

Chapter 2

A Shared Rationale for New School Designs with Place-Based Differences

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Abstract To fully appreciate the new policy and practice directions offered by community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools, it is best to view them as complex interventions; or more simply, as multi-faceted solutions for complicated needs and problems, which are rooted in particular places or locales. These complicated needs and problems, together with the search for local assets and opportunities, introduce a shared rationale for this new school-related design. This chapter introduces this rationale. Chief among these complicated needs and problems are concentrated poverty and overall disadvantage; high levels of family diversity and instability; the formidable challenges of social inclusion and social integration amid widespread perceptions of, and practices associated with, social exclusion; and the difficulty in attracting and retaining adequately prepared educators because they tend to be blamed when results are sub-optimal. These needs and problems often co-occur and nest in each other such that addressing one entails addressing one or more of the others. A full appreciation of the uniqueness and import of community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools starts with this shared rationale, setting the stage for succeeding chapters.

Keywords Poverty • Social exclusion • Social and economic disadvantage • Immigrant families • Educational equity • Social integration • Social geography • Community school • At-risk youths

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A significant institutional change involving the nearly-universal model for “school” is underway world-wide, albeit differentially and with predictable stops, re-starts, and adjustments in diverse regional, national, provincial, state, and local contexts. As with all manner of institutional changes, a design metaphor is instructive and useful. Like comparisons of alternative architectures for homes and apartments, inspections and evaluations of alternatives for “school” can focus on the essential elements of their respective designs.

The four design features presented in the Introduction—inventiveness, intentionality, causality and contrast—facilitate this special kind of planning and analysis. Together they facilitate comparative evaluations of alternative exemplars known as community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools and multi-service schools. These schools’ shared aim, whether explicit or implicit, is a special feature. All aim to ensure that every child has equitable access to high quality schooling and education. In many nations, *inclusion* is the concept employed to describe this access (Florian & Spratt, 2013; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Inclusion in school extends to broad access to salient opportunity structures and pathways toward productive citizenship, participation in the economy, social integration, and adult well-being. Viewed in this way, these schools are structured to improve child-well-being and, over the long haul, reduce social and economic inequality.

Building on this shared aim, this chapter provides useful, albeit still-evolving definitions. The best definitions have two important features. They identify and describe the core or defining features of a phenomenon, which identify and describe what it is. They also identify contrasting features and alternative models, which indicate what a particular school-related design is not.

This latter component enables analyses to be delimited. In other words, possible nominees for inclusion can be ruled out because their respective differences are ones of kind, not merely degree. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to such a two component definition for this new school-related design.

Getting Started: A School Improvement Configuration or a New Kind of Institution?

This new design has been developed in some places as a more expansive school with several new functions as well as additional programs, and services. Despite a new name for the school (e.g., community school, community learning center), early in the development of this new design the overall impetus is improvement of conventional schools. Educational policy, especially weighty and demanding external accountability requirements, are instrumental in this reformist framework.

In other places, this new design progressively transforms “school.” Here, the aim is to create a new kind of child, family, and community-serving institution, both in

response to and in anticipation of the rapidly changing characteristics and needs of twenty-first century global societies.

This new design operates under different names even in the same nation, province and state. The names include multi-service school (e.g., Van Veen, 2001, 2006a, 2006b; Van Veen, Day, & Walraven, 1998; Warren, 2005), extended-service school and full-service school (e.g., Dryfoos, 1994), community school (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012; Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005; Mendez, 2011), full-service, community school (e.g., Dryfoos & McGuire 2002; Valli, Stefanski & Jacobson, 2014), community learning center (e.g., Langevin & Lamarre, Chap. 7, this book; Parsons, 1999), all-day school (Fisher & Klieme, 2013; Mangold & Messerli, 2005), and university-assisted community school (Harkavy et al., 2013; Lawson, 2010). There are yet other names.

Beyond the manifest differences in names, operational definitions also vary. Five examples are instructive because each emphasizes special priorities that are important to leaders in particular places. Look for commonalities and similarities in these definitions, but also contemplate the implementation challenges.

A School-Related Definition

Blank, Melaville, & Shaw (2003) describe the five core features of community schools. In no particular order: (1) The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students. (2) Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school. (3) The basic physical, mental, and emotional needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed. (4) There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff. (5) Community engagement, together with school efforts, promote a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.

Clearly, this definition presents a community school as a different way to structure and deliver schooling in particular places. These places are alike in that their leaders recognize needs for a more comprehensive approach than the one provided by conventional, stand-alone schools.

The Children's Aid Society Definition

Leaders for New York City's Children's Aid Society (Mendez, Quinn et al. Chap. 9, in this book) define community schools *as a strategy* for organizing school and community resources to help students succeed and thrive. Viewed in this way,

a Children's Aid community school is characterized by four main features. These features are extended services, extended hours, expanded relationships, and a coherent strategy for having these three features come together in support of children's academic learning and overall school success.

This definition calls attention to several factors: the centrality of school-community partnerships; the intentionality of the partners in organizing their human and financial resources; and a clear orientation toward a shared set of results. In this vision, partners are an important resource in promoting school and student success, and all partners are united by core values.

A Community Learning Center Definition

Langevin and Lamarre (Chap. 7, this book) present a community learning center (CLC) as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community. More than a conventional school, a CLC brings new mandates to schools. CLCs are structured to achieve a broad range of goals, including youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, and family support. More concretely, their specially-designed CLCs are structured to foster improved school performance in young people; promote the language, culture and vitality of the Anglophone community in the French-dominant culture of Montreal, Canada; encourage a reciprocal relation between the schools and their communities; and renew and broaden the role of the school to become centers of lifelong learning. Clearly, CLCs encompass schools, but their overall design transforms what a stand-alone conventional school is structured to prioritize and able to accomplish.

A Definition Featuring Design Principles

Potapchuk (2013, p. 5) provides an alternative definition, which features the core principles for this new school design. Although community schools always are somewhat unique at any given point in time because they are tailor-made for particular places, Potapchuk (2013) derived five core principles from the urban community schools he studied. These principles are: (1) Develop a shared vision with accountability for results; (2) Hold high expectations for everyone; (3) Respect diversity; (4) Marshall assets of the entire community; and (5) Prioritize local decision-making.

The Community School Strategy

Writing on the behalf of the American national coalition for community schools, Melaville, Jacobson, and Blank (2011) provide six core principles for community school design and development: (1) Shared vision and accountability for results; (2) Strong partnerships; (3) High expectations for everyone; (4) Building on community strengths; (5) Respect for diversity; and (6) Local decision-making in response to special place-based and circumstantial needs and priorities (p. 3). Together these principles serve as the foundation for an expansive, compelling vision and conceptualization based on citizen participation in collective action mobilizations on the behalf of children. The overall premise is that “every child and every school is capable of excellence given the right conditions for learning” (Melaville et al., p. 5).

In addition to health and social service agencies and youth development priorities, the Melaville et al. (2011) strategy includes housing, employment, transportation, public safety and municipal services. Community schools thus are place-based hubs for multiple partnerships that connect schools with families, community leaders, and relevant community organizations. They are special kinds of schools, characterized by several moving parts, which enable them to provide “an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services, and community development” (p. 9). What is more, a community school curriculum “emphasizes real-world learning through community problem-solving and service,” a contribution made possible by an expansive school calendar and by explicit goals for contributions to the local community (p. 9).

Beyond the Names and Definitions to a Shared Rationale

Mindful of the above-emphasized differences in names, definitions, and school-related strategies and priorities we begin with a generalizable rationale. We believe that this rationale is as important as any exemplar’s present features. After all, nearly every new model for schooling is an adaptive, social experiment, alternatively called “a work in progress.” All such new models earn this status because their leaders are striving to meet urgent needs, solve pressing social problems, and capitalize on timely opportunities. Their shared rationale illuminates them and helps to explain the logic of their leaders’ respective efforts.

The rationale for these new school designs also is rooted in two pragmatic realities. One is the persistent inability of conventional, stand-alone schools to achieve desirable outcomes with identifiable sub-populations in particular places. In other words, leaders launch these new designs because of practical necessities. Their concern for children, youth, families and communities compels them to design alternative versions of “school.”

The other reality pertains to what schools, community agencies, and other partner entities must do in order to succeed with identifiable sub-populations in particular places. The importance of place—the social geography of schooling and education (Kerr et al., 2014; Tate, 2012)—is a special priority. So, for example, it matters if this new design targets an isolated rural community. Such a rural design will be tailored to the particularities of this special context, albeit with some of the same design features manifest in selected inner ring suburbs and poverty-challenged urban communities.

How, then, can leaders and planners come to grips with the tension between place-based tailoring and important commonalities in this new school-related design? The rationale for community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools and multi-service schools is an important, solid place to begin.

Growing International Convergence

The rationale for this new school-related design frames it as an alternative model for meeting emergent needs, addressing problems, building on strengths, and capitalizing on opportunities to achieve better outcomes. “Better outcomes” and “improved outcomes” are a priority because sub-optimal student outcomes have become an inescapable reality in many nations. School dropouts, also called early school leavers, are a special priority because the failure to succeed in and complete school is linked to a range of undesirable outcomes (Cuervo, Barakat, & Turnbull, 2015; Dupéré, Leventhal, Dion, Crosnoe, Archambault, & Janosz, 2015; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Lawson 2009). Examples include long-term unemployment, depression, substance abuse, crime and delinquency, and homelessness.

Overall, the stubborn gap between desirable outcomes and actual results has compelled governmental officials, policy leaders, researchers, and education professionals to ask probing questions. Increasingly, these questions penetrate to the defining features of the inherited school designs. For example, what may have gone wrong? How have fast-changing societal circumstances rendered conventional schools less effective? What needs to be done differently and better? What kinds of social innovation are needed, and who will take charge of them? Why should civic leaders from all walks of life become concerned and perhaps alarmed? Is this solely “a school problem?” Or, do we need a more expansive conceptualization of the problem, one that extends to community economic and social development?

Blaming Educators Instead of Examining Schooling and Place-Based Challenges

These questions and others they implicate are being asked and addressed in some form world-wide. Some such interrogations extend to the responsibilities and accountabilities of professional educators. Unfortunately, educators in some places are being blamed for the gap between desirable child and school outcomes and actual results.

One policy response follows suit. It is to tighten the accountability grip on educators and their schools. The core assumption for this response is that conventional stand-alone schools, most of which are twentieth century inheritances, are not the problem. The main problem resides in educators' inability or refusal to adhere to school policy mandates and recommendations such as adopting and emphasizing recommended curricula and implemented scripted pedagogical protocols. These perceived problems, needs, and limitations may extend to university-based, preservice education programs, including tough questions about education professors' preparation, orientations and goals, competencies, and manifest needs for faculty development, curricular guidance, and performance evaluations.

Granting needs for improvement in all such educator preparation and performance, when the focus is limited to school district leaders, principals, teachers, and student support professionals, this approach amounts to blaming the victim. It deflects attention from the limitations of an inherited school design for stand-alone schools as narrowly focused academic institutions. It bypasses an important contextual feature—namely, this traditional design was developed for a different time with societal conditions that are disappearing. When the conditions needed for these inherited schools to be effective have vanished, there is little to be gained and much to be lost with punitive educational policies and practices that do not and cannot alter the conditions that undermine conventional schooling.

When conditions have changed permanently, while schools remain the same, the result is what Henry (1963) called a cultural lag. Absent good reasons to believe that new societal circumstances will somehow vanish and “the good old days” will magically return, the obvious strategy is to start with this gap, examine these changing conditions, and use the findings in the redesign of schools.

Although these changing conditions have unique local features, increasingly they are international phenomena. Individually and together they comprise a shared rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book. The importance of this rationale cannot be over-emphasized because it helps to explain the new school-related design. Put differently, the new school-related design-as-solution cannot be fully appreciated without the a companion understanding of the new conditions—and particularly the needs and problems—that have caused leaders to abandon the stand-alone school and progressively design community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools.

Eight Commonalties in the Rationale for New School Designs

Mindful of nation-specific differences, eight international commonalties provide the shared rationale for this new school-related design. These components are: Diverse people on the move; concentrated disadvantage; a terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation; the fierce competition for young people's attention, time, and engagement; social responsibility founded on a moral imperative; the limitations of conventional school improvement planning; a three part planning framework for new designs; and the opportunities and challenges accompanying diverse, fast-changing policy environments. While each component is important, readers are reminded that the whole they comprise is greater than the sum of its parts.

Diverse People on the Move

Unprecedented, massive migrations of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse people pose a formidable challenge. The rationale for new school-related designs is being developed in response. Three migration patterns are especially salient. All are signature features of the multi-faceted process of globalization (Lawson, 2011).

Arguably the obvious one is the unprecedented movement of people from one nation to another; and with special interest in the impacts on the cities that serve as transportation hubs. The other is intra-nation movement from rural areas to cities. A third varies by nation, province and state; it involves an influx of new residents in rural areas.

Over time, these three migration patterns have convergent effects. Together they have joint impacts on the world's cities, the suburbs that ring them, and rural areas. Rural areas have dual challenges: Many continue to lose valuable people, especially employable parents and their children, while newcomer families often are culturally diverse and vulnerable.

These migrations have profound impacts on schools. In fact, the topic merits special books. Suffice it to say that school systems charged with the social integration of diverse students, perhaps extending to grand plans for wholesale cultural assimilation that results in citizenship, are stopped short when a steady influx of new students from diverse parts of the world, with their respective language systems and cultural practices, transforms these schools into miniature versions of the United Nations. For example, Amsterdam (The Netherlands) is home to people representing 180 nationalities, which poses special challenges and presents opportunities for innovation for schools and public sector services overall.

The challenges mount when family systems are divided, i.e., one parent and some children remain in the host or sender nation while the other parent with accompanying children arrive at the schoolhouse doors. For example, conventional parent involvement was not designed for these circumstances (Alameda-Lawson,

Lawson, & Lawson, 2013; Lawson, Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, Briar-Lawson, & Wilcox, 2014).

Significantly, strategies for school-parent relationships have been founded on the assumption that families either are, or aspire to be, socially integrated in the school and also in the surrounding community. In contrast, some of today's immigrant adults, especially parents with diverse religious beliefs, may actively resist social integration, cultural assimilation, and local civic engagement. In fact, some persons, perhaps many people in particular places, have a decidedly non-local orientation called long-distance nationalism and absentee patriotism (Lawson, 2011). Their identities, affinities, and loyalties are to their respective host (sender) nations, and they remain connected using twenty-first century communications technologies.

Two immediate consequences are noteworthy, and they are part of the growing rationale for alternative school-related designs. One is an apparent paradox. Some diverse newcomers take advantage of schools and other public services at the same time they eschew and resist efforts directed at social integration, cultural assimilation, civic engagement, and citizenship. Reflecting this orientation, they opt for work permits and short-term visas in lieu of formal citizenship applications.

The other consequence stems from the first. It is the manifest threat posed to the democracies when entire family systems reject the twin ideas of civic engagement and social integration. This resistance threatens schools' essential roles in preparing students for democratic citizenship founded on local civic engagement and a willingness to join friends and neighbors in local collective action initiatives. Terrorism, manifested in violent acts, is the epitome of this threat. The French sociologist, Alain Touraine (2000) anticipated these developments and the possible adverse consequences when he posed a central question. *Can we live together?*

Schools surely are not the only answer to this question, but they are essential to any effective solution. Unfortunately, educators have not been prepared for this nexus of novel circumstances or for the manifold challenges of increasing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

For example, when diverse people migrate to the same places, over time they intermingle. One result is inter-cultural marriages, resulting in succeeding generations of children who come to the schoolhouse doors with new kinds of hybrid cultures. Called "polyculturalism" in some circles and "creolization" in others (Lawson, 2011) these new cultural hybrids pose challenges to conventional pedagogies known variously as culturally-sensitive, culturally-responsive, and culturally competent.

Unfortunately, many of these pedagogies, like service delivery strategies implemented by community health and social service professionals, are based on the idea of culture as a unitary concept. Familiar descriptors such as culturally-sensitive, culturally-congruent, culturally-responsive, and culturally-competent usually are grounded in just one racial-ethnic identity and tradition. Already it is apparent that educators need help because many have not been prepared for the challenges accompanying culturally-competent, differentiated instruction (Gay, 2010).

At the same time, it is apparent that conventional schools-as-organizations have not been designed to address twenty-first century diversity in all of its forms.

In other words, stand-alone schools in which educators work alone inside the walls and focus primarily on the school day are not designed to respond to the challenges and capitalize on the timely opportunities accompanying this growing ethnic and cultural diversity. This problem is exacerbated when the education and social-health services workforces are not representative of the culturally diverse student and family populations needing to be served (Grissom, Kern, & Rodriguez, 2015).

The rationale for new the school-related design featured in this book is being developed accordingly. New professional, organizational and institutional designs are needed in response to and in anticipation of diverse people on the move in unprecedented numbers, especially the most vulnerable ones. What is more, dense concentrations of vulnerable people present formidable challenges, all of which can be reframed as needs, incentives and opportunities for school-related innovation.

Addressing Concentrated Disadvantage with Strengths-Based Language

To take a rough-cut view, the above-mentioned migrations involve two groups of people. Highly educated and employable people constitute one group. They often bring discretionary money and other attendant privileges, and they tend to settle and work in places where other residents also enjoy privileges. Conventional schools tend to be effective.

The other group arrives without a lot of money, and its members do not have extensive educational backgrounds and formal credentials. In comparison to the first group, they bring different employment histories, and their job opportunities tend to be limited to low-skill, low income positions, including some known as “3-D”—dangerous, dirty, and demeaning. Granting these people’s strengths and aspirations, they are vulnerable when they arrive, and they confront more vulnerability in their immediate future.

Migrating people’s individual and collective challenges are compounded when they congregate and settle in particular urban places—called “arrival cities” by some researchers (Alameda-Lawson et al., 2013; Saunders, 2010). When new immigrants’ possible reluctance and resistance toward social integration, cultural assimilation, civic engagement, and citizenship is added to place-based challenges, one result is a set of changing circumstances that are not conducive to conventional schools and other, traditionally-structured child and family-serving institutions. Just as gardens contaminated by pollutants and fouled by bad weather are not conducive to healthy plant growth, these residential areas are not conducive to family support and healthy child development because individuals and families do not join forces to care for each other (Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

In fact, stressed, vulnerable, isolated, and divided families are associated with child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health problems, and pervasive employment challenges. These several challenges track into others, especially homeless youth and families (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 1998).

But there is more to this part of the rationale. It is noteworthy that, prior to this recent period of mass migration, many of the world's cities, inner ring suburbs, and rural communities already were home to vulnerable populations, and they were congregated in particular places. In the main, these populations were native-born citizens. A growing number of them had migrated from rural areas to the cities, later they moved again to urbanized, inner ring suburbs.

Especially in the so-called advanced, industrial democracies, these people and their respective locales have been hit hard by rapid deindustrialization. When industries have closed shop and moved to other nations with lower labor costs and fewer regulations, local communities have had to confront declining employment opportunities and diminishing monetary resources. Predictably, employable adults, especially parents with children, have responded to these changes. Many have left deindustrialized urban neighborhoods. They have moved to places offering employment.

As large numbers of parents have moved their entire families and enrolled their children in faraway schools, the schools that were left behind have experienced adverse impacts. These impacts are especially likely when the percentage of students deemed "vulnerable" increases at the same time that funding based on the total number of students is reduced.

When these circumstances prevail, appropriate language is needed. Person-blame and deficit-oriented attributions need to be avoided and prevented. The same can be said of unflattering stigmas and inaccurate stereotypes (Opotow, 1990).

The rationale and recommended language for new school-related designs are being developed and disseminated accordingly. For example, every school and its surrounding place offer distinctive assets, and every population segment has distinctive strengths, ambitions, and aspirations. In all such cases, it is important to avoid pathological thinking, together with deficit-based language and intervention strategies (Valencia, 1997).

To claim that people and places have unmet, urgent needs is timely and important. However, there is little to be gained and much to be lost by claiming that particular places are inherently deficient, or that the people who reside there, like broken furniture, need to be fixed (Dyson & Kerr, 2012).

People are *vulnerable* when the conditions needed for individual and family well-being and community vitality are absent. Absent these conditions, and in contrast to populations characterized as privileged, vulnerable people live and work under conditions of comparative disadvantage.

For example, children living under stressful, challenging circumstance are vulnerable to a wide variety of adverse childhood experiences such as abuse and neglect, domestic violence, violent crimes, homelessness, and both housing and food insecurities. Problematic to every aspect of child development in the here-and-now, adverse childhood experiences are instrumental in school-related needs and problems such as dropping out (Dupéré et al., 2015). More than a school problem, these experiences impact neighborhoods and community agencies (Blodgett, 2015), and they also have widespread and long-lasting effects (e.g., Brookings Center for Children and Families, 2015; Cuervo et al., 2015; Tomer, 2014). In fact, adults who

continue to experience the traumatic effects of adverse childhood experiences may transmit the same problems and behaviors to their own children.

Thus, alongside vulnerable, “disadvantage” is the second recommended descriptor for challenging places. The growing concentration of vulnerable people—both new immigrants and native born citizens—in particular places, which are challenged by multiple, interrelated hardships, is disadvantageous. Although the American author James Garbarino over-stated the problem, glossed over family strengths and assets, and underestimated the sense of belonging that young people develop to the most challenging places (Cuervo et al., 2015), the headliner title for his book is compelling. There are indeed special challenges associated with “raising children in socially toxic environments” (Garbarino, 1995), and these challenges multiple when educators, parents and other family system members, and social and health service providers work alone and without adequate services, social supports, economic resources, and ways to join forces.

So, people have strengths and important aspirations, even though they have needs that render them vulnerable. They are vulnerable in part because they live and work in disadvantaged places with their respective assets and opportunities.

In this view, schools are among the most important community assets, and the work that lies ahead entails capitalizing on their potential so that they serve vulnerable people residing in disadvantaged places. On the other hand, when place-based disadvantage penetrates schools, rendering them vulnerable and less effective, a significant community asset is eroded, and significant questions arise regarding school-related equity and distributive justice (Raffo, 2014).

This developing language system and accompanying analytical framework are central to the rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book because the growing concentration of vulnerable people in places challenged by disadvantage is an international phenomenon. One useful framework for understanding and addressing this problem was developed by the American sociologist, William Julius Wilson (1996). He coined the terms “concentrated disadvantage” to refer to considerable numbers of vulnerable people clustered in challenging places.

Wilson added that concentrated disadvantage gives rise to predictable, harmful “concentration effects”—identifiable social problems such as early school leaving, under-achieving students and overall school ineffectiveness, unemployment, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, housing shortages, homelessness, food insecurities, crime and delinquency. Wilson emphasized that these several problems tend to co-occur. More profoundly, these problems often nest in each other, so much so that efforts to address one problem must include address one or more others.

This unprecedented complexity is new to educators world-wide. In the same vein, conventional school improvement models have not been developed to address co-occurring and interlocking problems, many of which are caused by external forces, factors, and actors. The implication is that educators and their schools cannot and will not succeed until such time as strategies and interventions are available for addressing such co-occurring and interlocking needs, whether in schools, external settings, or their connections (Lawson 1996a, 1996b; Van Veen 2006a, 2006b).

The same needs are manifest in several other child- and family-serving sectors. Social and health service providers, juvenile justice specialists, and others are no less “walled-in” and bounded by their respective policy and practice jurisdictions. They need help, social supports and resources from educators and their schools, just as educators need help from them.

The new school design draws on this ever-present reality. It is predicated on the idea that now-separate professionals and their host organizations need to join forces so they can mount a multi-lateral effort with two or more interventions in order to meet child, family and community needs and, at the same time, improve their own individual and collective efficacy, gaining confidence that they are able to make a positive difference. More than a sterile, emotionally-distanced strategy, this new school design is structured to provide young people with a sense of belonging (Cuervo et al., 2015) in safe, secure, and nurturing schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations. The best community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools are configured in this way. They assist young people in the development of positive identities and help them to set sail on satisfying life course development trajectories that promise meaning, significance, prosperity and well-being (Mills & McGregor, 2014).

A Terrible Trilogy of Poverty, Social Exclusion, and Social Isolation

When considerable numbers of vulnerable people are clustered in particular places, and they confront daily the challenges of concentrated disadvantage, it is tempting to employ the familiar coverall descriptor: Poverty. The stereotypical solution set follows suit. Governmental leaders, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers emphasize needs for anti-poverty strategies. Although these tendencies arguably are more prevalent in the United States, what can be called “the poverty school of thought” is a world-wide phenomenon.

Granting the merits of the poverty lens, while celebrating the students who escape poverty thanks to effective schools operated by caring, competent educators, it limits new school-related designs and their rationale. Although poverty surely is multi-faceted, too many different forces and factors typically are covered by the poverty umbrella. Under these circumstances, policy development and systems intervention strategies are complicated. When precise, useful conceptualizations are missing, both policy development and systems intervention designs are constrained because each policy alternative, like every intervention, must be tailor-made for specific needs, problems, and opportunities. One size does not fit all.

It has been encouraging to note that policy makers and educators have recognized the limitations of the poverty focus. These limitations have been instrumental in leaders’ decisions in several nations to avoid it. Many of them have substituted a relatively new idea: *Social exclusion*. This descriptor has several advantages, not least of which is its emphasis on social processes and mechanisms (Bongers, Klopogge, Van Veen, & Walraven, 2000).

Social exclusion connotes being left out and ruled out, including lack of access to important opportunity structures. Significantly, social exclusion is done to you, whether by design or unintentionally; whether through outright discrimination and marginalization (Opotow, 1990); or through more subtle mechanisms such as inequitable access to beneficial socialization opportunities (Raffo, 2014). Since people's perceptions are their lived realities, perceived social exclusion by individuals and groups is as important as widespread evidence of same. Either way, socially excluded people, especially young people, feel left out. They perceive that opportunity structures which other people are able to access are not available to them because of the color of their skin, their sexual orientation, their religious preferences, their social class affiliation, their language preferences, or the place where their family resides and they go to school. Although many such persons may not be labeled officially as "minority populations," their lived experience is akin to persons aware that they live on the margins of one or more dominant, majority populations. The places where they reside reinforce this stigma.

Furthermore, social exclusion signals that "the problem" involves more than money and economic development—arguably the dominant meaning of poverty. For example, students who perceive social exclusion and who attend schools in which a significant number of other students also share this perception are less likely to identify with school, accept and pursue school-related goals, and engage in classroom learning. "Dis-identification" and "dis-engagement" are two of the predictable orientations associated with all such socially excluded students, and these two problems track into school-related cognitive, behavioral, and emotional challenges and ultimately, early school leaving, i.e., school dropout (Dupéré et al., 2015; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Messing, Kuijvenhoven, & Van Veen, 2006).

This emphasis on social exclusion does not rule out poverty. Job development, income maintenance, and economic development priorities matter, so something important is lost when social exclusion replaces poverty. In brief, there is much to be gained, particularly for new school-related designs and their rationales, when these two important concepts, poverty and social exclusion, are linked.

When a third concept is added, the terrible trilogy is complete. *Social isolation* is the third concept, and it prevails in arrival city neighborhoods, other urban communities challenged by concentrated disadvantage, selected inner ring suburbs, and rural communities covering hundreds of kilometers and miles (Prince et al., 2015; Schutz, 2006). Different in their respective geographic features, these three community configurations share a keynote feature. In too many of them, vulnerable strangers live and interact with other vulnerable strangers, a pattern that oftentimes spills over into schools with high workforce turnover and high student turnover. Absent minor miracles that enable productive interactions that produce mutually beneficial friendships and resource exchanges, social isolation is a predictable result.

When social isolation prevails, much-needed social support systems oftentimes are missing, in part because they are not valued. Whatever the reasons the result is the same: Individual development, family stability, and neighborhood vitality are impaired. Children in particular suffer when they are isolated, and so do family

systems (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Schutz, 2006). In fact, social isolation’s adverse effects extend to neighborhoods and rural community settings. For example, social isolation erodes residents’ collective efficacy and civic capacity to address needs, solve problems, and care for each other. The reduced commitments and capacity to monitor, assist and support local children (Kimbrough-Melton & Melton, 2015), called neighborhood collective efficacy for children (Sampson, 2012), is a special loss because it creates conditions conducive to school success.

When these three elements are combined a powerful, negative synergy develops. Poverty (viewed as economic hardship and disadvantage), social exclusion (viewed as perceived and actual, negative discrimination, marginalization, and a lack of equitable opportunity structures), and social isolation (viewed as a lack of interpersonal social supports) constitute a powerful combination (Lawson, 2009). This terrible trilogy takes root and thrives in places where vulnerable people cluster and concentrated disadvantage is evident. In fact, this trilogy is terrible because it exacerbates disadvantage. It adds to the harms experienced by vulnerable people, and creates local conditions that serve to render conventional schools ineffective.

But there is more to this picture and the rationale it provides for new school-related designs. Wicked, complex problems, ones ripe with dilemmas, are created when vulnerable people are on the move; when urban, inner ring suburban and rural places are characterized by concentrated disadvantage with co-occurring concentration effects; and when these people and places are challenged threatened by the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation (Lawson, 2009; Quane & Wilson, 2012).

Figure 2.1, derived from research in the United States, presents one such depiction of the wicked, complex problem set. It provides one way to frame and appreciate the

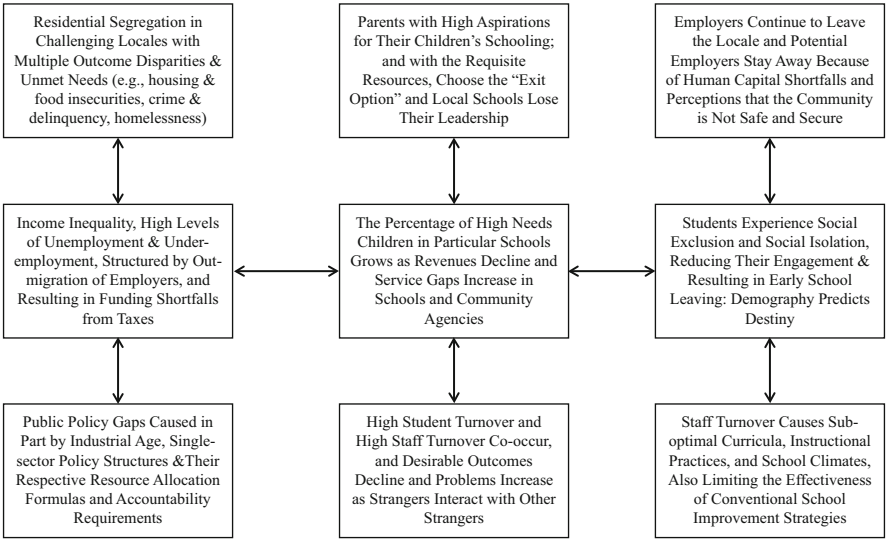


Fig. 2.1 Examining concentrated disadvantage: an example from the United States

fast-evolving rationale for the new school-related design showcased in this book, including the mismatch between conventional school improvement and these challenging, complex conditions.

Unfortunately, a single figure diagram does not tell the entire story. Continuing with the fast-changing situation in the United States, for example, the percentage of children challenged by poverty continues to increase dramatically, and more than half of these children attend schools in which the majority of children face the same challenges (EdBuild, 2015). What's more, the students attending these schools are victims of a national teacher quality gap (Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015), a problem exacerbated by high workforce turnover (Holme & Rangel, 2012). Conventional school improvement models and strategies offer few solutions to these complex problems and the challenges they pose for the monumental undertaking of educating children, contributing to their healthy development, and providing opportunity structures that lead to engaged citizenship, meaningful employment, and social integration.

A Fierce Competition for Young People's Time

Especially when the terrible trilogy is in evidence, and it is exacerbated by place-based concentrated disadvantage, parents, educators, social and health service professionals, youth development leaders, and governmental officials are engaged in a silent, but fierce competition for young people's attention, time, and engagement. This competition's importance is apparent when two firm reminders are provided.

On balance, young people spend only 9–13 % of their waking hours in school; and about half of this time typically qualifies as academically-engaged learning time (Berliner, 2009). Moreover, when the school is a stand-alone organization, out-of-school time needs, problems, and opportunities are someone else's responsibility.

Consider the implications for educators and schools. Student learning and academic achievement depend fundamentally on sufficient academically-engaged learning time facilitated by competent teachers and augmented by computer-assisted instructional technologies. When teachers and students do not enjoy enough time together, and especially when students out-of-school time priorities do not include or perhaps contradict academic learning priorities, desirable outcomes will not be achieved at scale.

Even worse, teachers are likely to be blamed for student learning outcomes, some of which are beyond the school's influence and control. This is not a formula for student, teacher, and school success. To the contrary, it is a formula for a host of undesirable outcomes (e.g., depression, early school leaving). It compels educators and others to take seriously the question of what students prioritize and do when school is out, including where they go, what they do, and whether they are alone or in the company of others.

Changing family systems and parenting dynamics add to the challenges. Divided family systems, single parent families, two working parent families, and the absence of accessible, affordable child care are instrumental in a predictable, undesirable outcome. Too many children and youth are home alone when school is out, and they lack adult and prosocial peer direction, guidance and supports.

When social exclusion and social isolation are added to the mix, the results are even more undesirable. Too many young people fall prey to the lures of the streets, mind-numbing video games, and a host of unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse, sedentary lifestyles, and bad nutritional practices. Lacking meaningful educational and career plans, together with a potentially powerful combination of adult guidance, mentoring, and coaching in schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations and strong families, too many young people embark on problematic life course developmental pathways toward delinquency and crime, long term under-employment and unemployment, and perhaps recruitment into cults and terrorist organizations.

Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools are configured to address and prevent these problems. Many involve out-of-school time partnerships with museums, libraries, special enrichment camps, and community youth development agencies (e.g., youth sports, boys and girls clubs). Out-of-school learning time is a special priority, especially for learners who entered schools behind their peers—with special measures to connect teachers and other school professionals to extra-school professionals and other significant adult mentors and coaches. Conventional schools rarely have formal structural and operational mechanisms for such a comprehensive, coordinated approach to competing for young people's time, attention, and engagement.

A Social Responsibility Founded on a Moral Imperative

When schooling shifted from a privilege limited to particular social classes to a right guaranteed for the masses, governmental leaders and policy makers in every nation accepted an important social responsibility. This responsibility was founded on a moral obligation to each nation's most vulnerable citizens: Its children. Educators' core values are framed accordingly.

The governmental promise to children and their family systems is that demography will not be destiny (Rothstein, 2004). In other words, the circumstances surrounding children's births, including their family of origin, where they reside, their gender, religious preferences, sexual orientation, and especially where they attend school, will not determine their life chances. In this view, high quality schools are vital to human development, adult well-being, a vibrant democracy, and a strong economy.

In short, when conventional, stand-alone schools are ineffective, indeed when they are identified as part of the problem, social responsibility, moral imperative, and educators' core values again become important priorities. These priorities

implicate a new “the politics of generativity”, i.e., what the current generation of adults owes to future generations, also contributing to “the good society” (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991).

The Limitations of an Inherited School Improvement Model

In a growing number of nations, provinces, states, cities, and towns, the progressive redesign of schools targets an inherited, twentieth century model with international prominence. In this model, the school is a stand-alone institution. In the main, it is operated and controlled by professional educators whose work with students, typically grouped together in age-graded classrooms, is bounded by the school’s walls and bracketed by the school timetable. Improvement planning proceeds accordingly.

Although many educators espouse priorities for whole child development, this inherited model increasingly prioritizes students’ academic learning and achievement, especially in nations with formal performance monitoring and accountability systems (Dyson & Kerr, 2012). Expert teachers who are assumed to know what students need to know are expected to implement approved curricula and provide instruction that yield desired outcomes. Governmental learning assessment regimes and achievement testing programs facilitate and reinforce this progressive narrowing of school missions, goals, core functions, and accountability mechanisms.

Sector-specific (“categorical”) public policy for schools provides salient incentives, rewards, mandates, accountability structures, and resources for this inherited model. Called “educational policy,” in fact, it is “school policy.” Part of the work that lies ahead for new school designs is to separate educational policy from school policy and with a focus on education and learning, not just schooling. Community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools offer this potential.

When the local context is characterized by diverse people on the move and the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation, the limitations of stand-alone schools in which educators work alone inside the walls and focus only on the school day are inescapable. The inherited model for school was predicated on entirely different conditions, so it is not surprising that, as circumstances have changed, conventional schools increasingly have been unable to achieve desired outcomes.

Another limitation follows suit. In the conventional school improvement model, educators working alone typically prioritize and are able to accomplish at most three or four goals every year. Worldwide they frequently rely on linear, one-at-a-time strategies to achieve these goals. Unfortunately, this overall approach, which is structured to achieve a few goals and proceeds with a restricted number of one-at-a-time improvement strategies, is destined to come up short when immigrant families

are on the move, disadvantage is concentrated, and a terrible trilogy exacerbates child and family vulnerability.

Thus, a new and better rationale is needed for the new school-related design featured in this book. This new design must take stock of and exert influence over the school's and families' social ecologies, especially the characteristics of the places where families reside and schools are located (Kerr et al., 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

With the school as an important centerpiece, a dual strategy is needed (Green, 2015; Kerr et al., 2014; Tate, 2012). The strategy must be both inside-out and outside-in. The inside-out strategy depends on active outreach and strategic bridge-building from the school (or clusters of local schools) to families and communities, encompassing school-owned and -operated services, supports and resources that have the potential to support and strengthen both families and communities.

The outside-in strategy also involves strategic bridge-building. Here the aim is enable educators and schools to benefit from family and community resources for student learning, healthy development, and school success. In these innovative configurations, area-based initiatives (Kerr et al., 2014), also known as local community development initiatives (Baum, 2003; Crowson, 2001), are connected to school redesign and improvement initiatives.

Furthermore, this dual strategy (outside-in, inside out) is founded on the practical necessity to solve complex, co-occurring and interlocking problems. While some such problem solving is desirably specialized, technical, sequential/linear, a key-note characteristic of this new school-related design is the increasing ability to problem-solve across several fronts in real time.

New structural arrangements enable these newly-developed capacities to address complexity, especially the ability to simultaneously address two or more co-occurring and interlocking problems. Two arrangements are especially noteworthy, and they are described in greater detail through this book. They are organizational partnerships involving schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations businesses, governments, and higher education and collaborative teams consisting of educators and other helping professionals and sometimes representative parents and youths.

Founded in part on the idea that isolation is the enemy of improvement (Elmore, 2004), these and other "joined-up configurations" are directed toward common purposes (Van Veen, 2006b). More specifically, these new collaborative working relationships are cemented when diverse participants develop a special kind of awareness. They realize that they and their respective organizations fundamentally depend on each other, so much so that no one can achieve desirable outcomes absent the contributions provided by one or more others (Lawson, 2003, 2004). These collaborative relationships, founded on interdependent relationships, are fortified when participants share certain core values and proceed with shared planning priorities.

Developing New School Designs in Different Policy Environments

The rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book extends to two important planning priorities. These new school-related designs are tailor-made for particular people, schools, communities and places. They also manifest the influences of national, provincial, and state policy.

These two commonalities are not inherently harmonious. In fact, the frictions between them are responsible for tensions, conflicts and contradictions (see also Dyson & Kerr, 2012). All such tensions, conflicts and contradictions serve to constrain the development and operation of new school-related designs, and some of the chapters in this book provide important examples.

On the other hand, some policies also are incubators for remarkable creativity and profound innovations, especially so when standardized (“cookie cutter”) school models and the conventional policies that drive them fail to achieve desired outcomes at scale. The fast-growing requirement for data-driven planning overall and data-driven instruction in particular represent a reasonable policy balance between rigid specification and tailor-made innovations for demonstrated local needs, problems, and opportunities.

This new school-related design’s commonalities, similarities and differences derive from another policy source. On top of this planning and evaluation triad are shifting policy environments and a growing number of bold policy experiments. For example, many alternative models for schools derive from a radical combination of private sector logic (a business-oriented approach that focuses on markets) and public sector logic (an altruistic, service-oriented approach that focuses on governmental responsibilities and constitutional rights).

This private sector logic frequently is described as part of the growing intrusion of “the neo-liberal” approach to public policy overall and especially to school policy (e.g., Raffo, 2014). This planning logic serves as a driver for the development of a variety of alternatives for the institution of school. Examples of these models include magnet schools, charter schools, performing arts academies, and career academies. These examples and others provide students and families, who are viewed consumers and customers, with a market-driven choice.

This same policy logic may extend to the special kind of school-related design featured in this book. In all such cases, one of the policy aims is to provide students and families with choices. Whereas in the past these persons would have compelled to attend a school with the same standardized design, usually one located near their residence, today they are able to choose the kind of school that best suits them.

How can these several alternatives be inspected and evaluated, starting with the particular school-related design featured in this book? Clearly, a more nuanced and developmental approach to their appreciation, evaluation and possible adoption and implementation is in order.

A Planning Triad with Three Evaluative Criteria

To facilitate all such complex, data-driven designs, an important planning triad has been progressively developed. Several of the chapters in this book provide examples.

One of the three components is *demography*—characteristics of the population and with special interest in identifiable sub-populations of children and family systems. The second is *organizational ecology*—starting with schools, encompassing other child and family-service organizations, and perhaps including businesses and governmental entities. The third is *social geography*. Social geography is a complex concept that refers to socially constructed and constituted place-based characteristics, encompassing identities, economic development histories and trajectories, and the ever-changing determination of the boundaries for schools and communities (Kerr et al., 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

Because this planning triad emphasizes uniqueness with important reminders about difference, it facilitates the development of tailor-made alternatives for the new school-related design featured in this book. Indeed, this same planning triad helps to illuminate and explain the commonalities, similarities, and differences among the alternative models presented in each chapter. All have been tailored in some manner to fit the characteristics of the populations being served, the local school and organizational ecology, and the special features of the surrounding places—social geography (Belay et al., 2014; Lawson, 2013).

So, for example, the configuration for an urban neighborhood will differ somewhat from one for a relatively isolated agriculture-centered, rural community. In the same vein, the design for an inner ring suburb that serves as home for significant numbers of new immigrants whose first language is not the dominant one will have its own special features.

None of this work is easy, and all of it involves an experimentalist posture with provisions for adaptive learning and continuous improvement (White & Wehlage, 1995). Driven by assessment and outcome data, sensitive to context, involving both bottom-up and top-down policy learning and with the ever-present reminder that the work is not likely to be completed in the near term, it nevertheless is important to have a rationale that recognizes progress and enables the celebration of accomplishments.

A three-component evaluative framework provides one such possibility: Fit for purpose, in this context, and at this time (Lawson, 2013). This framework emphasizes local needs, aspirations and goals as well as somewhat unique place-based ecologies (fit for purpose and in this particular context). The criterion “at this time” reminds various audiences that these alternatives are ongoing social experiments with yet more innovations possibly looming in the years ahead.

The alternatives presented throughout this book can be viewed and evaluated accordingly. The same evaluative framework helps to frame and facilitate the new designs featured in the next two chapters.

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International Exemplars for Practice, Policy and
Research

Lawson, H.A.; van Veen, D. (Eds.)

2016, XVIII, 437 p. 57 illus., 38 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-25662-7