in joint development or joint use is from the public, private for-profit and non-profit sectors.

### Better Schools

Joint use strategies can directly enhance a school's curriculum-related activities. For example, schools and local partners have developed museums and libraries connected to schools that students use in their coursework. The joint use partnership brings a resource to the school that would otherwise be unavailable. Joint use strategies can also bring in partners involved in the trades to run hands-on Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for students. Joint use of schools should be seen as an opportunity to enhance school quality.

Helping to ensure that all children are ready to learn is another way that joint use can improve educational quality. Evidence shows that children need basic physical, emotional and psychological needs met to succeed in school.<sup>13</sup> Numerous education-driven

initiatives work to increase the resources and services available to address the needs of the whole child. Schools typically bring in outside community-based organizations or city or county agencies to provide health, educational enrichment and other services inside schools. Joint use of public school facilities is at the heart of the full-service community school model.

Under community school strategies, public schools serve as community “hubs,” bringing together many partners to offer a range of support services and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. These include medical, social, and other services. While these full-service schools tend to be found in disadvantaged communities that serve predominately low-income students, in many schools throughout the nation there are after-school programs that help families from all income levels.

**Joint use of schools should be seen as an opportunity to enhance school quality.**

In school districts with a high proportion of children from low-income families, the increased needs of many school-aged children and youth mean there is growing demand for public spaces for non-school, district-related activities — to provide services to a high need population of children and families. As previously mentioned, there are more than 400 outside agency and non-profit entities with some sort of program partnership with San Francisco Unified School District. The vast majority of these organizations and agencies provide their programs on school grounds.

### **Child and Community Health**

Childhood and adolescent obesity has risen to alarming rates across the country, more than doubling in the last 20 years from 6.5 percent to 17 percent of children by 2003.<sup>14</sup> While many factors contribute to the increasing childhood obesity rates, declines in physical activity appear to be a large part of the equation. Physical activity is one of the best predictors for chronic disease and obesity, and establishing a regular physically active lifestyle at a young age is a preventative strategy for combating the onset of illness, disease, and especially

obesity.<sup>15</sup> Increasing rates of sedentary leisure activities and vehicle use does not encourage physically active lifestyles, especially for children.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, many neighborhoods lack pedestrian infrastructure and/or do not have public open spaces such as parks or social common areas that incorporate physical activity into everyday life. In other cases, existing outdoor spaces may be deemed or perceived as unsafe or unfit for use. Also, many parents do not permit unsupervised play in crime-ridden communities and are often unable to provide this supervision themselves. As a result, children not attending afterschool programs stay inside watching TV and playing video games.



*Julia Richman Education Complex Ceramics Studio*

Research has documented the importance of the school as a primary factor in obesity prevention, arguing that obesity, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity directly increase risk for poor academic achievement but also that “schools are unique in their ability to promote physical activity and increase energy expenditure.”<sup>17</sup>

**While many communities lack spaces for physical activity, there is a growing interest in joint use of public school buildings and grounds to fill this void.**

While many communities lack spaces for physical activity, there is a growing interest in joint use of public school buildings and grounds to fill this void. Spaces such as fields, gyms, or playgrounds, represent “modifiable

factors in the physical environment;” opening them can directly increase access to recreation space, especially outdoor green spaces, translating into increased opportunities to participate in physical activities. In searching for ways to increase healthy physical and social habits of both children and adults, public health advocates have identified these public infrastructure assets—public school buildings and grounds—as places that can and should play an important role in increasing physical activity not only among children and adolescents but also contributing to healthier communities.<sup>18</sup> In some communities neighborhood schools may be one of few places where children can be involved in active play.



*First Lady Obama at Bancroft Elementary School*

## “Complete” Communities

There is also new demand for underutilized or closed school buildings and grounds, particularly in urban areas that have lost families, but increased population by attracting singles into more dense, city households. This demand – from both the private and non-profit sectors – for access to school buildings and grounds for development of private housing, commercial or retail development, or where there are substantial numbers of charter schools, for non-district school use has increased in land-limited cities like Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Smart growth advocates are fostering a new conversation around the idea of creating “complete communities.” Complete communities provide a variety of homes, jobs, shops, services and amenities close to rail

stations, ferry terminals, or bus stops.<sup>19</sup> People then have the option to walk, bicycle, or take transit rather than drive a car to run errands, visit friends, exercise, or get to work. Among the benefits are that complete communities:

- Provide choices: a range of housing options available for people with different needs;
- Encourage accessibility: people can walk, bike, or take transit for short trips and for commuting;
- Offer connections: people are linked to jobs, health care, parks, services, and stores;
- Promote health: encourage physical activity and enhance the quality of life for individuals, families, communities, and the environment;
- Improve social and economic equity: meeting the needs of current and future residents; and
- Improve educational options and experiences through innovations in school planning and design.

The joint use of school facilities becomes one of many strategies in creating complete communities. Because schools (especially elementary schools) are frequently located within residential neighborhoods, sharing their facilities means more activities at single locations, with more people having easy access, thereby reducing the need to drive from place to place for different activities. Jointly using schools promotes reduced transportation demand and increased physical activity for children, families, and communities.<sup>20</sup>

## Environmental Benefits

The prevalence of schools and the number of students, teachers, and staff traveling to and from them everyday (about one-sixth of the country’s population), as well as their often community-central locations, means that they should be integrated into strategies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and conserving land.<sup>21</sup> In urban areas for example, schools contribute to much-needed green space and can amplify efforts to support healthy environments if planned and designed to do so. Using school grounds as public parks and recreation areas can help preserve other natural habitats. Joint planning and design with conservation as a priority can show the value of reuse and adaptation of schools within existing

communities. Maintaining underutilized schools in central locations and bringing in non-school users can preserve centrally-located community assets, reduce driving distances to other activities, and concentrate the use of energy for utilities in a single site that is fully utilized.

## Fiscal Efficiency

Government is always challenged to do more with limited public resources. Responsible public agencies look for innovative ways to efficiently use the resources they do have. Local governments and school districts serve the same families and communities; using the public school as the location for community health centers, swimming pools, libraries, or other public amenities or services, can thereby reduce overall public land assets, capital funds, and total operating costs required. However, this increased use may appear to burden school districts, which are under constant budget pressure for school operations and for facility improvements. More often than not, they defer maintenance and repairs and life-cycle system replacements until they are emergencies and so are reluctant to intensify use of public school buildings and grounds, unless explicitly required to do so. However, as more service and program providers seek to locate in or secure dedicated access to school facilities for their programs, school districts have the opportunity to raise revenue from these users to offset costs for utilities, security, maintenance and repair, and even capital and administrative costs associated with facilities. When school buildings are under-utilized, a paying joint use arrangement, with either a public or private partner, can make continued operation of the school building fiscally possible where it might not otherwise have been so.

**Jointly using schools promotes reduced transportation demand and increased physical activity for children, families, and communities.**

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The wide array of benefits associated with joint use, coupled with the demographic and housing changes

described above, lead to the idea of increasing and expanding the use of our public school infrastructure for a wider variety of users to meet a broad range of community and educational needs. However, there are significant challenges to its widespread implementation. These include:

- Under funding for utilities, maintenance, repair, custodial and security costs that increase with higher facility utilization;
- Lack of staff support to local schools to manage the requirements of collaboration, space sharing, and communication between multiple users;
- Spaces poorly designed to accommodate different users;
- Poor risk management support for student safety and building security; and
- Inadequate decision-making processes for allocating access to buildings and grounds.

These challenges are significant, but there are many cases where school districts and communities overcome these obstacles and jointly utilize their facilities. However, for the full benefits of joint use to be realized, communities need to develop a new social contract with public school districts on the use of public school infrastructure. Central to this idea is that school districts need not have exclusive rights to public school buildings and grounds, and that joint use and joint development should be common practice in communities.

On the school district side of the contract, this means explicit buy-in by school districts to maximize joint use and to enable joint development where appropriate and then to define criteria, decision-making processes, and cost for the allocation of joint use and development opportunities. On the community side of the contract, it means understanding and paying for the real operating and capital cost of using public school buildings and grounds. However, if this change in vision and practice is to occur, then the governance, policy, budgeting, management, planning, and design of our public school facilities will need to change to support this shift in public school facility use. Without this, we will face a “tragedy of the commons” with our public schools, where the burden of so many community use demands will degrade the asset such that its value is seriously reduced to all.

**For the full benefits of joint use to be realized, communities need to develop a new social contract with public school districts on the use of public school infrastructure.**

To secure the potential shared benefits of joint use and joint development, a policy and operational framework is needed. Our public school facilities and grounds should be governed, planned, designed, managed, and

funded to support their intensive use and joint development where appropriate. Until these explicit governmental systems and support are in place, school districts will likely remain limited and/or hesitant partners in joint use and joint development.

It will take a system of supports and regulation for the health, community development, education, and other community benefits to be maximized. However, once the new social contract and its policy and practice underpinnings are in place, the potential of joint use and joint development to improve the lives of children, youth, families and residents—particularly in low wealth communities—will be unleashed.



# DEFINITIONS & TYPOLOGIES FOR JOINT USE

**PUBLIC EDUCATION USE:** The primary uses for public school buildings and grounds.

**JOINT USE:** The use of school district controlled, owned, or utilized facilities by a non-district entity.

**JOINT DEVELOPMENT:** Two or more entities partnering to plan, site, design, and/or build a new school or renovate an existing school to better support the joint use of the building and/or land.

## JOINT USE TYPES / SCENARIOS

There are multiple joint use "scenarios" that can often occur at the same time, in the same school.

- **SHARED USE:** When the space is used by the school during school hours and by a non-school user after school hours. For example, a classroom for instruction during the school day and for after school program activities after school.
- **DEDICATED USE:** When a school space is exclusively available to the outside entity during the school day and after school. For example, an after-school office or storage area.
- **CIVIC USE:** The occasional joint use of school buildings and grounds by individuals, groups, or organizations. For example, use of schools for voting, community meetings, special events, as emergency shelters, as well as the casual use of grounds by the public for recreational use.
- **REAL ESTATE JOINT USE:** Use, either shared or dedicated where the user seeks no relationship with the school or its families but desires access to the location and space in the school.

**JOINT USE SCHEDULING:** Use by non-school users also differs in the amount of time, or scheduling, during which the use takes place. These scheduling types can be either shared or dedicated use.

- **DROP-IN USE:** When the space is made available for informal, drop-in activities. In this case, the user does not reserve the space in advance. Usually, spaces are made available for drop-in use during specified hours.
- **ONE TIME USE:** When a school space is available to the outside entity during the school day and/or after school for one specific period of time on a single day. Typically, the user has reserved use in advance.
- **REPEATED USE, SHORT-TERM:** When a school space is available to the outside entity during the school day and/or after school for a specified number of hours over a longer period of time (e.g., multiple days, weeks, or months).
- **LONG TERM LEASE USE:** When a school space is available (often exclusively) to the outside entity during the school day and/or after school over a longer period of time (e.g., months or years).

## JOINT USER TYPES

- **INDIVIDUALS:** Persons, generally residents of a community, who have access to exterior spaces, such as play equipment, athletic fields or courts, and open space for personal use.
- **CIVIC GROUPS:** Individuals, groups, or organizations, who seek occasional use of school buildings and grounds for activities or events such as polling stations, community meetings, and special events.
- **OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES:** A public agency that is not part of the school district that may offer programs, need to lease space and offer no program connection to the school, and/or may seek joint development with ongoing joint programming.
- **PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:** The use of school buildings and/or grounds by a non-profit organization such as after-school programs, health clinics, or adult education classes.
- **PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS:** The use of school building and/or grounds by a private for-profit corporation, either for education-related work such as a private testing service or unrelated work such as private offices.

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