



**Approaches of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-Funded
Intermediary Organizations to Structuring and Supporting
Small High Schools in New York City**

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Executive Summary

In 2003, a few years after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation began implementing its small schools reform agenda, the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (DOE) announced a plan to replace large failing high schools in New York City with 200 small schools. In short order, the foundation and the Chancellor became partners with city labor unions, several other foundations, and several intermediary organizations in carrying forward this initiative.

This study examines the role that intermediary organizations, the groups responsible for distributing grant funds and starting and advising new small schools, played in the Gates Foundation initiative. The study is part of a collaborative evaluation effort funded by the foundation and led by MDRC that included the Academy for Educational Development (AED) as well as Policy Studies Associates (PSA). Together the three groups, through four studies, aimed to clarify the characteristics, implementation, and impact of the New York City small schools initiative.

In this study, PSA presents intermediaries' various approaches to school design and capacity-building, answering four descriptive questions:

- What expertise did intermediary organizations bring to the small schools initiative?
- What were the key features of their school designs?
- What pressures and supports did intermediaries apply to encourage implementation of the school designs?
- What challenges constrained their efforts to establish schools that prepared youth for college and careers?

We also answer an analytic question: Did intermediary approaches to reform reflect the complexity of the challenge as it has been described and understood over the recent history of school reform?

In carrying out this study, PSA researchers conducted 70 open-ended, hour-long, individual interviews with 53 leaders of 18 intermediary organizations (executive directors and senior staff). We also analyzed intermediary reports to the foundation and their online program materials (such as start-up manuals, curriculum guides, databases, evaluations). A summary of key findings and conclusions follows.

Characteristics of Intermediary Organizations

Anticipating that intermediaries' prior encounters in New York City schools could be relevant to their success with this effort, we asked respondents to describe their earlier school reform efforts. We found that most intermediaries (13 of 18) had at least some experience creating and supporting small schools before joining the Gates Foundation initiative, and most (12 of 18) were located in or nearby New York City.

School Designs

Large-scale “new millennium” education reform efforts have tended to focus on the reorganization of schools and the transformation of teaching practices around explicit design principles (Borman, 2009a). When the foundation became involved in school reform, it too focused on developing schools around design principles. New Visions for Public Schools, a local intermediary, structured the initial New York City process for school roll-out and approval. Consistent with earlier foundation frameworks, New Visions directed prospective school leaders to design New York City schools around 10 principles: a rigorous instructional program; personalized instructional relationships; a clear focus on teaching and learning; instructional leadership; school-based, teacher-driven professional development and collaboration; meaningful continuous assessment; community partners; family/caregiver involvement; youth participation and development; and effective use of technology.

With these principles and other imperatives in mind, intermediaries developed diverse programming options. The range of approaches that resulted caused PSA researchers to seek out a concise conceptual model against which to compare alternative designs. We found that scaffolding in the work of Newmann and Wehlage (1995). These prominent researchers identify the following as central school design tasks: (a) defining the quality of intellectual work required of students, (b) describing pedagogy, (c) clarifying approaches to professional community, and (d) defining ways schools can obtain ongoing support from their environments.

At the time of this study (fall 2008), all but one intermediary could point to an explicit set of responses to the design tasks identified by Newmann and Wehlage (1995). Behind apparent differences in approaches, we identified four consistent principles of operation. In general, intermediaries sought to design schools that did the following:

- Provided all students with a college preparatory curriculum with personalized academic support (e.g., tutoring) and social support (e.g., advisories).
- Exposed students to real-world tasks and expectations (authentic pedagogy).
- Enabled professional collaboration and learning.
- Partnered with external organizations to enrich student and staff capacities.

Intermediaries elaborated on these design principles in unique ways. To encourage college-readiness, some intermediaries revised and increased course requirements beyond New York City minimums. Most added time for instruction to the school day and year. Virtually all required weekly student advisement at least for a year. As part of authentic pedagogy, some intermediaries embraced project-based learning (having students make things, from research reports to community gardens), other intermediaries adopted performance-based assessment (real-world tests that might include public exhibitions or the development of a portfolio of each student's best work), and others created instructional internships for students (work-related learning experiences). Some did all of these things. To enable professional learning, intermediaries encouraged schools to provide teachers with common opportunities to examine student work and plan curricula. Some were explicit about the need to schedule time for collaboration during the ordinary school week. To buttress relationships between schools and external organizations, all intermediaries provided external groups with funding to offset the costs of collaboration.

In addition to commonalities, we found important differences in intermediaries' approaches to school design. We identified six distinguishing factors:

- Most intermediaries approached school creation with a single school design in mind (e.g. a career academy design), but two intermediaries replicated multiple school designs (e.g. a career academy design, an early college design, etc.).
- All intermediaries focused on the needs of struggling students, but some focused on a distinct student population, such as English language learners or girls.
- All intermediaries promoted teaching that would expose students to real-world tasks, but some grounded instruction in classrooms and others grounded instruction in internships.
- Most intermediaries started new small schools, but one exclusively converted large schools into smaller academies.
- Some intermediaries designed four-year high schools; others designed serving grades 6-12.
- Some intermediaries admitted 40-80 students per cohort; others admitted 100-120 students per cohort.

A few factors, in addition to DOE and foundation mandates, were noted by intermediaries as influences on their decisions about school designs. These factors include the organizations' missions, their views about the instructional demands associated with preparing under-prepared students for college, and the scope of the curriculum changes they contemplated.

- Several intermediaries developed school designs with the special needs of the unique populations they historically served in mind. For example, Good Shepherd Services (GSS), consistent with its social work mission, developed

schools for older high school students with severe academic lags. GSS described its schools as providing rigorous instruction, keeping youth safe and secure, and linking instruction with learning-related job placement.

- Several intermediaries (Asia Society, College Board, City University of New York, and Young Women’s Leadership Network) expressed a strong commitment to schools serving grades 6-12. Leaders of these organizations explained that extra time was beneficial, if not necessary, in helping under-prepared students to develop the personal traits and skills necessary for success in college.
- Intermediaries that created schools for grades 6-12 were required by the foundation to admit smaller student cohorts (40-80, compared to 100-120 students per grade) to keep total school enrollments low. The Coalition of Essential Schools and four intermediaries committed to two-day per week work-related learning experiences (internships) also required schools to enroll smaller cohorts. Leaders of these groups explained that their models represented a major departure from common instructional practices. By limiting the total numbers of students that teachers taught, they hoped to contain instructional demands.

Support for Implementation

In carrying out the small schools initiative, some intermediaries needed to expand their capacity for school creation and support; others needed to build that capacity from the ground up. Intermediaries mined three sources of support for their school development efforts: external partners; the wisdom of their internal networks; and promising, if not proven, practices and curricula. They deployed these assets toward similar capacity-building targets, which included helping schools identify needed human resources and manage external pressures, developing planning and assessment materials, and building professionals’ knowledge and skills.

- All intermediaries reported helping school planners to identify principals and partners. Those with strong instructional knowledge and practice networks also reported helping to recruit and select teachers.
- All intermediaries reported supporting school leaders’ efforts to manage external pressures, such as identifying appropriate school locations and facilities. New Visions for Public Schools played a special role in managing district-level pressures by facilitating agreements for more flexible teacher assignment policies.
- Intermediaries invested in designing evaluation and planning materials to guide school development. Many created software for tracking student performance and developed organizational assessment rubrics. Some developed instructional materials, such as curriculum mapping software that allows teachers to link lessons with state and other standards, websites for sharing curriculum, and proprietary coursework.

- Intermediaries typically offered school principals and teachers multiple opportunities for professional development. A few invited prospective principals to spend several months studying instructional processes in model schools (residencies). Sitting principals typically participated in one- and two-day professional development events, monthly network meetings, and weekly coaching. Some intermediaries developed year-long leadership institutes to support new principals.
- The professional opportunities that intermediaries developed for teachers were typically less individualized and continuous. They included two-to-four-week summer workshops and one- and two-day professional development events. Some intermediaries provided teachers with group coaching, and some provided select teachers with individual coaching.

By 2008, the point of this data collection, many intermediaries offered schools nominally similar forms of support for implementation. What differed, we suspect based on respondents' incidental statements, were the organizations' internal capacities to support this work. As we were told, everyone partnered, but some intermediaries understood partnership better than others. Good Shepherd Services could, for example, "...draw on its social work professionals' knowledge of group work." All intermediaries had internal networks, but some intermediaries had strong local teacher networks and structured schools in ways that provided explicit means for teacher-sharing within and across schools. Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS), a network of (mostly) local schools and teachers could, for example, "...engage highly qualified teachers from across the City in staff recruitment, staff selection, and curriculum development efforts while teacher-mentors continued to function primarily as pedagogues in their home schools." Finally, some intermediaries had already developed and tested curricula they could deploy in this reform effort. As one intermediary leader noted, "Having strong curriculum frameworks in place, took some of the burden off teachers. We didn't have to invent everything."

Challenges

We asked leaders of intermediary organizations to describe the challenges they faced in implementing small schools. The core challenge was developing school professionals and, through those professionals, the curricula and pedagogy necessary to motivate under-prepared youth to achieve college-readiness standards. "The delicacy of the process," as one respondent said, "requires high-capacity individuals. It's not written in stone how you balance imperatives like acquiring and applying knowledge and respecting yourself and other people."

Intermediaries also faced several challenges that were not about instruction. Years into the new schools push, many intermediaries were, for example, still struggling to find adequate physical facilities (buildings) for their schools. Intermediaries also reported feeling burdened by the school system's repeated reinvention of complex operating procedures.

We expected to find differences in the extent if not the kind of challenges reported by intermediaries based on their prior experience creating small schools in New York City and the complexity and comprehensiveness of their school designs. It seemed reasonable, for example, that intermediaries that aimed to introduce major instructional innovations would face greater difficulty in program implementation than intermediaries following traditional paths. We didn't find these patterns in our data, however. At the nominal level, at least, instructional challenges appeared to be distributed across groups. A respondent from one intermediary organization offered a compelling partial explanation for the relative constancy of challenges across groups. "The issue is having a model. If you have a model you can tinker with it, you can invite others who share your values to work with you. The problem we had was in not having a model. That made everything more difficult. There were too many moving parts...no basis for collaboration."

Conclusions and Recommendations

In concluding, we address one issue: Do intermediaries' approaches to school design and capacity-building reflect the complexity of the reform challenge as characterized in today's professional literature? As of 2008, most intermediaries featured school designs that took account, in general terms, of the challenges identified by Newmann and Wehlage (1995). Intermediaries articulated clear instructional aims; specifically, preparing students for college. They championed authentic pedagogy and building professional learning communities, and they provided financial and other resources to enable schools to work with external partners. Ongoing design challenges included making college-readiness expectations more explicit, aligning those expectations with real-world standards, balancing "proven" with teacher-tailored curricula, and setting aside adequate time for teacher collaboration on instruction.

As of 2008, most intermediaries had varied ways of supporting school leaders in implementing school designs. Intermediaries typically helped school leaders identify human resources and manage external pressures. They provided materials for school planning and for student and program assessment and they worked to build professionals' knowledge and skills through coaching and networking. Perhaps the biggest implementation challenge that intermediaries faced was attending adequately to the learning needs of individual teachers.

We conclude that intermediary approaches to school design and support were multi-dimensional and coherent overall. Intermediaries also offered interestingly different perspectives on college-readiness, on balancing "proven" with tailored-made curricula, on organizing school time, and on enabling teacher learning. Based on these considerations, we make the following recommendations.

- Because intermediaries have developed reasonable approaches to school design and support, we recommend that local and national education stakeholders continue to engage these organizations in ongoing reform efforts. Intermediaries are capable of integrating multiple supports for school development and change.

- Because intermediaries are approaching school design in importantly different ways, we recommend that districts and states examine intermediaries' work *in situ* when selecting partners. Districts and states may want to charge particular offices with responsibility for studying the work of intermediaries and for developing relationships and program initiatives with these organizations.
- Because few intermediary models have been rigorously evaluated, we recommend that stakeholders support intermediaries' efforts to study program implementation and impacts. These data will serve to strengthen organizational problem-solving and development.
- Because intermediaries have developed alternative approaches to solving complex instructional problems, we recommend that education stakeholders support inquiry across intermediary organizations. These data will serve to build sector knowledge.
- Because the empirical meaning of college-readiness is still unclear, we recommend that education stakeholders support ongoing efforts to identify factors that make a difference in low-income students' college persistence and graduation rates. Increasing understanding of readiness factors will help to focus intermediaries' school designs and instructional supports.

Acknowledgments

Many organizations and individuals contributed to this study. We would like to thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for initiating and supporting our research. We are especially grateful to Kendal Guthrie and Jana Carlisle, both of the foundation, and to Constanca Warren, an independent consultant to the foundation, for guiding our work to completion.

The study was conducted in collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development and MDRC. Our collective work aims to describe the characteristics and impact of Gates Foundation investments in small high schools in New York City between 2002 and 2008. We would like to acknowledge the support of our AED research partners, Cheri Fancscali and Vernay Mitchell-McKnight, and to express our gratitude to MDRC, especially Janet Quint, for managing our collective activities, including revisions of this report, so ably. In tandem with the foregoing research, the foundation funded two internal studies. Kronley & Associates conducted an historical analysis of the foundation's New York City grant making. The Parthenon Group conducted a fiscal analysis of select intermediary organizations. The work of our colleagues in these organizations advanced our research, and we would like to thank them for their openness.

The Policy Studies Associates study presented here reflects on the work of intermediary organizations in New York City. These organizations were charged with distributing foundation funds to small schools and with supporting the schools' work. We spoke with 53 leaders of these 18 organizations and list their names Appendix A. We would like to thank them collectively for their thoughtfulness and generosity. We are especially grateful to the executive directors of these organizations, each of whom participated in a least two separate interviews.

Several colleagues within PSA contributed to this study. The following individuals (listed alphabetically) conducted interviews: Erickson Arcaira, Stephen Coleman, North Cooc, Eileen Foley, Jenny LaFleur, Derek Riley, Troy Scott, Beth Sinclair, Tandra Turner, Karen Walking-Eagle, and Yvonne Woods. Erickson Arcaira, Troy Scott, and Tandra Turner developed exhibits for Chapter 2, Chapter, 3, and Chapter 4 of this report. Yvonne Woods prepared initial treatments of Chapter 5, both text and exhibits. Erickson Arcaira prepared initial drafts of intermediary profiles presented in Appendix C, and Leila Fiester, an independent consultant, edited those profiles. Stephen Coleman interviewed executive directors of all intermediary organizations to confirm data collected during interviews. Ben Lagueruela produced the document.

The cooperation and support of these individuals was most valuable, but errors remain, of course, the responsibility of the author. The project was led by Eileen Foley, who framed the investigation and wrote the report. Drafts of the final report were reviewed and edited by Elizabeth Reisner, PSA Principal; and by our MDRC, AED, and Gates Foundation partners.

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1. Study Background and Framework

Background

Philanthropies have relied on intermediary organizations to launch major initiatives since the Ford Foundation introduced the practice in 1979 (Szanton, 2003). This study describes the contributions that intermediaries made in implementing the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's \$150 million small schools initiative in New York City. As described by a foundation official in 2009, Gates Foundation education intermediaries function as follows:

Education intermediaries are typically nonprofit organizations that operate between policymakers and funders and entities (for example, schools and school districts) charged with implementing new programs and practices. In the efforts of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create small high schools, intermediaries often served both as fiscal agents for distributing grant funds to schools and as sources of experience with and advice about creating, incubating, and operating small schools. Their areas of involvement have included leadership development, instructional support, and college-readiness services. To varying degrees, intermediaries also advocated for their schools with local educational authorities, helped identify and procure facilities, connected schools with other organizations and grantee networks, nurtured such networks, assisted with operations and staff selection, provided teacher professional development, and facilitated program planning, development and implementation.

The foundation began investing in small school intermediaries, or what it then called *school developers*, in New York City in 2001. With the Carnegie Corporation and the Open Society Institute, it made a grant totaling \$30 million to New Visions for Public Schools, New York City's largest school reform organization, to establish 75 small schools by 2005.

In 2003, a major reorganization of New York City schools prompted deeper investments by the foundation. The state legislature granted Mayor Michael Bloomberg control of the New York City Department of Education's 1,400 schools. The mayor appointed Joel Klein, until then Chief Executive Officer of Bertelsmann, Inc., to head the school system. Under Chancellor Klein, the DOE pledged to close large high schools that were not graduating students at an acceptable rate and to open 200 new small high schools over five years. Because of the apparent success of the schools, the Mayor and Chancellor later moved beyond that initial goal (<http://schoolsny.gov/Offices/mediarelationsh/NewsandSpeeches/2007-2008/nuschools.htm>).

In the fall of 2003, the Gates Foundation committed \$51 million to 10 intermediaries to establish 67 new secondary schools in New York City (Kronley, 2009). For each new school of 400 students, the foundation pledged \$600,000. The plan was for intermediaries to transfer \$400,000 over four years to each newly created school and to reserve \$200,000 to assist with school implementation.

New Visions for Public Schools, the foundation's original New York City small school grantee, was asked to structure the initial process for school roll-out and approval. New Visions created a three-step process. Prospective school planners received \$3,000 to \$5,000 to outline a school concept. Approved planners received \$65,000 to \$85,000 to develop a formal school proposal, recruit staff, and begin professional development. Teams with winning proposals were granted \$400,000 (minus earlier grants) to ramp up designs.

At the time of this data collection, 18 foundation-funded intermediary organizations had opened nearly 200 small high schools in New York City. The Chancellor and the foundation were closing in on their school creation targets. It was a good time to reflect on accomplishments and to consider the challenges that remain.

Purpose

This study was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of a grant for retrospective research on New York City small schools. The grant was made to MDRC in collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and PSA.

MDRC designed two studies as part of this collaboration. One study reviews the characteristics of small high schools in New York City and follows changes in the supply of and demand for high schools by type. The other study takes advantage of the lottery-like aspects of the high school admissions process to conduct rigorous analyses of the impact on students of enrolling in small schools. The AED study describes classroom and school practices in six small foundation-funded schools.

Alongside the MDRC-led research collaboration, the foundation supported two additional research projects that remain internal to the foundation. One is an historical analysis of the foundation's New York City grant making, by Kronley & Associates. The other is a fiscal analysis of select intermediary organizations, by The Parthenon Group.

In this study we provide a bird's-eye view of foundation-funded intermediary organizations' approaches to designing schools and supporting schools' implementation of program designs. In presenting the programmatic intentions of intermediaries, we answer four descriptive questions:

- What expertise did intermediary organizations bring to the small schools initiative?
- What were the features of their school designs?
- What pressures and supports did intermediaries apply to encourage implementation of school designs?
- What challenges constrained their efforts?

In this study, we also answer one analytic question: Did intermediary approaches to school reform reflect the complexity of the reform challenge as it has been described and understood over the recent history of school reform?

Conceptual Framework

We have adopted a program theory approach to structure this examination of intermediary organizations' reform strategies. Program theories describe the ways reformers expect to cause intended outcomes. Typically these theories have design and capacity-building components (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner, & Hacsí, 2000).

School designs are reform blueprints. Paul Hill *et al.* (1997) refers to school design as the architecture that shapes schools so students learn what they must know. Newmann and Wehlage (1995), who have written widely and for decades on this subject, identified four core dimensions of school design: (a) the quality of intellectual work required of students, (b) pedagogy, (c) professional community, and (d) external supports for effectiveness.

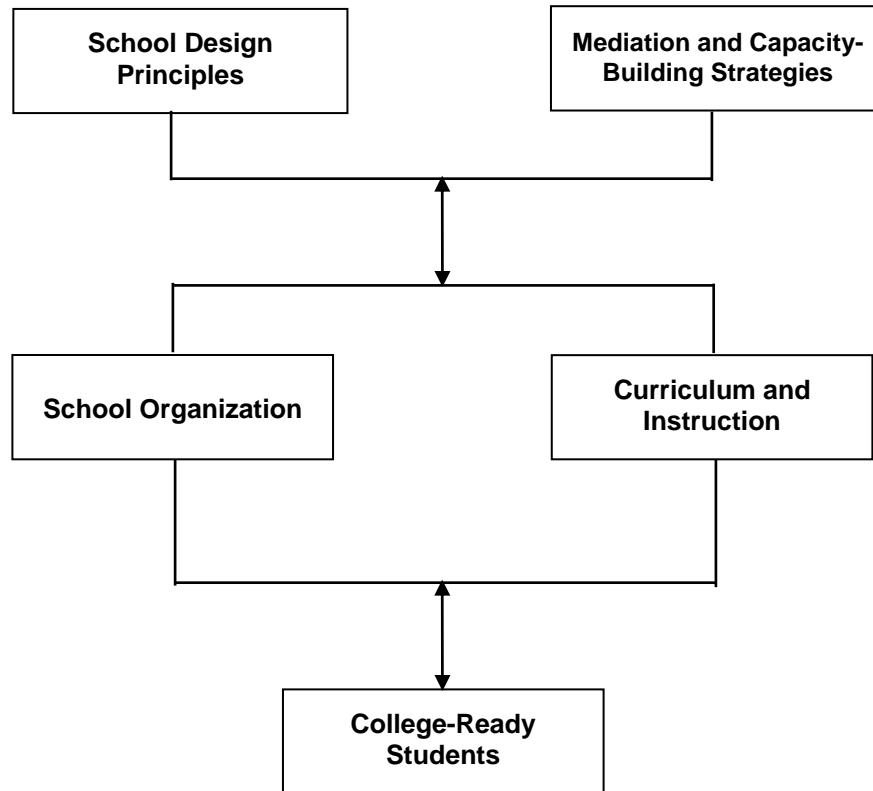
Assessments of the impacts of education reform efforts, including some that utilize explicit school designs, have found mixed results (Borman, 2009a). Explanations for mixed results cite reformers' failures to take account of the organizational complexity of school environments (Fullan, 2006) and professionals' learning needs (Cohen & Lowenberg-Ball, 1999).

In response to the first challenge, Fullan (2005, 2006) urges school reformers to help schools mediate inter-governmental and community pressures. In response to the second challenge, Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) urge reformers to address five capacity-building targets: teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions; professional community; program coherence; technical and financial resources; and principal leadership.

The foundation's approach to school development was attuned to the foregoing. By 2008, its formula for school creation included explicit school designs, organizational mediation (among levels of government, schools, and communities), and capacity-building (Rumberger, 2009). We present a broad outline of that framework in Exhibit 1.

In the upper panel of Exhibit 1, we note the foundation's interest in school designs, inter-organizational mediation, and capacity-building. In the middle panel, we note its intention that the foregoing shore up school organization and instruction. The bottom panel indicates the ultimate goal of foundation investments—ensuring that students are ready for college and for careers.

Exhibit 1 Logic of Intervention



Limitations

This study describes intermediary organizations' intended school designs, their inter-governmental and community mediation strategies, and their capacity-building strategies. In other words, it describes their program plans. We did not directly observe school-based activities as part of this research, and thus we are not in a position to make claims about the alignment of intermediaries' models or plans and their actual practice.

Organization of Report

The study is arranged in six chapters. In Chapter 1 we present the conceptual framework against which we will examine intermediaries' program theories. In Chapter 2 we describe the study's methods. In Chapter 3 we describe intermediaries and the scope of their work in New York City. In Chapter 4 we present intermediary school designs. We present intermediaries'

capacity-building approaches in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 we identify the challenges intermediaries encountered in implementing their program models and preparing students for college and careers. In Chapter 7 we summarize findings and present lessons. The appendix contains a list of individuals interviewed for this study and profiles of intermediary organizations that participated in this study.

2. Methods

PSA researchers used two qualitative methods to address the research questions: document reviews and structured interviews. These methods and our approach to data analysis are described below.

Document Review

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define *a research document* as written or recorded material not prepared specifically for purposes of an inquiry. In the first phase of this work, we reviewed online documents describing intermediary organizations and their small high school initiatives. Next we analyzed intermediaries' foundation funding proposals and examined project artifacts available online (start-up manuals, curriculum guides, databases, evaluations, annual reports, and the like).

Interviews

The document review process exposed us to the range of intermediary program models. This helped in framing tailored items for in-depth interviews¹ with program leaders.² Interview instruments were open-ended, structured guides designed to frame 60-minute conversations with leaders of intermediary organizations.

We reviewed our draft interview protocols with study partners at MDRC and AED and with study sponsors at the foundation. We then tested protocols in telephone interviews with senior officials at three intermediary organizations. We reworked questions based on respondent feedback.

In the first round of formal interviews, we spoke with the individual at each intermediary organization responsible for directing the organization's education program (or that person's designee). This was usually the executive director of the organization, but in larger organizations (e.g., universities) it was a division director. Next, we interviewed two senior officials responsible for overseeing school support operations. Most of these respondents were staff of the intermediary organization, but some were staff of partner organizations. In the final phase of data collection, we asked the organizations' executive directors to verify key findings by reviewing the data tables presented in this report. In all, we conducted 70 interviews with 53 people.

¹ In-depth interviewing has been described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, p. 149). Such interviews vary in structure and in the latitude that researchers employ in asking and respondents employ in answering questions.

² Marshall and Rossman (1995) refer to this as "elite interviewing."

The full PSA study team consisted of 12 researchers organized in six pairs. Each pair included a senior associate with at least 10 years of research experience and an analyst with one or two years of experience. Each pair was responsible for collecting data from three intermediary organizations. A senior associate conducted formal interviews and an analyst recorded comments. Interviews were not audio taped. Using standard word processing software, analysts summarized notes by question after each interview. Senior associates reviewed the notes for accuracy and completeness.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Each data collection pair contributed at least one team member to the seven-person data analysis team. Members of the data analysis team met weekly for two hours over nine months to structure and coordinate efforts. The process evolved in stages as follows.

Descriptive Analysis

We began by team members familiarizing themselves with the full body of data and assessing its informational value (clarity and accuracy), line by line. We gave each other feedback on elements of the text that required clarification. Team members then collected additional information through online searches and interviews. At the end of the data collection process, we coded or tagged the text to highlight statements associated with each of the four descriptive research questions. We then compiled the text in intermediary profiles, organized by research question. The modest number of primary questions enabled us to keep the data substantially in context.

Component Analysis

The next step was to sift through the data by research question to identify components of the phenomena of interest. Our approach to coding capacity-building strategies illustrates this process: First, we listed (by intermediary organization) the ways that intermediaries supported schools, paying attention to the type, target, and intensity of supports. We wrote statements such as these two: *(a) intermediary holds weekly meetings with principals to discuss leadership challenges* or *(b) intermediary sponsors monthly meetings of principals and assistant principals to review school progress indicators*. We then grouped related statements across intermediaries and framed a few statements about the variety of activities. The previous two cases might, for example, be organized under the statement: *intermediary runs leadership support groups at least monthly*. We then coded action models for the presence (*yes* or *no*) of stated activities. Using this process, we generated 55 codes to describe intermediaries and their program models (which we distilled to 36) and 32 codes to describe the challenges intermediaries faced.

Analytic Coding

As data collection and analysis proceeded, we became increasingly focused on interpretive analysis and, specifically, on making inferences about *types* of intermediary models. This stage of the work was quite challenging. In general, analysts selected specific topics for study (e.g., intermediary description, school designs, capacity-building strategies, and challenges) and developed matrices displaying component codes across cases. With the data in matrices, the research team evaluated its completeness and its importance relative to the study's conceptual framework. We verified data with intermediary leaders, and we classified intermediary models based on those data. This emphasis on iterative review to develop concepts and models places our work within the tradition of “grounded research” (Strauss & Corbin, 1997).

Reporting

Throughout this report, we present document and interview data schematically in exhibits. We elaborate on findings in the body of the text. In three of four substantive chapters, we report public data, meaning that the information can be found in funding proposals, annual reports, program manuals, and the like. In chapters that present public data, we identify the names of intermediary organizations associated with each data point. In the chapter identifying the challenges intermediaries faced in developing their schools, we list only the numbers of intermediaries that reported particular challenges, not the names of intermediaries. This is because the data were gathered exclusively in interviews. To encourage intermediary leaders to speak freely, we guaranteed their anonymity.

At the conclusion of each substantive chapter, we selectively describe relationships among study variables. We ask, for example, if certain intermediary characteristics are associated with certain school designs and capacity-building approaches. We approached these cross-variable comparisons in two ways. Initially, we simply tabulated findings. We noted, for example, if intermediary organizations that specialized in external learning were more likely to be New York City locals. Because the numbers of intermediaries in categories were small (e.g. only four intermediaries specialized in external learning), we often could not draw lessons based on these data. We had more success understanding possible relationships among variables by drawing on respondents' own statements. We use the latter approach in most substantive chapters.

3. Salient Characteristics of Intermediary Organizations and Initiatives

As the federal government prepared to spend \$100 billion in one-time money to improve foundering educational systems and institutions, questions emerged about the preparedness of external groups to support change within schools. In a 2009 *Education Week* story,³ Steve Barr, the founder of Los Angeles-based Green Dot Public Schools (an organization singled out by the U.S. Department of Education as a success story in overhauling low-performing schools), claimed that there weren't enough groups and individuals with the necessary expertise. This was not a surprising assessment. Proof about practice has been elusive.⁴

In a review of the 29 most widely implemented comprehensive school reform (CSR) models, Borman *et al.* (2003) found only three whose effectiveness had been established through randomized experiments. The three programs meeting the highest standard of evidence—Direct Instruction, the School Development Program, and Success for All—could be expected to improve students' test scores across varying contexts. Borman (2003) labeled three other CSR models—Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound, Modern Red Schoolhouse, and Roots & Wings—as on the brink of establishing strong evidence of effectiveness. In a later examination of systematic reviews, Borman (2009b) added Accelerated Schools, Career Academies, and Talent Development Schools to his list of proven models.⁵

This chapter describes the expertise of intermediary organizations responsible for creating new schools within New York City. We find that the foundation worked with a mix of groups, not just the small number of groups with strong evidence of success. This seems reasonable, given the scale of the foundation's change agenda and the state of knowledge about high school reform in 2002.

Description of Intermediary Organizations

Exhibit 2 presents data describing 18 New York City intermediary organizations across five domains of interest:

- Institutional focus
- Location
- Year of incorporation

³ See Alyson Klein, September 16, 2009.

⁴ Scientifically credible evidence of school reform, particularly high school reform, is elusive due to the challenges researchers face in establishing cause-effect relationships. Even when it is possible to assign schools at random to treatment and control groups, the issue of attributing causality for effects to particular components of interventions remains problematic.

⁵ Sources of these reviews included the Campbell Collaboration (<http://www.campbellcollaboration.org>), the What Works Clearinghouse (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>), the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (www.bestevidence.org), and the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (<http://www.evidencebasedprograms.org/static/index.htm>).

- Year opened first small school, and
- Number of small secondary schools created in New York City, 2001-2008.

We saw these conditions as possibly relevant to intermediaries' aptitude for framing effective school models and implementation strategies. Insofar as the factors were relevant, we expected that local, established reform-focused organizations with experience designing small schools would be better positioned than other organizations to implement the New York City reform effort. Having a framework of expectations helped us to define a concise list of intermediary characteristics for examination (even though we could not test the validity of proposed hypotheses).

The first columns of data in Exhibit 2 identify intermediary organizations by their *primary* substantive focus. The alternatives are as follows: (a) school design/reform organization, (b) other education-focused organization, and (c) other-than-education-focused organization.

Respondent comments led us to label 10 intermediaries as *school design or reform groups*. One of these organizations, New York City Outward Bound Center, a sponsor of Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound, is among those Borman (2003) labeled "as on the brink of establishing strong evidence of effectiveness."

We labeled four intermediaries as *other education-focused organizations*. These include two universities (City University of New York and Johns Hopkins University); the College Board, a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity; and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, a nonprofit that addresses pressing issues in the secondary and post-secondary sectors. Johns Hopkins University Talent Development High Schools is among those Borman (2009b) labeled as having rigorous evidence of success (Kemple, Herlihy, & Smith, 2005).

We labeled four intermediaries as *other-than-education focused*. These include the Asia Society, a cultural organization; Commonwealth Corporation, a workforce and youth development organization that sponsored Diploma Plus⁶; Good Shepherd Services, a social service organization; and National Council of La Raza, a civil rights and advocacy organization.

The second set of columns of Exhibit 2 identifies the geographic location of intermediaries. Eleven of 18 intermediaries have their headquarters within New York City, and one is located just outside New York City (Institute for Student Achievement). Five are located on the East Coast outside New York State (Big Picture Learning, Commonwealth Corporation/Diploma Plus, Johns Hopkins University, National Council of La Raza, and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation), and one is located on the West Coast (Coalition of Essential Schools).

⁶ Diploma Plus is no longer part of the Commonwealth Corporation. It became a separate organization in July 2009. Throughout this report we refer to Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus, because the Commonwealth Corporation was the original foundation grantee.

Exhibit 2 Characteristics of Intermediary Organizations

Intermediate Organization	Focus of Intermediary Organization			Headquarters		Year Incorporated	Year Launched First School/Small Academy	Number of Foundation-Funded Secondary Schools in NYC by 11/2008
	School Redesign /Reform	Education	Other	NYC	Other			
Asia Society			✓	✓		1956	2004	2
Big Picture Learning	✓				RI	1995	1996	2
City University of New York (CUNY)		✓		✓		1847	1974	6
Coalition of Essential Schools	✓				CA	1984	1984	3
College Board		✓		✓		1900	2004	12
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus			✓		MA	1983	1998	7
Good Shepherd Services			✓	✓		1947	1980	2
Institute for Student Achievement	✓				NY	1990	2001	24
Internationals Network for Public Schools	✓			✓		2004	1985 ^a	5
Johns Hopkins University		✓			MD	1876	1994	3
National Academy Foundation	✓			✓		1989	1982 ^a	1
National Council of La Raza			✓		DC	1968	2001	3
New Visions for Public Schools	✓			✓		1989	1993	83
New York City Outward Bound Center	✓			✓		1987	1992	8
Replications	✓			✓		1998	2000	8
The Urban Assembly	✓			✓		1990	1997	18
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation		✓			NJ	1957	2003	2
Young Women's Leadership Network	✓			✓		1998	1996	3

^a Organization incorporated after first school opened.

The third major data column of Exhibit 2 presents the year in which each intermediary was incorporated. Three intermediaries incorporated prior to 1900: City University of New York, Johns Hopkins University, and the College Board. Four incorporated between 1945 and 1970: Good Shepherd Services, Asia Society, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and National Council of La Raza. Four incorporated in the 1980s: Commonwealth Corporation, Coalition of Essential Schools, New York City Outward Bound Center, and New Visions for Public Schools. Five incorporated in the 1990s: Institute for Student Achievement, Urban Assembly, Big Picture Learning, Replications, and Young Women’s Leadership Network. Only one intermediary, Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS), incorporated after the start of the foundation-funded New York City small schools initiative. Although formally incorporated in 2004, INPS began operating as a small-schools network in the mid-1980s.

The fourth major column of Exhibit 2 displays the year each intermediary organization launched its first small academy (non-diploma-granting program affiliated with a diploma-granting school) or secondary school. Most intermediaries launched high schools or academies prior to 2000. Six intermediaries were later entrants into the field: Asia Society, College Board, Institute for Student Achievement, National Coalition of La Raza, Replications, and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

Scope and Pace of Interventions

The final column of Exhibit 2 presents the numbers of small secondary schools intermediary leaders estimated, during interviews, to have opened by 2008 with Gates Foundation funding. The numbers understate overall intermediary school-design activity: New Visions for Public Schools opened five additional schools with intermediary partners; those schools are attributed to the partner. Some intermediaries created schools within New York City for sponsors other than the foundation, and some intermediaries created small schools outside of New York City. The data show that four intermediaries created 70 percent of the 193 foundation-funded small schools opened by 2008. New Visions created 83 schools (43 percent), Institute for Student Achievement created 24 schools (12 percent), Urban Assembly created 18 schools (9 percent), and College Board created 12 schools (6 percent). From 2002 to 2008, in each year but one (2004), the foundation sponsored the opening 12 to 26 small secondary schools in New York City. In 2004, the foundation sponsored the opening of 64 new secondary schools.

Factors Influencing Pace of School Creation Efforts

We found that four local intermediaries developed 70 percent of New York City small high schools. All had incorporated by 1990. Only two of the four groups had experience creating small schools prior to 2001, but all four were education-focused and had other relevant background. The College Board had, for example, extensive knowledge of college-readiness criteria. The New York City initiative was, we conclude, carried out by a mix of groups, rather than a tiny number of proven few. Given the state of knowledge about high school reform in 2002 and the Department of Education’s ambitious goal of creating 200 high schools in five years, the decision to work with a mix of intermediaries seems reasonable.

4. School Designs

The school reform movements of the 1980s and early 1990s targeted particular aspects of education practice for improvement, for example, standards and teacher professionalism. By contrast, “new millennium” education reforms (often called third-wave reforms) tend to focus directly on the reorganization of schools and the transformation of teaching practices (Church, 2000).

A premise of third-wave reforms is that systematic change can help to ensure coherence, and that coherent design matters perhaps as much as the constituent principles of any particular design. In a RAND study of New American Schools, Paul Hill *et al.* (1997) refers to school design as the architecture that shapes schools so students learn what they must know.

As part of the 1997 Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CRSD) Program, Congress authorized incentive grants to schools to implement research-based reform models found to be effective in improving student performance. Program options varied greatly, but all were required to address the Education Department’s reform principles, which included ambitious learning goals, effective use of data, increased instructional time, and time for teacher collaboration, among other elements (Church, 2000).

From its inception, the foundation’s approach to reform was in the tradition of third-wave initiatives. Foundation-funded schools, in addition to being small, as described in AIR/SRI’s evaluation of the effort from 2001 to 2005, were expected to have the following features: a few important goals; a rigorous course of study for college, career, and citizenship; personalized relationships; respect and responsibility; time for staff collaboration; performance-based advancement with support; and technology as a tool (Evan *et al.*, 2006).

To develop schools in New York City, the foundation asked New Visions for Public Schools, an early small schools grantee, to structure a centralized process for roll-out and approval. New Visions directed prospective school leaders to design small schools around the following 10 principles (Foley & Reisner, 2009):

- A rigorous instructional program
- Personalized relationships
- A clear focus on teaching and high expectations for learning
- Instructional leadership
- School-based, teacher-driven professional development and collaboration
- Meaningful continuous assessment
- Community partners
- Family/caregiver involvement
- Youth participation and development
- Effective use of technology

Working with these principles and other imperatives in mind, intermediaries developed diverse instructional options. The diversity of approaches led us to seek out a concise conceptual framework against which to examine alternatives. We found that framework in the writings of Newmann and Wehlage (1995), leading researchers who have identified four core dimensions of school organization: (a) the quality of intellectual work required of students, (b) types of pedagogy, (c) approaches to professional community, and (d) the integration of external supports for effectiveness.

This chapter relies on the framework developed by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) to clarify both common and unique features of intermediaries' school designs. The chapter presents salient examples of intermediary programming. The practice examples are not endorsements or critiques, but simply illustrations. Briefly summarized, findings are as follows:

- Intermediaries showed a common commitment to college preparation, authentic pedagogy (teaching that exposes students to real-world tasks), teacher collaboration, and partnerships with external organizations.
- Most intermediaries replicated a single distinct school design, but two intermediaries replicated multiple school designs. All intermediaries focused on the needs of struggling students, but some focused on a single student population. Some intermediaries situated instruction within standard classrooms, while other intermediaries made extensive use of external contexts.
- Most intermediaries started new schools rather than restructure large existing schools. Ten intermediaries designed four-year high schools exclusively; four designed grade 6-12 schools exclusively; and the rest varied grade-organization approaches depending on local circumstances. Some intermediaries enrolled cohorts of 40-80 students; other intermediaries enrolled cohorts of 100-120 students.
- A small number of factors (in addition to the foundation and DOE) influenced intermediaries' decisions about school designs. Factors included their historic missions (selection of unique student populations and subsequent development of related unique curricula), perspective on the role of time in preparing students for college (grade 6-12 designs), and the contemplation of dramatic curriculum changes (smaller student cohorts).

Shared Features

As noted earlier, a school design is an explicit picture of preferred practice (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Below, with credit to Newmann and Wehlage (1995), who developed the framework, we elaborate on intermediary approaches to four dimensions of school design: (a) the quality of intellectual work required of students, (b) pedagogy, (c) professional

community, and (d) external supports for effectiveness. The patterns we report emerged, in part, as a result of the Gates Foundation-DOE-New Visions specifications for reform.

Academic Expectations

Intermediaries directed their schools to provide *all* students with a suitable college preparatory curriculum and supplemental academic and social supports. The DOE requires only one year of second language study and three years each of science and math for students entering high school in 2008, and most intermediaries defined college preparation in terms of district diploma requirements. Some intermediaries, however, increased subject-specific demands:

- The Asia Society required four years of second language study.
- The early-college initiatives of CUNY and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation made provisions for students to take up to 60 college credits while enrolled in high school.
- The College Board encouraged students to take Advanced Placement courses and helped students build requisite skills and understanding through its college preparatory “SpringBoard” courses.
- Schools designed by the Young Women’s Leadership Network required students to complete four years each of math and science.

To instill college-going expectations, all intermediaries required schools to provide students with academic advisement. Intermediaries that made atypical instructional demands like early college attendance (City University of New York Early College Initiative) or required students to spend two days per week in field work assignments (Big Picture, Diploma Plus, Good Shepherd Services, and New York City Outward Bound), required student advising at least three days per week. In all, nine intermediaries required weekly advising over four years, and another four required weekly advising for at least one year.

Student advisement was often conducted in groups of about 15 students and led by a classroom teacher, but approaches to advising students varied considerably. The Urban Assembly and Young Women’s Leadership Network engaged college counselors as part of their advisement services. In addition to regular weekly group counseling, Good Shepherd Services’ advocate counselors offered students individual advisement twice a month.

Pedagogy and Assessment

Most intermediary organizations expressed a commitment to *authentic pedagogy* (teaching that exposes students to real-world tasks and expectations). Within that context, project-based pedagogy and performance-based assessment emerged as leading strategies.

Six intermediaries promoted project-based learning (Coalition of Essential Schools, City University of New York, Diploma Plus, Good Shepherd Services, Internationals Network for Public Schools, and New York City Outward Bound Center). This approach requires students to consolidate their knowledge by making something, such as a product advertisement, a personal or organizational budget, a public service announcement, or a research paper. Some respondents referenced project-based learning in conjunction with *Understanding by Design*, a system developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (1998) to help teachers to frame explicit expectations for student performance and to develop projects that will enable students to achieve those expectations.

Some of the foregoing groups and other intermediaries promoted performance-based assessment (Asia Society, Big Picture Learning, City University of New York, Diploma Plus, Urban Assembly, and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation). This approach requires students to demonstrate their learning in real-world or project-based situations, such as public exhibitions on each student's development of a portfolio of his/her best work. For example, Big Picture assesses student work through exhibitions held three or four times annually. Diploma Plus asks students to compile, present, and defend a portfolio containing their interdisciplinary work three times during their high school experience. Respondents often mentioned performance-based assessment in conjunction with College Performance Assessment System (C-PAS), developed by David Conley *et al.* (2009), which focuses teachers' assessment activities on observing students' capacities for problem-solving, research, interpretation, reasoning, and precision.

Professional Community

Several scholars argue that opportunities to solve instructional problems jointly are important for professional communities to function productively (Boyd, 1992; Donahoe, 1993; Louise & Kruse, 1995). Many intermediaries encourage schools to establish conditions that enable joint work by teachers.

Some intermediaries recommended that schools organize teacher groups around discipline-specific teams. For example:

- In College Board schools teachers are organized into vertical (sixth-grade through twelfth-grade), discipline-specific teams to encourage curricular alignment.
- In Johns Hopkins' Talent Development High Schools, the upper grades are organized into career academies of 250 to 350 students. Common planning time for academy teams gives teachers opportunities to plan integrated lessons and share information about the needs and performance of their students.

More often, intermediaries encouraged schools to organize teachers into grade-specific teams. For example:

- In Johns Hopkins’ Talent Development High Schools, ninth-grade academies are organized around teams of four teachers and approximately 100 students.
- Internationals Network for Public Schools organizes teachers into grade-specific teams to encourage inter-disciplinary project-based learning. Team members work in close physical proximity, share a lunch period, and meet at least once a week for case conferencing and once a week for curriculum planning. Teachers are remunerated if planning activities extend their day.
- The Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) organizes grade-level teacher teams that meet as a group three to five times per week along with the academic counselor serving their students. To ensure efficient collaboration, ISA coaches train teachers to use protocols to review student work and to plan curricula. According to one respondent, this means that “professional practice is a public matter; teachers don’t hide behind the classroom door.”

Many intermediaries, including those that strongly valued collaboration, were not explicit about schools’ programming time for joint work by teachers in their standard schedules, however.

- New Visions for Public Schools was, in one respondent’s words, “strongly inquiry-oriented.” It encouraged school staff to clarify problems and identify solutions “based on collective reflection on student work and achievement data.” But New Visions did not prefigure for schools how they would build time for collaboration into the school day.
- Replications provided its schools with facilitators equipped to lead reflective teacher groups, but it defined teacher participation in these groups as a voluntary matter, and the groups generally met after school.

External Supports

Intermediaries encouraged their schools to work with many types of external partners. According to one respondent, the presence of foundation funding for inter-organizational work set up the expectation that “schools would be open to, if not entrepreneurial in, utilizing external resources.”

- Big Picture, Diploma Plus, Good Shepherd Services, New York City Outward Bound, and Urban Assembly formed close partnerships with employers able to offer their students internships.
- New Visions for Public Schools sought out partners in a variety of fields, including the sciences and humanities, such as museums and theaters.

- The Asia Society and Young Women’s Leadership Network partnered with exchange organizations and camps that could offer their students international learning opportunities.
- Many intermediaries partnered with college and with college-transition intermediaries like CollegeBound and College Summit to enhance their students’ opportunities to learn about college options and about sources of funding for secondary education.

Unique Features

The foundation maintains a database of small school grantees in which it defines schools as one of three types: traditional, theme-based, or student-centered. *Traditional* schools organize curriculum around a discipline or an interdisciplinary-focus. *Theme-based* schools combine academics with a focus on a particular real-world interest, often a career area. *Student-centered* schools offer specialized programming to students who may be under-served in larger schools (e.g., English language learners, over-aged youth).

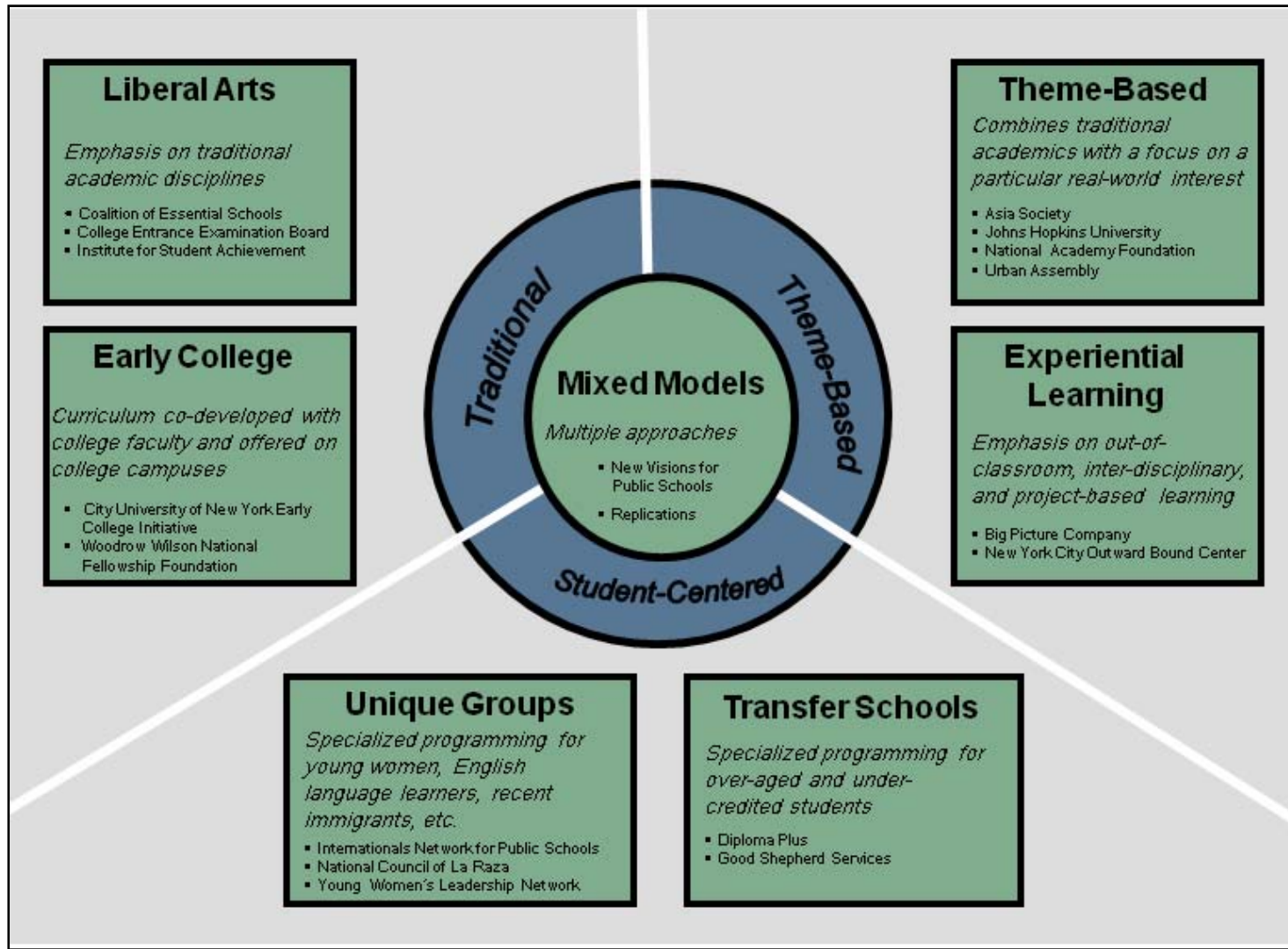
We took this framework as a starting point for classifying intermediary organizations by the unique features of their schools. Ultimately, rather than assign intermediaries to one of only three categories, however, we assigned intermediaries to categories based on their answers to three dichotomous questions: Does the intermediary replicate one or more school design? Does the intermediary emphasize traditional or real-world learning? Does the intermediary focus on a unique student group? In this way, an intermediary could, for example, be both traditional and focused on a unique student group or focused on real-world learning and a unique student group, etc.

Exhibit 3 presents the classification system we developed, along with the foundation’s original system. Intermediaries on the left side of Exhibit 3 focus on traditional academic targets: the *liberal arts* (Coalition of Essential Schools, College Board, and Institute for Student Achievement) and *early college admissions* (City University of New York Early College Initiative and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation). Intermediaries on the right side of the exhibit are especially interested in real-world learning opportunities. These include intermediaries with an interest in *thematic* approaches (Asia Society, Johns Hopkins Talent Development Schools, National Academy Foundation, and Urban Assembly) and those offering external learning two days per week—whether for new high school students (labeled *experiential*: Big Picture Company and the New York City Outward Bound Center) or for students who experienced failure in high school (labeled *transfer* schools: Diploma Plus and Good Shepherd Services).

Intermediaries at the bottom of the exhibit focus on specific student groups. These include *unique demographic groups* (Internationals Network for Public Schools, National Council of La Raza, and Young Women’s Leadership Network) and over-age *transfer students* (Diploma Plus and Good Shepherd Services).

Exhibit 3

Classification of Intermediary Organizations by Instructional Focus



The foregoing 16 intermediaries each implemented a single school design. New Visions for Public Schools and Replications, at the center of Exhibit 3, implemented multiple school designs. New Visions developed schools with partners that often had an important role in determining model features. Replications helped schools reproduce program models it deemed promising, and its portfolio included seven distinct models at the time of our study.

Organizational Structures

Exhibit 4 describes the ways intermediary organizations structured schools with regard to academies, grade span, and cohort size. Most started new small schools rather than reorganize larger schools into multiple smaller (non-autonomous) academies. The Johns Hopkins Talent Development High Schools program, which is committed to the school conversion strategy, is an exception to that rule.

Ten intermediaries exclusively organized ninth- through twelfth-grade high schools. Four intermediaries created combined middle/high schools exclusively (Asia Society, City University of New York, College Board, and Young Women’s Leadership Network). The rest applied both frameworks.

About half of the intermediaries admitted 40-80 students per grade, and half admitted 100-120 students per grade. Johns Hopkins University developed schools with cohorts of several hundred students. In ninth grade, students were organized into groups of 100 with four teachers. After ninth grade, students sorted themselves into three career-specific academies.

Factors Influencing Design Specifications

Intermediaries identified relatively few factors as influences on their school designs beyond expectations articulated by the foundation, New Visions, or the DOE. Those “other factors” included their missions, their views about the demands associated with preparing students for college, and the scope of the curriculum challenges they contemplated.

Several intermediaries tailored their school designs to meet the needs of student groups to whom they were historically committed. The civil right organization National Council of La Raza focused, for example, on the needs of Latino youth and forged connections between its schools and local Latino community organizations. Good Shepherd Services (GSS), consistent with its social work mission, developed schools for older high school students with severe academic lags. Its schools aimed to keep students safe and secure, to provide learning-related jobs, and to offer rigorous instruction.

The Asia Society, College Board, City University of New York, and Young Women’s Leadership Network created grade 6-12 schools. Leaders of these organizations reported that starting early helped their students to develop the traits and skills required for success in college.

Exhibit 4
School Structures Adopted in New York City

Intermediary Organization	Start-up Strategy			Grade Span			Cohort Size	
	New School	Conversion	Both	6/7-12th	9-12th	Both	40-80	100-120
Asia Society	✓			✓				✓
Big Picture Learning	✓				✓		✓	
City University of New York (CUNY)			✓	✓			✓	
Coalition of Essential Schools	✓				✓		✓	
College Board	✓			✓			✓	
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus	✓				✓		✓	
Good Shepherd Services	✓				✓		✓	
Institute for Student Achievement			✓		✓			✓
Internationals Network for Public Schools	✓				✓			✓
Johns Hopkins University ^a		✓			✓			
National Academy Foundation			✓		✓			✓
National Council of La Raza	✓				✓			✓
New Visions for Public Schools			✓			✓		✓
New York City Outward Bound Center	✓					✓		✓
Replications	✓				✓			✓
The Urban Assembly	✓					✓		✓
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation	✓					✓		✓
Young Women's Leadership Network	✓			✓			✓	

^aJohns Hopkins Talent Development High Schools enroll several hundred ninth-grade students.

To keep total school enrollments small and as required by the foundation, all grade 6-12 schools enrolled 40-80 students per cohort (compared to 100-120 students). Smaller enrollments were also characteristic of schools created by the Coalition of Essential Schools and four intermediaries strongly committed to experiential learning (Big Picture Company, Diploma Plus, Good Shepherd Services, and the New York City Outward Bound). Believing their models required major shifts in teacher practice, these intermediaries chose to limit the total number of students assigned to teachers to offset instructional challenges.

5. Support for Implementation

Three decades of research have identified relatively few interventions with consistent and statistically significant effects on instruction (Borman, 2009a). Explanations for these disappointing results cite the complexity of school environments (Fullan, 2006) and reformers' failure to provide adequate opportunities for professional learning (Cohen & Lowenberg-Ball, 1999).

To help overcome these organizational obstacles, the foundation made grants to school intermediaries, so that they could tackle their challenges. Grants varied with the size of planned schools (and other factors). The foundation made grants of \$600,000, for example, to support each new school of 400 students that it created. The schools were awarded \$400,000 over four years to augment programming, and the schools' intermediaries were awarded \$200,000 to support school implementation.

This chapter describes the strategies intermediaries developed to help schools implement program designs. As in Chapter 3, we use examples to illustrate intermediary approaches. The examples are not intended as indicators of best practice; they simply describe different ways of doing business. The following is a brief summary of findings.

- Intermediaries mined three sources of support for schools: partner organizations, internal professional networks, and the practice literature.
- Intermediaries concentrated on helping schools to do the following: (a) identify high quality human resources, (b) manage external challenges, (c) customize assessment and instructional materials, and (d) develop the skills and dispositions of professionals.
- New Visions for Public Schools played a special role in building capacity across intermediaries. It negotiated policy modifications in support of small schools at the district level.
- Most intermediaries developed customized materials to guide inquiry and action around instruction. Materials included software for tracking student performance, external evaluations, organizational assessment rubrics, curriculum mapping software, websites for sharing curriculum online, and proprietary coursework.
- Most intermediaries offered school staffs several avenues for professional development. Opportunities for principal development included pre-assignment residencies in model schools, year-long leadership institutes, one- and two-day professional development events, monthly network meetings, and weekly coaching. Opportunities for teachers included two- to four-week summer workshops, one- and two-day professional development events, group coaching, and selective individual coaching.

Sources of Support

In carrying out the foundation’s small schools initiative, some intermediaries needed to expand their internal capacity, while others needed to build capacity from the ground up. Intermediaries looked to three sources of support for their work in school creation: external partners; the wisdom of their internal networks; and promising, if not proven, practices and curricula. Below we describe the ways intermediaries cultivated and deployed those resources.

Organizational Partners

The term *partnership* is used to describe mutually beneficial relationships. As required by the foundation, intermediaries encouraged schools to develop relationships with partner organizations such as universities, museums, theaters, hospitals, community organizations, and employers. Sometimes partnerships were hardwired into school designs. In structuring arrangements for university campuses and high schools to work cooperatively on curriculum integration, for example, both the City University of New York Early College Initiative and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation focused on particular colleges and schools. More often it was the case, however, that partnerships were “at will.” One theater group could be switched out with another theater group in New Visions or Urban Assembly schools without dramatically reconstituting the framework of school operations.

Network Wisdom

Intermediaries’ internal professional networks provided them with yet another source of strength—especially when those networks were formal associations designed to help teachers connect around practice. Formal teacher networks had substantial scaffolding in place to foster professional learning. Some operated nationally, while others operated locally within New York City.

National networks (Big Picture Learning, Coalition of Essential Schools, Diploma Plus, and National Academy Foundation) and local networks with national affiliations (New York City Outward Bound) were positioned from the start to provide school professionals with opportunities to attend national conferences and to share concerns and information online. Between national meetings, Big Picture Learning and the Coalition of Essential Schools linked new schools with local mentor schools. Between national meetings, Diploma Plus and Outward Bound sponsored local principal networks and encouraged participants to engage in structured observations in featured schools (known as walkthroughs).

Like national networks, local networks sponsored conferences and featured ongoing inter-school communication. But geographic proximity offered extra advantages: Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) and Young Women’s Leadership Network recruited new principals from within network ranks, and they provided prospective principals with extended residencies in local network schools to study operations closely before beginning their own schools. INPS provided network teachers with funding to encourage visits and joint work across

school campuses. This process generated hundreds of curriculum units, video documentation of practice, and teacher toolkits in four disciplines, all available online.

Proven Practices

Replication involves the “faithful transfer of proven practices.” Some intermediaries were explicitly interested in drawing on structured (if not exactly proven) practices and curricula. Other intermediaries—including sponsors of teacher networks—expressed ambivalence about this strategy. They used terms like “pre-shrunk” to describe packaged curriculum and terms like “inventing solutions” and “releasing the imagination and energy of professionals” to describe preferred alternative approaches.

Replications, Inc. was, as its name suggests, unabashedly committed to the reproduction of promising instructional practices. This intermediary provided principals with opportunities to become “residents” in mentor schools where they could distill the schools’ “essential features.” Other intermediaries focused somewhat more narrowly, on replicating promising curricula. For example:

- The College Board codified an integrated set of services, courses, programs, tools, and resources (called the College Readiness System) for adoption by its schools.
- The Johns Hopkins University Talent Development High Schools Program developed specialized college preparatory courses to provide struggling students with extra help. The program gave teachers daily coaching to enable faithful program implementation.
- The National Academy Foundation (NAF) developed career-themed courses with industry experts for replication in NAF schools. Curricula are refreshed every two years.

The replication approach appeared to gain adherents over the course of the foundation-funded initiative. New Visions for Public Schools softened its resistance to structured programs, for example, after selectively implementing Ramp-Up Literacy, a double-period reading-writing curriculum that features explicit standards, extensive curriculum materials, daily lesson plans, scripted lessons, and professional development. According to one respondent, “We found that a structured program didn’t mean the end of professional discourse. It could be consistent with inquiry.”

Forms of Support

Partnerships, networks, and knowledge of proven practices fueled intermediary efforts to develop school capacity. The forms of support intermediaries provided to schools typically included help with the following: (a) identifying human resources, (b) managing external challenges, (c) designing materials, and (d) building professional knowledge and skills.

Identifying Human Resources

Intermediaries were responsible for supporting foundation-funded schools over four years. The process typically started with their active involvement in the selection of school principals and partner organizations. A few intermediaries like Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) were especially savvy about instructional practice. They involved themselves not only in principal selection but in teacher selection as well. Experienced practitioners from INPS schools served on teacher hiring committees. Describing the importance of participation in teacher hiring, the leader of one intermediary organization remarked, “I wonder what people think of as normal when it comes to teacher recruitment. It’s not crazy to look at a hundred teachers in the hope of finding the right one.”

Managing External Challenges

New schools faced challenges such as attracting students, situating themselves in communities near their target student populations, and finding viable school buildings near public transportation, among other challenges. All intermediaries reported that they helped school leaders with these start-up problems. New Visions for Public Schools played an important additional role in managing external challenges. The DOE and the foundation relied on New Visions to surface district-level challenges that needed to be addressed. As part of its New Century High Schools initiative, New Visions worked intensively with the DOE, union leaders, and other local stakeholders to help frame adaptations in teacher hiring practices. Prior to the 2005 teacher contract, teachers were allowed to “bump” each other simply on the basis of seniority. New York City schools—large and small—are now staffed by “mutual consent,” meaning that principals must agree on teacher placement.

Designing Materials

A striking feature of intermediary interventions was the development of materials to help schools in reviewing and structuring professional practice. Exhibit 5 identifies intermediaries that invested in tools for evaluating student progress and program implementation. Exhibit 6 identifies intermediaries that invested in tools for planning curriculum and instruction.

Program planning and evaluation tools included software for tracking student performance, external evaluations, and rubrics for assessing program implementation. Good Shepherd Services used *SchoolPower* software to track student enrollment, attendance, and achievement. Replications’ online system for monitoring program implementation included modules for tracking student attendance and test scores. New Visions created one-page, color-coded student profiles for its schools indicating at a glance whether a student is “on track” for graduation.

Some intermediaries hired external evaluators to assess their foundation-funded New York City initiatives including Asia Society, Big Picture Learning, College Board, Institute for Student Achievement, Johns Hopkins Talent Development High Schools Program, and New

Exhibit 5

Materials for Evaluating Student Progress and Program Implementation

Intermediary Organization	Electronic System for Tracking Student Data	External Evaluation	Rubrics for Systematic Implementation Monitoring
Asia Society		✓	✓
Big Picture Learning		✓	
City University of New York (CUNY)	✓		✓
Coalition of Essential Schools			
College Board		✓	✓
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus			✓
Good Shepherd Services	✓		
Institute for Student Achievement	✓	✓	✓
Internationals Network for Public Schools	✓		✓
Johns Hopkins University	✓	✓	✓
National Academy Foundation			
National Council of La Raza			
New Visions for Public Schools	✓	✓	✓
New York City Outward Bound Center	✓		✓
Replications	✓		✓
The Urban Assembly			✓
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation	✓		✓
Young Women's Leadership Network	✓		✓

Exhibit 6

Materials for Framing Curriculum and Instruction

Intermediary Organization	Curricula Mapping Software	Online Curriculum Sharing	Proprietary Curricula
Asia Society		✓	
Big Picture Learning	✓	✓	
City University of New York (CUNY)	✓	✓	
Coalition of Essential Schools		✓	
College Board			✓
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus	✓	✓	
Good Shepherd Services			
Institute for Student Achievement			
Internationals Network for Public Schools		✓	
Johns Hopkins University			✓
National Academy Foundation		✓	✓
National Council of La Raza			
New Visions for Public Schools		✓	
New York City Outward Bound Center		✓	
Replications			
The Urban Assembly			
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation			
Young Women's Leadership Network	✓		

Visions for Public Schools. Some intermediaries participated in evaluations during earlier interventions (Coalition of Essential Schools, Diploma Plus, and Outward Bound); others intermediary organizations designed their models in response to research findings (both Early College Initiatives).

About two-thirds of intermediaries developed tools to monitor implementation of local initiatives. We mentioned Replications' online software earlier. New Visions for Public Schools also deployed a sophisticated online system. Diploma Plus provided schools with a five-page rubric to guide twice-yearly self-assessments. The CUNY Early College Initiative used Lauren Resnick's Learning Walksm to structure classroom observations.

Intermediaries adopted or created three kinds of curriculum planning tools: online curriculum mapping software to help teachers link learning tasks with state and other standards, websites for sharing curriculum and practice tips, and proprietary coursework. The City University of New York Early College Initiative (CUNY-ECI) was among four intermediaries that used online curriculum planning tools. CUNY-ECI used ATLAS, a web application developed around *Understanding by Design* principles.⁷ ATLAS provides teachers with a uniform protocol for developing curricula and for examining and discussing instruction across subjects, grades, and schools.

Several intermediaries developed websites to share curricula and practice tips. Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) has posted hundreds of curriculum units online, and INPS and Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) present videos online to help principals and teachers understand ways of implementing core principles.

Three intermediaries developed proprietary courses. The College Board SpringBoard English and Math curriculum is designed to increase diversity of students in AP courses. Johns Hopkins Talent Development High School Programs provide a "double dose" of math and English courses to accelerate learning for lagging ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-graders. Students in the ninth-grade academy must complete a one-semester seminar on strategies for meeting the academic demands of high school. The National Academy Foundation works with industry experts to develop and align curriculum with industry standards. NAF curricula are refreshed every two years.

Building Professional Knowledge and Skills

Every intermediary viewed the development of principal and teacher knowledge and skills as essential to success. The next two exhibits illustrate the range of interventions intermediaries designed to support the work of teachers and principals. Exhibit 7 lists supports available primarily for teachers. As indicated in Exhibit 7, several intermediaries sponsored two- to four-week intensive summer workshops for new teachers. These lengthy training sessions familiarize teachers with curriculum expectations and support initial curriculum development.

⁷ Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe propose design standards for achieving quality control in curriculum and assessment. They suggest that teachers begin with desired results, determine acceptable evidence, and then plan learning experiences and instruction to achieve the desired results.

Exhibit 7 Professional Development Events for Teachers

Intermediary Organization	Two- to Four-Week New Teacher Summer Intensive Workshops	Other Network-Wide Teacher PD Events	School-Level Teacher PD Events
Asia Society		✓	✓
Big Picture Learning		✓	✓
City University of New York (CUNY)		✓	✓
Coalition of Essential Schools		✓	
College Board	✓	✓	✓
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus	✓	✓	✓
Good Shepherd Services	✓		✓
Institute for Student Achievement		✓	✓
Internationals Network for Public Schools	✓	✓	✓
Johns Hopkins University		✓	✓
National Academy Foundation	✓	✓	✓
National Council of La Raza			
New Visions for Public Schools	✓	✓	
New York City Outward Bound Center	✓	✓	✓
Replications			
The Urban Assembly		✓	✓
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation		✓	
Young Women's Leadership Network		✓	✓

Most intermediaries sponsored one- and two-day professional development events for teachers, network-wide and at the school level. New teachers (and counselors) in College Board schools, for example, attend five Saturday retreats in addition to their intensive summer workshop.

Exhibit 8 lists supports available primarily for principals. Six intermediaries offered prospective principals three-month to year-long residencies in model schools. Typically these were local residencies, but the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation supported a national residency program through Middle College National Consortium. Four intermediaries sponsored year-long leadership institutes. These institutes offered a structured curriculum and reading list, and they met three or more times in a year. New Visions' Scaffolded Apprenticeship Model (SAM), developed with Baruch College School of Public Affairs, supports both teachers and principals. SAM engaged school leaders in building teams that are collectively responsible for school improvement. Teacher-leaders participated in weekly seminars, daily apprenticeships, monthly visits to schools, monthly on-site coaching, and a four-week summer institute.

Several intermediaries supported principal networks that met regularly in schools. Talent Development principals met every other Saturday. Diploma Plus principals met bimonthly; they also attended a network-wide summer institute and three professional development events.

Most intermediaries provided principals (and select teachers) with weekly coaching. New Visions for Public Schools paired new principals with an experienced educator, usually a retired principal. Internationals' coaches worked with new principals once a week for the first four years of their tenure in a new school and once a week for the first two years of their tenure in an established school. Several intermediaries also provided coaching for teachers. The Institute for Student Achievement engaged subject-area coaches as well as process coaches that helped teacher work in teams constructively and efficiently.

Factors Influencing Support for Implementation

By 2008, intermediaries offered schools nominally similar forms of support for implementation. What differed, we suspect based on respondents' incidental statements, were the organizations' internal capacities to support this work. We were told that everyone partnered, but some intermediaries understood partnership better than others. Good Shepherd Services could, for example, "...draw on its social work professionals' knowledge of group work." We were told that all intermediaries worked their internal networks, but some intermediaries had stronger local teacher networks to exploit. In addition, some intermediaries had structured schools in ways that provided explicit means for teacher-sharing. Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS), a network of (mostly) local schools and teachers could, for example, "...engage highly qualified teachers from across the City in staff recruitment, staff selection, and curriculum development efforts while these teacher-mentors continued to function primarily as pedagogues in their home schools." Finally, some intermediaries had already developed and tested curricula they could deploy in the reform effort. "Having strong curriculum frameworks in place took some of the burden off teachers. We didn't have to invent everything." This suggests that the quality of support schools received was strongly influenced by particular aspects of intermediaries' organizational capacity, but the data are anecdotal.

Exhibit 8 Direct Support for Principals

Intermediary Organization	Principal Residency (3-10 months)	Year-Long Leadership Institute	Principal Networks (Meet 3+ times/year)	Principal/School Coaches/Mentors (Provide Weekly Support)
Asia Society			✓	✓
Big Picture Learning	✓		✓	✓
City University of New York (CUNY)			✓	
Coalition of Essential Schools				✓
College Board		✓	✓	✓
Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus			✓	✓
Good Shepherd Services	✓			✓
Institute for Student Achievement			✓	✓
Internationals Network for Public Schools	✓		✓	✓
Johns Hopkins University		✓	✓	✓
National Academy Foundation			✓	✓
National Council of La Raza				
New Visions for Public Schools		✓	✓	✓
New York City Outward Bound Center			✓	✓
Replications	✓	✓	✓	
The Urban Assembly			✓	✓
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation	✓			
Young Women's Leadership Network	✓		✓	✓

6. Challenges

The New York City Department of Education attempted to transform its system of secondary education by working with intermediaries to develop 200 new small high schools within five years. Using analytic procedures summarized in Chapter 2, this chapter describes obstacles that intermediaries confronted in carrying out this herculean effort (see Exhibit 9). The unit of analysis in this chapter (as elsewhere) is at the level of the organization. In brief, findings are as follows:

- A central challenge, in terms of importance and frequency, faced by intermediaries was developing school professionals and, through those professionals, the curricula and pedagogy necessary to motivate under-prepared youth to achieve college-readiness standards.
- Operational challenges, perceived as systemic, included coping with inadequate facilities and managing bureaucratic rigidity and discontinuous reform efforts.
- Operational challenges, perceived as internal, included replacing Gates Foundation funding, holding schools accountable to program models, using data effectively, and providing curriculum guidance with the right level of specificity.
- There were no apparent differences in the kind or number of challenges reported by intermediaries based on their proximity to New York City, their prior experience creating small schools, their school designs, or the extent of their capacity-building efforts. The challenges intermediaries reported were well distributed across types of organizations.

Instructional Challenges

Intermediaries identified six distinct instructional challenges: (a) providing teachers with support, (b) aligning curricula (pre-K through grade-12) with college-readiness standards, (c) innovating within the context of state-mandated tests, (d) developing principals' skills, (e) providing students with adequate guidance, and (f) creating manageable workloads for teachers.

Providing Teachers with Adequate Support

Leaders of 11 intermediary organizations discussed the challenge of providing teachers with adequate professional support. Respondents spoke of the important relationship between teacher learning and student learning, the difficulty they faced in finding time during the school day for teachers to work on instruction, and their interest in providing teachers with examples of good practice. Illustrative comments include the following:

Exhibit 9 Challenges

Type of Challenge	Summary of Related Responses	Number of Intermediaries (out of 18)
Instructional	Providing teachers with adequate support (e.g., planning time, mentoring, networking)	11
	Aligning college- and career-readiness standards with K-12 curricula	11
	Innovating within the limited scope of state-mandated tests	9
	Developing principals' management and instructional leadership skills	6
	Exposing students to college options and guidance	6
	Creating manageable workloads for teachers	4
Operational	Inadequate facilities	15
	Bureaucratic rigidity/inflexibility	11
	Discontinuity of reform agenda	8
	Insufficient collaboration among intermediaries	4
	Limited community involvement in DOE decision-making process	4
Internal to the Intermediary Organization	Replacing Gates Foundation funding	8
	Holding schools accountable to the model	8
	Utilizing data effectively	6
	Designing curricula with appropriate level of specificity	6

A challenge is counted whether it was raised by one or by three respondents within an intermediary organization. We include only challenges raised by four or more intermediaries, however, so as to focus the presentation.

- “We’re beyond the structural and programmatic stuff and into the ways teachers and students are working and learning. We need to develop a systematic way of supporting teachers so that college and career readiness is a reality.”
- “[You] need a mix of experienced teachers in a school so someone knows something. The work with teachers is challenging because there are so many new teachers each year. It’s difficult to reach into all of those classrooms.”
- “The model is dependent on professional development. There’s not enough time. To do this model well, teachers need to have tons of planning time, and it’s just not in the contract.”

- “Performance-based learning and instruction [are areas] where more support is needed [for] teachers [to] develop skills. Students are not yet being asked to do the more rigorous, higher-order thinking skills.”

Aligning Curriculum (Pre-K through Grade-12) with College-Readiness Standards

Leaders of 11 intermediary organizations cited improving the alignment of elementary, middle, and high school curricula with college readiness standards as a challenge. Respondents described the instructional system as fragmented and said that practitioners are not fully aware of the skills students need to be college-ready. Comments include the following:

- “There’s fragmentation within the Pre-K-through-12 instructional continuum. We need to know where the problems start for kids...where the cracks are in the system.”
- “Problems start well before high school, and it is hard to catch up on the old work and prepare students for new challenges. We need to synchronize what we do at the primary and secondary level to prepare for college.”
- “We need to send a clear message about the college-readiness outcomes throughout the instructional continuum. We need to set standards and plot strategies. It can’t wait until the kids are in high school.”
- “The delicacy of the process requires high-capacity individuals. It’s not written in stone how you balance imperatives like acquiring and applying knowledge and respecting yourself and other people.”

Innovating within the Context of State-Mandated Tests

Another common curricular challenge was innovating within the context of state-mandated tests. Leaders of nine intermediary organizations raised this issue. They described themselves as struggling to reconcile the demands of “authentic pedagogy” and standardized testing. Authentic pedagogy pushed them in the direction of real-world assignments, while preparation for state tests pushed them to ensure students had specific and broad content knowledge. Their dilemma was not whether to embrace one approach or the other but how to balance the two imperatives. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “High-stakes content tests drive schools. Students *also* need to engage in authentic tasks—the kind of things they would do in college or the real world.”
- “You need to look at how students are assessed and be open to different forms of assessment that capture depth. Also, there needs to be a widening definition of student success beyond Regents exams.”

Developing Principal Skills

Many more intermediaries cited challenges associated with teacher development (N = 11) than cited challenges associated with principal development (N = 6). The difference in levels of concern may reflect intermediaries' sense that capacity-building efforts with principals were gaining traction. There certainly were a profusion of such efforts.

Intermediaries related the challenges they experienced with principals to principals' relative inexperience. According to respondents, too few new principals had served as assistant principals and too many had participated only in the City's leadership institute. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “Principals need help developing a strategic plan and [they need to refine their] knowledge of the instructional program. They go from a [short] leadership academy [into a school], which is doing a disservice to everyone.”
- “They don't have the experience of [being] an assistant principal. They just do [the academy]. They don't have the depth and breadth of knowledge to evaluate their teachers in the content areas, and they could use more help in the financial aspect. They have now become CFOs.”

Providing Students with Adequate Guidance

Leaders of six intermediary organizations indicated that they faced challenges introducing students to college options and providing students with adequate social supports. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “You're going to need a college guidance counselor dedicated to college and career exploration. You need someone who does this full-time to shepherd them through the process: college access and finding financial aid, help with transcripts...The next step is to get them to the right college for them. I think it's a critical piece that's not being thought of right now.”
- “In high school, [it is important to] give kids a chance to see college life, understand they can get into college, and know what they need to do to be ready for college.”

Creating Manageable Workloads for Teachers

Intermediaries were conscious of the extra pressures that implementing their unique instructional paradigms could place on teachers. Leaders of four intermediary organizations indicated it was a challenge to create manageable teacher workloads. These intermediaries were a subset of the 11 that expressed concern about teacher preparation more generally. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “I feel that the schools are understaffed, that the teachers don’t have the time or preparation to focus on their students productively. It pushes the limit of human capacity to be teaching five classes and be able to give students the attention and individual understanding that they need.”
- “We don’t want teachers to burn out. You need to think carefully about the amount of work you can expect teachers to take on in addition to all of their direct responsibilities.”

Operational Challenges

Intermediaries identified five system-wide operational challenges: (a) inadequate facilities, (b) bureaucratic rigidity, (c) discontinuity in reform efforts, (d) insufficient collaboration among intermediaries, and (e) limited community involvement in DOE decision-making.

Inadequate Facilities

Asked directly about the adequacy of school facilities, 15 intermediaries identified low-quality school facilities as a limiting factor. Chief challenges were finding space in neighborhoods where their target populations lived, finding larger spaces as school enrollments grew, sharing space with other schools, and coping with late-stage assignments to new buildings. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “[The] DOE did not [locate us in a neighborhood] where there is a CBO that serves the community we serve.”
- “[Our new site] is a 45-minute ride from the first campus. We lost students because they did not want to go that far. Think about staff morale, students staying, and parents being anxious about their kids moving from place to place.”
- “We only have the space for two to three years [so we have to move] next year.”
- “Space is critical in building culture, branding, getting families and students to be [tied with the identity of the schools]. It’s not realistic to segment schools into wings.”

Bureaucratic Rigidity

Leaders of 11 intermediary organizations identified living with bureaucratic rigidity as a challenge. Respondents rarely specified particular obstacles. Rather, they spoke in general about the pressure of mandates. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “There’s [inflexibility.] You have to do things a certain way. Creating new schools or improving instructional capacity is...not something you mandate. You don’t really mandate professional development or a particular curriculum. You give a school resources and the autonomy to develop things.”
- “[We have] found that in New York City there is receptivity around [our] creative efforts, but often there is not a parallel commitment to actually remove the policy mandates that are barriers [to change].”

Discontinuity in Reform Efforts

Eight intermediaries characterized the school system as “a continuous motion machine” and themselves as “overwhelmed by efforts to reinvent practice.” They worried openly about forces within the city that might unseat the mayor, cause further disruption, and push their work to the side. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “The scope [of reform] in New York City will change if the mayor doesn’t get elected. Now we’re stable and doing good work, but anytime someone new comes in they change what we have to do.”
- “The DOE continually proposes top-down structural and policy changes that are insensitive to the needs of the schools. Schools start implementing one mandate while another is quickly introduced; it’s overwhelming.”

Insufficient Collaboration among Intermediaries and with DOE

Leaders of four organizations said it was difficult for intermediaries and the DOE to coordinate activities, and they needed to get better at it. The following comment identifies the kinds of problems that resulted from limited coordination:

- “There’s duplication. Schools can be members of multiple networks—a DOE network and a foundation network. Both networks will probably have a winter institute and tools. The DOE has a Leadership Academy, and we have one, and there are others. It gets complicated.”

Leaders of three other groups, all eager like the foregoing respondent for more collaboration, elaborated on particular obstacles:

- “It’s not a simple problem. It takes time to create something, then to realize that others are doing related things, then to connect all of that.”
- It’s very important that we know what’s going on at the DOE. Some parts of the DOE are closed off.”

- “In some sense we’re partners, but in another sense we’re competitors. That’s not bad necessarily, but it’s a factor, like intellectual property. Sometimes it feels unfair when people just walk away with the stuff you worked so hard to create.”

Limited Community Involvement in DOE Decision-Making Process

It would be hard to fault DOE leaders on their willingness to involve external organizations in building small schools, but leaders of four intermediary organizations were concerned about the relative absence of parent and community voices in the reform effort. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “Parents have no voice in the system. There’s very little help or advocacy on their behalf.”
- “Bloomberg and Klein haven’t involved the community or even the teachers union adequately.”

Internal Organizational Challenges

Intermediaries identified four internal organizational challenges: (a) replacing Gates Foundation funding so they could continue to work with schools, (b) holding schools accountable to program models, (c) using data effectively, and (d) providing curriculum guidance with the right level of specificity.

Replacing Foundation Funding

Eight intermediaries commented on the challenge of replacing foundation funding. One leader’s comment is illustrative: “Gates money was never intended for [general] support. The money needs to be raised or the schools need to pick up the cost. We don’t feel so confident that we’ll be able to find new funding.”

Holding Schools Accountable to the Model

Holding principals and teachers accountable to school designs was a challenge described by eight intermediary leaders. They said their relationships with schools were occasionally out of balance. As intermediaries, they had limited authority. Principals could fail to participate in network meetings or fail to establish viable means for teacher collaboration with relative impunity. One part of the solution was to have a review process in place, so the intermediary leader knew what was going on in the schools. But review did not always bring about compliance, and follow-up steps were far from clear. Sometimes intermediaries had to end a relationship with a school. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “We struggle in defining our relationship to schools. We’re currently partners with schools, but [we] have limited authority in schools. We’re not able to say, ‘Do it, and if you don’t, here are the consequences.’ A lot is done by consensus [and] persuasion. When things aren’t going well and leaders get sidetracked, we haven’t figured out how to get accountability, to get schools to understand what specifically needs to get done to correct things.”
- “I think we need more of a review process that connects principals’ goals with our core model. We don’t create enough accountability. I feel we were never clear enough with schools about what the line is. Some schools are all over the place and there’s no way to rein them in. It’s not working as we had hoped. I think we should have more leverage because the schools should be accountable for the money they receive.”
- “There comes a time when you have no choice but to end a relationship. The model means something to us. It’s not an ‘anything goes’ situation.”

Utilizing Data Effectively

The system was described as “awash in data,” and finding ways to help schools use those data without becoming “terrified” of the consequences was a challenge for leaders of six intermediary organizations. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “There’s plenty of data in schools to make [performance] more transparent, but we’re not really able to analyze that data.”
- “New York City is big on data. We have quality reviews where an external person comes in and observes and rates the school. It is very stressful [for the schools]. . . It is frenzy, and it doesn’t need to be frenzy, but people are afraid.”

Refining Models

We opened this chapter with a discussion of curriculum challenges that intermediaries perceived as embedded in the system, such as innovating within the context of state tests. Intermediaries were also concerned about their internal challenges in developing curricula. A critical issue for six intermediaries was achieving the right level of specificity in the formulation of curriculum frameworks. Illustrative comments include the following:

- “We have curriculum challenges. We don’t impose a standard curriculum. We appreciate the need to differentiate, but [in the future] we [will] ask schools to make commitments to specific curricula.”

- “We’re working on scope and sequence in specific subjects areas. School leadership teams do a better job now in collecting and analyzing data, but the identification and application of strategies is still an issue.”
- “[We are still testing] curriculum frameworks. We don’t know if they’re effective.”

Factors Influencing Perceptions of Challenges

We expected to find differences in the extent if not the kind of challenges reported by intermediaries based on their prior experience creating small schools in New York City and the complexity and comprehensiveness of their school designs. It seemed reasonable, for example, that intermediaries aiming to introduce major instructional innovations would face greater difficulty in program implementation than intermediaries following traditional paths. We didn’t find these patterns in our data.

At the nominal level, at least, instructional challenges appeared to be distributed across groups. This was true even when we examined challenges that intermediaries described as internal to their groups (as compared to embedded in the school system) such as raising funds, holding schools accountable to their program models, developing curricula that reflected their pedagogical values, and using data effectively.

A respondent from one intermediary organization offered a compelling partial explanation for the relative constancy of challenges across groups. “The issue is having a model. If you have a model you can tinker with it, you can invite others who share your values to work with you. The problem we had was in not having a model. That made everything more difficult. There were too many moving parts...no basis for collaboration.”

7. Conclusions

The objective of this research has been to describe intermediaries' school design and capacity-building approaches. This chapter assesses the accuracy or validity of our findings, the alignment of intermediary approaches with practices recommended in the professional literature, and the implications of findings for future school development and improvement efforts.

Validity of Findings

The substantive chapters of this report describe intermediary organizations, their school designs, their capacity-building efforts, and the challenges they faced in creating small schools in New York City. Can we claim to have produced rounded descriptions?

We used several strategies to develop full and accurate summaries of intermediary program models. We started by reading intermediaries' reports to the Gates Foundation and documents they had posted online. We then interviewed multiple senior officials in all intermediary organizations. We ended by asking intermediary leaders to review our descriptions of their program models and each data table in this report. The care we took in fact-checking gives us some confidence that the program descriptions we generated reflect official accounts.

This does not mean that our descriptions perfectly capture activities in schools in fall 2008, the year in which we asked respondents to ground their program descriptions. Almost certainly there are gaps between what leaders thought their organizations did and what they actually did. Programming environments are dynamic; events are difficult to time-stamp, and we did not directly observe intermediary activities in schools as part of this study. To get a sense of the various ways in which intermediary activities were experienced by school personnel in foundation-funded schools, we refer you to the work of our research partners at the Academy for Educational Development (Fancsali *et al.*, in progress).

Alignment of Intermediary Approaches with Recommended Practice

Do assembled facts support the conclusion that intermediaries' school designs and capacity-building approaches were aligned with the recommendations of leading scholars? We think they do.

By 2008, the year we conducted this data collection, most intermediaries' school designs addressed issues highlighted by Newmann and Wehlage in their influential 1995 report on restructuring schools. In conceptualizing school designs, intermediaries were attentive to college-readiness learning standards, authentic pedagogy, support for professional community, and integration of external supports for learning with school-system resources.

- Intermediaries extended the school day to support lower-performing students, and they provided students with personalized weekly (and sometimes daily) advising to help them form close social bonds and internalize college expectations.
- Intermediaries urged teachers to frame curricula so that students could see the real-world relevance of lessons, and they provided support for internships, project-based learning, and performance-based assessment.
- Intermediaries' typically acknowledged the importance of professional collaboration. Only some were explicit, however, about ways of reorganizing the school day to create opportunities for teachers to work collectively on instruction.
- Partnerships between schools and community groups were of interest to all intermediaries, but again, only some intermediaries developed explicit means for guiding inter-organizational work on instruction.

By 2008, most intermediaries had developed a rich array of capacity-building strategies. As recommended by Fullan (2005), intermediaries were typically set up to help schools navigate government and community pressures in identifying staff, partners, and facilities. As recommended by Newmann, King, and Young (2000), they were equipped to provide schools with useful instructional materials and with individual and group staff support.

- Two-thirds of intermediaries provided schools with rubrics to use in reviewing institutional performance. About one-half of intermediaries provided schools specialized software designed to track individual student performance. About one-third of intermediaries contracted with third-party evaluators for external school assessments.
- One-half of intermediaries offered schools online means for sharing curriculum and practice tips. Four intermediaries provided teachers with software to map instruction in relation to state competencies and other standards. The College Board, Talent Development High Schools, and the National Academy Foundation provided schools with curricula in response to perceived needs.
- About two-thirds of intermediaries provided principals with weekly coaching by outside experts or weekly peer mentoring, and about two-thirds facilitated regular meetings of principal networks. Several arranged residencies for prospective principals in flagship schools, and several arranged year-long leadership institutes for novice principals. Intermediaries tended to focus principal-development activities on building leadership skills. In that sense, individual principal coaching was a means for increasing collective organizational capacity and improving teacher practice.
- Attending adequately to the learning needs of the individual teachers was the biggest capacity-building challenge intermediaries faced. Fewer intermediaries had means for intervening regularly at scale with teachers than with principals. It is hardly

surprising, given the size of the teacher workforce, that teachers' formal learning opportunities tended to be occasional (e.g., summer and winter institutes).

Implications of Findings

Intermediary approaches to school design and support were multi-dimensional and coherent overall. And intermediaries offered interestingly different perspectives on how to define college-readiness, balance “proven” with tailored-made curricula, organize school time, and enable teacher learning. Based on these considerations, we make the following recommendations.

- Because intermediaries have developed reasonable approaches to school design and support, we recommend that local and national education stakeholders continue to engage these organizations in ongoing reform efforts. Intermediaries are capable of integrating multiple supports for school development and change.
- Because intermediaries are approaching school design in importantly different ways, we recommend that districts and states examine intermediaries' work *in situ* when selecting partners. Districts and states may want to charge particular offices with responsibility for studying the work of intermediaries and for developing relationships and program initiatives with these organizations.
- Because few intermediary models have been rigorously evaluated, we recommend that stakeholders support intermediaries' efforts to study program implementation and impacts. These data will serve to strengthen organizational problem-solving and development.
- Because intermediaries have developed alternative approaches to solving complex instructional problems, we recommend that education stakeholders support inquiry across intermediary organizations. These data will serve to build sector knowledge.
- Because the empirical meaning of college-readiness is still unclear, we recommend that education stakeholders support ongoing efforts to identify factors that make a difference in low-income students' college persistence and graduation rates. Increasing understanding of readiness factors will help to focus intermediaries' school designs and instructional supports.

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Appendix A

Study Respondents

Asia Society

Shari Albright
Chief Operating Officer

Judy Conk
Director of Academic Affairs

Barbara Kelly
Professional Development Director

Big Picture

Elliot Washer
Co-director

Al Sylvia
Assistance Principal (Bronx Guild)

Kari Thierer
National Director for School and Network
Support

City University of New York

Cass Conrad
Director, Early College Initiative

Claire Riccardi
Program Officer

Claudette Tableman
School Support Coordinator

Coalition of Essential Schools

Lewis Cohen
Executive Director

Mara Benitez
Senior Director of School Development

Maria Hantzopoulos
School Liaison

College Board

Helen Santiago
Executive Director

Edna Vega
Senior Director, New Small Schools

Maria Diaz
Implementation Manager

Commonwealth Corporation Diploma Plus

(Diploma Plus, formerly a program of
Commonwealth Corporation, is now an
independent organization)

William Diehl
National Director, Diploma Plus

Willair St. Vil
Network Manager

John Jenkins
Instructional Program Manager

Good Shepherd Services

Rachel Forsyth
Director of Transfer Schools

Meghan Eison
Data Analyst

Institute for Student Achievement

N. Gerry House
President and CEO

Anna Maria Farnish
Vice President of Programs

Jacqueline Ancess
Co-Director, NCREST
Teachers College, Columbia University

Internationals Network for Public Schools

Claire Sylvan
Executive Director and Founder

Camille Rodriquez
Director of New School Development

Daria Witt
Director of Academic Affairs

Johns Hopkins University

Robert Balfanz
Director of Strategy, Finance & Operations

Wendy Gonzales
Interim Northeast Regional Manager

Tony Gerdes
Organizational Facilitator

National Academy Foundation

J. D. Hoye
President

Patti Smith
Senior Director, Network Services

Regina Paul
NYC Small Schools Manager

Wendy Hedges
Associate, Center for School Design

National Council of La Raza

Delia Pompa
Vice-President, Education

Dolores Gomes
N.E. Regional Director

Irene Cuyun
Senior Director of Special Projects

New Visions for Public Schools

Robert L. Hughes
President and CEO

Ron Chaluisan
Vice President, Programs

Beverly Donohue
Vice President, Policy and Research

New York City Outward Bound Center

Richard Stopol
President

Suzanne Tillman
Field Director

Fred McIntosh
Director of Recruitment and Professional
Development

Replications, Inc.

John Elwell
President

Bob Lesser
Vice President of Operations and New School
Development

Urban Assembly

Sue Fine
Executive Director

Lauri Goldkind
Former Director of Research and Analytics

Doug Knecht
Director of Instructional Support

Woodrow Wilson Foundation

Kristen Vogt
Associate Director, Early College Initiative

Roberta Matthews
Provost and Vice President for Academic
Affairs at Brooklyn College

Rob Baird
Vice President School-University Partnerships

Young Women's Leadership Network

Josh Solomon
Executive Director

Kathleen Ponze
Director of Education

Sarah Wendt
Director of Development and Marketing

Appendix B: Summaries of Intermediary Organization Planning Processes, School Designs, and Support for Implementation¹

¹ The profiles of intermediary organizations that follow describe their espoused program models as presented in documents available online and as described by leaders during interviews with PSA researchers. We make no claims regarding the alignment of espoused and actual practices. Readers interested in obtaining additional information about a particular program model should visit the organization's webpage. For online readers, we have embedded a link to each organization's webpage in the organization logo in the header of its profile.



Planning Process

Asia Society (AS) requires a planning phase (usually six months), during which AS selects the school leader, helps him or her write the new school application, and guides the leader through procedures required by the DOE Office of Portfolio Development. The school leader then creates a school leadership team of interested teachers and begins recruiting teachers, parents, and students. AS provides a coach and a comprehensive manual on the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN) school design. The design matrix defines goals, outlines key features of ISSN schools, and provides indicators for charting the school's progress.

School Design

Asia Society creates new schools for grades 6-12 or 9-12 that are intended to develop students who are globally competent and college ready, prepare them for college, and raise their awareness and understanding of global issues. ISSN schools pursue these goals by infusing international content in all subjects; requiring yearly foreign language study; and providing extracurricular, service, and travel opportunities for learning about the world. ISSN schools feature heterogeneous classes, an inquiry- and project-based learning approach, and the use of technology to support instruction. The schools also use performance-based assessments, require students to create yearly portfolios, and require seniors to develop a capstone project or exhibition. Advisory classes, which students attend three to five times a week, are intended to foster academic and social skills, a sense of community, and strong student-teacher relationships (advisors stay with their students for all four years). Common planning time is designed to enable grade-level and content-area teaching teams to meet at least three times a week to collaborate on and align curriculum.

Support for Implementation

Asia Society states that it assists schools with curriculum development, professional development, and school progress reviews. AS offers curricular frameworks (examples and lesson plans of internationally themed coursework), access to a national network of schools, and an online forum for sharing curricular challenges, solutions, and best practices. AS also provides school coaches, who are expected to spend 30 days on site at each ISSN school working with principals and teachers. Coaches lead professional development on principal leadership; data and systems; and curriculum, instruction, and classroom management. AS facilitates principal and practitioner networks, and offers a Leadership Institute, a Summer Institute, seminars, regional events, and other professional development offerings based on a school's needs. AS conducts a three-day review of each school's progress, based on the school design matrix. The review, which consists of observations, interviews, and focus groups, occurs in Years 1 and 3 of operation.



Planning Process

The one- to two-year planning process of Big Picture (BP) is designed to begin with a discussion about the applicant school's goals and how they fit BP's approach. The principal receives training in BP's philosophy, design, and start-up issues. He or she also develops a plan and timeline for leadership and organizational development. Big Picture enters into a memorandum of understanding with the school district that establishes basic requirements for the school, such as establishment of an advisory program, student-teacher ratios of 15-20:1, and BP's participation in hiring decisions. If needed, Big Picture also may help raise funds for the program.

School Design

Big Picture is a sponsor of the Alternative High School Initiative, a network of youth development organizations that create alternative settings for youth who do not succeed in traditional schools. BP organizes learning around advisory groups and internships, allowing students' interests to drive curriculum and instruction. Each student belongs to a 15- to 20-member crew led by an advisor/teacher, who stays with the group for multiple years. Along with school-based academic specialists and an instructional coach, the advisor/teacher oversees students' academic development. Students spend three days a week in school and two days at internships where they develop academic skills in a work setting. When in the building, students participate in a group activity led by the advisor, work on individual projects, or work with an academic specialist. Mentors oversee the internships and advisors check in periodically.

Students' work is assessed through exhibitions, held three or four times annually, and other performance assessments. Advisors use an online system to map student projects against NYC standards and grade requirements. This is expected to enable students to receive enough academic credits for a high school diploma. Each student also has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), and families are expected to meet with the advisor and student four times annually to gauge progress toward ILP goals.

Support for Implementation

Big Picture provides an extensive database of materials, ongoing professional development through coaching, and an annual kick-off conference for principals and teachers. BP's network is designed to provide access to ideas and advice at other schools, and BP will arrange peer visits if desired. A practitioners' network for principals meets three times annually, and principals are paired with mentors. Advisors and teachers also team up for support. BP's website posts curriculum, instructional, and advisory guides and allows teachers and principals to interact around specific topics. BP also offers coaching on design implementation, curriculum, and instruction. A quantitative reasoning director provides direct support on math content and quantitative thinking. BP states that it advocates for its schools by attending school board meetings and school events, helping to align curricula with standards, and writing grant applications. Big Picture is using a longitudinal study of its graduates to assess the long-term impact of BP schools.



Planning Process

Early College Initiative (ECI) program officers identify CUNY college presidents and/or provosts who may want to join the partnership with DOE. The college representative engages his or her dean of instructional services and other faculty in an advisory team, which—along with the new school’s principal (recruited by the advisory team) and ECI program officer—develops the school’s features. CUNY handles publicity, student recruitment, and (with DOE) the selection of school locations.

School Design

ECI’s goal is to bridge the high school-college divide for students who are underserved on traditional campuses by making higher education more accessible, affordable, and attractive. The model features a seven-year sequence of courses (encompassing grades 6-12) but does not prescribe a curriculum. Teams of teachers and university faculty use ATLAS online mapping tools to develop curricula, and they incorporate David Conley’s concepts of 21st Century Skills and Understanding by Design into traditional disciplinary courses such as math and Spanish. Middle-school students are expected to spend a considerable amount of time developing math and literacy skills; by senior year, they take college courses almost exclusively. Program materials state that students can complete up to 60 college credits by the end of high school, earning an Associate’s degree or two years of college credit toward the baccalaureate. ECI schools follow an expanded day or year that allows extra time for tutoring, small group work, homework help, summer orientation, longer class periods, or student activities. Students meet in advisory groups three to five days a week. The advisory curriculum, which varies across schools according to student need, includes social development, problem solving, character building, and special topics (e.g., health). Students are assessed by portfolios, grades, and test scores. ECI schools also use Lauren Resnick’s Learning Walksm and other observation protocols to assess classroom instruction.

Support for Implementation

CUNY provides fiscal support and administrative oversight to 11 ECI schools in New York City, including schools operated by Woodrow Wilson Foundation and Middle College National Collaborative. CUNY states that principals receive support through: the ECI network, which meets monthly; ECI program officers, who consult with school leaders every other week; and a school support coordinator from DOE’s Partnership Support Organization (PSO), who helps with instructional assessment, operational support, and other issues. Teachers receive consulting and curriculum development support from the PSO once a week and network-wide professional development from ECI four times annually. School staff meet monthly. Teachers and principals attend a winter institute and summer professional development program and visit other ECI schools nationwide. A CUNY liaison organizes curriculum team meetings and recruits college faculty to participate. CUNY also provides curriculum development tools, such as ATLAS, and a five-step protocol for using data to set goals.



Planning Process

Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) publishes requests for proposals via websites, research centers, and affiliated schools, and applicants typically come to CES with a mentor school in mind. The planning process lasts one year, during which the new school design team attends quarterly meetings and a summer institute, visits other CES schools, and reviews protocols for startup, instruction, and community engagement. CES' main role in NYC is to broker the new school's relationship with its mentor school, which does most of the design work. Mentor principals are intended to help new school principals with curriculum planning and teacher recruitment, often on a daily or weekly basis.

School Design

The CES Small Schools Project creates and supports small schools for underserved student populations. The schools are designed to feature powerful instruction, personalized attention, a challenging curriculum, and sustainability. CES believes that their Essential schools should reflect the community of students and teachers and the surrounding neighborhood and that these communities define each school's characteristics. No two Essential schools are exactly alike, but all are expected to commit to these principles: (a) A focus on helping young people use their minds well; (b) depth over breadth of content; (c) goals that apply to all students; (d) personalized teaching and learning, supported by student-teacher ratios of 80:1 in high school and 20:1 in elementary school; (e) a student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach approach that teaches students to teach themselves; (f) assessment of students on performance of "real tasks"; (g) an emphasis on decency and trust; (h) principal and teachers' commitment to the whole school, positioning them first as general educators and then as specialists; (i) use of resources to support teaching and learning (e.g., collective planning time, competitive salaries, low student-teacher ratios, low per-pupil costs); and (j) promotion of democracy and equity. Other common features of CES schools include advisory groups, a culture of collaboration among faculty and between faculty and students, heterogeneous classrooms, and college counseling.

Support for Implementation

CES states that it brokers mentoring relationships between schools, offers technical assistance, and provides data analysis. Principals from new schools are expected to meet weekly with mentor principals to examine course offerings and discuss curricula. Teachers from mentor schools spend time observing and co-teaching classes, and once a week new school teachers spend a day in mentor schools. CES' quarterly network meetings often focus on teachers' professional development and classroom practice. CES Centers are intended to support school design, leadership development, and school-community relationships. All CES schools have access to ChangeLab, an online source of best practices, tools, and strategies from mentor schools. Every new CES school hosts highly structured visits by individuals from established and new CES schools. The visits are designed to elicit feedback to the hosting school on key issues and give people from new schools a chance to see how other schools face similar challenges.



Planning Process

College Board (CB) leaders present their model to new principals via groups like New Leaders for New Schools. Interested principals submit a letter of intent to CB and a summary of the school they want to open. CB screens potential school leaders and prepares them for DOE interviews. The leaders then build teams to plan and create the new schools. College Board schools open with grades 6 and 9 and grow to a full cohort of grades 6-12 over four years.

School Design

CB schools focus on preparing students for college. This is done primarily through the College Readiness System, a series of programs and services CB designed to help students develop the competencies needed to transition between grade levels and to college. The programs include SpringBoard English and Math (a curriculum to increase diversity of students in AP courses); CollegeEd (a program to help middle-school students and their families with college planning); PSAT; SAT Readiness Program; and MyRoad (a web-based tool to explore majors, colleges, and careers). Other features of the model include weekly advisory classes, in which students address academic and social developmental issues. CB faculty and staff belong to vertical, subject-specific teams, which help teachers understand how their classes contribute to a coherent curriculum across grades.

Support for Implementation

The College Board provides training on the College Readiness System and related services at summer institutes and as needed throughout the year. Professional development generally focuses on defining college readiness and developing activities to prepare students for post-secondary education.

Principals attend monthly meetings and annual retreats. All new teachers and counselors attend five Saturday retreats. Faculty attend two days of advisory training in the summer.

Two implementation managers for the CB schools in New York City support teachers and principals on a regular basis and act as liaisons between CB and the schools, usually working on site at each school once a week. CB contracts with Metis Associates to evaluate the implementation of CB products and services, professional development activities, and students' academic performance.



Planning Process

Diploma Plus (DP)⁹ staff work with the DOE to find candidates to lead new schools. DP staff help the potential principal assemble a school planning team that includes educators, parents, and students. The team submits a proposal to the DOE Office of Portfolio Development, usually the fall before opening. If the proposal is accepted, DP staff and school leaders hire staff and recruit participants.

School Design

Diploma Plus intends to create small, rigorous high schools, primarily in urban areas, that serve students who are over-age and under-credited or at risk of dropping out. The model's four essential ingredients are: a performance-based system, supportive school culture, focus on the future, and effective supports. DP has three phases—"Foundation," "Presentation," and "Plus." In each, students are expected to pursue projects and assignments with clearly defined expectations and objectives and are promoted or graduate as soon as they reach the goals—regardless of how long it takes. At the end of each phase, students are expected to compile, present, and defend a portfolio containing their best work across subjects. During the Plus Phase, students complete an internship, college coursework, and a community action project in addition to high school courses. Students meet in advisory groups two to four times a week. All students are expected to develop strong relationships with at least one or two adults who can provide personal, academic, college, and career guidance. DP schools also partner with community-based organizations, including those funded through Learning to Work, and CBO staff assist with internships, wrap-around services, and advising.

Support for Implementation

A network manager works with DP's seven New York City principals, the DOE, community partners, and school coaches on budgets, work plans, community partnerships, and recruitment of teachers and students. Aspiring principals attend a workshop on evaluation, assessment, and data use. Principals in the network meet bimonthly and, along with teacher leaders, attend a network-wide summer institute and at least three professional development events annually. New school staff receive a two-week orientation to the model, curriculum development process, and assessment tool. Twice annually, schools conduct an evaluation and revise their work plans.

Diploma Plus has two school coaches in NYC who provide on-site coaching, mentoring, modeling of instructional practice, one-on-one teacher consultation, and observation as well as network-wide professional development. Teachers develop curricula with help from the coaches and tools available on www.Diplomaplus.net, which map backward from DP competencies and state content standards. Learning rubrics assess mastery of the DP competencies in all areas.

⁹ Diploma Plus was developed by Commonwealth Corporation. Until recently, DP operated under CommCorp's sponsorship. It now is an independent non-profit corporation.



Planning Process

Good Shepherd Services (GSS)'s Division of Transfer Schools forms partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) that share GSS' mission and scope and have experience working with DOE. After GSS identifies a likely principal (often via the New York Leadership Academy or the network of GSS teachers) and a school director (a CBO employee), it forms a planning team that includes the proposed principal, program director, GSS and CBO representatives, current students or alumni, lead teachers, and parents. Because transfer schools are a vastly different model from traditional schools, GSS looks for teachers who are especially committed to the model and to students. Applicants undergo two interviews; submit lesson plans, a description of their education philosophy, and writing sample; and teach a demo class. GSS convenes the entire school staff for professional development and curriculum planning the summer before school opens and for two additional retreats.

School Design

GSS develops and implements transfer schools for at-risk students and former dropouts, most of whom are age 16-21. Principals and school leaders share leadership, with principals providing the instructional vision and school leaders in charge of youth development. The schools are small and individualized, with 200 or fewer students and a teacher-student ratio of 1:25. The instructional program is designed to recognize students' individual strengths, needs, learning styles, and varying levels of credit attainment. An accelerated credit program helps some students speed toward graduation, earning up to 20 credits (equivalent to three academic cycles) per year. Students move through the program in ungraded cohorts and select a schedule based on the courses and Regent exams they need to graduate. Instructional strategies allow for differentiated instruction and hands-on assignments that have real-world relevance. Advocate counselors support students through bimonthly, one-to-one sessions; weekly peer support groups; and additional coaching to set personal and academic goals, develop a post-graduate plan, and overcome barriers to success. An internship coordinator finds opportunities for students who are ready to work. Teachers reach out to parents/guardians to inform them of their child's progress, and family members can receive services from GSS and other neighborhood resources.

Support for Implementation

GSS views itself as a school partner as well as an intermediary. It hosts a three-week summer institute to build community among new staff, create curriculum maps for the first six to eight weeks of school, and plan group work. GSS trains staff in the youth development model and provides an instructional coach to help principals build teachers' capacity. During the school year, GSS helps schools with recruitment, scheduling, and attendance outreach. Every six weeks, GSS facilitates a meeting between school co-leaders and community representatives to strengthen implementation and resolve issues. GSS trains school staff in PowerSchool software and data analysis.

Planning Process

The Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) works with school leaders for one year to plan a new school or restructure an established one in accordance with ISA's principles. ISA provides an additional four years of support for implementation of the model.

School Design

ISA schools develop a four-year college preparatory program that is expected to be rooted in inquiry, embedding literacy and numeracy in content areas, and deploying multiple assessment measures. The model emphasizes college-ready skills, college visits, counseling on admissions and financial aid, internships, and community service. At each grade level, a team of teachers and a counselor work with a grade-level cohort of students. An extended school day and year give students time for challenging assignments, homework help, test preparation, and enrichment.

All adults in a school are expected to be responsible for knowing students well and for providing a caring, safe environment and academic and emotional support. Counselors work closely with teachers to help them advise students effectively. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school and to provide feedback on their children's strengths and needs. Teachers and counselors are supposed to keep parents informed regularly about the progress of their child.

ISA grade-level teams meet weekly to assess and monitor progress toward student and school goals. Strategies include: the critical friend process; peer observations; reviews of students' work; analysis of student performance data (e.g., pass rates, attendance, improvement on writing and math assessments); surveys of students' attitudes and expectations for school and their future; and reports on the implementation of ISA principles. School teams also use case management to resolve students' issues and manage their progress.

Support for Implementation

ISA states that it fosters schools' standards of professional practice, professional capacity, and sense of collective responsibility for students and outcomes. Capacity-building occurs through (a) institutes that help teachers, school leaders, and counselors implement the ISA model and (b) coaching for individual teachers, grade-level teams, counselors, and school leaders. Coaching is expected to focus on design and implementation of inquiry-based teaching and learning, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, supervision and leadership to support inquiry instruction, school development and organization, grade-level team facilitation, and use of data to inform instruction. Content coaching in math, literacy, and science is available on request. Coaches address outcomes specified in the school's annual action plan, which identifies how ISA's principles will be used to achieve district and school goals. Coaches track schools' progress monthly on performance indicators, and they meet monthly to solve implementation problems. The ISA leadership network provides principals and assistant principals with support from peers around the country, and a separate network does the same for counselors.

Planning Process

Planning for new schools by Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) begins with a committee of present and former teachers, which recruits principal candidates. Prospective principals spend three to five months interning at an INPS school and are encouraged to visit other schools to study specific components. After INPS and the school district agree on how many schools to create, formal planning begins. The principal, supported by an experienced advisor, leads a team that designs the school, screens teachers, and guides the school for the next four years. INPS supports teachers and student recruitment online and through ads in native-language newspapers.

School Design

International schools are learner-centered, linguistically heterogeneous settings. Students learn collaboratively in small groups with peers from other cultures and languages, and classrooms build on the strengths students bring from all over the world. INPS' principles emphasize: (a) heterogeneity and collaboration; (b) experiential learning beyond school; (c) integration of language and content (English is taught through the disciplines, with an interdisciplinary focus); (d) local autonomy and responsibility, so all members can contribute to their fullest; and (e) a single learning model for all faculty and students. All INPS schools use the same performance-based assessments and rubrics.

Support for Implementation

INPS supports curriculum development and sharing by engaging teacher teams in network-wide projects. The INPS website features hundreds of lesson plans, four teacher toolkits, videos of valued instructional practices, and protocols for program planning and review.

New INPS principals are expected to meet with a coach once a week for the first four years of their tenure in a new school or the first two years of their tenure in an established school. INPS facilitates monthly principal meetings and sponsors an annual, two-day leadership retreat (August Institute) for principals and assistant principals. Teachers in new INPS schools and all new teachers in established schools attend a two-day, network-wide summer institute. New teachers also have access to an experienced "email buddy" in their discipline, and all teachers can visit other INPS schools to see peers in action. A teacher residency program enables teaching apprentices to become certified and earn a master's degree. Schools contribute half the cost of stipends for 14-16 apprentices annually, to guarantee a pipeline of prepared teachers. INPS also sponsors six- to 10-member intervention teams that help teachers address issues within their disciplines.

INPS plays a strong role in advocacy and external relations with the DOE, other government agencies, and partners such as the New York Immigration Coalition, Coalition for Excellence and Equity for English Language Learners, and Make the Road New York.

Planning Process

The Talent Development High School (TDHS) initiative of Johns Hopkins University begins program development in an existing secondary school with an awareness-building period to introduce school leaders, parents, and communities to the model. School staff are expected to collaborate on academic development, student and faculty selection, marketing and recruitment, facility changes, and scheduling. All teachers receive training in teaching via extended course periods. During the summer between the planning and implementation year, the intermediary organization trains school staff in the TD curriculum, small learning communities, and leadership. Some schools adopt all four grades of the existing school, while others start with the ninth grade and add new grade cohorts every year.

School Design

TDHS aims to reform schools that face serious problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement, and dropout rates by implementing small learning communities and curriculum innovations that help students transition from grade to grade. The model converts large urban high schools into career-themed academies that are expected to focus on students' interests and learning needs, support student-teacher relationships, and foster collaboration among teachers. A key feature is the ninth-grade academy, a self-contained school-within-a-school with interdisciplinary teacher teams designed to give students a smooth transition to high school and a close-knit environment. Similarly, TD schools establish self-contained career academies for students to pursue after the ninth grade.

TDHS designs curricula to address low student expectations and poor academic preparation, which the model views as root causes of dropping out. The program, developed by Johns Hopkins researchers, provides "double dose" math and English courses to accelerate learning for lagging ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-graders. Students in the ninth-grade academy must complete a one-semester seminar on strategies for meeting the academic demands of high school.

Support for Implementation

TDHS offers training during the planning year, followed by ongoing needs assessment and professional development for teachers in the following areas: teaching within the block schedule, building teams with students and adults, managing sub-committees, and developing professional learning communities. TDHS facilitates principal meetings every other Saturday, which focus on improving instructional leadership. Each academy has its own leader and teachers, who work as a team. Regional TD facilitators visit schools throughout the year to provide classroom support, co-teaching, modeling, and help in planning instruction and assessment. TD schools and staff also have access to Johns Hopkins researchers, who help analyze attendance and dropout rates. Researchers are currently working on an intervention for students with low attendance.



Planning Process

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) selects principals from a pool of interested candidates and helps them develop applications. Sites then begin a year of planning. They form a design team with a school district administrator, principal or assistant principal, teachers from at least two disciplines, current and/or past students, and business and community partners. Sites report frequently to NAF on their progress in building the team, developing the career academy's structure and content, fostering a sense of community, and launching and monitoring the academy. Planning sites are expected to assess their status continually, using NAF's core principles.

School Design

NAF maintains a national network of career academies that are designed to implement the following principles: (a) a personalized learning environment; (b) academic engagement of all students; (c) empowered educators; (d) accountable leaders; (e) engaged community and youth; and (f) an integrated system of high standards, curriculum, instructors, assessments, and supports. The academies work with industry experts to develop and align curriculum with industry standards. The curriculum meets many entrance requirements for four-year colleges and universities and is refreshed every two years.

Each academy has an advisory board of leaders from the community, nonprofit sector, and industries. These partners are expected to help the academy director arrange internships, mentors, and classroom volunteers. Students often take paid, career-specific internships during the summer of their junior and senior years. After completing an internship, students develop products that link their studies to workplace experience. NAF encourages its schools to place students in year-long advisory groups that cultivate academic and personal growth.

NAF emphasizes collaboration, particularly around curriculum development, and expects teachers to have common planning time.

Support for Implementation

NAF maintains a network of academy leaders to share ideas for curriculum and instruction. The foundation sponsors a national leadership summit and summer institute, facilitates a principal leadership network and local institutes for its NYC-based schools, and generally serves as an advocate and "barrier buster" for the career academy model. NAF holds "design studios"—interschool school visits—that bring several schools together to share practices and obtain feedback on specific topics. The foundation launched a social network, NAF-Connect, which uses Web-based technology to facilitate real-time feedback on school issues, concerns, and strategies. NAF monitors schools progress through informal evaluation visits.



Planning Process

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) views its 2002-2008 planning process as insufficiently structured. Applications for new school funding were submitted by NCLR affiliates working in partnership with local Latino organizations. Applications required little evidence of collaborative planning and little information about partners' instructional intentions. Funds were awarded early in the school implementation process, which worked against NCLR's later efforts to tighten school design features.

School Design

NCLR's education division supports community-based small schools that each serve a large number of Latino, low-income, and English Language Learner students. NCLR aims to create an academic environment that addresses the specific needs of these students and helps them graduate from high school and attend college. A consistent feature is NCLR's leadership in matching each school with a partner college, whose deans and/or faculty meet yearly with the high school teachers to outline what students need to know by the time they enter college. NCLR is continuing its strategic planning to refine its school design and specify the core qualities of an NCLR school.

Support for Implementation

NCLR builds its relationship with New York City's DOE by attending monthly meetings and discussing the needs of ELL students and the complications of schools sharing buildings. In the past, its technical assistance has been tailored to individual school needs and has varied from year to year. As NCLR engages in strategic planning, the organization has stated that it will continue to develop the menu of technical assistance that it will provide in the areas of leadership development, curriculum development, instructional coaching, and literacy support for English Language Learners.



Planning Process

New Visions for Public Schools (NVPS) designs schools with the involvement and approval of the DOE, local superintendents, and unions. At the beginning of the New Century High Schools (NCHS) initiative, NVPS made grants in three stages: (a) a small grant for planning teams to describe a school concept, (b) a larger grant for teams to develop full school proposals, and (c) \$400,000 grants to teams to implement school designs over four years. Much later in the initiative, the planning process focused more on staff recruitment. Planning began with New Visions setting out to identify individuals equipped to serve as principals. These individuals developed school concepts, formed planning teams, and recruited and developed staff during a three-week summer institute.

School Design

Each NCHS school has a unique mission, identity, and educational approach, but they share allegiance to achieving an 80 percent graduation rate and 92 percent attendance rate and to 10 design principles: a rigorous instructional program; personalized relationships; clear focus and expectations; strong instructional leadership; school-based professional development and collaboration; meaningful, continuous assessment of student learning; partnerships with community organizations; family/caregiver engagement and involvement; student participation and youth development; and effective uses of technology and information resources.

Support for Implementation

NVPS focuses on outcomes and inquiry. Schools receive automated tools for monitoring student achievement, conducting internal reviews, and planning professional development. They engage in annual self-assessments and develop action plans, which are stored in an online database maintained by NVPS. Coaches are expected to provide feedback on outcomes (especially attendance and graduation rates), action plans, and school structure. NVPS pairs each principal with an experienced leadership development facilitator who spends one day a week at each school. The Scaffolded Apprenticeship Model (SAM), an intensive leadership training institute developed by NVPS and Baruch College School of Public Affairs, helps school leaders build a team of professionals who collectively are responsible for school improvement. Cohorts of teachers participate in weekly seminars, daily apprenticeships, monthly visits to other schools, monthly on-site coaching, a four-week summer institute, and other activities, readings, and assignments.

NVPS operates teacher institutes and learning networks and occasionally pays for teachers' self-designed learning. Collaborations between schools and partner organizations also advance teacher learning. NVPS has six instructional mentors who work individually with teachers. The model is moving toward requiring schools to commit to specific curricula.



Planning Process

Outward Bound (OB) follows DOE's school planning cycle. A recruitment director identifies possible school leaders, using the network's system of contacts and referrals. Potential principals attend an open house to learn about the model, meet school representatives, and discuss responsibilities. New principals submit a school proposal to DOE jointly with OB. The principal recruits students, and NYC Outward Bound provides public relations materials and sends staff with the principals to recruiting fairs.

School Design

Outward Bound schools are based on the highly successful, national Expeditionary Learning™ (EL) model, which shapes the curriculum, culture, and structure of each school to build students' courage, character, teamwork, and community. The curriculum emphasizes active learning and challenges students to prepare for college and successful life choices. Students belong to crews—groups of 12-18 who meet with a teacher daily for team- and relationship-building activities, such as a four-day backpacking trip that occurs before the first year of high school. Crews usually stay together through high school.

Support for Implementation

Principals of OB schools attend an annual national conference, visit other schools every six to eight weeks, and participate in monthly network meetings. Each OB school in New York City has a full-time instructional guide who coaches teachers and helps them select national professional development opportunities based on individual needs. Professional development sessions are organized by OB's director of recruitment and professional development.

School designers are expected to meet weekly with teachers to help them develop Learning Expeditions and to share resources developed elsewhere, including curricula from other EL schools. Teachers also have common planning time to develop Learning Expeditions. Teachers attend an annual, network-wide conference, a summer institute, and occasional school visits. New teachers participate in three to four weeks of orientation and professional development before the school year begins.

Principals meet annually with the field director, program director, executive director, and others to develop a work plan based on the Expeditionary Learning Core Practice Benchmarks, which address active pedagogy, culture and character, leadership and school improvement, and school structures. Work plan progress is monitored during monthly meetings. A data manager is expected to help teachers and principals understand, interpret, and use data strategically. School designers and instructional guides meet with principals every six weeks to discuss issues and develop solutions.

The NYC Outward Bound Center advocates for its schools' space and budget considerations (but not policy changes) with the Mayor's office and DOE's Office of Portfolio Development.



Planning Process

Replications, Inc. identifies new school leaders; matches them with an exemplary, replicable school model; and assists with the new school's application to DOE. The replicated schools are expected to customize a set of essential features—aspects of school culture, academic performance, and performance-based assessment—which are used to determine funding allocations.

School Design

Replications, Inc. identifies schools that have reputations and records of academic success with urban populations and replicates their essential features in new schools. Currently, seven school models are being replicated. Depending on the school, the educational focus and learning standards range from science and math competency to foreign language skills or civic responsibility. For the most part, the School Design focuses on replicating school cultures; for instance, a strong school culture of art or academics helps to mold student behavior and support classroom management. All schools are expected to emphasize high standards for student behavior and to display visible symbols of learning and achievement throughout the school building.

Support for Implementation

The principal of a new school completes a three-month (or longer) residency at the model school, where he or she studies key structures and features. Principals' learning continues at: monthly council meetings, where peers discuss common issues; two annual retreats that help principals with the essential features; and a leadership institute, held three times annually, where experts address topics selected by principals.

For teachers, Replications, Inc. promotes professional learning communities known as critical friends groups. These groups consist of teachers within a school and across the Replications network, who meet periodically to discuss curriculum, lessons, and other school concerns. The Annenberg Foundation provides protocols for the meetings, and usually one person per school is trained to facilitate the group. Teachers also meet with data inquiry teams to identify struggling students and develop interventions. Staff of new schools attend a summer workshop to plan the first two months of classes. Although the curriculum varies according to the replicated model, efforts are made to help teachers understand and align standards with their teaching. Teachers are paired with senior teachers and observe successful lessons.

Replications, Inc. reviews its replicated schools' strategies and performance through data and observations. The essential features documented by the principal during his or her residency become an integral part of an online, performance-based system for monitoring the replicated school's adherence to standards.



Planning Process

The Urban Assembly (UA) planning process begins with development of a concept paper that outlines the new school's design features. Typically, the prospective principal submits this paper, but sometimes the concept is created before he or she is selected. UA then helps the principal draft the new school application, create professional development structures, recruit teachers, and present the plan to the DOE.

School Design

UA schools use partnerships between schools and nonprofit organizations, corporations, institutions of higher education, and government to prepare low-income students for success at a four-year college and in the workplace. All UA schools are organized around an educational and professional theme (e.g., law, government, justice, design and construction) that connects academic achievement to college and career realities. The schools' partnerships support an internship program that is the largest in New York City and a web of more than 1,000 mentors who advise students throughout high school and during the first year of college.

UA schools are expected to adopt David Conley's College Performance Assessment System (C-PAS) to develop five cognitive strategies in students, including problem solving, research, interpretation, reasoning, and precision. The UA model examines performance in these cognitive strategies, along with content knowledge, when assessing students' college readiness.

Support for Implementation

UA's Leadership and Instructional Development team provides continual professional development. For teachers, this occurs via C-PAS training, sessions at summer and winter institutes, and Atlas Consultants who meet monthly with teachers in selected schools to help them create "thinking cultures" in the classroom. Principals develop leadership skills by meeting weekly with achievement coaches and attending principal meetings facilitated by UA. College counselors in the UA schools also receive support from the intermediary's director of college readiness.

UA aims to improve students' social capital by providing internships and mentors that guide and enrich students academically and socially. UA actively recruits partners for internships and for support of school themes; offers assistance on curriculum, data, and assessment; and advocates for the schools on such issues as access to facilities, special education enrollment, and government oversight of the NYC school system.



Planning Process

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (WW) provides a matrix to help prospective schools, institutions of higher education, and school districts understand their roles in launching an Early College High School (ECHS) and gauge their readiness to implement the model. Interested parties develop a concept paper that incorporates ideas presented in the matrix.

School Design

The Early College High School Initiative gives students who have no family history of college-going access to what are expected to be rigorous high school and college classes so they can complete a degree “in more timely and cost-effective ways.” WW brokers relationships between high schools and universities to create a strong expectation and culture of college attendance in the school. High school students are exposed to college life through SummerBridge, a college immersion program that places students in: college writing centers; meetings with college counselors; mentoring programs within academic subjects, such as chemistry or math; and enrollment in college courses on campus during the school year. The relationship with a partner university benefits high school faculty, too, who receive professional development from their colleagues at the college. ECHS and university-based faculty develop curricula together, co-teach classes, and align the high school coursework with the requirements of first-year college general education courses. Early College schools and their university partners also develop an integrated academic plan that is expected to enable students to earn one to two years of transferable credits toward college completion.

Support for Implementation

WW supports a residency program for first-time principals, offered by the Middle College National Consortium. Consultants from the partner universities help high school staffs prepare for the challenges associated with the early college model, and external consultants address issues outside the universities’ expertise. WW sponsors several events and opportunities for networking among schools, including three annual conferences focused on curriculum, instruction, and student support. WW also encourages inter-school visits so faculty can learn best practices from each other.

WW advocates for policies that make the ECHS model more affordable and supports policies that enable or encourage dual enrollment. Formative assessment tools are in development.



**YWL
NETWORK**

Planning Process

Young Women’s Leadership Network (YWLN) selects and trains new school leaders, who shadow experienced leaders during a year-long residency at a flagship school before launching their own school. YWLN’s education director helps principals develop a summary of their proposed school and a data inquiry team and then guides the applicants through DOE’s new-school proposal process. After approval, YLWN assists with teacher recruitment and selection.

School Design

Young Women’s Leadership Network develops all-girl schools for grades 6-12 that are expected to emulate the culture of single-sex private schools. The schools use an extended schedule to accommodate daily college awareness, health and wellness, leadership, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs along with traditional academic coursework. Students are required to complete four years of math and science.

YWLN promotes an inquiry-based teaching and learning, and teachers mostly develop their own curricula aligned with city and state standards. Common planning time is expected to be available for content area teachers, advisory teams, grade-level teams, achievement teams, and the full staff. A distributed leadership model requires teachers to assume out-of-classroom responsibilities.

Support for Implementation

In addition to the residency program, YWLN states that it supports principals with weekly coaching, monthly principal meetings, and twice-yearly retreats in which school leaders discuss problems and share best practices. YWLN identifies exemplary teachers and deploys them as content-area coaches. An annual national conference addresses single-sex education and additional professional development, based on teachers’ needs and interests, and occurs during the summer and school year.

YWLN helps schools select, coordinate, and finance extended-day programming. It also sponsors programs like SummerBridge, an orientation for incoming students; a summer travel camp; and the CollegeBound Initiative, an intensive, school-based college guidance program.

YWLN conducts formal evaluations of student progress and model implementation at participating schools.