

Making Room for Change: Community School Space and
Shifting the Educational Paradigm

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Abstract

Schools are often seen as integral parts of a city's physical and social infrastructure. However, there is often minimal communication between planners and key stakeholders in defining what school space can/should be used for. Using in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, this study seeks to examine the spatial implications of service integration within the school environment. Often referred to as 'community schools', the model has grown in popularity within New York City, playing a central role in Mayor Bill de Blasio's new education plan. More specifically, this study seeks to answer the question of how the physical space of a school enhances or limits the successful implementation of a community school model. It is hypothesized that when considering whether or not a community model will succeed, the design of classrooms and buildings are secondary to rules and regulations governing space. The paper concludes with several policy recommendations to help further improve and support the community school model in New York City.

Introduction

In a recent article in *Planning* magazine, Christopher Tramutola and Peter Gisolfi suggest that school design and function need to become a growing focus and concern of urban planners. Although urban planners generally agree that schools are an integral part of a city's physical and social infrastructure, there is often minimal communication between planners and key stakeholders in defining what school space can/should be used for. Those that have studied the issue have cited that institutional structures needed to encourage dialogue between school districts and local governments are often lacking or non-existent (Abrams and Gibbs, 2000; Warren 2005; Norton, 2007; Vincent, 2006). Despite this lack of dialogue, one area in which planners have sought to exert their influence and expertise is through school siting regulations/policy. Christopher Tramutola and Peter Gisolfi take this approach stating that, "site planning [...] can serve both the educational goals of the school and the planning interests of the wider community" (2014, October, p. 18). The practitioners argue that proper site planning recommendations result in engaging and inviting schools that both influence and complement the existing urban fabric.

Jeffrey Vincent and Deborah McKoy, cofounders of the Center for Cities and Schools (CCS) at UC Berkeley, echo this need to focus on school siting. Driven by the notion that greater collaboration between schools and cities benefits local communities, CCS seeks to understand how innovative approaches to urban planning can be used to support young people from preschool into adulthood (CCS, 2015). Vincent and McKoy attempt to address the institutional divide by analyzing school sites and their relationship to other forms of infrastructure (e.g. transportation and housing). The analysis is then used to develop a series of solutions that emphasize joint policy making structures and the participation of residents, planners and politicians throughout the decision making process.

Using the site plan as an intervention model – as Tramultola and Gisolfi suggest – or utilizing more traditional methods by coordinating transportation and housing at the neighborhood level – as CCS does – are beneficial macro approaches to furthering connections between planners and schools. However, both approaches implicitly (or perhaps explicitly) reinforce the notion that a planner’s domain is one that should be focused external to the school building. By doing so, what is left unexplored are the multiple interventions planners can have in developing or influencing the internal programming of spaces.

I argue that the internal organization and function of a building should be as much of a concern to planners as is the external activities/systems. Though the internal analysis of a building may be seen as outside the realm of planners, as Fainstein and Campbell (2012) explain, many of the boundaries between planning and related fields are often times ambiguous. What delineates the role and responsibilities of the planner from other fields is more often than not a product of ‘territoriality’ and traditional cultures of professional practice and not necessarily sharp theoretical differences in understandings of material, social and/or spatial realities. Thus, while the approach of site planning is appropriately within the purview of the urban planner, I seek to understand the role planners can have in closing the ‘school-city’ divide at the scale of the individual building.

In order to explore this possibility I will examine the implementation of the community school model in New York City as a case study. I will attempt to understand the various effects that school design and space allocation have on programming within a community school model. I hypothesize that while the designs of classrooms and buildings are important factors to consider, they are often secondary factors to whether or not a community school model will succeed. It is my assumption that the most important factors to consider affecting community

school success are the various rules and regulations (both formal and informal) that govern space and its use.

Literature Review

Physical and Social Space

Before discussing the limitations and/or opportunities that space provides in community schools, a definition of space should first be given. While at first it may appear to be a simple question, concepts regarding space have been debated and contested for quite some time in the field of geography (Harvey, 1989, 1990, 2006; Massey, 1994; Crang and Thrift, 2000). Though the debates vary in subject and scope, much of it can be understood as the tension between the understandings of absolute versus relational/cognitive conceptions of space.

Absolute space, as its name suggests, regards space as an independent geometric container that holds various forms of matter in which interaction takes place. From this perspective, space is measured according to Euclidean methods with an emphasis on concepts such as distance and scale, using representation through maps supplemented with concrete shapes, borders and numbers. The absolutist view of space was taken afresh during human geography's 'Quantitative Revolution' of the 1960s that brought about scientific methodology to 'objectively' assess, measure and monitor the movement and placement of various social phenomena (Castree, Kitchen, & Rogers, 2013). In urban planning, the understanding of space through an absolutist lens has led to models and designs that "replace the discontinuous patchy space of practical paths by the homogenous, continuous space of geometry" (Bourdieu, 1984 cited in Harvey, 1989, p. 253). Though useful in some ways, the Euclidean approach to space can lead to a linear, over-simplified understanding of the urban realm and therefore limit the understanding of how space operates (Cao & Zhang, 2013).

As a response to the ‘Quantitative Revolution’ and its restrictive construct, various geographers have since begun to highlight how social relationships influence and define understandings and experiences of the spatial (Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Massey, 1994; Soja 1996; Thrift, 2006). Rejecting the notion that space is merely a geometric container that holds material objects, post-absolute thinkers assert that space is a subjective experience: both contested and contextual to various individuals at different points in time. Criticizing the inflexibility of an absolutist perspective, a growing recognition of space’s temporality led to a concept known as the ‘production of space’ made famous by Henri Lefebvre (1991). Whereas absolutist spatial theory would suggest that space is *a priori*, Lefebvre argues that the experienced reality of a particular geographic location is not found within the inherent physical qualities of that location, but rather in the various social modes of production. Given that social relations change in place over time the diverse array of actors and materials – and their relationship to each other – work to develop a specific arrangement of realities that are unique to particular individuals. In this way, depending on the various connections and relationships one makes, a unique spatial reality is developed that can either be shared, accepted, or contested by others in the same geographic location (Soja, 1996).

Therefore, the tension in defining what space is, is not so much of what is true or untrue, but about the particular bias one has. Whether Euclidian or relational, the influence that each individual has will affect the lived experiences of other people. Kitchin and Dodge (2011) summarize this absolute-relational understanding well when they state:

*Social relations do not operate independently of space or simply at a location, rather space is an **active** constitutive element in the production of social relations, communal formations, political organization, and personal regulation. In other words, the social is inherently temporal and spatial (emphasis original, p. 65).*

Therefore, while it is important to recognize the value of non-Euclidean approaches, it is just as vital to understand how the physical shapes relationships by either providing opportunities or obstacles for social interactions.

Educational Reform and School Design

The dialogue between a space's physical attributes and its effect on the social is one at the core of school design in the United States (Gyure, 2011). Though school design has changed significantly over the years from single-room schoolhouses to multi-story buildings and the 'school-within-a-school' concepts of the early 1990s, the influence of educational reform via social and political forces of the day has brought about various school designs (Gislason, 2009). Writing of the architectural and design changes he witnessed in Texas, Caudill (1941) made explicit the social relationships behind particular school designs stating that, "the scope of the curriculum has broadened [...] Traditional school structures cannot be satisfactorily used. Educators need modern structures, structures that are flexible enough to conform with the changing needs of education" (p. 42). In her study of post-WWII elementary schools in the United States, Ogata (2006) highlights the various ways in which educational reforms – such as those of John Dewey – and political climate of the post-war era led to a change in architectural school design. In her analysis of the Cold-War era, Ogata reveals how political fears and the need for ideological supremacy over communism led to an increase in federal funding for education. With democracy as its core value, educational reform moved towards an idea of 'progressive' education that would allow the student to be creative and free, not having to conform to the will of the authoritarian curriculum or teacher. This led to classrooms with open spaces, moveable furniture and expanding walls for creativity to flourish.

Emphasis on aligning educational reform with school design became a larger mainstream question in 1958 with the creation of the Educational Facilities Laboratory (EFL). Founded by a

group of architects and teachers from Teachers College at Columbia University, EFL received over 25.5 million dollars in funding from the Ford Foundation's Fund for Advanced Education to redesign American education facilities between 1950 and 1978 (Ogata, 2006). Writing on a number of topics from construction materials, cost, as well as form and function (EFL, 1960; 1962; 1968), several EFL innovations included the introduction of middle schools, the use of carpeting to minimize noise, joint-use/mixed-occupancy and the use of moveable walls (Marks, 2001). With a desire to create educational systems where "form was to follow not only function but philosophy as well" (ibid, p. 2), EFL also worked to create new pedagogical directions and curriculum design for enhanced student learning. Soon enough, engineers, planners and other researchers joined EFL, creating an organizational force that influenced school design and construction methods that set a new standard for much of North America (Brubaker, 1998). With such a large scope and progressive vision, EFL worked to not only, "deal with the things of education, but with the feeling of the schoolhouse as a whole, as a total environment that could deeply affect learning and growth" (Weinstock, 1999 cited in Marks, 2001, p. 2).

Numerous studies have since been conducted in order to further understand the various ways in which the physical environment and student learning affect each other. While there is quantitative evidence that school environments have a direct effect on student achievement (Lackney, 1994; Tanner, 2000; Earthman 2002), such statistical analysis studies have been disputed. According to their own findings, Picus, Marion, Calvo and Glenn (2005) assert that higher quality buildings are unrelated to higher levels of student achievement. While the authors do not dispute the need for high quality buildings, they suggest that it is not so much the importance of the building, as it is the allocation of resources within the building itself, a notion also shared by a study done by Perez and Socias (2008). However, some studies have found that

there does indeed exist a relationship between building quality and student achievement, though the understanding of which exact physical attributes (e.g. windows, walls, lighting, paint) are most responsible for the change is difficult to pinpoint (Woolner, Hall, Higgins, McCaughey and Wall, 2007).

Given that education is not a victim of architectural determinism but rather a complex interrelationship played out through various physical and social chains of events (ibid), there is a need to tease out the understanding of how the physical and social interact with each other (Weinstein, 1979). Bowers and Ulrick (2011) echo this need suggesting that, while they did not find any significant correlation between building quality and student achievement, facilities still matter via indirect effects through the perceived quality of the facilities. Suggesting that perceived quality affects the motivation and attitude of various stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students, parents, and administrators), the positive or negative emotions associated with such perceptions will affect the school climate, inevitably affecting student achievement (Uline and Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, and Devere Wosley 2009).

In this way, the space of the school is not static, but rather a dynamic and integral piece to the experience of education itself. Schools act as physical representations of moral, economic and political discourse as the physical and social combine to both create and shape the lived experiences of learning. Imagined and developed through the complex negotiations of various stakeholders such as community residents, teachers, students, school boards and architects (Weisser, 2006), schools are highly contested spaces of society. Though there is yet to be a conclusive remark as to what components and impact the physical has on the social – or vice-versa – the existence of what Bowers and Ulrick (2011) call the mediated (i.e. indirect) effects of

facilities on student achievement show the complexity of analyzing, let alone understanding, the effects and outcomes.

Comprehensive Education and School Design

Though gaining greater attention in recent years, the full-service school model is not a new concept. As immigration and industrialization created rapid urbanization in the late 19th Century, more and more families began to move to cities. Coupled with new child labor laws and mandatory school attendance, schools became overcrowded and ill equipped to manage the increased volume of students and various needs associated with urban poverty (Dryfoos, 1994). As progressive social reformers began to decry the deplorable conditions of lower-class urban children, efforts were made to provide more services to children in schools. Given the outbreak of disease in various urban centers such as Boston and New York, medical professionals and school authorities began to collaborate in order to address student health needs (McMahon, Nadia, Marsha, Larry, & Ezra, 2000).

A branch of the holistic education philosophy, the community school model - also known as the full-service school model - suggests that while quality instruction and assessment are essential components for academic success, they are not the only factors. The community school model contends that student success includes, but is not limited to, positive parental involvement, rich extracurricular experiences, physical and mental health and family stability. While various applications of the model abound, central to the approach is the use of community partnerships that provide a variety of services that address social, emotional and/or health needs. This can range from providing improved facilities and alternative curriculum to medical clinics and access to psychologists or dentists. Some school-based programs are also known to provide financial assistance to families in crisis.

The model comes out of an understanding that the school system alone cannot and should not bear the responsibility of mitigating the myriad of social factors affecting student education. Synonymous with ‘community schools’, the term ‘full-service schools’ came into popular use after 1991 with the passage of Florida State legislation that called for the creation of, “A Full Service School [that] integrates education, medical, social and/or human services that are beneficial to meeting the needs of children and youth and their families on school grounds or in locations that are easily accessible” (p. 1 cited in Dryfoos, 1995, p. 148). The policies guiding community schools seek to emphasize the school’s central role in providing services due to its social status as a natural place of congregation. In this way, the school is seen as *the place* for resource centralization. Whereas holistic education in general seeks to provide students with services, the community school model works to provide services to students *on site*.

Yet, the physical and social implications of serving the whole child, school and community can present several obstacles. Having written extensively on full-service schools, the late Joy Dryfoos (1994, 1995, 1998; and Maguire, 2002), outlined how space allocation is often a large obstacle to providing quality care to various clients. Two major concerns outlined by Dryfoos are appropriate size and location. Depending on the program, different schools will have different spatial requirements. This may require areas for confidential client rooms (in the case of mental health counseling), rooms with access to sinks and showers (medical clinics), or spaces large enough for community gatherings and organizational meetings. While space itself is important, the location and design are just as critical. Having visited a school that ran its teenage-mother program in the basement of the school beside a boiler room, Dryfoos concluded that the room conveyed “a sense of hopelessness [...] and] a strong message that they [the teenage mothers] weren’t worthy of anything better” (p. 157).

Addressing this issue, several designers have sought to create guidelines regarding community school design (Molloy, 1973; Fanning/Howey Associates, 1995; Bingler, Quinn, and Sullivan, 2003; Bingler, 2005). A major advocate for and builder of community schools, Steven Bingler has written extensively on the topic. In one of his writings, Bingler et al. (2003) asserts that space in schools should follow six core principles:

- (1) Enhance teaching and learning by accommodating the needs of all learners;
- (2) Serve as centers of community;
- (3) Be designed with community participation;
- (4) Provide health, safety and security;
- (5) Make effective use of all available resources; and
- (6) Be adaptable and flexible for change.

Though the guidelines are quite broad and can take a number of shapes, the most important is perhaps the last point of flexibility. This often leads to the creation of large ‘flex’ spaces such as auditoriums, gyms, family/community rooms and large atriums. Given that school models and philosophies often change over time, the flexibility and physical adaptability through various lengths of time are key to a successful school space design.

Joint-Use and Governance Structures

While design is important, also key to community school are governance systems and control mechanisms. According to Dryfoos (1995), the ideal situation for the community school model is to work under a joint governance structure with full participation from all stakeholders. Given the diverse nature of each individual school and administration, the structures and governance styles used by each community school are often unique unto themselves. According to McMahon et al. (2000), many different governance structures have been thoroughly evaluated, yet few have been systematically replicated leaving knowledge about successful replication quite limited. According to the research conducted by the National Center for Community Schools (NCCS, 2011), however, there is actually quite a lot of similarity between community schools

across sites all over the United States. Therefore, governance structures for joint-use schools are not disparate as some may think. From this perspective, the difficulty in implementing a community school model may not lie in establishing a successful model at the school level: many different successful models abound and have been implemented across different sites. Rather, the difficulty may lie in obtaining, or retaining, the political will needed to establish and support the community school model.

Studying joint-use agreements between school districts and community agencies in California, Ken Testa has conducted what is perhaps the most thorough study of joint-use and governance structures. According to Testa (2000), joint-use is a “highly complex matter, one [that is] full of subjectivity, circumstance and intangibles” (p. 298). However, he does conclude that joint-use is an overall beneficial endeavor that helps alleviate pressures and negative outcomes associated with overpopulation and school building deterioration.

According to Testa, the organizational structure of a joint-school arrangement is critical given that schools are no longer single use facilities only for teachers and students. He argues that “school facilities have become places for the public to gather, meet, worship, socialize, play, as well as academically grow [...] as such transformational trends continue, learner centered focuses challenge long-held school facilities assumptions” (p. 10). Citing Molloy (1973), Testa asserts that the two words ‘community’ and ‘schools’ often, “distinguishes two entirely different concepts in the use of educational facilities,” while the word *community schools* elicits an image of a building that simply opens their doors to the public (p.126).

Focusing on three ‘metathemes’, Testa asserts that the most important attributes for success include trust; openness to new ideas; and an entrepreneurial spirit to think outside the box and persevere through difficult circumstances. Conversely, barriers to success include

attitudes of ‘territorialism’ wherein individuals would argue over what space belonged to whom, and who had control; access issues of when and who could use space at what times; and power struggles between school and community leaders (for a summary of metathemes and findings see Chart 1). In many ways Testa’s findings echoes previous assertions that it is not necessarily the space that is important, but rather how it is viewed, used, and subsequently governed by others (Picus et al., 2005; Perez and Socias, 2008).

Metatheme	Findings
Elements of strategic joint-use agreement practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) development of cooperative relationships 2) perseverant work-ethic 3) collaboration with stakeholders 4) pursuit of mutual-needs 5) creation of synergistic benefits 6) fiscal resourcefulness
Elements that impede joint-use agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) territorialism 2) facility use/access conflicts 3) limited collaboration 4) lack of financial support 5) bureaucratic processes 6) lack of top-level support
Elements that support joint-use agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) institutionalized belief in the benefits of joint-use 2) productive working relationships 3) strong personal and district reputations 4) top-level leadership support

Chart 1: A summary of metathemes and findings from Ken Testa’s work on joint-use of schools.
Source: Testa (2000).

Background

Community Schools and New York City

The joint-use, holistic education model is not new to New York City. Perhaps the most well-known effort in recent memory is the Beacon School initiative created by New York City’s Department of Youth and Community Development. Similar to the community school model, the motivation behind the Beacon School model is to utilize otherwise unused public space beyond the hours of academic instruction (Dinkins, 2013). Part of the ‘Safe Streets, Safe City’ program during the David Dinkins administration of the early 1990s, Beacon Schools were developed to provide youth development and social services to previously underserved areas of the City. The

hope is for the programs to provide at-risk youth an alternative to the City streets and keep them out of trouble after school hours. In this way, the school is meant to act as community center space for children and families. In all, 37 schools were originally designated for after-school programming funded by an increase in City taxes that covered maintenance and security costs, while the programming itself is provided by local community based organizations with expertise in youth and community development. Today, there are 80 Beacon Schools across the City and the model has been adopted across the United States in cities such as Denver, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

During the time of the Beacon School initiative, the Children's Aid Society (CAS) also became increasingly concerned about public education and social service provision in the City. Traditionally a provider of child welfare and social services, the CAS sought to develop a new model that saw the "clustering [of] services and education in one place, right where the students and parents are" (NCCS, 2011, p. 21). After working in partnership with the City's Board of Education (now the Department of Education), the CAS opened up its first community school in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Northern Manhattan in 1992. Today, the agency has 22 community schools operating in three different boroughs across the City. In 1994, the CAS opened up the National Center for Community Schools in response to the increased interest in the community school model across the country. Today the center provides training and resources to schools and school boards through conferences and tailored consultation.

Most recently, current New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is championing the community school model via a new initiative to create 128 new community schools across the City (45 of which are set to open in the 2014-2015 school year). Stating that, "Community schools embody the values we believe should drive public education and make a real difference

in student achievement” (de Blasio, November 3, 2014), the community school model is the cornerstone of his “School Renewal Program” in order to close the widening achievement gap between students of various racial and economic backgrounds. Thus far, the Mayor has been able to secure \$52 million dollars from New York State (NYC Office of the Mayor, June 14, 2014) to fund the initiative. Also supporting the investment from the State is a newly revised capital budget from the City’s School Construction Authority that is totaled at \$13.5 billion over the next five years (DOE, 2014a).

While the spotlight on community schools has been a welcomed change to some in New York City, the reception has not always been a warm one. The renewed emphasis on improving public schools created tension with charter school advocates, who had access and control over public school space. In a *New York Times* article, Bergner (2014, September 3) outlines one of these political battle between the Mayor and charter school advocate Eva Moskowitz. Bergner states that:

Under Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, charter schools were readily granted free space alongside regular [public school] ones in cavernous school buildings [...] The public schools — with the United Federation of Teachers spurring the fight — have protested that sharing space causes overcrowding, though in theory charters have moved in only where enough rooms were available

Therefore, the battle between the Mayor’s new initiative and proponents for charter schools is primarily an ideological one based upon the privatization of public education. As Bergner concludes, “Eva Moskowitz and Bill de Blasio are two liberal crusaders with profoundly divergent ideas about how the mission of aiding the disempowered should be carried out”.¹

¹ While Mayor de Blasio’s educational reforms are focused on re-empowering public schools it is important to note that the community school model is not attached to a public, private, or charter school approach. There are charter schools in New York City that also take a community school model approach (e.g. Harlem Children Zone located in Central Harlem).

Neighborhood Demographics

All community schools for this study are located in traditionally low income and immigrant neighborhoods of northern Manhattan. According to The New School's Center for New York City Affairs, gentrification in the area has deteriorated public school enrollment. The past ten years has also seen more affluent, and predominantly White and Asian newcomers move to the area. These newcomers tend to have smaller families and are pricing out many of the neighborhood's traditional demographic of recently landed Latino immigrants. However, many of the area's public schools continue to serve a predominantly Latino population (Inside Schools, 2015).

The change in community demographics can be seen in the Census figures from 2000 to 2013 (see Chart 2, 3 and 4). Over the past decade, the area has experienced several significant changes to its population. Though the population has only decreased by 3% from 2000 to 2013, the rate of school-aged children (18 and younger) has fallen by three times that amount at 9%. The area has also seen a significant change in the racial makeup with more racially White individuals moving into the area, which has corresponded with a decrease in both the Other Race and Hispanic/Latino population numbers. However, compared to the rest of Manhattan and New York City, the area is much more diverse with the largest proportion of the population coming from the Other Race category, along with a high percentage of foreign born residents (see Chart 3).

The most drastic changes over the years have come from housing, with median rents and the value of owner occupied homes increasing by 23% and 132%, respectively. Though the rise in median rents is similar to increasing rents within Manhattan and across New York City (Chart 4), the increase in owner-occupied housing units is larger than the rate of increase for both Manhattan and New York City combined. Despite the increase in housing prices, however,

according to the latest Furman Center report (2013) homeownership rates are increasing, though they are still among the lowest throughout the City.

Study Sites: School Performance and Demographics²

According to New York City's Department of Education (2014b), the schools in the study area typically perform worse on New York State level Math and English Testing than other schools in the City (see Chart 5) ranking amongst the lowest in school performance for all of New York City (Furman Center, 2013). However, despite the low academic performance, parents seem quite satisfied with the level of education that their children are receiving, having rates equal to or higher than the City average for all three levels of public schools. This is also true for parent's satisfaction with school course offerings, extracurricular activities and services provided at the schools. Teachers, on the other hand, are not impressed with the level of education being provided. For elementary, middle and high schools, fewer teachers from the local district said they would recommend schools in the area to parents.

The state level testing performance ratings for the four schools included in this study are even lower than that of the district. Only 11% and 16% of the students in the studied schools met the New York State requirements for English and Math, respectively, compared to 17% and 23% for the district. Though these numbers are lower it is understandable given that the community school model is often applied to the lowest-performing schools. Despite the lower score on academics, the community schools score much higher on parent and teacher support and satisfaction. According to the latest reports, on average, 92% of parents at the studied schools are satisfied with the number of school course offerings, extracurricular activities and services provided at the school. Teachers are also overwhelmingly satisfied with the schools, with and

² Due to stipulations outlined by New York City's Department of Education Internal Review Board, school names are not to be used in any of the writing. As such, this study does not use specific neighborhood or provide any explicit geographic details in order to protect the location of the study sites as much as possible.

average of 85% saying they would recommend the school to parents, a rate much higher than the 79% and 77% attributed to the City and District, respectively.

Demographically, the school sites are quite different than other public schools across the City (see Chart 6). Of the 2,053 students served in the four study sites, 90% are Hispanic/Latino, compared to only 41% of all public school students in New York City. Despite a growing Asian population in the area, only 1% of the public school student population at the study sites are Asian, while only 7% and 2% of all students are Black/African-American or White, respectively. The schools included in this study also have a larger proportion of students that are English language learners (i.e. English is not their first language), with 34% enrolled in ELL programming, much higher than the City average of 14%. In regards to students with special educational needs, the rate is similar to that of the City with only 11% of students cited as needing a special education program.

Changes in Population Characteristics for Study Site from 2000 to 2013

	2000	2010	2013
Population	215,800	209,986	208,854
White	27.90%	32.90%	35.70%
Black/African-American	14.70%	13.50%	14.30%
Asian	2.20%	2.20%	2.60%
Other Race	55.20%	51.40%	47.40%
Hispanic/Latino	72.60%	70.80%	69.80%
Under 18 Years of Age	27.90%	20.40%	18.60%
Foreign Born	51.90%	48.80%	47.60%
Population with a Bachelor's Degree	10.20%	16.80%	18.40%
Median Household Income*	\$39,143	\$38,969	\$38,802
Median Gross Rent*	\$888	\$1,017	\$1,092
Median value for all Owner Occupied Housing Units*	\$154,161	\$402,513	\$357,519

* Values are in 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars

Chart 2: Population Snapshot of study site for years 2000, 2010 and 2013.
Source: Social Explorer (2000; 2010; 2013).

Comparison of Population Characteristics between
Study Site, Manhattan and NYC in 2013 (ACS 5-year estimate)

	Study Site	Manhattan	NYC
Population	208,854	1,605,272	8,268,999
White	35.70%	57.00%	44.30%
Black/African-American	14.30%	15.30%	24.90%
Asian	2.60%	11.30%	13.00%
Other Race	47.40%	16.40%	17.80%
Hispanic/Latino	69.80%	25.60%	28.70%
Under 18 Years of Age	18.60%	14.80%	21.50%
Foreign Born	47.60%	28.50%	37.00%
Population with a Bachelor's Degree	18.40%	31.00%	20.40%
Median Household Income*	\$38,802	\$69,659	\$52,229
Median Gross Rent*	\$1,092	\$1,442	\$1,200
Median value for all Owner Occupied Housing Units*	\$357,519	\$828,100	\$490,847

Chart 3: Population snapshot comparing the Study Site, Manhattan and New York City in the year 2013.
* Values are in 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars. Source: Social Explorer (2013).

% Change in Population Characteristics between Study Site, Manhattan and NYC from 2000-2013

	Study Site	Manhattan	NYC
Population	-3%	4%	3%
White	8%	3%	0%
Black/African American	0%	-2%	-2%
Asian	0%	2%	3%
Other Race	-8%	-2%	-1%
Latino	-3%	-2%	2%
Under 18 Years of Age	-9%	-2%	-3%
Foreign Born	-4%	-1%	1%
Population with a Bachelor's Degree	8%	5%	5%
Median Household Income	-1%	6%	-3%
Median Gross Rent	23%	30%	22%
Median value for all Owner Occupied Housing Units	132%	64%	61%

Chart 4: Population snapshot comparing the rate of change within the Study Site, Manhattan and New York City from 2000 to 2013. Source: Social Explorer (2000; 2013).

Comparing School Performance and Survey Results for all levels of
Public Schools and Study Site in 2014

	Elementary		Middle		High		Average		
	City	District	City	District	City	District	City	District	Study Sites*
Met State Standards for English	30%	18%	27%	16%	N/A	N/A	29%	17%	11%
Met State Standards for Math	39%	26%	29%	19%	N/A	N/A	34%	23%	16%
Parents Satisfied with Child's Education	94%	95%	94%	97%	94%	93%	94%	95%	95%
Parents satisfaction with courses, extracurricular activities and services	91%	92%	78%	84%	72%	72%	80%	83%	92%
Teachers would Recommend Schools to Parents	81%	79%	78%	77%	78%	75%	79%	77%	85%

Chart 5: Comparing the performance and satisfaction rates of all public school levels in the City, Study School District, and Study Sites in the year 2014. * Study Site figures represent the average value amongst all four schools
Source: DOE (2014b).

Population Characteristics of Students at Study Site Schools in 2015

	Study Sites	City
# of Students	2,053	1,036,207
Hispanic/Latino	90%	41%
Asian	1%	16%
Black	7%	25%
White	2%	16%
English Language Learners	37%	14%
General Education	88%	89%
Special Education Stream	11%	11%

Chart 6: Demographic snapshot comparing the student population from the schools included in the Study to all other public schools in New York City. Source: DOE (2015a).

Methodology

For the purposes of this research project open-ended interviews are used to obtain qualitative data. Individuals are asked about their personal experience of working in a community school with an emphasis on how physical space and design affects their experience.

In order to maintain internal validity, a rigorous selection methodology is utilized to screen potential schools and participants.

Prior to meeting with local community schools, several meetings were held with a local Community Based Organization (CBO) involved in community school planning and implementation. From these meetings research design and focus were discussed along with potential sites to visit and various community school models to explore within New York City. These meetings were pivotal in obtaining a general understanding of how community schools in New York City operate and provided context of how to understand the function of physical space within schools.

As previously mentioned, there are many different governance structures used to implement a community school model (McMahon et al., 2000). The NCCS (2011) alone outlines six models, though many others exist including hybrid versions. For the purposes of this study, site selection criteria are based off of the lead-partner (LP) model. The lead-partner model utilizes a community-based organization (CBO) with a set of specific skills and knowledge to work closely with a local school (ibid). In the LP model, there is a primary CBO who is the main negotiator and communicator (i.e. the lead partner) for all programming that occurs at the school. As such, the key to the success of the LP model is the hiring of a Community School Director (CSD). The CSD works to broker and develop key relationships with various providers to help integrate various programs into the school.

In this way, the LP model is unique in that the LP does not have to be the sole provider of services. Rather, the LP model seeks to create a diverse network of providers to create new opportunities for community stakeholders to collaborate with the school. Thus, the CSD's main focus is to facilitate collaborative planning processes and to mediate any conflicts that may arise

between the school and various providers. In order to do this effectively the LP model requires that the CSD is based in the school with their own administrative offices. However, as representatives of the LP and other providers, the CSD is not to be seen as another tenant, but as a key collaborator who is embedded into the various aspects of community and school life.

Selection Criteria

Given the description of a LP model above, the following site selection criteria are used as a guideline for selecting potential school study sites:

- Schools must have a single community partner that is recognized by both school administrators and other agency partners as the lead agency that deals directly with daily school leadership responsibilities;
- Schools must have a site director whose job it is to work directly with school staff to recruit, manage and coordinate partners and whom maintains a full-time presence in the school;
- The school must have a ‘Community Needs’ document that guides the purpose and direction of the various programs and justifies their financial support for such programs;
- Schools chosen must have programs that are integrated with the school’s academic instruction;
- Schools must have programs that require a significant spatial adjustment or adaptive re-use of school space. This can include programs which require the creation of family/community resource rooms, health related facilities (medical, dental or mental), or early childhood education rooms;
- If and when possible, comparable schools should serve comparable student populations in regards to age-range (e.g. pre-k, elementary, middle or high school).

Similarly, criteria are created for recruiting research participants from each of the sites. For the purposes of this study, the following criteria are used:

- Participants must have authority over, or be in a leadership role for running, program activities;
- If and when possible, participants should have some influence in the program space allocation process;
- If and when possible, participants should be from the lead agency or a key community partner in the school;
- If and when possible, participants should conduct their primary responsibilities in the same location as the school that is being analyzed.

These criteria ensure that the schools chosen follow the LP model as closely as possible. Using these site selection criteria, a total of 20 schools in New York City were found, from which 8

were chosen as ideal sites due to their: 1) similarities in geographic location, lead partner agency, and student population; and 2) differences in spatial characteristics with some being co-located, single tenant, purpose built, or renovated/retrofitted.

Each of schools was contacted by email and phone over a two-week period. Of the eight schools chosen as potential study sites, six responded, of which four agreed to participate in the study. Due to regulations laid out by New York City's Department of Education, potential participants from all the schools can only be recruited using letters or publicly available information online. In total, four individuals agreed to participate in the study, one from each school site. All of the participants hold administrative positions (either with the school or the LP agency) and are directly involved with the everyday activities of running a community school. Using a set of guiding questions (see Appendix A), open-ended interviews were conducted and recorded on-site with each interview lasting approximately 40-minutes long. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed for particular themes and patterns.

Findings³

As previously noted, the focus of this project is to understand the effect that school design and space allocation have on programming within a community school model. It is hypothesized that while the designs of classrooms and buildings are important factors to consider, they are often secondary factors to whether or not a community school model will succeed. My findings confirm my assumption that the most important factors to consider are the various rules and regulations (both formal and informal) that govern space and its use. The most prevalent theme discussed by all participants is the need for a strong governance structure that all parties (school and program providers) need to understand. Especially emphasized is the need for

³Due to stipulations outlined by New York City's Department of Education Internal Review Board, names of individuals working in schools are not to be used in any of the writing. As such, this study will refer to all participants as 'participant' and schools as 'study site'.

strong leadership on part of the school administration to work closely with the lead community partner. This is not to say, however, that space and school design are non-factors.

Design and space allocation are often mentioned in tandem with governance structures. It is implied from each individual's response that proper school design makes the lives of administrators easier and that proper design allows programs to run more effectively. In this way, the views expressed by the participants reveal the close relationship that space and governance structures have with each other in the community school context. Though the participants do not provide any specific design requirements necessary for a community school model, they do mention the need for greater communal-gathering spaces that are flexible in nature so as to be able to host a variety of events.

Across all four interviews three common topics are covered. They include:

- 1) Design of School Spaces
- 2) Leadership Structure
- 3) Regulations Governing Space

Design of school spaces outlines the various ways in which the physical structure of the building provides opportunities or limitations to the administration's ability to run a successful community school. *Leadership structure* explains the ways in which each school operates with an explanation of particular leadership qualities that participants outlined as important for a successful community school. Lastly, *regulations governing space* provides commentary on the various regulatory challenges, or lack thereof, each individual faces from an administrative perspective that hinders or facilitates successful community school programming.

Design of School Spaces

All four schools included in this study are purposefully designed and built as community-based schools. However, despite being housed in purpose built structures, all four participants

express a strong disconnect between their school's original design vision and the experienced reality of working in the space. According to one participant:

This building was built with the intention of being a community-based school. So it was built with space dedicated to mental health and medical health clinics, offices for social workers, and a parent's room and an administrative office. So it started off with a good design. However, the program has expanded. So last year after many years of working with the DOE and School Construction Authority and other agencies the [CBO] rebuilt the whole mental health clinic so they had to move one of the administrative offices⁴ (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

Other participants also mention increased space pressures due to program success. As another participant notes:

Often what happens that people develop a plan [i.e. design], and after the fact people are like, 'let's add this, or this, or this.' So the space that was originally constructed and planned out has to be stretched this way and that way. So then the vision for what the space was supposed to be made for is not there anymore. And I think that is what has happened to this building (Interview with Participant, B, 2015).

These experiences are interesting as they reveal an ironic reality of the community school model. That is, the spatial obstacles faced by the community school model are in many ways due to its overwhelming success. Expressed by all participants is the fact that the overwhelming need of the student population and surrounding community means that implementation of programs and supply of resources are immediately maxed out.

This is especially true when it comes to the opening up of any physical space. Any 'breathing room' created by spatial expansion of program space within the school is quickly used up, putting extra pressure on other members/aspects of the school community. This has created

⁴ It was clarified later that while greater demand was one of the reasons behind rebuilding the mental health clinic, the primary reason was to integrate mental health and medical services into a larger common area to reduce the stigma students felt when using the mental health facilities. Previously, the mental health clinic was located across the hall from the medical clinic making it easy to identify which students were using the services. Creating a larger room housing both the medical and mental health clinic provided privacy and a layer of autonomy for students utilizing the mental health facility.

the unique difficulty of limiting program expansion or sacrificing other valuable space so that more students and community members can be served. As one administrator recounts:

At one point we even had trailers because we were so full. So we had two trailers with four classrooms full of children. Now we don't use that anymore, we use that for parents and parent-children classes. But, it is in the works to be dismantled so that we can have our tennis courts back, and so that we can get our activities for track and field back (Interview with Participant C, 2015).

When asked which spaces are most important for the functioning of a successful community school the participants had difficulty pin-pointing specific areas of their respective schools. All participants started to answer the question describing a single program but quickly ended up answer with a long list of all spaces that the CBO currently occupies:

They need it all. They will need at least two administrative offices because after school they have staff coming in so they need administrative office [...] one for the parents program and one for the staff [...] the medical clinic and mental health clinic...they just got renovated and we already need more space (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

I think the most important things to have event space that are large enough for events to happen and having multiple options for the type of events [...] another really important room that we have is a parent resource room [...] so they feel like they have their own space to hold their own meetings and allows for a shared ownership when you have a room that is not just for the school but for the community [...] and [CBO Administrative office space] is very important from the perspective of being a visible stakeholder. So when you have an office space they [other stakeholders] know where to find you (Interview with Participant D, 2015).

Once again the characteristics that make the community school model so successful are also one of its major obstacles. Due to the comprehensive nature of the model and its requirement that services be located *on site* for programming and administrative purposes, the schools can quickly become constrained in their ability to provide enough room for all the needs of the school community.

Also a consensus amongst the participants is the need for more community event ‘flex space’: a large space that can be used for multiple events and easily changed from one use to

another (e.g. classroom, gym space, meeting room, event space etc.). All four participants note that programming would be much more effective/easier if they had larger gym or auditorium venues in which to hold large school events. As two participants shared:

The only drawback [in regards to building design] is the auditorium. I cannot accommodate all of my children in the auditorium [...] so if I have an activity that parents want to come to, children and parents, I am only able to do something one grade at a time. So I think that is something that has to be looked at. There has to be a room or a place where you can accommodate the whole building at one time (Interview with Participant C, 2015).

If you are going to build and design a community school, you should have a space in the building that could be used for many different things. It could be changed into a gym, a cafeteria, a meeting place, or a function space. So if I was designing a community school, I would design something else that could be used for many different things, a multipurpose space [...] a congregating space...because the whole point of a community school is to develop a team between the different groups (Interview with Participant B, 2015).

Community space is important given the emphasis that the community schools model puts on social gatherings that promote interaction and collaboration. The participants shared that while school classrooms are important for after school and community programming, much of the critical relationship building comes from hosting events that connect students, parents, teachers and community members in the same room at the same time.

Yet, despite communicating that they would like more space, all participants expressed that space is not the most important factor to consider when implementing a community school model. Rather, all participants highlight the need for a successful governance structure between the school administration and the lead CBO. In this way, the findings from the interviews align closely with other research in the subject (Testa, 2000; Picus et al., 2005; Perez and Socias, 2008) who claim that it is not the physical dimension of the space that is most important, but the way in which it is viewed, planned, governed and regulated.

Leadership Structure

In order to foster a strong, collaborative relationship between the school's administration and the lead CBO, it is important to pay just as much attention to *how* space is allocated as one would when considering *what* space is allocated. This point came as a major theme in the interviews as all participants mentioned how they each engage in meetings to ensure that communication lines remain open and unobstructed with their administrative colleagues. In order to maintain such lines of communication, the participants point to the importance of choosing collaborative and engaging leaders:

Every year the director of the [CBO] and I sit together and discuss what are my students needs and how they can serve those needs during their after school programs and summer programs. So we work hand-in-hand. It is not that we do their planning separately. I give them a lot of data and we talk and plan together (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

Who you hire is important. Who the leadership of the school is given to impacts the programs, the facilitation and the understanding of the CBO within the space and how everyone is going to work together. So being of the same like mind about how we incorporate all that is important (Interview with Participant B, 2015).

I've been (knocks on table) very fortunate where we've [school administration and the CBO] had a great working relationship. And even though there have been changes between directors, the message has been the same [...] it's not them, and us. We're together. And it has never been an 'us' versus 'them'. [The CBO] has always been with us, but it also has been that way because we pushed it to be that way (Interview with Participant C, 2015).

Its goes back and forth with, 'oh I need X, Y, and Z' and then the other going, 'Oh actually I need x, y, and z. So we just have a good partnership worked out here because both leaders are buying into the work and are trying to do and believe it and are excited by it and are willing to put time and energy into it. It takes a lot of energy (Interview with Participant D, 2015).

The personal and professional relationships created between both the school administration and the lead CBO's CSD are integral to the successful implementation of the community school model. Highlighted in the comments above is the need to learn from each other and understand each other's goals, visions and abilities. A common thread amongst all participants is the

understanding that even during times of conflict both the school administration and the lead CBO are working to provide services and a level of care that benefit the students and the wider community. This common goal provides a foundation that both parties look back to when facing conflict and tensions within their working relationship.

Although the participants note that a collaborative working environment is essential, there is also a clear power structure that exists. All participants state that the school principal holds the most authority when it comes to space allocation within the school (with the exception of board administrators from the DOE). As head of the school, the principal has the ability to promote or demote any program from taking place. As one participant states, “It is all about whether or not the principal sees that this program will benefit them. If the principal sees the value of the program they can make it work” (Interview with Participant A, 2015). Another participant asserts:

The principal is the key person. He is in charge. While the school is in session, he holds the reins. So at its core, this building is a school building, so we need to meet the needs of the students and the school first. He would never take over the office space [of the CBO] because technically that is not part of the school, but for everything that is school property, he has autonomy (Interview with Participant D, 2015).

Therefore, although the community school model attempts to change the understanding of schools from a single-use mindset to that of mixed-use and collaboration, the findings from the research suggest that the shift is not yet complete. Though the buildings included in this study have uses that are atypical to the majority of schools in New York City, the understanding is very much that the buildings are, first and foremost, buildings for academic instruction.

Reasons for the existence of this tension between community school model theory and community school model practice can be many. One such explanation may be due to the way

principals view their status as a key stakeholder within the community school governance structure. As one participant shared:

I think principals used to have the romantic version of being a principal that this [the school building] is their world and they do what they want and that they are THE person. But in a partnership position, they are being collaborative [...] so when somebody is hired and they are put in a community school, the relationship takes a while for it to get somewhere that is positive. And that is because in some ways principals may still feel like, 'this is my world and I don't want to share, I don't want to do it'. So in other words, you don't want to see the bigger picture of how your child is being helped, how the CBO is helping the family, teacher, and everyone (Interview with Participant B, 2015).

This type of power dynamic can be difficult for any CBO to work with, given the influence that principals have over the school population. In one of the interviews a participant recounted their experience with a CBO at a previous school. The participant revealed using retaliatory tactics in order to compel the community partner to engage a more collaborative working relationship.

In the school where I was principal before there was another CBO that ran some programming and they were terrible [...] As is my style, I met with the director and said here are my needs, this is what the school needs, here is the data. And they said, 'No. We are not going to work with you, we are going to do what we want', and it was terrible. So I retaliated. I told my parents not to enroll their kids in the program, so the CBO had no kids in their program. So when I did that, the director said, 'Okay, let's sit down and talk. It was a competition of who's got power. I don't want to play that way (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

Though this is a drastic example of a principal exerting their influence, all of the school administrators interviewed in this study highlighted the fact that they want to work collaboratively. As another school administrator states, "We [the CBO and school administration] sometimes agree to disagree, but we always come up with a conclusion or a solution that everyone is happy with" (Interview with Participant C, 2015). Therefore, the sentiment is very much that of power tactics only being used when absolutely necessary. All of the school administrators that participated noted that they have never had to use power tactics with their current colleagues and each reported having positive working relationships.

A key reason for this positive relationship is that the school administration and the lead CBO both believe in the community school model and are willing to make the system work. This became clear when each of the participants was asked about Mayor de Blasio's new plan to apply the community school model to other schools in New York City. All of the participants showed support for the plan but added a key caveat:

The purpose of the CBO is to serve the children in the school. So my concern is whether or not the DOE is talking to the principals and telling them why the program is a benefit. Are they going to the schools and saying, 'You've got to do this'? The minute you tell someone you have to do something without having them buy in, it's a catastrophe (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

Whatever ideas you have as a principal running a building, you have to adjust to the CBO and their mission and how you interact with them. And some principals don't necessarily appreciate that. They want to go off and do it their own way. So when you are a principal in a community school you need to remember that you need to be collaborative. And you need to understand that you will be sharing spaces, and that you will be sharing the supplies or resources (Interview with Participant B, 2015).

The biggest thing is principal buy in. The principal has to be on board and has to be willing to convince the teachers, say, you know, 'Now teachers, it is really important that you share your space with the CBOs coming in because they are going to help our students and it really does take a leap of faith for people to share resources like that (Interview with Participant D, 2015).

Given the uneven power balance between the CSD and the school principal, not having principal buy-in from the start can lead to negative outcomes. The positive components of the community school model are only realized once the various leadership structures are able to develop a positive working relationship. With principal buy-in, the presence of the CBO is not seen as threatening academic autonomy, but as a welcoming and needed resource for student success.⁵

Though a strong leadership structure within a community school can minimize the spatial strain that additional programming creates, the administrative tasks become increasingly difficult when the community school model is applied to co-located schools. A major reform strategy

⁵ There are many ways in which a CBO can contribute to academic success. These include improving student attendance, engaging families, providing tutoring and academic enrichment services, and improving health access.

that gained traction during the Bloomberg administration as part of the former mayor's small schools initiative, co-location is when two or more schools – each with their own administrative team – occupy the same building as another existing school. The different schools divide the share of classrooms amongst themselves but share common spaces such as the cafeteria, gymnasium or auditorium. The policy is a controversial one with some groups criticizing it as careless and based upon unreliable information (The Campaign for Educational Equity, 2014), though others suggest that there is no evidence to conclude that colocation has a negative or positive effect on student achievement (Winters, 2014).

Two schools studied for this research are co-located with each having a very different perspective as to the effect that co-location has on the community school model. One administrator highlighted that co-location has made the community school model more difficult to implement while the other asserted that co-location obstacles can be overcome with administrative creativity. Despite the difference in experience, both participants from the co-located schools mention a 'domino effect' can occur when space allocation becomes strained. The domino effect is when the solution to a spatial problem creates another spatial problem in an area that is not under their control. As one of the participants stated:

When they redesigned the mental and medical health clinics they had to take over the administrative offices of one of the other schools, which meant that they [the CBO] had to take over other space, which impinged on the space for the other schools. Which is not bad, I mean...we needed this extra space but it did have a domino effect when it came to the other schools. But it's serving the needs of our children [...] So if you were to ask them [the other school] they would probably say, 'Oh well we have less office space because of [the CBO]'. But I think that is backwards thinking (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

In this instance, the domino effect does not necessarily have a negative impact, given that the loss of space for one school results in a gain for all schools (the expansion of the health clinic

serving both schools). However, there are times when the domino effect strains working relationships with other administrations within the same building:

So with new mandates [of co-location] from the DOE, some of those classrooms that we got to use for the CBO we had to move them around or have teachers meet in the library so that those programs can continue. We have now gotten to the point where I have said, 'I only want my kids for the CBO programs on my floor' [...] So when another school is doing their thing and we can't even be on their floor, I don't think that is fair. So my floor can't get cleaned or I get blamed for additional dirty rooms when it isn't my kids. So the co-location makes you want to draw the line of, 'these are my kids, these are my responsibility' which we don't want to be, because we want to be about all children at all times, but sometimes when it becomes a problem you have got to do that (Interview with Participant B, 2015).

In this instance co-location creates a sense of territoriality. The scarcity of space due to the presence of other schools is compounded by the need to concede additional space to the CBO. In this way, the collaborative sharing of materials and resources becomes difficult, especially when other schools appear to not want to share. In this research on joint-use, Testa (2000) cites territorialism as an impediment to fostering positive joint-use agreements, recommending that such act be remedied with strong leadership from higher levels of authority. To date DOE has put various measures in place such as Building Councils and Shared Space Committees in order to mitigate any disputes that arise between co-located administrators (DOE, 2014c). However, as the findings from this research suggest, there is only so much that administration can do before the physical limitations of the building become too much to overcome.

As one participant from a single occupancy school expressed, having a community school in a building that is not co-located with other schools helps tremendously in ensuring program success. In their opinion, co-located schools put greater strain on leadership structures simply because there are multiple voices exerting authority over a single space (Interview with Participant C, 2015). With principal buy-in and CBO cooperation a huge component of community school success, the lack of a cohesive message from a school's administration to the

CBO can create confusion and generate tension within a building. This becomes especially true when one of the co-located schools does not buy into the community school model and is not a full participant in the collaborative efforts.

Regulations Governing Space

While leadership structures are more important to the community school model than are school design elements, there is only so much that a leadership structure within a school can handle before the physical limitations of the building become too much to overcome. As the domino effect of co-location shows, while the effect may not always be negative, it nonetheless puts additional strain on the various administrations working within the same physical structure. In this way, *how* space is allocated and used within schools is just as, if not more, important to understanding than *what* space is allocated and used. In order to understand the ‘how’, one must look at the regulations that govern space within schools. According to Testa (2000), the regulations used to govern school space can, and should, be used to help mitigate issues associated with joint use, working to make the experience beneficial for all parties involved.

From the interviews gathered in this research, there are two types of regulation categories:

- 1) **Internal regulations:** Rules, policies and procedures that dictate how things are operated within the school. Given their authority and influence, the principal is the one who makes/supports these rules and enforces them;
- 2) **External regulations:** Rules, policies and procedures that come from higher levels of authority beyond the individual school’s administration (i.e. DOE and SCA). An example of this is the DOE’s requirement that all co-located schools have monthly building council meetings that involve all school principals.

All of the participants mention some level of both internal and external regulations that affect their experience of working in a community school. However, administrators working in co-located schools cite external regulations of space as the largest obstacle to running a successful community school program.

Though much of the difficulty associated with running a community school model within a co-located building is the coordination of schedules with other school administrators, none of the participants blamed the other administrators for their spatial difficulties. In fact, the administrators express a sense of understanding that their colleagues are only seeking to act in their own best interest: even if those interests cause extra stress for other administrators. Rather, both participants from the co-located schools cite ill-conceived external regulations from the DOE as the source of the extra strain put upon school space. The one regulation cited by both interview participants as the main culprit to co-location struggles is school building utilization.

According to the DOE, co-location only occurs in schools that have what they determine to be underutilized school space. Outlined in their annual *Enrollment, Capacity, and Utilization Report*, also known as the *Blue Book*, the report DOE identifies the capacity numbers for all public school buildings based on a set of assumptions and compares them to actual enrollment numbers. This creates a framework for the DOE to assess whether or not particular schools have too few or too many students on their registry. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, the DOE makes decisions regarding: new schools or programs in underutilized spaces; capital projects for new schools buildings or expansion to existing ones; and space sharing conditions between currently co-located schools (DOE, 2014d).

In order to calculate the utilization of a school, the DOE sets a target capacity for each instructional classroom depending on the size of the classroom, and the grade level of the students. Then, adjusting for administrative offices and specialty or cluster classrooms, the number of instructional classrooms each school is calculated.⁶ Next, the number of available instructional classrooms is multiplied by the target capacity for each classroom, resulting in a

⁶ Specialty and cluster rooms are those rooms dedicated to specific uses such as music rooms, science labs, art spaces, or reading rooms. Depending on the grade level being served, these classrooms will have a different capacity than regular instructional classrooms.

total building capacity. Finally, the school's current enrollment is divided by the building's calculated capacity, providing a building utilization rate (also known as a programming efficiency rate). Depending on the rate, the school is determined to be running at, below, or above program efficiency (see Chart 7).

Summary of Classroom Capacity by Grade Level

Grade(s)	Target Capacity	Programming Efficiency Rate
Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day)	18	100%
Kindergarten – 3	20	75%-90%
4-5	28	75%-90%
6-8	28	87.5%
9-12	30	87.5%

Chart 7: Summary of acceptable NYC DOE program efficiency rates according to grade level.
Source: DOE, 2014b.

The programming efficiency rate is a much contested figure. The DOE acknowledges this fact, stating:

We understand that the utilization rate of our schools and buildings garner much attention, and that one statistic cannot capture the full picture of the space situation in a building. That being said, it is critical that we as a Department have a standardized means of assessing the use of our buildings that evaluates all of our schools consistently.

Though the need for a consistent method is understandable and in many ways necessary for efficiency sake, the very present reality remains that community school model is not, as of yet, a prototypical school model. With specific spatial requirements that other schools do not have, the utilization formula does not sufficiently take into account the extra spatial requirements that community schools have over other non-community schools. As one participant put it,

Every space does not equate to a registered child. You cannot say that because I have only X amount of kids I should be constrained to this space. So when we talk about quality and class size and how children learn best in smaller settings, why is it suggested that I am under footprint [have underutilized space] and then give this amount to another school? Then I need to make space for the CBO [...] so the space we need in order to have some elbow room is not being valued (Interview with Participant A, 2015).

The problem as seen by school administration is the difference in understanding and value of space between themselves and the DOE. A phrase that came from both administrators working in co-located schools is ‘quantity-over-quality’: that current school utilization regulations regarding are perceived as caring more about the number of kids being educated, rather than the quality of the education. Though the regulation is put in place in order to maximize school efficiency, the dispute is over who gets to define efficiency, and at what cost to the student. While school administrators see extra space as necessary to allow for extra breathing room and flexibility, the perception from administrators is that the DOE wants to minimize as much as possible the amount of extra space each school has leading to a dissection of ‘underutilized’ versus ‘truly underutilized’ schools. Though neither participant elaborated as to what exactly the distinction between the two types of utilization are, it is important to note as it reveals a discrepancy in the value and view of space by different key stakeholders.

According to the school administrators from the co-located schools, this attempt of maximization of spatial efficiency puts an extra strain on internal regulation efforts. Both administrators acknowledge that they are willing to accommodate the needs and mandates of the DOE and will overcome the spatial issues as needed. Much of this accommodation comes in the form of a strong leadership structure to conduct joint planning and create internal regulations that mitigate the negative effects of co-location. However, as previously mentioned, there is a limit to what can be before the stress of internal coordination between the various schools becomes too much and external regulations need to be amended.

For the non-co-located schools, the issue of school utilization is a non-factor. One participant even acknowledges that their falling registry is resulting in positive outcomes as it allows the school and CBO to provide more community space for the students and their

families.⁷ Of greater concern to the non-co-located schools is the process of writing grants for program funding, or coordinating schedules to accommodate new programming with the CBO. One participant did note that external regulations such as school safety measures and health regulations do put an extra strain on programming logistics, the regulations are not seen as being an impediment to the successful implementation of the community school model. The lack of regulatory obstacles mentioned by the participants of both non-co-located schools is noteworthy. Both participants expressed that the merits of the lead-partner community school model addresses many of the conflicts that arise, and that the external regulations they face are necessary to ensure the safety and health of the students.

Policy Implications

The findings from the interviews confirm the hypothesis that school design is often a secondary factor to whether or not a community school model will succeed. All participants note that the most important factor to consider when implementing a community school model is the leadership structure governing how or when space is being used and by whom. In the four schools that participated in this study, it is found that the lead-partner governance model is well suited to accommodate and address the internal regulation challenges. The model is only challenged in co-located schools where DOE regulations regarding school utilization have taken over and placed multiple school administrations in a single building. The issue of co-location revealed that there exists a discrepancy in the way in which school level and department level administration value and understand school space.

This would suggest that spatial obstacles faced by community schools are not necessarily at the school level, but at the level of the department. This, however, does not minimize the need for a strong leadership structure at the school level. The findings show that the success of the

⁷ Though many of the schools interviewed for this study cited they currently have falling registries, many of the schools were actually overcrowded at the outset of their start as community schools.

community school model primarily rests on the ability of both parties to implement a successful internal planning and regulatory framework and build positive working relationships.

Yet, while the leadership structure of a community school is important, it does not exclude the importance that space plays within the equation. Though often positioned as being of secondary importance throughout the findings, space is a critical element to the success of a community school model. The discussion surrounding co-location also reveal that the leadership structure of a school can only do so much before it breaks down due to spatial constraints.

The findings of this research present a difficult predicament for the planner. Though planners should be concerned with the quality and placement of schools within communities, how to intervene and what role to play in the community school process is unclear. Developing governing structures on how schools run and what activities can occur within them is not often within the realm of planners. However, planners can advocate for, and help implement, policies that ensure that space becomes an opportunity rather than a constraint for community school use. That is, planners can involve themselves into the school planning process by ensuring that the school building is more amenable to community school model leadership structures and activities.

One such opportunity for greater collaboration with planners and schools is through the DOE's Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP). The goal of the OSDCP is to "develop new schools that are responsive to district needs in the areas of family and community engagement, new school leader selection and new school design and development" (DOE, 2015b). Currently there is no website for the office and solicitations for documents were

not answered in time for publication of this paper.⁸ However, the Department of School Design, in partnership with the School Construction Authority, is responsible for capital projects on public school property and primarily responsible for the regulations dictating school space and use. Planners can and should, therefore, work to establish relationships with both offices in order to ensure that the school becomes a tool, rather than an impediment, for the DOE to develop positive relationships with local communities.

More specifically, the findings from the interviews point to three potential policy recommendations that can potentially improve future community school model expansion. The first policy recommendation is to revise the school utilization formula to address the specific spatial needs of community schools. Currently, there are no special categories for community schools within the DOE's *Blue Book*. As the interviews with the principals from the co-located schools revealed, the presence of other schools puts a strain on attempts to internally regulate space and placed an emphasis on quantity and not quality. While current calculations within the *Blue Book* have already been updated for the 2013-2014 school year, and current calculations already exclude community used spaces, the experiences of the participants in this study suggest that further revisions are needed. By revising the utilization calculation and making specific exemptions for community schools, the DOE can work to ensure that there is enough 'elbow' room for the school administrators to work with. The changes can also work to address the current discrepancy between the DOE and school level administration in regards to how each party values and views school spaces. Change to the policy can be as simple as reducing the target number of students for each classroom, or reducing the number of periods a classroom should be used throughout the day. The reduced pressure on a principal's registry should work to

⁸ While the SCA is ultimately in charge of capital projects for school buildings, their regulations and documents outline construction standards concerning the various uses of materials and approved vendors as opposed to design standards and spatial requirements.

alleviate the stresses associated with co-location and allow principals greater freedom to use the extra space for additional programming.

The second policy recommendation is to change New York State and City laws to make community use of public school space ‘as of right’ as opposed to recommended or allowed. Currently New York State and City laws permit the use of public school facilities by external organizations, however it is not required that schools permit community organizations access to school facilities. There are only six states in the United States (California, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio and Utah) that require local school districts to allow community use of public school facilities (Filardo and Vincent, 2014). While the laws put forth by the six states vary in their definitions of ‘community use’ – in turn limiting the type of organizations that are able to use the school facilities – the laws assert the notion that public school facilities are more than just buildings for educational purposes. Though research suggests that joint-use of school facilities will still occur even in the absence of state or local policies (Vincent, 2010), an as-of-right mandate for community use of public school facilities can establish a structure and framework where community schools are understood to be the norm and not the exception. As Vincent (2010) asserts, such a mandate may provide both political and financial backing for more joint-use facilities, and also develop a culture of sharing and cooperation across city agencies.

The third policy recommendation is to develop greater collaboration between the DOE and other City agencies such as the Department of City Planning, the Department of Buildings, and the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. The governance of the DOE is unique compared to other large metropolitan areas in the United States as the Mayor of New York City

has control over the department.⁹ While there is yet to be a comprehensive study that evaluates the effectiveness of mayoral control and its impact on joint-use of schools, the research shows strong leadership is essential to the success of the community school model. Though the primary focus of this study is the leadership structure at the individual school level, the findings also reveal the importance of leadership at higher levels of government. Mayor de Blasio has already taken steps to further the community school model through his new “School Renewal Program” and the re-visioning of the DOE’s organizational framework. Despite preliminary research shows that mandates from a central authority do not necessarily create more collaboration between agencies (Vincent, 2010), the influence and leverage of the Mayor should not be underestimated. By mirroring the collaborative efforts of the community school at the City government level, a more robust community network can be established at higher levels of government and help provide the public school system with support from multiple fronts.¹⁰

Limitations and Future Research

The themes and ideas gathered in this paper represent only four community schools within the New York City area. As mentioned previously, in order to maintain internal consistency, schools and participants are limited to only those that follow a lead-partner community school leadership model. As such, the findings from this paper do not apply to other community schools within the City or other geographic regions. Furthermore, due to the limited timeframe of the research project and restricted access to other potential participants, only school or CBO administrators are interviewed. Other key stakeholders such as students, parents, and community members may provide a different understanding of community schools not expressed

⁹ Typically the department of education is a separate and independent entity headed by a chancellor or director elected by an education governing board.

¹⁰ The newly formed Children’s Cabinet, created by Mayor de Blasio, shows great promise in this area. For more information see http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloadins/pdf/news/press_releases/2014/pr_april_2014/Creation_NYC?Childrens_Cabinet.pdf

by the participants (e.g. balance of power and authority between principals and community members or parents).

Future research on community schools in New York City should work to assess the various policies put forth by the de Blasio administration from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods should be used such as open-ended interviews (as used in this research paper), focus groups, surveys and statistical analysis of student achievement with community space acting as the independent variable.

Also crucial to future research is the understanding of various funding models for community schools. Some research has already been conducted regarding various funding models for community schools and joint-use school facilities (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, Pearson, 2010; Filardo and Vincent, 2014; Belay, Mader and Miller, 2014), and the Children's Aid Society has also conducted a social return on investment case study analysis on some of its community schools in New York City (CAS, 2013). Future research should be continue to update these figures and models so that policymakers at both the State and City level may be able to project future costs (or savings) that the community school model can/does provide.

Conclusion

The findings from this research show that the physical structure of a school is a complicated and contested space. The responses from the participants of this project reveal that space is both primary, and secondary, to the successful implementation of a community school model. While leadership structures and regulations are often seen as the most important components, alluded to is the notion that there exists a limit to what social structures can overcome. As exemplified through the experiences of the co-located administrators, space becomes an issue and social structures become stressed once its availability is restricted or severely reduced when multiple parties lay claim to it. The three policy recommendations

outlined seek to remedy some of these issues, though it remains to be seen how such policies can be played out.

As integral components of a City's physical and social infrastructure, school buildings are physical presentations of social discourse. Schools deserve, require, and currently hold, the attention of a diverse range of community stakeholders. It is therefore a somewhat confusing notion as to why the planning profession has yet to be more involved. As educational models expand to take on a more holistic approach to education – exemplified in this project through the community school model – the institutional and physical boundaries that once separated schools and the surrounding community become blurred. Though recent efforts in planning are attempting to take this trend into account via site analysis, there is yet more to be done. However, due to the fluid and multi-faceted nature of the planning field, the role of planners in addressing the 'school-city' divide that currently exists can be difficult to place.

Despite this difficulty, planners need to continue to 'find their place' in the conversation. Broadly, planning is a profession that seeks to enrich people's lives and create environments that improve where and how people live and work (APA, 2015). Successful and healthy schools are integral to that goal. As Candace Stowell (2014, June) outlined in a letter to the APA, planners should "start looking at a new model of comprehensive planning that places public schools front and center." I will echo her call and ask that planners work to develop methods for "school-focused community planning and include education elements [...] that seriously examine the quality of the public schools (not just the location)" (p. 53).

Appendix A

Interview Questions

- 1) What do you think are the most important design characteristics to consider when implementing a community school model?
- 2) Were there any modifications to the school building in order to prepare it as a community school?
- 3) Can you think of any specific spatial characteristics of the school that affect how the programs are run? How about where the programs are located?
- 4) I have learned from speaking to several individuals that physical space is one of the largest challenges facing community schools. What space issues have you faced – or do you face on a regular basis – and how have they been overcome?
- 5) What have been the largest successes of the programs since its start at the school, and how have they been achieved?
- 6) Specific funding sources (e.g. federal grants for early childhood education programs) have mandated space requirements for each child. How have you been able to accommodate those mandates?
- 7) Are the programs provided by this school able to meet the needs outlined in your Community Needs document? What are the obstacles to meeting those needs?

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