

**Files of Melanne Verveer,
Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady
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Community Schools

Computer School Initiative

2000 Convention

Council on Foreign Relations

Counsel's Office

Counterparts

Creator's Syndicate

Cubs

Cuba

Culture Presentation

Conference on Culture & Diplomacy

International Culture Conference

Culture Conference – Final

Czech Republic

DARE

- Youth Development/After School/ Violence

Davos

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Points of Light Foundation
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President's Council on Physical Fitness
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National Planning Association
DAVID LOW
Univ of TX, Health Science Cntr
BRUCE MACLAURY
The Brookings Institution
KAY MAXWELL
CT League of Women Voters
NEWTON MINOW
Sidley & Austin
ILENE H. NAGEL
Univ of Maryland
GILBERT OMENN
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American Federation of Teachers
EDWARD SKLOOT
Surdna Foundation
HOLLY SLOAN
Association of Junior Leagues
TERRY WILLIAMS
McKinsey & Co.
RAUL YZAGUIRRE
National Council of La Raza

To
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Ms. Melanne Verveer
Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Melanne:

Please find enclosed the memo we discussed. I often send memos to several staff members in the building simultaneously. This one is only sent to you because it is so clearly tied to the idea of "it takes a village." Looking forward to discussing it with you.

Sincerely,

Amitai Etzioni

*file
community
schools*

The Communitarian
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Community Schools Memorandum
from
Amitai Etzioni and Michael Bocian

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION: Steps should be taken to help as many public schools as possible, as soon as possible, to become **community schools**.

By community schools, we mean schools that, in order to better serve their communities and become more communitarian themselves, will stay open more hours each day, more days a week, and more month a year. Community schools are able to offer education better than regular schools because community schools encompass young people for significantly longer time periods; they also are able to provide more services to children, parents, and other non-students in the community. Community schools can serve better than regular schools as the community's hub for public education, both formal and informal. For instance, they can teach English to immigrants, provide vocational classes, literacy and computer instruction, pre-school and after-school extra-curricular activities, day care, social services, and health clinics.

SPECIFIC STEPS

Appoint a White House task force to (a) review the lessons of scores of different kinds of community schools that have sprung up across the country to distill key lessons for many other school systems that have yet to move in the desired direction; (b) make recommendations on coping with the main obstacles that community schools face—the high costs involved. The recommendations should be shared with the public in order to increase the awareness of the very concept and its merits, with the key local and state actors, and with the relevant departments of the federal government which include not just the Department of Education, but also the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development,

and Americorps.

RATIONALE: The more encompassing schools are, the more and the better services they can render. These include:

- **Deeper education.** Studies show that, all other things being equal, if pupils are involved in the school for longer periods of time, the school is better able to provide education. Also, the schools' effects are less washed away by negative influences, especially the anti-social effects of the "streets," television and others. Being in school for longer periods also provides more opportunities for extra-curricular activities which further enhance the ability to affect character, as well as impart knowledge and skills.
- **More learning.** The current short school-calendar reflected the days when the United States was largely a farming country and children were needed to help with the harvest. Involving the young people in schools for longer time periods will enable teaching them more subjects, more effectively.
- **Reduce juvenile crime.** Given that the highest share of juvenile crimes are committed during the hours from when regular schools typically close (often at 3 PM) to when most parents return home from work (circa 6 PM), community schools can reduce this problem significantly by providing constructive supervised activities during these critical hours.
- **Supplement parents.** Community schools support parents, rather than replace them. Parents

continue to have the primary responsibility for the education of their children at home and should be involved as much as possible in guiding the work of the community schools. Given, however, the fact that many parents can no longer fully discharge their other duties because of economic pressures and other factors, and that parents have been backed up by schools from the beginning of industrialization, schools must be beefed up to help parents more than they have done in earlier ages.

Community schools can also serve to help parents be more effective by teaching parental skills, and supplementing their learning where this is needed. In many community schools, parents attend classes.

- **Efficient use of resources.** Most communities fail to make effective use of school facilities in which, as a nation, we have invested \$250 billion. Equipped with libraries, gymnasiums, class rooms, and playing fields, schools afford communities numerous resources that often stand idle for long periods each day, during weekends, and during the summer. These could be used for full-time public education.

- **Preparing children for school.** For many single-parent and two-working parent families, child care of young children is a pressing need, and one that schools can help fulfill. Edward Zigler's School of the 21st Century offers an effective framework in which schools can provide home visitation and advice for expectant mothers and those with children under 3, as well as school-based year-round child care for children ages 3-5.

- **Offering young non-students constructive activities.** Community schools can be more of a

place for young non-students to be involved at school and off the streets. Midnight basketball leagues, which have been mocked by some politicians, in effect provide a sound case in point.

- **Build community.** By serving as a nexus for community events, from town meetings to seminars, community schools can help forge the bonds that bring communities together. They can also help build community identity.

OBSTACLES: For community schools to succeed, they must overcome several obstacles and answer to several kinds of objections.

- **Heavy financial costs.** The costs of simply extending schools from the way they currently operate now to function for much longer periods of time, would entail adding billions of dollars to their budgets, maybe doubling it, which is impractical, indeed inconceivable. While some additional allocation of funds to public schools might be necessary, a good part of the new resources is likely to have to come from other sources. These include volunteers (which in the future may come more often from senior citizens than the traditional source—women), corporations and other private sector sources, enhanced parental involvement, older students helping younger ones, foundations, and others to be identified.

- **Setting priorities.** It is a foregone conclusion that the transition to community schools will have to be gradual. Hence, priorities will have to be set in terms of which

developments will come first: longer hours in the day, more days of the week, more months of the year, or various mixtures; which grades should be included first, and so on. One suggestion for consideration: expand the school first for those who need to catch up.

- **Union opposition.** Teacher and custodial unions may have to be shown that these other sources of labor are not competing with their members or draining them of jobs.

- **Liability.** With schools open extra-hours and open to non-students, liability issues may be more difficult.

- **Clinics.** Community schools should include health care clinics. The question if they will provide contraceptives must be faced. This might be best dealt with if these clinics are located in schools, but not fully financed from public sources and have their own community boards.

MODEL PROGRAMS: The following are two communities (among many) that have succeeded in developing community schools to one extent or another:

- Salome Urena Middle Academy (I.S. 218) in a Manhattan neighborhood frayed by drugs and crime has developed a community school to deal with the problems the community faces. The school has an enrollment of 1,500 students, 98% Hispanic and 2% African American. Students can stay at the school after normal class hours to get extra help with homework, participate in arts and crafts, sports, dance, or playground activities. The school operates pre-school programs,

before-school, after-school, and summer child care, drug education, conflict resolution, vocational education, and mentoring programs. Later in the evening, adults in the community attend classes at the school in parenting, GED/ESL preparation, adult education, computer instruction, drug education, citizenship, job-skills training, family counseling, and recreation.

I.S. 218 utilizes the help of 200 volunteers per week to operate its programs. The school has partnered with the Children's Aid Society who offers medical and social-welfare services to the school's community, and has secured foundation support for the community school.

- Bowling Park elementary school is situated in a Norfolk low-income public housing community. With the help of Yale University's CoZi program (a combination of James Comer's and Edward Zigler's approaches), the school has developed into a community school that can attend to many of the needs of this troubled community. The school has hired two parent educators who offer parenting skills and developmental screening to families with children younger than three and to families with expectant mothers. Bowling Park also offers pre-school, before-school and after-school programs for children. Bowling Park staff members participate in a mentoring program where they "adopt" a child. The staff members often take the children home with them on weekends or out for a meal, offering advice and providing supervision to the children. The school offers health and social services, adult-education courses, adult-exercise courses, and a program that puts parents in the class room to help teachers, as well as a monthly family breakfast at which parents talk about children's books.

Bowling Park's programs are funded through federal funds set aside for inner-city schools,

parent fees, private grants, and school-district funds.

- For a reference book that lists numerous other attempts to develop community schools, see "Community Schools Across America: 135 Community/School Partnerships That Are Making a Difference," compiled by Pat Edwards and Kim Biocchi of the C.S. Mott Foundation.