



# **Linking Public Housing Revitalization to Neighborhood School Improvement**

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The cover photograph in the upper left corner is of Atlanta's Centennial Place, from [www.atlantahousing.org/portfolio/index.cfm?Fuseaction=signature](http://www.atlantahousing.org/portfolio/index.cfm?Fuseaction=signature); the photograph to the right is of Atlanta's Centennial Place Elementary School, from [www.flickr.com/photos/karsh/122096573/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/karsh/122096573/).

The inside page photographs, from top left to right, are: Milwaukee's Parklawn, from [www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/manuf\\_res/Parklawn.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/manuf_res/Parklawn.pdf); Milwaukee's Central City Cyberschool, from [www.midwestgreatlakes.cefpi.org/2006conference/Parklawn.pdf](http://www.midwestgreatlakes.cefpi.org/2006conference/Parklawn.pdf); Tacoma's Salishan, from [www.lorig.com/d\\_salishan.htm](http://www.lorig.com/d_salishan.htm); Tacoma's Lister School, from [www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/schools/es/lister/](http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/schools/es/lister/); Tucson's Posadas Sentinel, from [www.housingresearch.org/hrf/HRF\\_News.nsf/982edc9f376438cd852569d0000d00b7/b5aba346398ee53385256a16007aac98?OpenDocument](http://www.housingresearch.org/hrf/HRF_News.nsf/982edc9f376438cd852569d0000d00b7/b5aba346398ee53385256a16007aac98?OpenDocument); and Tucson's Drachman School, from [edweb.tusd.k12.az.us/drachman/Drachman%20Info/School%20Photos.htm](http://edweb.tusd.k12.az.us/drachman/Drachman%20Info/School%20Photos.htm).

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## Introduction

So strong is the conviction of some policymakers and practitioners that effective public housing revitalization requires concomitant school improvement that in 2005 Senator Barbara Mikulski introduced legislation requiring all recipients of federal HOPE VI funds to establish, “a comprehensive education reform and achievement strategy for transforming neighborhood schools that serve . . . revitalized HOPE VI sites into high-performing schools.”<sup>1</sup> Expecting such strategies to be developed through partnerships between public housing agencies and local school systems, Senator Mikulski is not alone in believing this type of collaboration to be fundamental. Renée Glover, the Executive Director of the Atlanta Housing Authority, testified before Congress that linkage between Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and schools is essential to promoting opportunity for public housing residents.

In all of the public housing communities, there is a captive elementary school. Those schools

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill S. 1513, *To Reauthorize the HOPE VI Program for Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing*, July 27, 2005. HOPE VI provides competitive federal grants to local agencies to support the transformation of severely distressed public housing, encouraging the agencies to seek new partnerships with private entities to create mixed-finance and mixed-income affordable housing (*Section 24 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437v)*).

are at the flat bottom of the state. Even in the Appalachian areas, these schools are terrible performers and we have a very high rate of truancy. So people are not being provided an opportunity to pursue the American dream.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Richard Barron of the St. Louis-based private development firm McCormack Barron Salazar emphasizes that when families consider housing options, their first consideration is affordability and their second is schools.<sup>3</sup> He and his firm, accordingly, expend considerable effort finding ways to improve the schools that serve the revitalized public housing and other mixed-income developments in which they are invested.

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## Obstacles and Disincentives to Collaboration

Linking school improvement efforts to public housing and associated neighborhood revitalization projects seems so logical that, on first consideration, it may not be entirely evident why the two would ever be unconnected. On reflection, however, it

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<sup>2</sup> “Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation’s Communities: The HOPE VI Program,” Hearing before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity of the Committee on Financial Services, U.S. House of Representatives, April 29, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Phillipa Strum (ed.), *Dealing with Race: The Quest for Regional Cooperation*, 2005, p. 35.

is clear there have been and are many obstacles standing in the way of collaboration between local housing agencies and school systems. Proscio (2004) describes an “unnatural separation” between the community development and school arenas that dates back to the early 1960s.

The gulf between the two fields only widened with the mounting alarm over physical disintegration in the inner cities throughout the 1960s and '70s. The specter of dilapidated neighborhoods and derelict buildings drew more and more federal attention toward construction and renovation, housing assistance and financing, and urban infrastructure. Educators, meanwhile, were focusing ever more narrowly on what happened inside schools, classrooms and school systems, with little reference to other work underway in the streets beyond. To achieve social equity, courts increasingly mandated busing of children away from their neighborhoods, further deepening the divorce between where children lived and where they learned. It was as if the future of neighborhoods had somehow become all but unrelated to the future of the children living in them.

Indeed, informed observers of school-community connections see numerous, significant barriers to collaborative efforts between school systems and community-based organizations. Despite the potential for synergistic benefits that could emerge from such interorganizational partnerships, Gray (1995) notes that

“(s)uccessful collaborative alliances depend on a host of factors, many of which the partners cannot directly control,” including institutional disincentives, historical and ideological barriers, power disparities among stakeholders, technical complexity, and political and institutional norms. Likewise, Eisenberg (1995) points to differences in professional training and background, fear of loss of autonomy, and the inefficiency of cross-professional dialogue as having hindered interorganizational cooperation, helping to explain why school-community partnerships have tended to fail over the long run.

With respect to the linkage of school improvement efforts to public housing revitalization, there is both the problem that many school systems have not welcomed collaboration with others (Moore, 2001) as well as the fact that public housing authorities have often been isolated within, and disconnected from, the communities in which they operate. Despite the occasional programmatic demonstrations or special initiatives that compelled local housing agencies to connect with other community entities, PHAs have generally been “other-directed”—taking their guidance and cues from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), not the local community. Although PHAs own and manage their own developments, public housing policies and operations are

governed by federal rules, which are often divorced from market forces and local considerations. In the past, PHAs have generally had little or no incentive to relate to, or collaborate with, other local entities—either public or private, which is why political and community stakeholders often see public housing as “federal property” governed by federal rules, not a community asset or resource responsive to local interests.

The consequence has been that collaboration between school systems and public housing agencies, even where both serve the same clientele and geography and could benefit from each other’s resources and expertise, has been more the exception than the rule.

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### **Recent Encouragements to Collaboration**

Compared to the earlier history of unnatural separation between community based organizations and school systems, Jehl et al. (2001), Chang (2002), Proscio (2004), Turnham and Khadduri (2004), and Varady et al. (2005) have observed signs of a fusion of sorts over the last decade among schools, community based organizations and housing agencies as partnerships have increased in frequency. Forces promoting improved collaboration include:

- A growing realization that there are socially adverse and politically unacceptable consequences to perpetuating neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and social pathology;
- An increased recognition that there are shrinking resources with which to deal with such conditions (Eisenberg 1995); and
- A greater appreciation of the possibility for achieving enhanced solutions to these problems through collaborative ventures—solutions that are otherwise infeasible for any single organization or sector to solve through independent action (Gray 1995).

To a large extent, the federal HOPE VI program, which supports the revitalization of severely distressed public housing as part of a strategy toward broader neighborhood redevelopment, has encouraged public housing agencies to begin to communicate, cooperate, and partner with others—including school systems—to carry out their renewal objectives. As such, new public-private as well as public-public partnerships have emerged since the mid-1990s for financing, developing or managing revitalized public housing projects as well as for providing various kinds of resident services and supports. The latter have included relocation services, social and human services, and educational and recreational services.

Likewise, the HOPE VI program has, in many cases, funded the replacement of highly concentrated,

dilapidated, low-income developments with less dense, mixed-income communities—through the construction of market-rate rental or homeownership units on site (Schubert and Thresher 1996; Myerson 2001; Urban Land Institute 2002, 2003; and Smith 2002). And, having quality schools that serve such areas is judged by many to be both a necessary marketing tool for attracting middle-income renters or homebuyers as well as essential to improving the opportunities of children of low-income families residing in such developments. Good schools, in sum, enhance and complement the benefits following from the redesign and physical reconstruction of housing units.

Communication and cooperation between PHAs and school systems has also been motivated by practical and political needs. For one thing, coordination of HOPE VI redevelopment with school systems has often been necessary to enable school officials to project and accommodate school contraction or expansion (temporary or otherwise) that result from large-scale demolition and reconstruction of public housing properties. Also, some housing agencies and school systems have begun to recognize that resources (such as community centers and facilities) and expertise (such as real estate finance and development planning) can be shared across the public housing and schools arenas to the benefit of both.

Finally, there are instances in which efforts to communicate and forge partnerships between public housing agencies and school systems, as well as between advocates for school improvement and on behalf of public housing communities, have brought new allies “to the table” on both sides—a table often in need of broader support to promote the respective interests.

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### **Currently Prevailing Notions of Public Housing-School Collaboration**

Over the last several years there has been a good deal of both informal as well as organized conversation taking place focusing on the need and possibilities for increased collaboration between the housing and school sectors. For example,

- In 2001, the Millennial Housing Commission heard testimony about the need for improving schools in mixed-income developments (Cousins 2001).
- In 2005, the Ford Foundation hosted a research roundtable on “Schools and Communities” to discuss the activities underway across the nation that link school improvement to community revitalization.
- In 2005, a HOPE VI roundtable organized by HUD, the Urban Institute, and the University of California at Berkeley’s Center for Cities & Schools included several small group sessions on linking HOPE VI and schools.

- At various times during 2005, advocates encouraging reauthorization of the HOPE VI program held strategy sessions to discuss not only the value of that program but also how it can better be coordinated with school reform efforts.
- And, most recently, in 2006, the National Housing Institute convened a practitioners forum titled “Building the CDC/School District Partnership for Community Development” to discuss options, models, impediments and strategies for increasing collaboration between housing providers and school districts.

Among the points raised about linkages between public housing and schools in these various forums have been the following:

- The phenomenon is growing and becoming more commonplace;
- There are many different approaches being tried; and
- The process is at an early stage.

Observers of the emergent linkage seem to agree that, at this time, there are too few outcomes to evaluate and, therefore, it is premature to identify model efforts or best practices (Turnham and Khadduri, 2004; Varady, 2005). Although the research literature affirms that no single approach has applied across the board, the current policy conversations that encourage coordination of public housing revitalization and school improvement efforts tend to be dominated by several prominent examples. These, *de facto*,

have become shorthand for what is meant by the linkage between public housing and schools.

The most often referenced examples of public housing revitalization that have stimulated and, in turn, benefited from, neighborhood school improvement are the former Techwood and Clark Howell Homes, now Centennial Place in Atlanta, and the former George L. Vaughn Family Apartment high rises, now the Residences at Murphy Park in St. Louis. Centennial Place was Atlanta’s first HOPE VI development; Murphy Park was not redeveloped under HOPE VI but under a special HUD demonstration enabled by Congress prior to HOPE VI. Both redevelopments are notable for the fact that they involved an explicit connection to the improvement of local public elementary schools that served their neighborhoods.

These examples of how public housing revitalization and school improvement can occur in tandem and for mutual benefit are referenced so frequently in the literature and policy conversations that they have become a prototype for how such linkages originate, are implemented, and what they produce. The simplified characterization is as follows:

1. **Preconditions.** A severely distressed public housing development served by a failing, low-performing neighborhood public school and located in a

dysfunctional, disinvested, low-income neighborhood is slated for redevelopment, using HOPE VI funds.

2. **Collaboration.** As a result of the foresight, initiative and perseverance of one or a few prominent persons associated with the housing revitalization effort and/or the schools sector and, sometimes, motivated by special circumstances and/or preexisting interpersonal relationships, a new partnership is established that recognizes the interdependence and value of explicitly linking and coordinating housing redevelopment and school improvement; the partnership develops holistic strategies for cooperation, coordination, and action.
3. **Implementation.** The partnership brings new resources and energy to both public housing and education forces, beyond what would have been possible were each to have acted independently, resulting in converting developments from very-low-income to mixed-income occupancy, improving the failing schools' physical facilities, changing school personnel (including the principal), making educational and curricular improvements and, in some cases, adding new community facilities for use by public housing residents, students, and the community-at-large.
4. **Accomplishment and follow-on.** As public housing redevelopment is accomplished, the improvements result in better outcomes for residents and students, as tracked and formally evaluated; and the partnership is sustained beyond its original purpose—such that the concept and experiences are extended to additional neighborhoods, developments, and schools within the community.

This is a compelling scenario. How well it depicts conditions and behavior in various locales, however, is unclear, and is the basic curiosity motivating this exploratory study. The extent of resemblance to the above characterization is of interest because of the policy, advocacy, and research implications that follow.

To structure a set of statutory or regulatory requirements implementing PHA partnerships with school systems, as anticipated by Senator Mikulski's proposal, requires that the implementation entity understand variations in preconditions, collaboration etiology, and implementation options—in real world circumstances. Absent that, whatever rules are promulgated could be off base or misguided. Similarly, philanthropic organizations interested in investing in, or advocating for, closer ties and more strategic connections between housing agencies and school systems need the same understanding to avoid ineffective initiatives. Finally, there is a need to know what more needs to be known—what gaps exist in knowledge—to figure out how to fill them. If the gaps are not filled, future public policies or private investments are likely to be grounded in “seat-of-the-pants,” rather than research-based, understanding.

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## **Methodology for Exploring Public Housing-Schools Linkages**

As of mid-2005, there was no definitive list of efforts to link public housing redevelopment to school improvement. Studying this phenomenon, therefore, initially required learning where it had been tried or was currently underway.

To assemble such a list, the literature was reviewed and public- and private-sector observers were contacted. The latter consisted of persons who, by reputation, were knowledgeable about HOPE VI revitalization projects across the country or, specifically, about attempts to combine neighborhood revitalization and school improvement. Included were staff from HUD's Office of Public Housing Investments, which oversees the HOPE VI program. They, in turn, contacted HUD field representatives to ask for additional leads on HOPE VI initiatives that were believed to have included a school-improvement component.

Although no claim can be made that this process identified all instances in which HOPE VI revitalization efforts had been, or currently are, linked to school improvement, the list that resulted includes a variety of types of communities and situations—as shown in Exhibit 1. All of those who

recommended HOPE VI projects believed them to be examples of linkage to neighborhood school improvement.

Some HOPE VI developments included in Exhibit 1 have experienced, or will experience, little change in the economic mix of their residents between the pre- and post-revitalization periods. Others, however, have changed, or will change, their mix considerably as PHAs actively recruit some proportion of households with higher incomes than before. Indeed, the extent to which income mixing in redeveloped HOPE VI projects varies may account for variations in PHA interest in promoting school improvement, or variations in strategies for linking public housing revitalization and school improvement efforts.

Of the developments included in Exhibit 1, Atlanta's Centennial Place and Capital Homes, and properties in King County, Tacoma and Tucson involve the most extensive income mixing—defined here as developments in which one-half or more of the redeveloped units will not be subsidized under HUD's Annual Contributions Contract (ACC). Atlanta's Carver and properties in Baltimore, Richmond and Washington, DC, involve somewhat less extensive income mixing, while Milwaukee's Parklawn involves the least amount of income mixing of the group.

**Exhibit 1: HOPE VI Developments Identified by Observers as Involving School Improvement Efforts**

City	HOPE VI Redevelopment and School Improvement Activities
Atlanta, GA	Reconstitution of the Fowler Elementary School into Centennial Place School in conjunction with the redevelopment of Techwood and Clark Howell Homes into Centennial Place; redevelopment of Drew Elementary School into Charles R. Drew Charter School, the first charter school in Atlanta, in conjunction with the redevelopment of East Lake Meadows into The Villages of East Lake; rehabilitation of an elementary school adjacent to the Villages at Carver; and improvement of a magnet elementary school across from Capitol Homes in conjunction with its redevelopment into Capitol Gateway. The PHA is also negotiating for rehabilitation of a school adjacent to McDaniel Glenn.
Baltimore MD	Demolition of Lexington Terrace Middle School and replacement with a K-8 Math, Science & Technology Magnet School in conjunction with the redevelopment of Lexington Terrace as The Towns at the Terrace.
Chicago, IL	Demolition of a school and development of a new magnet school in conjunction with the redevelopment of Cabrini Green.
Cincinnati, OH	Reconstitution of Porter Elementary, Hays Elementary and Washburn Elementary into a neighborhood elementary school and a city-wide magnet school, as well as restructuring of Taft High School in conjunction with the redevelopment of Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court into City West.
Decatur, IL	Building of a charter school across from Longview Place.
King County, WA	When White Center Heights Elementary School was slated for closure, the PHA worked with the school system and included a new community school as part of a Village Green in conjunction with the redevelopment of Park Lake Homes into Greenbridge.
Louisville, KY	Collaboration between local housing and school administrators in the redevelopment of Cotter and Lang Homes Park into Park Duvalle, involving Carter Traditional Elementary and Kennedy Montessori schools; the school system, however, is not structured into neighborhood schools due to a desegregation order.
Milwaukee, WI	PHA construction of a Family Investment Center for use by a new charter Central City Cyberschool in conjunction with the redevelopment of Parklawn.
Portland, OR	Development of a new school planned as part of a "Community Campus" at New Columbia.
Richmond, VA	Construction of a new elementary school adjacent to the Blackwell development.
Tacoma, WA	Reconstruction of the Lister School that serves Salishan, now in the process of redevelopment.
Tucson, AZ	Relocation and construction of the Drachman Elementary School that serves the former Connie Chambers development, now Posadas Sentinel.
Utica, NY	Development of a new school in conjunction with redevelopment of the Washington Courts Complex into the New Steuben Village Apartments and Town Homes Complex throughout the Cornhill neighborhood.
Washington, DC	PHA involvement with respect to (a) the future of Turner Elementary School in conjunction with the redevelopment of Frederick Douglas and Stanton Dwellings into Henson Ridge and (b) an effort to dedicate Payments of Lieu of Taxes from the redevelopment of Eastgate to the schools that currently serve the area—Fletcher-Johnson, Shadd, C.W. Harris and Nalle.

During mid-2005, when the information contained in Exhibit 1 was collected, it was too early in the

development process to know much about the connection between HOPE VI and school improvement efforts in some

of the instances. Also, those who identified these cases of HOPE VI-school improvement linkages were not always aware of, or could not characterize, the environment for or constraints on school reform efforts in the various communities. What tended to be known, however, was whether the respective school systems were region or county wide and, therefore, if schools served exclusively the residents of specific public housing developments. Chicago, Cincinnati, and Louisville are examples of systems whose schools are generally not neighborhood based.

Most of the schools involved in HOPE VI-school linkages serve elementary students, although Milwaukee's Central City Cyberschool and Atlanta's Charles R. Drew School serve students through grade eight. Also, most are public schools rather than charter—with the latter located in Milwaukee, Atlanta's Villages of East Lake and Decatur.

From among the communities identified in Exhibit 1, five were chosen for further study. In seeking to discover basic similarities and differences across places, the selection process emphasized achieving diversity—including with respect to geographic location. One community each was selected from the Northwest, Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, and mid-Atlantic regions. Beyond geography, there was an attempt to vary the extent of income mixing that

had been attempted through HOPE VI revitalization, the type of school involved (public or charter), and the number of completed instances in which housing redevelopment had been linked to school improvement efforts—the latter ranging from none to more than one. Using these criteria, the following five communities were selected and studied.

- **Atlanta, GA.** The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) has been at the forefront of the effort to encourage greater linkage between public housing redevelopment and neighborhood school improvement, and offers insights honed by multiple experiences in doing so.<sup>4</sup> Its initial effort involved Techwood/Clark Howell Homes, a property whose construction had originally begun in 1935 and is considered by some to have been the first federally sponsored public housing project in the nation. An immediate neighbor of the Georgia Institute of Technology, its “in-town” location is adjacent to the downtown business district. Atlanta's second effort, East Lake Meadows, was located five miles east of downtown Atlanta in a moderate-income neighborhood of primarily single-family detached dwellings adjacent to the East Lake Golf Club. Formed in part to preserve the historic core of the facilities that were once Bobby Jones' home course, the golf club was begun in the 1960s when members of the original Atlanta

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<sup>4</sup> Atlanta has received HOPE VI grants for planning, demolition and/or revitalization for seven of its properties, totaling over \$200 million. See Housing Research Foundation, <http://www.housingresearch.org/hrf/hrfhome.nsf/vApprovedHomePageNew/Hope+VI+About+Hope+VI+Home!OpenDocument>.

Athletic Club purchased the property in the face of neighborhood decline and the Athletic Club's decision to vacate.

- **Milwaukee, WI.** The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) provides an example of the simultaneous construction of a new school on the site of its Parklawn property, which was redeveloped under the HOPE VI program beginning in 1998.<sup>5</sup> Originally constructed in 1936-1937, Parklawn was the first of the nation's public housing developments to be constructed on open land rather than on property acquired for the purpose of slum clearance. It was originally designed to provide an efficient delivery of services and to maximize the natural setting that its location afforded along Lincoln Creek.
- **Tacoma, WA.** Tacoma offers an opportunity to examine a large public housing property that, unlike most others undergoing HOPE VI redevelopment, will actually increase in size when completed, and where the neighborhood school has had to adapt to rapidly fluctuating enrollments as a result. This involves the Salishan development, for which the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) received a HOPE VI grant in 2000. Built in 1943 as temporary housing for shipyard workers during World War II, it originally included over 2,000 units. Following the end of the War, federal legislation extended the life of such projects so veterans and military personnel in the lowest grades, who did not receive housing or allowances, could live there. By 1950, 6,700 people lived in Salishan and, the next year, the

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<sup>5</sup> Milwaukee has received HOPE VI grants for planning, demolition and/or revitalization for four of its properties and additional grants for scattered site properties, totaling over \$133 million. *Ibid.*

City Council voted to convert 900 of its units to low-income housing and demolish the rest.<sup>6</sup> Over time, Salishan became home to waves of immigrants.

- **Tucson, AZ.** Tucson allows for examination of how a HOPE VI redevelopment is connected to a school improvement effort that began before receipt of a HOPE VI grant.<sup>7</sup> Involved is Barrio Santa Rosa, an historic Tucson neighborhood adjacent to the downtown. It was the location of Tucson's first public housing project, La Reforma, which was built in 1942. In the early 1960s, 200 additional public housing units were developed across the street from La Reforma—the Connie Chambers development. To overcome community objections to their construction, the City promised to clear 200 “slum units” in the area, which was also targeted under the City's urban renewal program, to make way for a convention center that now borders the neighborhood. Continuing deterioration at La Reforma resulted in its demolition in 1983, and the Connie Chambers development became the focus of HOPE VI revitalization efforts beginning in 1996; demolition occurred in 1999.
- **Washington, DC.** The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) offers an opportunity to examine yet a different history of HOPE VI-school linkages. DCHA has undertaken, or is currently involved in, six HOPE VI revitalization projects and, since 1999, has pursued a policy of coordinating all

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<sup>6</sup> See “History Link Essay: Salishan Housing Project – Tacoma Housing Authority,” [www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=5512](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=5512).

<sup>7</sup> Tucson has received HOPE VI grants for planning, demolition and/or revitalization for three of its properties, totaling over \$37million. See Housing Research Foundation, *op cit.*

of its HOPE VI activities with school improvement objectives.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, in 2005, DCHA hired a senior liaison to work full-time with the DC public school system. As of this point, however, there has been no case in which a neighborhood school has been improved as a result of HOPE VI activities but, instead, the building of a basic, long-term relationship between the agency and the school system that is intended to link the future activities of both.

Collectively, these five examples provide fundamental, on-the-ground understanding of the diverse ways in which communities approach the linkage of public housing revitalization and school improvement. To gather such information, site visits were made to each of the five locations to confer with housing agency and school officials and others about local activities. These visits were supplemented with the collection of information, such as local newspaper articles and other relevant documents, from each community.

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### **Different Approaches to Linking Public Housing Redevelopment to School Improvement**

Looking at what has transpired in the five communities over the past

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<sup>8</sup> In total, the District of Columbia has received HOPE VI grants for planning, demolition or revitalization for nine of its properties of over \$160 million. See Housing Research Foundation, *op. cit.*, and <http://www.dchousing.org/hope6/index.html>.

decade makes clear that efforts to link public housing revitalization to school improvement differ considerably from place to place and, also, do not necessarily correspond to the prototype outlined above. Each community either focused on, or accomplished, both public housing revitalization and school improvement, but with histories and in ways that varied considerably. As will be discussed in the concluding section of this report, this observation has implications for legislative or other interests that seek to formalize the connection between public housing revitalization and schools.

In the remainder of this section community variations are portrayed with respect to

1. Preconditions
2. Collaboration
3. Implementation, and
4. Accomplishment and follow-on.

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**1. Preconditions.** As outlined above, the prototypical linkage between public housing revitalization and school improvement starts with a severely distressed public housing development scheduled for redevelopment under the auspices of the HOPE VI program. The characterization is that the development is located in a dysfunctional, disinvested, low-income neighborhood and is served by a failing, low-performing neighborhood public school. That

description is best exemplified by Atlanta's first two experiences connecting school improvement to housing redevelopment, but is less accurate in the other communities in one way or another.

**Atlanta.** In 1994, two years before Atlanta was scheduled to host the 1996 summer Olympics, the AHA was one of the first agencies in the nation to receive a HOPE VI grant to completely demolish and redevelop its aged Techwood/Clark Howell property. The crime rate in the neighborhood surrounding the property, which was adjacent to the planned Olympic Park, was 69 percent above the City's average.<sup>9</sup> The vast majority (91 percent) of the development's residents lived in poverty—with 49 percent receiving welfare, only 18 percent considered employed, and only 5 percent of the families having married spouses.<sup>10</sup> The neighborhood was served by the Fowler Elementary School, which ranked near the bottom (60 out of 71) of the City's public schools.

A few years before the AHA initiated plans to redevelop the Techwood/Clark Howell property and

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<sup>9</sup> T.D. Boston, *The Effects of Revitalization on Public Housing Residents: A Case Study of the Atlanta Housing Authority*, Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 71, No. 4., Autumn 2005, 393-407.

<sup>10</sup> Most (96 percent) of the residents were African American.

prior to the initiation of the federal HOPE VI program, the AHA had received funds from HUD to revitalize its dilapidated 650-unit East Lake Meadows development.<sup>11</sup> The property was less than 28 percent occupied when the redevelopment began (Urban Land Institute, 2002). Because of its high level of crime, gang warfare, drugs and violence, it was often referred to as "Little Vietnam." Most of East Lake Meadows' residents (91 percent) lived in poverty—with 59 percent receiving welfare, only 13 percent considered employed, and only 5 percent of families having married spouses.<sup>12</sup> The development was served by the Drew Elementary Public School, which ranked 44 of 71 schools in the City's system.

**Milwaukee.** In 1998, the HACM received a grant to: demolish about one-quarter of the housing units of its Parklawn property, all single-occupancy housing that was in disrepair; revitalize the remainder of the property—focused especially on malfunctioning utilities systems and external appearance, without the need for gut rehabilitation or resident relocation; and construct a small number of single-family homes on the parcel where units were demolished.

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<sup>11</sup> Funds came from HUD's Major Reconstruction of Obsolete Projects (MROP) program, which, prior to 1994, provided grants to PHAs to finance the capital cost of rehabilitating old public housing.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* Virtually all (99.5 percent) of the residents were African American.

The infrastructure was especially in need of upgrading since it was unable to meet contemporary residential standards. The electrical system, for example, was badly outdated—designed to power a stove, refrigerator, and a few smaller appliances; its sewer pipes, arranged to maximize the number of buildings on a main line, were failing; and its central heating and domestic water distribution system was plagued by leaks and corrosion.

Prior to the receipt of a HOPE VI grant, intergenerational dependence on public housing had been a serious problem in Parklawn. Average annual wage-related income in 1998 was \$10,527 for the 36 percent of working-age heads of households reporting some wage-related income. Almost 31 percent of households were at least partially dependent on TANF or General Assistance.

Unlike many large, urban public housing developments designed for family occupancy, the Milwaukee property is located in a residential-like neighborhood of generally well-kept, detached, single-family houses, which are not neglected or rundown. And, while crime was a problem at Parklawn prior to HOPE VI redevelopment, it was not considered severe.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the

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<sup>13</sup> There were 79 reports filed for Part 1 crimes on site in 1997. Part 1 crimes include murder and negligent manslaughter, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, auto theft and

area surrounding Parklawn was not served by any particular elementary school prior to redevelopment. Elementary aged students were bussed to over 30 public schools throughout the community at the parents' discretion—a result of an earlier desegregation order.<sup>14</sup> None of those schools were in the immediate neighborhood.

**Tacoma.** Prior to HOPE VI revitalization, residents of Tacoma's Salishan development tended to have very low incomes and limited educational achievement: 278 occupants of the 855 units scheduled to be replaced received TANF assistance, and 883 did not have high school diplomas or GEDs. Also, the development had been plagued by a legacy of crime, which peaked in 1991 with extensive drug trafficking and drive-by gang shootings.

The Lister Elementary School is located on the edge of the Salishan development, and 99 percent of elementary school-aged children in the development attended Lister at the point the HOPE VI redevelopment was initiated. About 84 percent of Lister students received free or reduced price lunches, 9 percent required special education, and 40 percent were considered transitional bilingual.

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arson. During 1999, 8 persons were arrested for drug-related felonies.

<sup>14</sup> Laura L. Hunt, *An iBook in Every Backpack*, UWM Today, 3:1, Winter 2001, p. 11.

Contrary to the prototypical notion that schools serving severely distressed public housing developments are failing, however, Lister had a reputation of being one of the better schools in the Tacoma system.

**Tucson.** There had been interest in revitalizing historic Barrio Santa Rosa, the location of the Connie Chambers public housing development, for over 40 years. In 1961, according to the *Tucson Weekly*, the City's urban renewal plan proposed demolition of most all of the buildings (more than 1,200 in all) in a 416-acre area, and relocating 5,000 people to make way for new residential, commercial and civic improvements. Then Mayor Don Hummel labeled it a neighborhood of "dirt, disease and delinquency."<sup>15</sup> The plan was never implemented, although a smaller-scale redevelopment project involving 80 acres and the relocation of 1,200 people was undertaken to make room for the Tucson Convention Center.<sup>16</sup>

Beginning in the 1970s, "middle-income Anglo families began trickling back into the barrio...attracted by its unique blend of Mexican-style design, diverse population and proximity to downtown," resulting in conflicts with the Mexican-American families who had

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<sup>15</sup> Dave Devine, "Barrio Viejo, Barrio Nuevo," *Tucson Weekly*, May 23, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

lived in the barrio for generations.<sup>17</sup> In 1994, then Mayor George Miller noted that the population of the area had a median income of about \$10,000—one-half living below the poverty line and one-half having a high school diploma.<sup>18</sup>

While low-income, Barrio Santa Rosa differed from the other neighborhoods identified above in that it had been the focus of renewal efforts for many years prior to HOPE VI revitalization. It also differed from the Atlanta examples in terms of the school that served the area. Although the Drachman School was located in a 50-year old building that was physically inadequate, it was not otherwise seen as a failing school and had a good reputation within the community.

**District of Columbia.** The Washington, D.C., experience is different from the other four communities in this study in that not a single HOPE VI development has yet to be formally linked to the improvement of a neighborhood school. As will be discussed below, however, the DCHA has been, and continues to be, in the process of developing a comprehensive set of relationships to effect school improvements related to HOPE VI redevelopment efforts. To this point, therefore, Washington showcases how such relationships are being developed

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

more so than how the linkage has produced results in any specific instance.

*Summary.* Of the communities studied, all of the properties redeveloped under HOPE VI initially served very low-income residents and required major redevelopment. However, one of the properties needed upgrading, not total demolition; some were not located in dysfunctional, disinvested neighborhoods; and some schools, although in need of physical upgrading, were not seen locally as failing or requiring major curricular or personnel improvements. In sum, among communities identified as linking public housing redevelopment to school improvement, there is considerable variation with respect to precondition characteristics and, consequently, noteworthy deviation from the prototypical construct.

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**2. Collaboration.** Some case studies of HOPE VI revitalization efforts emphasize the crucial roles played by specific individuals who motivate or facilitate the process. According to Turbov and Piper (2005, p. 43), a “clear champion shapes the vision and clears the way.” Likewise, reported cases where neighborhood or public housing revitalization has been linked to school improvement frequently spotlight one or more such champions. These are sometimes political decision makers,

such as mayors, but can also be other prominent persons with foresight, initiative and perseverance who are associated with either the housing revitalization sector, the schools sector, or both (Turnham and Khadduri 2004; Raffel et al. 2003). The literature suggests that collaboration among such key persons may be based on preexisting interpersonal relationships or involve entirely new relationships forged for this purpose.

As will be apparent below, however, champions of establishing formal and continuing linkages between public housing revitalization and school improvement efforts are more prominent in some communities than others. In the latter, the fact that HOPE VI redevelopment occurred concomitantly with school improvement appears to be based less on formal partnerships than on serendipity. Indeed, the “collaborative” experiences across the five communities differ in terms of their nature and histories, and include situations where the existence of a formal partnership between public housing and school sectors are difficult to discern.

*Atlanta.* The AHA’s first effort to link public housing revitalization to schools came about, in large part, as a result of a robust collaboration among several key individuals, all of whom shared a vision as to what could be accomplished if public housing

redevelopment and school improvement were effectively coordinated. One such person was Renée Glover who, with a corporate law and finance background, became Executive Director of the troubled AHA in 1994. She was interested in transforming old distressed neighborhoods containing public housing and creating more livable, healthier environments for residents and the city as a whole.

Another was Dr. Norman Johnson who, during the late 1990s, was an executive assistant to the president of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), with responsibility for minority student recruitment. As a member of the Atlanta Public School Board, he recognized that no child from the local elementary school adjacent to Georgia Tech, Fowler, that also served the Techwood/Clark Howell development, had ever attended Georgia Tech.

Glover and Johnson, in collaboration with Egbert Perry (a socially minded developer and President of the Integral Group) and Richard Barron of McCormack Barron Associates, aimed to change the culture of the Techwood/Clark Howell development, not just its buildings. Their vision, which involved renewing both public housing and the school, was considered a very high-risk venture at the time.

Both Glover and Johnson wanted the revitalized area to be a place where they would want to live, served by a school that would prepare children for college and other opportunities to exit from poverty. Each had an agenda for improving the neighborhood that was complementary of the other's. Glover, for example, believed that the Flower School, which was considered Techwood's school, had to change for the community to change. Johnson was already campaigning to revitalize Fowler when the HOPE VI award was made. At that point, he concluded that without linking the two together, the neighborhood school might be physically improved but not radically overhauled.

According to Johnson, prior to his meeting with Glover neither was making substantial progress. The two met as "kindred spirits," both wanting to see those served by the Techwood/Clark Howell development and Fowler School face better life opportunities. There were difficult hurdles to overcome, and many at the time considered failure a strong possibility. However, with the imperative of transforming the neighborhood before the opening of the Atlanta Olympics, Glover and Johnson were able to encourage prominent members of Atlanta's political, corporate, and educational establishment—important stakeholders—to work with them to

overcome those hurdles and bring about both public housing revitalization and major school improvement.

A second opportunity for collaboration linking school improvement to public housing revitalization occurred when Tom Cousins, a real estate developer and philanthropist, proposed the establishment of Atlanta's first charter school to replace the Drew Elementary public school located adjacent to the East Lake Meadows public housing development, scheduled to be redeveloped by the AHA. In 1993, through the Cousins Family Foundation, he had purchased the East Lake Golf Club next to the development to save it as a historic site and generate revenues for area-wide revitalization efforts.<sup>19</sup> Cousins then created the East Lake Community Foundation to establish a charter school as part of the revitalization effort. All proceeds from the operation of the golf club go to the Foundation.

Aware of the AHA's efforts to improve the Fowler School as part of its Techwood/Clark Howell revitalization, Cousins wanted to follow suit at East Lake Meadows. To make that happen, he and Renée Glover formed a public-

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<sup>19</sup> The club has hosted the PGA Tour Championship and the Southern Amateur. See [www.eastlakegolfclub.com](http://www.eastlakegolfclub.com).

private partnership. According to Glover,

There was a real alignment of vision and interest for me and Tom Cousins. A notion that we could bring people together and create affordable housing in a fabulous community, and leave behind the last vestiges of hopelessness represented by East Lake Meadows.<sup>20</sup>

*Milwaukee.* During the late 1990s when the HACM applied for a HOPE VI grant to upgrade its Parklawn development, Milwaukee public schools were generally failing. The latter was the subject of conversations being held between Dr. Christine Faltz, a former high school teacher, then director of pre-college programs at Marquette University, and Dr. Howard Fuller, a former Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent, then director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette. The two were especially concerned about the increasing importance of technology in the U.S. economy and how that threatened to further the opportunity gap

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<sup>20</sup> *GeorgiaTrend Online*, [www.georgiatrend.com/site/page7350.html](http://www.georgiatrend.com/site/page7350.html). According to Martin A. Davis Jr., Cousins intended to convince the AHA and the East Lake Meadows tenant association "that philanthropy and the free market, not government, were the keys to retrieving this community and offering its low-income residents their best shot at moving themselves out of poverty." See, "A Civic Hole-in-One," *The Philanthropy Roundtable*, September/October 2004, [www.philanthropyroundtable.org/magazines/2004/SeptOct/EastLake.htm](http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/magazines/2004/SeptOct/EastLake.htm).

between low-income children and others.

Faltz considered the development of a “cyberschool” one means of dealing with this problem, and applied to the city to charter such a school. This became more feasible when Governor Tommy Thompson secured passage of an amendment to state law that allowed charter schools to receive per-pupil funding. That, in turn, contributed to support for the concept from the Milwaukee business community and Major John O. Norquist. In addition, Fuller’s reputation and personal association with Ricardo Diaz, then executive director of the HACM, led to discussions with the Authority about creating such a school in conjunction with one of its developments. Diaz, who had a Master’s degree in education and was interested in the idea, recommended its development in conjunction with the Authority’s Parklawn HOPE VI efforts.

As a result, HACM’s Parklawn HOPE VI application included funding for an on-site facility to be used for a new charter school, among other things. Initially, HUD’s Office of General Counsel raised an issue regarding the use of Hope VI funds for constructing an elementary school, and asked the Authority to provide additional documentation pertaining to the facility’s use in delivering supportive services to Parklawn’s residents. When the Authority’s documentation included

reference to the school as part of a “Family Investment Center” that would also consist of a YMCA and day care services to promote resident self-sufficiency, the application was accepted.

Faltz also met with officials of Johnson Controls, Inc., a Milwaukee firm specializing in facility management and control, to obtain a cost estimate for key-card access to the proposed school building. The company, instead, offered to help the school obtain a loan to fund installation of the heating, air conditioning, fire, security and lighting controls in the form of a lease-to-own arrangement.<sup>21</sup> The idea was that the loan would be paid off over time using a portion of the school’s per-pupil funding and that HACM would build the building, which the school would then lease without having to pay the Authority until the Johnson Control-supported loan was repaid. The fact that HOPE VI funds and the HACM were involved lowered the default risk for Johnson Controls and, between the HOPE VI funds and the Johnson Control-supported loan, “we didn’t spend a dime,” according to Faltz—now Executive Director of the new Central City Cyberschool of Milwaukee.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See [www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/12-17-1999/0001099711&EDATE=](http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/12-17-1999/0001099711&EDATE=)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Some local observers presumed Johnson Controls might not have invested in the

**Tacoma.** Although the THA's Salishan development and school improvement efforts occurred during the same general time frame, the Lister School was rebuilt and reopened in 1998 before the Authority had received its HOPE VI award. Indeed, the rebuilt school was noted as a neighborhood amenity in the Authority's HOPE VI application, and the THA was not involved in the school district's decision to rehabilitate the building. That decision was made because of infrastructure problems associated with the building's age.

While the Authority has a partnership that includes the city's Parks and Recreation Department for space sharing for summer and after-school programs, a nonprofit organization (World Vision) for carrying out the programming, and Washington University to run a computer lab for Salishan residents, the primary function of the relationship between the Authority and school involves information sharing. Because of the large-scale demolition of housing units, temporary relocation of residents, and rebuilding of the Salishan development, the Authority's HOPE VI relocation manager, Julie Foss, and Lister Principal, Ray Maltos (as well as the middle-school principal), have quarterly meetings to discuss the

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school absent HAMC's financial commitment to the Family Investment Center, recognizing that

redevelopment schedule. This allows the schools to shift teachers and students, as needed.

**Tucson.** Unlike most communities, the city of Tucson's Community Services Department also serves as the Public Housing Authority, which makes it more directly responsive to city officials than is typical. The arrangement facilitates coordination of various planning and revitalization interests and, in the case of Barrio Santa Rosa, the city had a vision that went well beyond revitalization of the Connie Chambers public housing development. Prior to the city's receipt of its HOPE VI grant, the School Board had issued bonds for remodeling or rebuilding the neighborhood Drachman Elementary School, even though the exact use of those funds had not been determined at the time.

At the beginning, then, school improvement and public housing/neighborhood revitalization efforts had not been formally coordinated. However, according to local observers, a teacher at Drachman School, Roslyn Miller, the wife of then-Mayor George Miller, encouraged her husband to link the City's broader revitalization efforts to those of the School Board. Independently, Drachman's principal, Gloria Barnett,

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the Authority would likely do whatever was necessary to make the school a success.

also became very involved in wider community planning endeavors. Key to how Tucson implemented its various efforts involving Barrio Santa Rosa, therefore, were the formal political and administrative decision makers involved in both the city's (including the PHA's) and School Board's projects, as well as other stakeholders whose role was to encourage broad, cross-sector coordination.

*District of Columbia.* As observed by Raffel et al. (2003), the DCHA has for some years been “actively engaging residents and schools in the planning process to ensure quality schools in their neighborhood.” In 2004 DCHA's executive director, Michael Kelly, hired David Cortiella, a former administrator of the Boston Housing Authority, to be the liaison between DCHA and the D.C. public school system (DCPS). This occurred at about the time that Clifford Janey, also formerly from Boston and an acquaintance of Cortiella's, became D.C. school superintendent. Prior to that, a revolving succession of superintendents had stymied DCHA's efforts to engage DCPS on an ongoing basis. Moreover, the governance structure of the school board changed from a fully elected board to a hybrid elected/appointed board. According to DCHA staff, the new structure is less parochial and able to look more at the “big picture,” which is

especially important for joint HOPE VI-school improvement efforts.

In conjunction with Larry Dwyer, DCHA's HOPE VI director and head of its Office of Planning and Development, Cortiella has been systematically building relationships with the school system to ensure coordination of future public housing redevelopment and school improvement efforts. Their relationship-building strategy includes:

- Establishing credibility by forging strong connections with key staff in the School Superintendent's office, including the head of facilities and chief of staff. For example, DCHA helped DCPS develop their “master transitional plan” and consider new ways to address physical problems in their buildings/schools—taking advantage of DCHA's real estate and management expertise. DCPS also contracted with DCHA's for-profit construction affiliate to conduct a rapid response review of the system's school buildings and help address maintenance problems.
- Building a reservoir of good will with the School Board by establishing personal communications and cultivating relationships with individual board members on topics about which the DCHA can credibly provide expertise and assistance.
- Providing help to DCPS with respect to future facilities planning and funds leveraging options for school physical improvement purposes, including arranging for studies by a real estate development firm and an architectural and planning firm focused on schools associated with HOPE VI developments.

- Building relationships with D.C. government officials by facilitating an interagency planning process related to new schools development (as well as other city investments, like parks and libraries) for HOPE VI neighborhoods.
- Engaging in joint planning efforts between DCHA and DCPS, working toward improvements of schools as well as serving HOPE VI developments.

*Summary.* The establishment of formal partnerships by advocates of generic linkage among school improvement, HOPE VI redevelopment, and/or neighborhood revitalization is clearly evident in *some* communities—although each collaborative seems to have had a distinctive evolution and variable prospects for being sustained over time. In *other* cases, however, formal partnerships established to improve the neighborhoods, housing conditions and education of residents of severely distressed public housing are less observable, even in instances where HOPE VI redevelopment and some form of school improvement occurred within the same time period. The latter may not necessarily affect the outcomes, but recognizing that not all cases of concomitant action are the result of a holistic vision or explicit, planned strategic action is important to understanding how consistent, or inconsistent, the process is from instance to instance.

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**3. Implementation.** In theory, partnerships established to undertake HOPE VI redevelopment, including linkage to school improvement, are meant to bring new resources and energy to both public housing revitalization and education reform efforts—beyond what would occur should each proceed independently. Desired outputs from such collaboration include elimination of severely distressed developments; significant upgrading of developments’ physical configurations and conditions; conversion from very-low-income to mixed-income occupancy; improvement of schools serving the areas, in terms of physical plant, personnel, and curriculum; and, in some cases, the addition of community facilities for use by public housing residents (including students) and the neighborhood at large.

Under the HOPE VI program, extensive resources are targeted to a particular development in a particular neighborhood. The standard lore with respect to HOPE VI-school improvement linkages is that improvement of a specific school, as distinct from system-wide school reform, is more likely to be motivated by place-specific public housing revitalization, and is an important component of the revitalization in terms of outcomes that are sought. School improvement is expected to benefit the families residing in renewed

developments as well as to enhance a PHA's ability to market its redeveloped property to a mixed-income clientele.

What, then, transpired at each of the HOPE VI sites with respect to redevelopment and its relationship to school improvement?

**Atlanta.** Both Techwood/Clark Howell Homes and East Lake Meadows were demolished and totally reconstructed, the former renamed Centennial Place and the latter, the Villages at East Lake.

Residents began moving in to Centennial Place in 1997, with the project ultimately completed in 2000. While some community members objected to the removal of low-income families in exchange for higher income households or saw the redevelopment as rushed because of the Olympics, community leaders generally coalesced on the notion that "something" needed to be done to improve the development and area. That resulted in a reconstructed, mixed-income development containing 900 units—41 percent public housing eligible, 17 percent low-income eligible based on Low Income Housing Tax Credit criteria, and 42 percent market rate rental. The development consists of one- and two-bedroom garden style apartments as well as two- and three-bedroom townhouses, all managed by a private company.

During the HOPE VI development stage, Norman Johnson, as a member of the Atlanta School Board, worked from within that system to rally for school improvement to occur simultaneously with the public housing transformation. Prior to HOPE VI, the Board was committed to revitalizing the Fowler School, although probably only to upgrading its physical plant. Working with Renée Glover, Johnson arranged for a land swap between the School Board and the AHA in order to take the existing school out of the housing development and rebuild it on a main street bordering the development—next to a YMCA that provided after-school childcare programs. According to local observers, without HOPE VI the land exchange would not likely have taken place and, although the school might have been physically improved, it would not have been radically overhauled, which is what in fact occurred.

The name of the school was changed to Centennial Place and a new principal, Dr. Cynthia Kuhlman, was hired. She had been in the Atlanta public school system for many years as an educator and administrator (chief financial officer). All teaching positions in the school were opened as new positions. Previous teachers at Fowler could apply for jobs but only about 20 percent were rehired. Since there was no major organization actively championing school reform in Atlanta at the time and

most teachers did not belong to a teacher’s union, the changes were initiated by the partners themselves without organized opposition related to teacher employment rights.

With support from the district and state, Kuhlman, Johnson and key stakeholders (the AHA, Georgia Tech, the Coca Cola Company, the YMCA, BellSouth and others) met on a regular basis and decided the school would be a “prototype for technology,” taking on a mathematics, science, and technical focus. The curriculum was influenced by the elementary school’s proximity to Georgia Tech and its interest in science-based education. The curriculum was combined with CO-NECT, a research-based educational model that stresses community accountability for results, learning by doing, and the “sensible use of technology.” In addition, it was decided to utilize “open classrooms” to encourage teamwork and collaboration. This was accomplished without special funding, since Centennial receives no additional monies and operates on the same funding formulas as other local public schools.

The Centennial Place Elementary School is still perceived to be part of Centennial Place development, and all children residing in the development are guaranteed a place. Of its 535 current students (the school was originally built for 450), Principal Kuhlman estimates that about one-half are from “their

zone,” which includes Centennial (about 150-plus children) and other areas rezoned to be part of their district after the Fowler School closed. The district now includes family housing associated with Georgia Tech as well as a local domestic violence shelter. The remaining slots are filled by application. Of the four PTA officers, Centennial parents currently hold two positions, those of president and treasurer.

During roughly the same time period that Centennial Place was being constructed, the Villages at East Lake was also transitioning from a distressed public housing development to a mixed-income property.<sup>23</sup> Initially delayed when a tenants’ organization objected to the development of a mixed-income property that would consist of 80 percent market-rate renters and 20 percent public-housing eligible households, the development ultimately consists of 542 units—one-half of which are public housing eligible and one-half of which are market-rate.

East Lake consists of one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom garden-style apartments; two-, three-, and four-bedroom town homes; and one-, two-

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<sup>23</sup> The AHA demolished East Lake Meadows and helped to finance the Villages of East Lake, which the East Lake Community Foundation controls. The costs to build the new complex were split between the AHA and the Foundation—with the latter maintaining a 60-year lease and the property and its buildings reverting to the AHA in 2054. See Davis, *op. cit.*

and three-bedroom villa-style units, all managed by a private company. The development's first phase was initially occupied in 1998, and the property was completely occupied by early 2001. Of the original 400 families in East Lake Meadows, 78 returned to the Villages at East Lake. Some pre-development residents were excluded as a result of criminal background checks, others self-excluded because of new rules and requirements or a desire to live elsewhere (Khadduri 2003).

Having established an after-school program for children in the East Lake neighborhood—the East Lake Junior Golf Academy<sup>24</sup>—Tom Cousins, working in partnership with Renée Glover, decided to develop a new school for the area as well.<sup>25</sup> The combination of disagreement between the East Lake Foundation and the Atlanta School Board over the extent to which the school could exercise autonomy over curriculum and the selection of a principal, and newly enacted state legislation permitting charter schools, led to the creation of Atlanta's first charter school.

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<sup>24</sup> This youth program was later renamed the First Tee of East Lake.

<sup>25</sup> Funds to demolish the Drew Elementary School and build the charter school were raised by Cousins, including from his own foundation. See Davis, *op. cit.*

The Drew Elementary School closed in 2000 and the Charles R. Drew Charter School opened in 2001, occupying a new building, wired for computers. It extends from kindergarten through grade 8. Karen Eldridge was selected as founding principal after a nationwide search. None of the teachers from the former Drew Elementary School were hired for the new school, although some came from the Atlantic public school system. Initially, 40 percent of the students resided in the Villages at East Lake, 20 percent came from the nearby neighborhood, and 40 percent came from elsewhere in Atlanta (Khadduri 2003).

The Edison Schools, Inc., curriculum was adopted, which focuses primarily on reading (1.5 hours daily) and mathematics (1 hour daily); it also includes (1 hour each, every other day) writing-language arts, science, social sciences, world language, fine arts, and physical education. The school day schedule lasts 1.5 hours longer than the typical public school day, and the school year extends 15 days more than the regular public school calendar (Boston 2005). The reading program requires parental involvement and periodic parent-teacher conferences.

The school also builds on the community asset of a golf course. Students receive free golf instruction, learning about golf through both texts

and physical education classes during and after school.<sup>26</sup>

**Milwaukee.** Use of a HOPE VI grant for the Parklawn development permitted HACM to reduce density, initiate some amount of income mixing, upgrade an aging infrastructure, alter the development's appearance, and add new facilities. Density was reduced by demolishing 138 deteriorated single-occupancy units. In their place, in the middle of the development, 20 new, market-rate, single-family homes were constructed. The overall appearance of the property was improved by adding triangular roofs, porches, and a cul-de-sac layout altered to include freer access, through multiple entry and exit points, to the development.

A notable component of the revitalization involved construction of a Family Investment Center for use as a cyberschool as well as rehabilitation of a YMCA and HeadStart center/preschool building. The HACM supervised the construction of the school building, which was very important because the charter school did not receive school district funding for construction oversight. According to local observers, the Authority's expertise with respect to HUD's construction rules and regulations was critical to getting the building constructed on time.

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<sup>26</sup> See [www.eastlakefoundation.org](http://www.eastlakefoundation.org).

The cyberschool, which leases the Family Investment Center, is affiliated with the "Anytime Anywhere Learning" network, facilitated by Microsoft. The cyberschool has a unique curriculum featuring a wireless data network system where students can operate laptop computers and access the Internet from anywhere within the building. Each student has his or her own laptop and uses it like a paper and pencil so that learning happens, literally, anytime and anywhere; teachers integrate technology into the curriculum and communicate with parents and students over e-mail; and parents are active participants and partners in the education of their children.<sup>27</sup>

When the center was completed, the school hired all new teachers. It initially experienced some faculty turnover due to problems related to its start-up status, such as working out disciplinary procedures, working together as a team, backing one-another up, and learning the new technology. According to local observers, the teaching environment is also especially challenging, given the level of behavior problems and learning disabilities among the students.

**Tacoma.** The THA's HOPE VI grant for its Salishan development will produce an increase in the property's

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<sup>27</sup> Christine J. Faltz, *Presentation to PRIMA*, June 2005.

size and density, resulting in more units and less yard and green space than the original development. Being constructed in four phases, the property will consist of 1,270 units when its final phase is completed in 2011. There will be 921 rental apartments and 349 owner-occupied homes, as well as an education/technology center and a health clinic. Phase I of the project, which is completed, involves 270 rental units affordable to low-income residents, 120 market-rate home ownership units, 55 subsidized rental units for low-income seniors, 11 renovated homes available for sale to low-income residents, and six Habitat for Humanity homes.

Like many HOPE VI investments, the new development is based on the concept that architecture has the power to transform communities and the way people interact in them—reflecting such New Urbanism designs as placing doors and windows in the front, facing the streets, to reduce crime and increase cohesion. Apart from the THA’s plan, a long-term objective of the City is to stimulate development in the area surrounding Salishan, which is primarily residential but contains a struggling business district consisting of strip-mall type shopping and no major grocery or department stores. It has prioritized this Portland Avenue corridor for business development by landscaping the median at Salishan. The city’s efforts have apparently been spurred, in part, by the HOPE VI grant.

As previously indicated, the rehabilitation of the Lister School, which serves the Salishan development, occurred prior to the housing redevelopment efforts and the two were not coordinated. However, observers believe the school to be a selling point for some parents on the waiting list for housing at Salishan. Beyond the physical upgrading of the school, there was no overarching school reform or improvement initiative. Neither district nor state-level school officials were involved in the HOPE VI redevelopment, except to the extent they had to shift teachers in order to account for the declining enrollment at Lister following initial demolition. Some teachers assigned to the new Lister School had been at the old school, while others were moved from schools with declining enrollments.

According to local observers, Lister has a district-wide reputation as one of the better elementary schools in the community. The willingness of the parents of 50 gifted children across the district to send them to Lister lends credibility to this observation. Initiated to encourage desegregation, the program permits “highly capable” students from across the city to attend two Self-contained Advanced Individual Learning (SAIL) classes—a full-time program at the fourth- and fifth-grade levels in which students are grouped with a teacher who has been trained in gifted education. SAIL emphasizes the

mastery of basic skills at an accelerated rate and the application of those skills to an integrated curriculum.” Some refer to Lister, therefore, as a technology magnet school, even though it is only a magnet for the SAIL program.

The school’s footprint will not change in light of relocation, and it will still serve the neighborhoods surrounding the school. Lister’s principal, in conjunction with the THA’s HOPE VI coordinator, attempted to devise a plan to allow children who temporarily moved out of Salishan to be bused back to the school after they moved, but neither the school district nor the Authority had funding to allow this to happen. Children who move beyond the school’s busing footprint can still attend the school, but their parents are responsible for their transportation. And, students who move outside the busing footprint can ride the bus that collects gifted students, provided their parents bring them to an existing bus stop.

**Tucson.** A year following receipt of a HOPE VI planning grant to Tucson in 1995, the City received HOPE VI funds for the demolition of 200 units (131 of which were occupied) of its Connie Chambers development. Demolition began in 1999 and a new development, Posadas Sentinel, was constructed in its place. It consists of 60 public housing units and 60 affordable (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) rental

units. An additional 80 scattered-site public housing units, located elsewhere in City, completed the redevelopment plan. According to the director of the Community Services Department (the city’s PHA), Emily Nottingham, the objective was to create a safe, vibrant community that would look good and bring about a psychological change on the part of residents and others such that all would be proud of the area and see it as a place of opportunity and a good place to live.

With receipt of HOPE VI, the city’s revitalization plan for Barrio Santa Rosa, in which Posadas Sentinel is located, evolved to include a “village center.” This contains a new child development facility (with day care and Head Start); a new learning center (operated by the library system and emphasizing computers and job training), both funded by HOPE VI; a remodeled community center (including a new wellness center) built with bond funds; and an upgraded park supported by the city’s Parks and Recreation Department.

In the early 1990s, prior to redevelopment of Connie Chambers, the School Board floated a large bond issue that included funds for upgrading the Drachman Elementary School that serves Connie Chambers. Drachman draws from the broader neighborhood and accepts students from other areas as well, yet roughly one-third to one-half of

its students resides in public housing. Originally built in 1950, by the 1990s it was too small and had become outdated.

While the form that the school upgrading would take had not been determined when the bonds were issued, local observers indicate that what was finally done was influenced by the broader HOPE VI-inspired neighborhood plan. The city and School Board jointly purchased the land on which the former La Reforma public housing development, demolished years before, had been located, and rebuilt the school on that site next to a learning and child development center.<sup>28</sup>

In rebuilding the school, neither its curriculum, staffing, governance nor funding arrangements were altered. While passage of the bond issue may have indicated voter recognition of the need for physical change at Drachman and other district schools, the school had a good reputation. Drachman's principal, Gloria Barnett, stayed with the school throughout the process, as did the teaching staff.

Drachman School had been seen as a vital educational institution and community resource. According to several local observers, the fact that the

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<sup>28</sup> The historical significance of the original Drachman School was basis for some community objection to the plan, which involved redeveloping it into senior housing.

mayor's wife was a teacher at the school contributed to the perceived legitimacy of the revitalization effort—furthering a feeling of trust and general excitement about the changes to the school and neighborhood. Likewise, the central school district was supportive of the plan. They worked with the City (PHA) to coordinate bus drop off and installation of lights to improve the general area around school, and negotiated an agreement for use of the playground that serves the school by other community members.

*District of Columbia.* The DCHA has not yet linked school improvement to any of its completed HOPE VI redevelopments, but has plans for doing so at three HOPE VI sites currently under way. According to local observers, it was not the residents but Housing Authority personnel who raised the HOPE VI-schools linkage issue, believing that vibrant neighborhoods needed good schools.

At DCHA's Eastgate development, involving 286 units (100 low income senior rentals, 61 public housing rentals, and 125 mixed-income homeownership units), the Authority is working with the Mayor's Office to dedicate property taxes from the homeownership units, in the form of payments in lieu of taxes, to the school system for use in funding new school construction in the neighborhood. DCHA is leading this effort. The

Authority is also working with the school system in considering how to best leverage these funds.

At the Arthur Capper/ Carrolsburg Dwellings development, consisting of 707 public housing units in the near southeast quadrant of the City, HOPE VI funds are being used to create 1,597 units. There will be 707 public housing units, 480 market-rate units, 118 affordable homes for purchase, 50 Section 8 homeownership units, 140 market-rate homes for purchase, and 90 market rate condominiums, as well as office space, retail space and a community center. DCHA has invested in a Funding Opportunity Study for the school system, focusing on the Van Ness Elementary School that serves this area. The study has been adopted and used by DCPS in their facility planning, which involves a new school. The Authority is also working with the school system to build two other new schools in the area.

Finally, at the former 650-unit Frederick Douglass and Stanton Dwellings, a new Henson Ridge development will consist of 320 homeownership units for mixed-income occupancy and 280 mixed-income rental units. Plans also call for construction of multiple new facilities in a campus environment, including a new school, Turner Elementary, as well as a new library, community center, and childcare center. According to local observers, the

plan was “pretty far down the pike,” yet the school system had not been included—even though a new school was part of the plan. DCHA, however, used its good offices and worked with the Mayor’s Office to involve the school system as well as to facilitate coordination among the various agencies—those responsible for parks, libraries and schools.

Based on their real estate expertise, DCHA officials concluded that many existing schools serving children residing in public housing are in such poor condition that improving their physical condition will go a long way to achieving more general school improvement. Although DCHA wants the new facilities to be “community schools,” meaning the doors stay open past 3 p.m. and the building is a community asset, there are no other specific planned staffing or curricular changes with respect to any of the new schools. DCHA officials believe that, in time, Superintendent Janey will bring about system-wide reform.

**Summary.** HOPE VI revitalization activities have occurred, and continue to occur, in each of the five communities. They have produced better and more appealing physical structures, more income mixing, and more community facilities than had been the case on any of the sites before redevelopment. In some instances HOPE VI redevelopment is also tied to

broader neighborhood revitalization in one way or another. In four of the communities, and planned for the fifth, there are improvements to the schools as well—including the creation of a new charter school where there had been no school before. The role played by HOPE VI and local housing authorities in the school-improvement initiatives, however, varied considerably, as did the processes by which the improvements came about and the extent to which they went beyond the upgrading of physical facilities.

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**4. Accomplishment and follow-on.** Those who promote greater linkage between HOPE VI redevelopment and school improvement emphasize the fact that linkage produces synergy; it enhances prospects for a more viable, sustainable, mixed-income community with better opportunities and outcomes than would be the case if only one or the other occurred. Proponents also believe that “success breeds success;” once the value of linking HOPV VI with school improvement becomes evident within a community, it is likely to be repeated in additional neighborhoods.

The logic is persuasive, but what are the experiences of the various communities? What outcomes have been sought, are they being achieved, and do they lead to subsequent efforts?

*Atlanta.* Those involved in the collaborative that supported redevelopment of Atlanta’s Centennial Place and Centennial Elementary School saw their primary objective as “making families successful;” this meant focusing on the health, well being, security and safety, and education of residents, not just their housing conditions.

To measure educational outcomes, the collaborative partnered with Professor Thomas D. Boston of Georgia Tech’s School of Economics. He has examined, and continues to examine, student trends at the Centennial Place School using demographic, AHA administrative, and school test data. To date, he has concluded that student performance has increased in every subject in the years Centennial Place School has been operating.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, AHA officials believe it is important to compare each school associated with public housing to the top performing schools in high-income areas as well as in the district as a whole. By 2002, Centennial had become the 11<sup>th</sup> ranked school in the district, compared to 60<sup>th</sup> in 1995.

The AHA is also interested in demographic changes at Centennial Place School. While it continues to serve primarily an African American

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<sup>29</sup> *The Performance of Elementary Schools in AHA’s Revitalized Mixed-Income Communities*, 2005. In the future, Dr. Boston intends to focus

student body, officials point to its increase in economic diversity as an indicator of success. Also, in terms of its geographic draw, the school has become a popular choice for households living outside the neighborhood, even though Centennial Place residents have priority and are guaranteed admission. When Principal Kuhlman is asked, “how do I get in?” she responds, “move here.”

According to AHA officials, other key performance measures—indicating the development is attractive, crime is down, and the school is performing—all show success. As a result, they assert the Authority has gained credibility, and that those community members who had believed the AHA could not revitalize both the development and the school have had to reconsider their view.

Equally important to the AHA, the partnership that produced these outcomes continued in a number of ways. The two principal advocates for HOPE VI-school improvement linkages, Renée Glover and Norman Johnson, go to Centennial Elementary at the start of each school year to meet with teachers and reinforce the vision of Centennial Elementary and Centennial Place as outstanding places of opportunity and excellence. They also return at other times and sponsor a breakfast for

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specifically on public housing children who attend Centennial.

teachers and staff. In addition, Principal Kuhlman is in close contact with the AHA’s Community Outreach Director at Centennial Place. They share information about families that may be having difficulty and attempt to help them. Finally, the school has maintained a number of partnerships with local business and institutions—the Coca Cola Company, Southern Company, and Georgia Tech—to provide mentors, tutors and other enrichment activities.

Local observers contend that the perception of Centennial Place and Centennial Elementary School as successful has had derivative benefits. For example, while the state was apparently “silently supportive” of Centennial Elementary School’s transformation at the time it occurred, officials began to embrace the school more openly once it was viewed as a success. An indication of this support was the fact that Georgia’s governor chose to hold a press conference on the premises to announce his appointment of the head of the State Board of Education. Perceived success also contributed to increased community acknowledgement that linking public housing and school improvement was, indeed, possible, and early on encouraged a partnership between Tom Cousins and the AHA in the comprehensive redevelopment of the East Lake neighborhood.

Desiring to take a holistic approach to community revitalization,

not simply to redeveloping a housing complex, Cousins observed, “We set out at the beginning, and it’s still our objective, to create a model for urban renewal.”<sup>30</sup> Prior to its redevelopment, East Lake was considered to have been one of the worst areas in Atlanta because of its high level of crime, drug trafficking, and social pathology. Only five percent of fifth graders attending the neighborhood public school had been able to pass the state mathematics examination. “Our objective,” according to Cousins, “was to get to the children before they could get hooked on drugs or a life of crime, because that’s the kind of future most of them seemed to be facing.”<sup>31</sup> In addition to creating a new charter school, therefore, the revitalization involved establishment of the East Lake Family YMCA, the Sheltering Arms Early Learning Center, and the Charles Yates Public Golf Course.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See [www.georgiatrend.com/site/page7350.html](http://www.georgiatrend.com/site/page7350.html).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Drew Charter School students use the YMCA facility for their physical education classes and some after-school programs. The Atlanta Speech School uses Drew’s facilities for professional development, Emory University provides psychological services for students, and a partnership with the University of Georgia’s athletic department provides Drew’s students with coaches and mentors. See [www.nationalschoolsearch.org/honors/school.asp?intSchoolID=22](http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/honors/school.asp?intSchoolID=22). The East Lake community has an array of other partners, as well. See [www2.cybergolf.com/sites/courses/printPage.asp?id=346&page=8831](http://www2.cybergolf.com/sites/courses/printPage.asp?id=346&page=8831). The AHA’s relationship to the East Lake Community Foundation is that

Soon after the redevelopment of the Villages at East Lake and opening of the Drew Charter School, Cousins observed that crime in the development was down 96 percent, resident employment averaged 80 percent to 90 percent, and over one-half of the residents earned more than \$15,000 per year compared to 12 percent in AHA properties system-wide (Cousins 2001). Likewise, in 2006, East Lake Community Foundation Director Carol Naughton reported that the area was prospering.

Property values have increased more than anyplace else in the Atlanta metro area, leaping 43 percent between 2000 and 2001, the year after the Villages at East Lake was completed. According to Naughton, the average home price in the East Lake neighborhood was \$45,000 in 1996. Today it’s \$280, 000.<sup>33</sup>

With respect to demographics, virtually all of the students at both the original Drew Elementary School and the new Drew Charter School are African American (Boston 2005). However, in 1995-96, 100 percent of the students at the Drew Elementary School qualified for free or reduced lunch, compared to 68 percent in 2002-2003.

Based on CSMpact, a survey conducted by Harris Interactive that solicits ratings on a 1 to 10 scale, where

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of equity partner, development entity, lender and landowner.

<sup>33</sup> See *GeorgiaTrend*, [www/georgiatrend.com](http://www/georgiatrend.com), *op cit.*

10 is the best: students rated their overall satisfaction with the Drew School 7.1, their teachers 8.5, and their equipment and facilities 7.1; faculty rated their overall satisfaction 7.2, their students 6.9, and their principal 8.8; and parents rated their overall satisfaction 8.0, the quality of feedback on their child's performance 8.9, the curriculum and training 8.5, and the equipment and facilities 9.2. According to the school's *Annual Report 2001-2002*, its faculty and staff use this information to develop a fact-based strategic plan to improve satisfaction (Boston 2005).

Dr. Thomas Boston has compared the original Drew Elementary School, the Drew Charter School, and the Atlanta Public School system using a variety of indicators. His conclusion is as follows:

Drew Charter School students have demonstrated a significant increase in their academic performance. Test results have revealed that in each consecutive year, students are achieving higher test scores. Nevertheless, the tests results are not as significant as those achieved by Centennial Elementary and in some instances, Drew's student[s] still perform below the APS average. (Boston 2005)

Other measures of student performance also show marked improvement over time. In 2001, only 32 percent of fourth graders passed the state's reading examination and 15 percent passed its mathematics

examination. As of 2004, 73 passed the reading examination and 69 percent passed the mathematics examination.<sup>34</sup> According to East Lake Community Foundation Director Naughton, Drew Charter School, which extends through middle school, currently ranks in the top 4 of the area's 19 middle schools.

*Milwaukee.* HACM officials believe the new cyberschool built on the Parklawn site was a selling point for some of their 20 market-rate homeownership units. Several of the children who live in those units attend the school. In that respect, and by increasing the percentage of Parklawn children who ultimately graduate from high school with appropriate technological and social skills, the school has the potential to begin to "break the cycle of poverty," according to Executive Director Perez.

The vast majority of cyberschool students either live in Parklawn (40 percent) or the surrounding neighborhood, and 53 percent of Parklawn families have at least one child enrolled in the school. As a charter school, it is not eligible for transportation funding, which increases the likelihood that students will be neighborhood residents. Current enrollment is almost 400, with 94

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<sup>34</sup> See *National Review Online*, Martin A. Davis, "Schools Fit for King," January 18, 2006, at [www.nationalreview.com/comment/davis200601180939.asp](http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/davis200601180939.asp).

percent of the students eligible for free or reduced lunches and 50 students designated “special needs.” Virtually all (99 percent) of the students are African American.

Cyberschool founder and Executive Director Faltz observed that the beautification of Parklawn, the new homes in the middle of the development, and the cyberschool all send the same message to the children and their parents: someone believes in their ability to succeed. She sees the school as helping to achieve the HOPE VI program’s self-sufficiency outcome objectives for Parklawn—i.e., that every school-aged child is in school every day and learning; academic excellence is achieved by every school-aged child; every non-disabled, non-elderly adult is working or in school full time; youth graduate from high school and continue in post-secondary education or enter the work force, job ready; and residents transition into homeownership.<sup>35</sup> Toward those ends, a primary goal of the school is “to turn out students who have mastered academics in a computerized environment, giving them the same advantages as students whose families own computers.”<sup>36</sup> Faltz hopes that the physical changes to the development, as well as the self-sufficiency supportive services provided as part of HOPE VI, signal that there are resources available

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Hunt, *op cit.*, p.10.

and that residents do not have to remain in poverty.

A common objective for student success is every student reading at grade level. Faltz routinely collects data and reports to the state on the percentage of students who do so, although she considers that standard to be somewhat unfair given the level of behavioral and learning problems among cyberschool students. Believing that the standard should involve improvement on an individual level, to control for new students coming into a program who may draw down the success rate, she also tracks separately the progress of children who entered the school at the preschool or kindergarten levels. The vast majority of that group is learning at grade level.<sup>37</sup> Finally, she emphasizes the importance of attendance as a measure of success. Beyond the outcome monitoring done by Faltz, no additional evaluation has been done of the cyberschool’s impacts.

The partnership that evolved between HACM and the cyberschool has continued past the development stage in several ways. The cyberschool board President, Susan July, is the Economic

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<sup>37</sup> The 2004-2005 Programmatic Profile & Educational Performance, conducted by the Children’s Research Center, indicates the following proportions of students having reached mastery or progressed one level: 97.3 percent in language arts; 95.3 percent in math skills; and 96.9 percent in technology skills.

Development and Supportive Services Manager for the City of Milwaukee. She serves as President in light of the Housing Authority's financial interest in the school. Also, Executive Director Perez helped the Cyberschool renegotiate the interest rate on its loan, an Authority maintenance employee provides maintenance for the cyberschool, and quarterly meetings are held between HACM and cyberschool officials. HACM had been involved in school-related programs as part of a Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP), which focused on preventing gang-violence and teaching children not to bully, join gangs, or take drugs.

HACM's involvement with the cyberschool motivated staff to consider additional ways to improve the linkage between public housing and schools. For example, a staff member at one of the developments noticed that some parents continued to send their children to schools outside of their residential neighborhoods after moving to HOPE VI developments despite the availability of higher quality schools located closer to the developments. That staff member has spent time counseling parents on their educational options. Otherwise, there has not yet been a subsequent instance where HOPE VI has been linked to school improvement.

More generally, HACM officials believe the redevelopment of Parklawn

to have improved conditions in a number of respects. Based on data collected by the Authority in 1997 and 1998, before redevelopment, and later in 2001: resident employment levels improved from 36 percent to 55 percent; reliance on TANF dropped from 31 percent to 5 percent; and the crime rate dropped from 80 Part 1 criminal offences to 51. Also, between 1999/2000 and 2001, resident ratings ("good" or "improving") of the ability of their children to play outside increased from 46 percent to 85 percent; of their access to needed services increased from 66 percent to 82 percent; and of their health increased from 59 percent to 88 percent.

*Tacoma.* THA Executive Director Michael Mirra's goals for the new Salisham development are to help residents become successful as: tenants, by providing bigger, newer homes in a development free from stigma; parents, by providing a stable place to live and dental and medical care on-site by a non-profit organization; wage earners, by providing a stable place to live, construction jobs on-site, and an FSS program; and children/students, by providing a safe living environment, after-school and summer programs, a computer lab, and health services.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Other THA objectives involve building all units and infrastructure according to construction standards and establishing the financial stability of the development through the sale of market-rate units.

The THA has collaborated with the Lister school regarding joint programming, but not related to school improvement. For example, it partnered with the school as well as a non-profit organization and the City Parks and Recreation Department to provide afterschool and summer programs in the Salishan development when funding was available from HUD's Drug-Elimination Grant program. When the program was terminated, the Authority began discussions with the former school principal to consider possible new funding possibilities; those discussions have not yet resumed with the new Lister principal. The THA has also partnered with Washington University to organize a computer laboratory for Salishan residents in a Parks and Recreation building. The laboratory was funded through HUD's Neighborhood Networks initiative for technology and employment training, and will be rehabilitated under HOPE VI.

The THA has connected with the Lister School for other purposes as well. In the past, school officials requested that the Authority's case worker staff assist in communicating with parents of truant children and increasing parental involvement in their children's education among non-English speaking parents. In a few instances, caseworkers had interpreted for parents during meetings with the school.

The redevelopment of Salishan has had, and will continue to have, short-term effects on Lister School as children and teachers have to change schools. For example, the student body fell from 551 to 352 primarily as a result of Phase 1 demolitions.<sup>39</sup> And, there is some concern that the school will not be able to absorb all of the students from Salishan once redevelopment is complete, since the development is increasing from 835 to 1,270 units. In that case, nearby schools will likely absorb Salishan students who will be unable to go to Lister. Some local observers consider that a positive outcome for the nearby elementary school, because its enrollment has been falling recently.

According to Lister School Principal Ray Maltos, the school's objective is to have all students learning at grade level and meeting WASL standards in reading, mathematics, writing and science. From the THA's perspective, success should also be measured in terms of health (i.e., absences due to illness), safety (i.e., parental perceptions of neighborhood safety), children attending school regularly (i.e., the absentee rate), and academic standards of achievement (i.e., meeting WASL standards, learning at grade level, and graduating from the elementary, middle and high schools).

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<sup>39</sup> Some of the change may also be due to declining elementary enrollments citywide.

In fact, the school's WASL scores have fallen somewhat with the movement of students both in and out of the school, but for those who started at the school in kindergarten and remained there, the scores are much higher than average. No independent studies have been initiated to evaluate change at Lister.

Principal Maltos does not foresee major changes in the demographic characteristics or incomes of the student body as a result of HOPE VI, mainly because all of the low-income rental units are going to be replaced. THA Executive Director Mirra, however, believes that the income and demographic characteristics of Salishan will change due to the new homeownership units, and sees this income mixing as a positive outcome of the HOPE VI redevelopment.

**Tucson.** Barrio Santa Rosa, in which the demolished La Reforma public housing property and the redeveloped Connie Chambers property were located, had been the focus of City renewal interests for many years prior to HOPE VI. But it was HOPE VI that, in addition to revitalizing Connie Chambers, facilitated the latest wave of activities, resulting in upgrading of an existing park and expanding community amenities (a recreation center, library, and childcare center). HOPE VI also helped to encourage others, like Habitat for Humanity, to work in the area.

While the school system was already prepared to physically upgrade the Drachman School prior to the City's receipt of HOPE VI funds, grant planning played a role in the school's relocation to a different site.<sup>40</sup> According to local observers, the connection between Drachman's improvement and HOPE VI enlarged the renewal vision beyond what would have occurred had only the school been upgraded or Connie Chambers been redeveloped. The newly constructed Drachman School is considered to be the anchor to the village center of Barrio Santa Rosa.

From the Housing Authority's perspective, the image of a good school is important, but it was not the Drachman School that stigmatized the neighborhood prior to HOPE VI. The perception of the area as dominated by "the projects" and being unsafe was primarily responsible for its negative image. That has since changed, however. Recently, *Sunset* magazine, a journal of Western homes, gardens and travel, named Barrio Santa Rosa its "Best New City Neighborhood."<sup>41</sup> According to one local resident, it was "a very scary place" when he moved there in 1989 but, since then, has

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<sup>40</sup> A Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly development was built on the land that was formerly the site of the Drachman school.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Stauffer, "New Homes Reflect Area Heritage," *Arizona Daily Star*, January 20, 2006.

become a “friendly, ethnically mixed neighborhood of younger families and longtime residents . . .”<sup>42</sup>

In terms of HOPE VI outcomes, Tucson’s PHA executive director, Emily Nottingham, focuses on certain indicators, such as crime statistics, but is more interested in measures of community perception. Although no formal study has been undertaken, she would like to do neighborhood surveys to examine changes in residents’ views. Drachman School officials are also not tracking school performance in relation to neighborhood revitalization, and would not consider this to be a measure of success. Their monitoring of student performance relates to the fact that they consider Drachman to be a quality school, not tied to the neighborhood or to the Connie Chambers revitalization. Housing Authority officials also believe

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<sup>42</sup> See *Sunset* magazine’s Web page, [www.sunset.com/sunset/home/article/0,20633,1145609,00.html](http://www.sunset.com/sunset/home/article/0,20633,1145609,00.html). The neighborhood was seeing some signs of gentrification even before its HOPE VI grant, particularly on the edges and the side that meets the downtown, where some offices and homes were being remodeled. During the revitalization of the Connie Chambers development and the rebuilding of Drachman School, some local residents expressed concern about the possibility of being pushed out of the neighborhood by rising taxes brought on by gentrification. The city, consequently, instituted a program whereby people at or below 60 percent of median income who owned homes prior to HOPE VI could be reimbursed for any tax increase over and above the city increase. The city ultimately paid out very little under this program, but it apparently served to assuage community concerns.

outcomes related to the revitalization would be particularly difficult to develop, given the transience of many families in public housing.

The collaboration that occurred among the city, Housing Authority, and Drachman School is, today, discussed only in the past tense. Relationships continue to be cordial, but there is no ongoing effort to keep those who were involved connected; they consider the work of the partnership to have been completed. The Authority received a second HOPE VI grant and, initially, considered involving the local school in joint improvement, but decided otherwise after learning the area was under a desegregation order and, accordingly, the school was considered a magnet, not a neighborhood school.

*District of Columbia.* When the city received its first HOPE VI grant in 1993, the PHA was considered one of the worst in the nation; consequently, HUD would not provide grant funds directly to the Authority but, instead, to an alternate administrator.<sup>43</sup> According to one observer,

Basically the housing authority was totally dysfunctional when the grant was awarded; [it] ultimately went into receivership. So that was one situation. And the district government was also dysfunctional and was under the control board, so it

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<sup>43</sup> Raffel *et al.*, p. 133.

was in a severe deficit position and [the] staff were very demoralized.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, mismanagement and bankruptcy of the school system led the appointed D.C. Control Board to take it over in 1996, despite the reform efforts being attempted by various groups. The situations of the city, DCHA, and school system made efforts to link HOPE VI revitalization and school improvement all but impossible.

The Control Board is no longer in existence and, unquestionably, conditions have improved with respect to city government, the PHA, and school system. And, all parties have taken steps to improve coordination and establish more productive relationships. This is a work in progress, however, and has yet to accomplish a coordinated public housing-school improvement project of the sort witnessed in the other communities.

**Summary.** Atlanta authorities have sponsored independent studies to track and evaluate student outcomes

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p.137. Known as the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, the “Control Board” oversaw most of the City’s decisions in the late 1990s. Congress proposed the Board in 1995 to restore financial stability after the City’s debt had climbed to \$722 million and showed no signs of a turnaround. It consisted of five citizens appointed by the President and approved by the Congress; see [www.thewashingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/control/controlqa.htm](http://www.thewashingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/control/controlqa.htm).

related to the revitalization of Centennial Place and the Villages at East Lake, as well as broader revitalization issues. While some data are available elsewhere, however, in none of the other communities has there been a formal assessment of the range of outcomes sought by most HOPE VI grantees related to school performance, family stability, crime and safety, or residential and community attitudes.

Although the collaborations that joined public housing revitalization to school improvement in Atlanta and Milwaukee continue in various ways, that has not been the experience everywhere; there are, however, some residual relationships in all cases. And, Atlanta is the only community among those studied that, so far, has extended the linkage between HOPE VI revitalization and school improvement to other public housing revitalization efforts.

None of this detracts from the accomplishments of the respective communities related to HOPE VI renewal or school improvement but, instead, serves to sharpen an understanding of the kinds of forms that HOPE VI-school linkages can take in different communities across the country.

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## Summary and Implications

It is difficult to argue with the assertion that when public housing revitalization is effectively coordinated with neighborhood school improvement, prospects for mixed-income communities are enhanced and opportunities for residents are expanded. Practitioners and researchers alike have been learning over the recent past that achievement of longer-term positive outcomes for low-income residents of public housing, particularly involving their economic and personal well-being, often requires more than solely providing good-quality housing.

What *is* debatable, however, is how best to effect a linkage between public housing revitalization and school improvement. That is unsettled, in part, because there has been little opportunity to establish best practices. But an equally powerful reason is that policy conversations dealing with this topic have not been especially explicit regarding what it means to join public housing revitalization with school improvement. Understandably, such discussions have relied heavily on a very few prominent examples of neighborhoods, such as in Atlanta, where failing schools were rebuilt and reformed as a direct consequence of the reconstruction of severely distressed public housing and its transformation

into mixed-income communities. Those examples have served as tacit role models for what it means to link the two together, and are often what proponents have in mind when suggesting that HOPE VI projects should include school-improvement requirements.

Though still somewhat early to evaluate long-term outcomes where HOPE VI has been linked to school improvement, it is not too early to document the various conditions and processes that have been involved in different places. Knowing that is important in light of the possible policy risks and opportunity costs associated with mandating school reform as part of HOPE VI undertakings across the board.

To further the policy conversation on this subject, this analysis began with an identification of communities where, according to knowledgeable observers, HOPE VI had been explicitly linked to school improvement. From among the communities identified, a sample of five was selected for study. Selection criteria ensured a diversity of geography, variations in the extent of income mixing, and inclusion of both public and charter school forms. Site visits and interviews were conducted to learn what occurred in such places, what were the “outputs,” and what were the early outcomes.

In all of the communities, distressed public housing developments had been renewed and transformed into better-designed and higher-quality housing, with at least some emphasis placed on income mixing through the inclusion of market-rate rental or homeownership units. That is where the similarity ends, however.

As of early 2006, schools have been built or renovated in four of the communities, while the fifth is systematically laying a foundation to link HOPE VI to school rebuilding in the future. In two communities, the neighborhood elementary schools that served HOPE VI revitalized developments had not been considered failing but only in need of physical upgrading. In one instance, no partnership explicitly linked school rebuilding to HOPE VI revitalization and, in another, HOPE VI contributed to a decision about where to locate a school but otherwise played no role in its improvement.

In two of four communities where school improvement occurred in conjunction with HOPE VI, the school revitalization efforts had begun prior to the housing authorities' receipt of HOPE VI funding and involved an upgrading of physical plant but no changes to school personnel, educational programs or curricula, which were not deemed needed. In the community yet to link

school improvement to HOPE VI revitalization, the strategy of the housing authority is to focus on school reconstruction finance and development issues—seeing school placement and rebuilding as playing a role in neighborhood economic improvement and contributing to other positive changes.

Charter schools were begun in two instances, one involving conversion from a public school and one involving a newly built school where none had existed before. Educational and curricular innovations and fresh staffing occurred in both.

Variations have also been apparent in the aftermath of public housing revitalization and school improvement. In three of four cases where schools were upgraded, for example, there is formal tracking of student performance in conformance with state or federal requirements but no independent evaluations being done or contemplated of the revitalization's effects—in general or with respect to its relationship to school improvement. In two communities, collaboration across the school and public housing sectors either did not continue or continued only on a limited basis following the initial collaborative. And, in three of four communities there has yet been no subsequent collaboration linking additional public housing revitalization to school improvement—in some

instances because of desegregation policies that decouple schools from neighborhoods.

These variations in no way diminish either the public housing or school improvement accomplishments of the various communities. They do suggest, however, that HOPE VI-school improvement efforts tend to be opportunistic experiments that are not cut from the same cloth. They also show that certain presumptions about such linkages should be *set aside*, including that: only failing neighborhood schools serve the residents of severely distressed public housing; school improvement involves staffing and educational or curricular changes as well as physical revitalization; HOPE VI precedes and stimulates school improvement; and concomitant HOPE VI and school improvement initiatives are uniformly the result of formal, cross-sector collaboration. These presumptions are not uniformly valid.

At minimum, the preceding observations should be considered cautionary to philanthropic foundations or policymaking bodies interested in connecting local housing and education sectors. The five community examples add nuance that is useful for understanding variations in the preconditions, collaboration arrangements, and implementation processes that are in play in different kinds of situations. It may be obvious to

some, but not necessarily to others, that such linkages can be very complicated and are often context-sensitive—dependent on some combination of political will, timing, circumstance, interpersonal relationships, leadership skills, etc. Hence, what transpires or succeeds in certain instances may not transfer to others. This suggests that either public or foundation initiatives intended to promote linkages should not presume or mandate a particular model—including one that requires a failing school or that HOPE VI be the inspiration for school reform. Instead, public mandates or foundation investments can attempt to create incentives for local stakeholders to craft unique approaches adapted to local circumstances.

One way to promote further linkage is for the public sector or foundations to facilitate the sharing of different experiences in order to further refine the issues, carrying forward the conversations now sporadically taking place among practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders. Many schools serving low-income residents of public housing developments as well as the developments themselves will continue to require upgrading of one kind or another into the foreseeable future. Considerable amounts of money and effort will be spent doing both. To the extent they are done in relative isolation, do not take advantage of relevant experience, fail to include potentially

valuable stakeholders, or are not based on authentic partnerships, the effectiveness and efficiency of such efforts are likely to be problematic. In fact, however, it is not yet clear what experiences are relevant to what circumstances, which stakeholders are valuable, and what kinds of partnerships are authentic. That is why more conversation, and research, is necessary.

How to link school improvement to public housing revitalization is too important a question to be answered primarily by anecdote and hearsay. Additional investment in systematic research is needed to increase the number of empirical observations, track existing efforts, rigorously evaluate

outcomes, develop a typology of models, and continue to synthesize this body of information. A serious, and focused research investment at this time, supported either by public or foundation resources, would move toward establishing some consistent output and outcome measures as well as assembling a rigorous body of knowledge about what works and under what circumstances. Such research could contribute enormously—ensuring that future linkage efforts are based on fact and experience as well as on desired objectives. That could be as valuable a contribution as continuing to work at the grass roots to connect the public housing and schools sectors.

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