

Addressing the Needs of Students Living in Poverty through Comprehensive School Reform

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Executive Summary

The academic achievement and social-emotional well being of students living in low-income, at-risk urban environments is of paramount concern for community stakeholders across the country. Students living in low-income, at-risk environments tend to be at higher risk for developing behavioral and social-emotional learning problems, decreased academic achievement, and higher school drop-out rates. Nationally, approximately 17% of the population of children under the age of 18 lives in poverty. In the state of Nevada, this percentage is approximately 23%. Additionally:

- Nevada is ranked 31st out of 50 (with 50 having the highest rates of poverty) when it comes to the number of children living at or below the poverty line.
- Approximately 22% of students in Clark County and 21% of students in Washoe County live at or below the poverty line.
- Of the nine public schools in Clark or Washoe County earning one star on the Nevada School Performance Framework, eight had 75% or more of their students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch.
- Of the 75 public schools in Clark County earning two stars on the Nevada School Performance Framework, 71 had over 50% or more of their students qualifying for FRL, with many having a student population of over 75% qualifying for services.
- Of the 13 public schools in Washoe County earning two stars, all 13 had 100% of their students qualifying for FRL.

Nationally, Comprehensive School Reform efforts are being implemented to address the needs of students living in low-income, at-risk urban school environments. The Nevada Legislature is currently considering two of these bills: (a) SB432, Victory Schools, which proposes a Full Service Community Schools model for Comprehensive School Reform, and (b) AB 448, the Achievement School District, which proposes a Charter School District model for School Reform. While both of these initiatives show some promise at addressing the needs of students in Nevada, it is noted throughout the literature that the major variables impacting the achievement of students, and thereby the success of schools, are related to poverty (e.g., hunger, lack of access to health services, housing insecurity, lack of access to out-of-school programming) and it is recommended that considerations be made for Comprehensive School Reform initiatives that is focus on addressing these issues, not just on reorganization or

restructuring of school governance. Based on a review of the literature and Comprehensive School Reform models from around the country, a series of recommendations have been made:

1. Data-based preparation should drive any Comprehensive School Reform model, including adequate time (at least one year) to plan to implement systems and interventions.
2. Careful attention should be paid to developing an infrastructure to support any Comprehensive School Reform model to ensure scalability.
3. Schools participating in a Comprehensive School Reform model should engage in targeted progress monitoring to ensure that the frameworks are being implemented appropriately.
4. Comprehensive School Reform models should pay close attention to the development of human capital to ensure the adequate implementation of strategies and supports.

The academic achievement and college- and career-readiness of students living in low-income, at-risk urban environments are of major concerns to community stakeholders across the country (Elias & Haynes, 2008; Flowers & Flowers, 2008; Gimbert, Bol, & Wallace, 2007; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011; van der Klauuw, 2008). Additionally, students in low-income, at-risk environments tend to be at higher risk for developing behavioral and social-emotional learning problems that are often linked to decreased achievement and higher dropout rates (Voight, Geller, & Nation, 2014). Therefore, addressing both the academic and social-emotional well being of students in low-income and at-risk environments becomes paramount for success.

Poverty and Academic Achievement in the State of Nevada

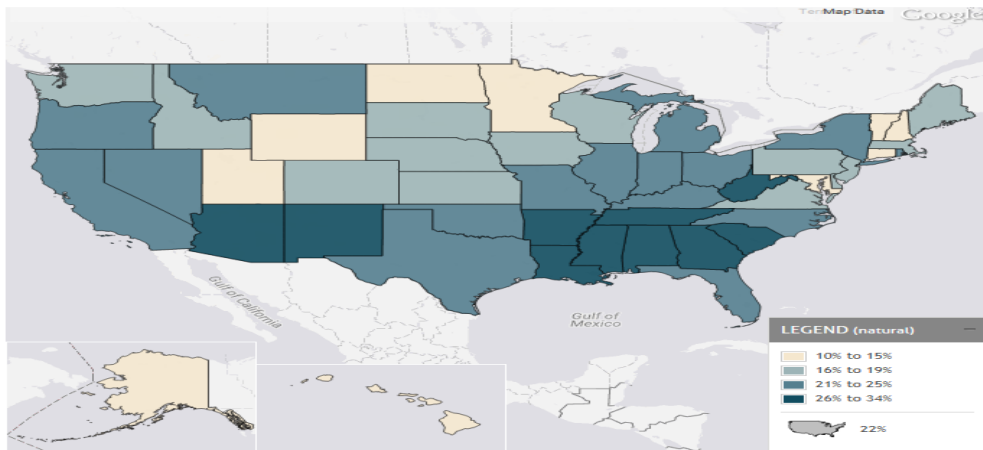
In the state of Nevada, approximately 15% of the total state population lives at or below the poverty line (US Census Bureau, 2013). For both Clark and Washoe Counties, the two counties containing urban environments, the population of individuals living in poverty is also 15% (US Census Bureau, 2013). When considering students under the age of 18 living in poverty, the rate in the state of Nevada increases to approximately 23% of the total student population live at or below the poverty line; the national poverty rate for students under the age of 18 is 17% (US Census Bureau, 2013; National Kids Count, 2013). The state of Nevada is

ranked 31st in the nation (with 50 being the highest) relative to the number of students living in poverty (see Figure 1 for national childhood poverty data; National Kids Count, 2013).

Compared to other southwestern states, Nevada is similar in the number of students living at or below the poverty line, ranking 4th out of 7 identified states (see Table 1 for comparable southwestern states; National Kids Count, 2013). In Clark County, approximately 22% of the student population lives in poverty; in Washoe County, it is 21% (US Census Bureau, 2013). For Clark County, this poverty rate is specifically concentrated in Nevada Congressional District 1 with a 36% poverty Rate (National Kids Count, 2013).

Table 1
Southwestern States Poverty Rates

State	Rate of Children Under the Age of 18 in Poverty
New Mexico	31%
Arizona	26%
California	24%
Nevada	22%
Idaho	19%
Colorado	17%
Utah	15%



CHILDREN IN POVERTY (100 PERCENT POVERTY) (PERCENT) - 2013

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Figure 1. *National poverty rates from 2013.*

The correlation between poverty and the educational outcomes of students in at-risk urban environments, and thereby on school outcomes, is often high (Elias & Haynes, 2008; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). In the state of Nevada, this is especially pronounced when considering both the star rating of schools in Clark and Washoe Counties and the percentage of students on Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), a common identification of the number of students living in poverty on a school campus. Based on data from the 2013-2014 academic year, 8 of the 9 public schools in Clark and Washoe Counties (excluding public charter schools) earning a one-star rating on the Nevada School Performance Rating had over 85% of the student population qualifying for FRL (NDE, 2014). For two-star schools, 71 of the 75 schools earning a two-star rating had over 50% of the student population qualifying for FRL, with many having over 75% of the student population qualified; in Washoe County, all 13 of the schools earning a two-star rating had an FRL population of over 75%, with 12 of the 13 having a 100% FRL student population (NDE, 2014).

To address the educational needs of all students, many states (including Nevada) are exploring methods of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) in an effort to find a solution to improve the performance of the lowest-performing schools. There has been consistent movement toward the reform of educational systems to improve the achievement of students who have historically been marginalized by these systems (Dobbie & Fryer, 2013; Green & Carl, 2000). Two current bills before the Nevada legislature are exploring options for CSR via different mechanisms: (a) Victory Schools, which takes a Full-Service Community Schools approach to CSR, and (b) the Achievement Zone, which takes underperforming public schools and creates a

charter school district overseen by the State Educational Agency (SEA; e.g., the Nevada Department of Education). A discussion of each of these two models follows.

The Full-Service Community Schools Approach to Comprehensive School Reform

It is clear that a link exists between poverty and the academic achievement and social-emotional well being of students. Research indicates that there are several complex and interconnected variables that correlate to lowered academic achievement and increased risk for issues related to behavioral and social-emotional learning (Gilbert et al., 2007; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011; Voight, Geller, & Nation, 2014). The development and implementation of coordinated and connected systems within school environments and the community surrounding these schools is the best way to address these complex variables (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

For schools located in low-income, at-risk urban environments, it is important that interventions address both the in-school and community variables that are impacting student achievement and social-emotional well being (Gimbert et al., 2007; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011; Williams & Portman, 2014). Research indicates that school-based reforms alone account for less than 35 percent of the variance related to achievement (Coleman, 1966; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). Interventions and programs for schools in low-income, at-risk urban environments should also include high quality family and community engagement to address both in-school and in community variables (e.g., poverty and hunger, violence in the community, parental engagement in schools, health supports, remedial education, quality and effective instruction; Flower & Flowers, 2008; Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2012; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012; Jeynes, 2012; Williams & Portman, 2014).

One method for developing this coordinated and connected system of services to address both academic and social-emotional needs of students is the Full Service Community Schools

model. The use of Full Service Community Schools as a CSR model emerged in the 1990s with the goal of establishing the school as a centralized location for integrating school, physical, mental, and social health supports. The general idea was to identify the systems that were implicated in student learning, outside of school, and offer wraparound service delivery methods on school campuses (Adleman & Taylor, 1997). This model meets student needs along Maslow's hierarchy (food, shelter, safety, health, etc.) to better prepare students to consume, retain, and utilize academic content. Further, this model fosters the appearance of the schools as an anchor in the community and offers a "bottom-up" approach to changing school culture. This model is also seen as vehicle for building communities that may have become less cohesive due to desegregation and busing effort in the 60s and 70s. For these reasons, over the last thirty years, many districts have found success through this model (Green & Gooden, 2014; Pullmann, Weathers, Hensley & Bruns, 2012).

Public schools operating in a Full Service Community Schools framework form a clear link between evidence-based, high quality teaching practices to address the academic needs of students in low-income, at-risk urban public schools and also to a variety of health and wellness services provided on the school campus to address the students' social-emotional well-being (The Children's Aid Society, n.d.). According to Quinn and Dryfoos (2009), a Full Service Community School is a school that (a) is open most of the time, including during summer breaks, (b) operates in partnership with a series of community agencies that address the holistic needs of the child, (c) provide access to mental and physical health care, (d) support a family resource center and family engagement in the school environment, (e) have a variety of after-school and summer programs to meet the needs of students, (f) offer a variety of social services for families, and (g) ultimately address the needs of the community surrounding the school through the

implementation of services. The Finance Project (2013) recommended that the array of services provided by a Full Service Community Schools be overseen and coordinated by a leadership team to ensure that the needs of students are being met by the services being provided.

Examples of Full Service Community Schools Across the United States

According to the Coalition for Community Schools (2009), there are currently Full Service Community Schools initiatives occurring in 44 states and the District of Columbia; these efforts are reaching 5.1 million children and youth around the country. In Nevada, the only Full Service Community Schools initiative currently in existence is schools in partnership with Communities in Schools (CIS) of Nevada (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009). There are several other examples of Full Service Community Schools throughout the country; several of these are highlighted below. An annotated table with links to these programs can be found in Appendix A.

In California, there are several Full Service Community Schools initiatives occurring. One of these programs is the Coordinated School Health and Healthy Start Community Schools, which focuses on addressing the health and mental health needs of students on school campuses to best meet their needs and increase their capacity to learn (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009). Organizers report that student basic needs are being met as a result of this partnership and that they are also seeing overall improvements in the social emotional well-being of students. Additionally, the city of Los Angeles is coordinating LA's Better Education Students for Tomorrow (BEST) After-School Enrichment program. This is a nonprofit program run through the city that addresses the out-of-school learning opportunities of students. Organizers report that there has been a significant increase in students' grades and achievement scores in math, reading,

and language arts, as well as increased attendance rates (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009).

In Massachusetts, organizations in the city of Boston have developed Boston Connects, which is a school-to-community-to-university partnership designed to link students in Boston Public Elementary Schools to needed services. Their goal is to create sustainable, coordinated, and integrated educational supports for students and families. They have reported higher academic achievement and increased social-emotional well-being. In New York City, several Full Service Community Schools Initiatives have been developed. One of these is the Children's Aid Society Center for Community Schools, which works at both the local and national level to coordinate Full Service Community Schools models on at-risk, low income school campuses. Programs focus on academic supports, development of character and leadership skills, and cultural experiences. Data suggest that students have increased academic achievement and attendance, and that schools with these models have more positive climates (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009).

The Harlem Children's Zone is another example of a Full Service Community Schools model in New York City. Their mission is to address the needs of students from birth to college graduation, with a focus on increasing school readiness and academic success throughout students' school experiences. They also focus on the nutritional, fitness, and overall health needs of students and their families. According to the Coalition for Community Schools (2009), the Harlem Children's Zone provided health insurance for 94.3% of its students, had 100% of its students scoring at the average or above average level on school readiness exams, and had an overall higher rate of passing of standardized tests for its students.

In the state of Washington, nonprofit organizations and school districts have created the Community Schools Collaboration. This is a multiple district and community initiative that serves over 2000 students in five unique sites. This initiative uses public schools as the hubs of services, and organizations bring the needed services to the public school campus. There are several different activities offered (all based on the specific needs of the site), and these include after-school remediation and enrichment activities, technology classes, adult English classes, and programs for parents. The Community Schools Collaboration found that the initiative has increased attendance, lowered drop-pout rates, and has increased the academic achievement scores of students enrolled in the program (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009).

Structures of Full Service Community Schools

There are several different structures that could be implemented within a Full Service Community Schools model; it is important to note that experts in this area recommend that schools engaging in the Full Service Community Schools model leave specific planning and structuring of the model to the individual school site based on a thorough needs assessment to prioritize needs (The Children's Aid Society, n.d.; The Finance Project, 2013). In Chicago, Full Service Community Schools funding typically pays for individual schools to have a coordinator of resources who works in conjunction with the administrative team at the school to ensure that students have access to needed resources and supports (Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.). This resource coordinator typically works for a lead community partnership agency that takes responsibility and ownership for overseeing the implementation of services on the school campus.

Additionally, Full Service Community Schools are often overseen by a governance structure on the school campus to ensure appropriate implementation of needed activities. One

example of this governance structure from Chicago is to have three lead committees, including an Executive Committee, an Evaluation Committee, and an Oversight Committee (Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.). No matter what the structure, it is important that leaders of the academic interventions occurring within the school day are regularly meeting with the coordinator of community organization services on a school campus to ensure seamless implementation of needed services and to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the community interventions on student achievement and social-emotional well being.

Effectiveness of Full Service Community Schools Models

Although it should be noted that the evaluation of CSR is quite difficult due to the strong complexity of variables interacting with each other during school reform, the research on Full Service Community Schools shows promise (Dryfoos, 2000; Quinn & Dryfoos, 2009; Krenichyn, Clark, & Benitez, 2008). Quinn and Dryfoos (2009) indicated that several studies and analyses of Full Service Community Schools have been conducted and that teachers typically report: (a) higher levels of school readiness upon entering kindergarten, (b) higher levels of school attendance, (c) more parent and family involvement in education, (d) greater access to health care and mental health services for students and community members, (e) greater access to out-of-school time learning, including after-school programs and summer learning opportunities, and (f) higher levels of community support for public schools.

Krenichyn, Clark, & Benitez (2008) found that students who participated in a Full Service Community Schools model in New York City were found to have significantly higher math academic achievement scores, significantly higher self-esteem and career aspirations, and had significant more engagement in their home community than students who did not participate in the model. Additionally, students displayed increases in reading performance levels and had

higher attendance rates than before participation in the Full Service Community Schools model, although the increases were not significant (Krenichyn, Clark, & Benitez, 2008).

Whalen (2007) conducted an evaluation of a Full Service Community Schools Initiative in Chicago to determine the effectiveness of the model after three years of implementation. Whalen (2007) found that schools in Chicago were able to vastly increase the number of hours they were open in service to the community as a result of the initiative, with an increase of service of over 50%. Additionally, schools were able to increase the number of after-school programs and other out-of-school time learning opportunities. Whelan (2007) also reported that the Full Service Community Schools initiative in Chicago was able to greatly increase the community involvement with the school community, with over 400 organizations partnering with the schools (p. 3). Related to parent involvement, the Full Service Community Schools in Chicago were able to increase their parent involvement and diversify their options for parent engagement. For students, the Full Service Community Schools model greatly increased the participation of students in out-of-school opportunities and had positive impacts on student learning and attendance in school, although these impacts were not statistically significant (Whelan, 2007).

Dryfoos (2000) conducted an evaluation of 49 different Full Service Community Schools models from around the country to determine the impact they had on the achievement and social-emotional well-being of students in the school, as well as the engagement and involvement of parents and community members. Dryfoos (2000) found that Full Service Community Schools had a large, positive impact on student learning outcomes and attendance and had smaller impacts on student suspensions, the engagement of students in high-risk behaviors (e.g., drug use, sexual activity), and parent involvement (see Table 2 for specific data related to the

outcomes of Full Service Community Schools from Dryfoos’s report). Dryfoos compared the impact of Full Service Community Schools on other CSR movements and found that Full Service Community Schools models had a stronger impact on student achievement and well-being variables than other CSR initiatives (2000). She also noted the difficulty with finding an overall impact of CSR due to the complexity of evaluation, but reported overall positive results based on her analysis.

Table 2

Summary of Dryfoos (2000) Research Findings on Full Service Community Schools Compared to Other Comprehensive School Reform Initiatives

Outcome	Percent of Programs Displaying Increased Scores
Academic Achievement	73% (36 of 49 programs)
Attendance	39% (19 of 49 programs)
Suspensions	22% (11 of 49 programs)
High-risk behaviors	22% (11 of 49 programs)
Parent Involvement	25% (12 of 49 programs)
Overall School Reform Movement Data	12% (3 of 24 programs) are strong 21% (5 of 24 models) are promising

When conducting an analysis and evaluation of Full Service Community Schools, the Finance Project (2013) recommends that stakeholders engage in Social Return on Investment analysis to determine the effectiveness of specific programs and projects integrated through the Full Service Community Schools model. This analysis provides an approach to determine the overall social impact of specific initiatives within the Full Service Community Schools model to continue to invest in organizations and supports that are having a positive impact on student achievement and well-being, and not investing in things that are not delivering. The Finance

Project (2013) recommends that organizations evaluation Full Service Community Schools must have a thorough understanding of what to measure before conducting an evaluation, and that the evaluation procedures should be done through careful planning and consideration of key stakeholders involved in the model.

The Charter School District Approach to Comprehensive School Reform

Another CSR model that is growing in popularity is the use of Charter School Districts. This model transforms low achieving public schools into charter schools based on the premise that non-traditional methods which can be more easily implemented by charter schools, will result in improved student performance (Zimmer & Buddin, 2006). While this idea is novel in Nevada, it has been attempted in other areas of the country and remains extremely controversial. Laws promoting the transformation of low performing public schools into charter schools have been established in states such as Georgia, Texas, and Louisiana. When faced with quickly shifting student demographics and a glut of underperforming schools, Hall County, Georgia (29,000 students) began transforming their public schools into charter schools. Now in a district that has 33 schools, 12 are charter with almost one third of the district's students in charters (Kardish, 2013). According to Hall County School board chairman, Nath Morris (personal communication, April 6, 2015), the decision to convert their languishing public schools to charter schools has taken a great deal of effort from the families and communities. Morris touts that the students in the charter schools have made gains, however, they are heavily reliant on parents that are motivated to procure additional resources for their schools. It must be noted that CSR models implemented in isolation and without substantial planning before implementation, have demonstrated limited longitudinal impact.

Achievement School Districts and Charter Schools

The rage over school choice and the introduction of charter schools into the educational market has intensified over the last decade. Some educators and scholars see charter schools as direct competition for the public school industry (Ravitch, 2013). They draw on public funds, often have open enrollment, do not require tuition and are seen by many as an educational alternative for marginalized communities who the public schools continue to fail or in Nevada as an option for exurban areas where traditional public schools have not yet been constructed. Charter schools have greater flexibility than traditional public schools in that they may offer special programming, niche instructional approaches, or create special communities. In some ways, they have greater accountability than their public school counterparts in that they can potentially close if they do not meet the standards set forth in their charter (Paino, Renzulli, Boylan, & Bradley, 2014). The Nevada State Charter School Authority states that charter schools offer the opportunity to “provide a more thorough and efficient system of accountability” and “improve the learning of pupils.”

The Charter School District CSR model was most famously implemented in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD) was initially proposed in 2003, two years before the storm that made it famous. In accordance with the zeitgeist of school take over, this plan was designed to allow the state Department of Education to step in and assume chronically underperforming schools. The goals of the RSD are to encourage flexibility, autonomy, and innovation in educational practices. The initial schools included traditional public schools and charter schools (Louisiana Department of Education, 2015). Following Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana school systems were decimated. As such, the RSD was poised to bring widespread reform to schools that were failing before the disaster and re-establish the educational community after the storm. Findings suggest that this model has been successful in

improving student achievement compared to pre-Katrina performance. However, it would be negligent to overlook the gross number of students and families who did not return to the district after the storm, which may have influenced the composition of the RSD schools. As of 2010, sixty percent of RSD schools were no longer considered Academically Unacceptable Schools and the graduation rate of students in the RSDs improved 19.5% from 2009-2010. With time, the growth has continued and the graduation rate in RSD schools has improved from 54% in 2003 to 73% in 2013. This model has since been replicated in Michigan and Tennessee.

The Tennessee ASD model is driven by the goal to move designated schools from the 5th percentile of performance to the 25th percentile in 5 years. Early results from the work in Tennessee would suggest participating schools are making gains in some areas. However, based on the limited data available, the improvements do not appear to be consistent across schools or subject areas. Further, it is too early in their implementation to determine if the success is sustainable.

The Michigan Education Achievement Authority, their ASD, was riddled with scandal due to fiscal irresponsibility, poor planning, and glaring conflicts of interest. The model was implemented with the “build this plane as we fly it” mentality (Guyette, 2014). As a result, the communities impacted, which were largely impoverished and African American, were essentially subjects in an educational experiment. According to data provided by the Education Achievement Authority, over 60% of students in participating schools made 1 to 1.5 years growth in reading and math based on individual student data. However, upon examination of the school report cards provided by the Education Achievement Authority, it appears that school progress is limited and inconsistent (Michigan Education Achievement Authority, 2015).

While each charter is unique, the recipe employed by the most successful charter schools includes extending instructional time, providing additional tutoring, targeted staffing (teachers and administrators with strong alignment with the charter's mission), using data-driven instruction and having a clear culture of high student expectations (Fryer, 2014). Successful charter schools, which are beginning to franchise and expand across the country, work within this framework and have seen marked improvement in student achievement (Doobie & Fryer, 2013). Given the success of some charter schools in some areas of the country, transforming failing public schools into charter schools could be seen as a viable option for improving student achievement. Yet it is gravely important to note that with Limited English Proficient and minority students, charter schools have not consistently demonstrated the ability to consistently improve academic performance. In their comparison of traditional public schools and charter schools in two large southwestern school districts, Zimmer and Buddin (2006) found that when using a common metric to measure achievement, charter school students did not perform better than their public school peers. In one district, the students were on par with their peers and in a second district they lagged behind their public school peers. This study also found that charter schools were no more effective in closing the achievement gap in Limited English Proficient and minority students than traditional public schools. In contrast, examination of the long-term outcomes (e.g. earnings, college entry, and college completion), graduates of charter schools appear to be doing better than their peers (Booker, Gill, Sass, & Zimmer, 2014). Further adding to the plethora of inconsistent charter school outcome data.

Subsequently, in lieu of conceding their schools to charters, some districts have attempted to implement charter school practices in traditional public schools. In response to the growing success of charter schools, public school districts in Houston, Denver, and Chicago have

attempted to apply these charter school principles in traditional public schools. Demographics for these districts can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.
Summary of Demographic data based on 2014-2015 academic year.

District	Population	FRL*	ELL**	Ethnicity
Denver Public Schools	90, 150	69.69%	35%	56.7% Hispanic 21.9% Caucasian 14.1% African American 3.3% Asian 4% Other
Chicago Public Schools	396,683	86.02%	16.7%	45.6% Hispanic 9.4% Caucasian 39.3% African American 3.9% Asian 2% Other/Unavailable
Houston Independent School District	215,000	75.5%	57.83%	62.1% Hispanic 8.2% Caucasian 24.9% African American 3.6% Asian 1.2% Other/Unavailable

*Students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch benefits.

**Students designated as English Language Learners

In 2014, Ronald Fryer explored the outcomes of the implementation of charter school principles by public school districts. The five tenets employed by the districts were: increased instructional time, change in human capital, differentiated instruction using tutoring and technology, data-driven instruction, and a culture of high expectations (Fryer, 2014). The findings indicated that like the charter schools, there was a marked increase in student achievement. Limitations regarding scalability were noted as the projected faced challenges typically faced by traditional public schools related to funding and staffing. However, it is noteworthy that these districts were able to adopt these principles and improve student performance without relinquishing control of the schools to charter entities. An appendix outlining the considerations for this approach is available with the Fryer (2014) study.

Nevada Assembly Bill 448 proposes the adoption of an “Achievement School District” (ASD). The Nevada ASD, similar to the previously discussed ASDs will be composed of formerly public schools, which have been converted to charter schools. The schools selected to become apart of the ASD will be schools who have continuously demonstrated limited progress toward standards and have been determined to be eligible for this program by the Department of Education. Schools will be in the ASD in 6 year terms where the goal is to turn every school into a 4 or 5 star school. Each ASD School will be run by a governing board that is charged with facilitating innovative educational practices and building their school’s capacity. At capacity, this ASD may be comprised of 30 schools which is less than half of the chronically failing schools currently in Nevada. Schools will only enter the ASD if there is a willing a charter school to take them over. Unlike in the other states that have undertaken this work, the Nevada Department of Education will not be directly running any schools.

As proposed, AB 448 is being viewed with a speculative eye and has drawn some criticism. In a report released by the Guinn Center and Nevada Succeeds, the adoption of an Achievement School District should be viewed as a low priority for Nevada legislators. The report reiterates that present legislation only allows for schools to be assumed by the state for fiscal mismanagement (Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, 2015). Similar to the recommendations below, the report stresses the need for the further development of this plan.

The initiation of an ASD in Nevada would be beneficial in that it could foster innovation outside of the purview of the local school district. The governing body would have additional flexibility and space to meet the needs of students in specific communities. However, it could be argued that other bills such as Victory Schools and Zoom Schools that that funding and flexibility without being converted to charter. Finally, as was demonstrated by Fryer and

colleagues, adoption and implementation of best practices commonly observed in charter schools by public schools is a feasible option, thus removing the need to convert public schools to charters.

Considerations and Recommendations

Each of the proposed bills discussed in this paper have some capacity to greatly improve the educational outcomes for Nevada's students. In development of this paper, it became glaringly apparent that the common need plaguing the schools targeted by these initiatives is poverty. It is futile to exert efforts to reform schools and raise student achievement without addressing the foundational issues related to poverty (e.g. food insecurity, housing insecurity, access to healthcare, etc.). Review of the literature revealed that efforts to support the overall well-being of students (social, emotional, and physical needs) demonstrated the greatest progress in student achievement. Comprehensive school reform must include community support and reform to truly be effective. As such, the following considerations and recommendations are made with the understanding that innovations to address the overwhelming poverty in the targeted schools will be integrated.

1. Data-based Preparation – It is pivotal that Nevada executes a comprehensive evaluation of what resources can be devoted to the immediate implementation of either of these systems and what resources must be acquired for the successful implementation.
 - a. Needs Assessment - Successful models are clearly aligned with information gathered through baseline needs assessments. Information acquired both qualitatively and quantitatively from community stakeholders, parents, teachers, and other directly involved with the schools should guide framework development and intervention selection.
 - b. Planning - Using needs assessment data, dedicated strategic planning time should be allocated within the period of monitoring determined by the legislation. CSR models that were implemented as they were developed demonstrated the least student gains and often failed.
 - c. Selection of evidence based interventions - Based on findings of the needs assessment, interventions to be implemented within the CSR should be evidence based. This includes the selection of charter school curricula.

- d. Common metrics- Based on desired outcomes, the legislature should establish common metrics to be used across all schools and community agencies participating in the CSR model.
2. Infrastructure and Scalability - Being mindful of the fact that the Full Service Schools and Achievement School District models are frameworks for reform but not interventions, developing a solid and generalizable infrastructure is paramount.
- a. Establish a funding mechanism that meets the needs of Nevada schools.
 - i. Determine if funds would be more prudently and effectively utilized if given to the anchor agency or the school districts. Fewer barriers and greater success has been found in programs that provide funding to the anchor agency.
 - ii. Determine if funding for interventions will be based on the needs gleaned from the needs assessment or if all participating schools/agencies will receive equal funding.
 - b. Determine what Agencies to provide services for full service schools
 - i. Develop selection criteria for intervention agencies.
 - ii. Develop explicit evaluation and progress monitoring plan for intervention agencies.
 - iii. Develop a competitive process for intervention agency selection.
 - c. Collaboration with local universities
 - i. Encourage the integration of trainees (e.g. practicum students and interns) in the targeted schools to prepare additional teachers, administrators, and related service personnel to work with high needs population.
 - ii. Collaborate with local faculty and researchers to provide expertise and develop evidence for interventions that are effective within the Nevada context.
 - d. Provide options for ASD schools
 - i. Allow for traditional public schools to implement innovative approaches without converting to charter schools under the governance of a body outside of their school district.
 - ii. Select evidence-based charter programs that include rigorous progress monitoring and accountability plans.
3. Targeted Progress Monitoring - These frameworks it is imperative that baseline data outcome data be gathered and explicit monitoring of progress toward desired outcomes is ongoing.
- a. Identify outcomes beyond school-based achievement that are related to the needs identified by the need assessment (e.g. employment, college entry, etc).
 - b. Develop multiple paths to monitor targeted outcomes
 - c. Develop explicit plans to collect longitudinal and cross sectional data in participating schools.
 - d. Establish a plan for intervention modification - Using baseline data, determine specific target review points in which interventions that are not effective can be modified or replaced.
4. Human Capital – The most effective implementation of CSR include deliberate attention to the individuals implementing the interventions within the CSR framework.

- a. Plan for hiring teachers, administrators, and related services staff with specific experience and knowledge in working with students in poverty.
 - i. Targeted interviews and assessments prior to selection.
 - ii. Mentoring and scaffolding for administrators, teachers, and related services staff.
 - iii. Training university students to work in the targeted settings.
- b. Foster relationships with partner agencies that can provide additional teachers, administrators, and related services personnel who have experience and knowledge in working with students in poverty.
- c. Monitor the effectiveness of incentive plans for teachers, administrators, and related services personnel in regards to retention and student achievement.
- d. Collaborate with collective bargaining agencies to insure hiring flexibility in targeted schools that would allow for movement of administrators, teachers, and providers if they are not fitting with the vision of the school model.

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Appendix A

Suggested Resources and Websites Related to National Full Service Community Schools Initiatives

Suggested Resource	Website	Description
Boston Connects	http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/cityconnects/	The website for Boston City Connects, a school/community/university partnership.
Children’s Aid Society National Technical Assistance, Center for Community Schools Community Schools Collaboration	http://www.childrensaid.org http://www.cscwa.org	A technical assistance center and Full Service Community Schools coordination service in New York City. A collaboration in the state of Washington, focused on increasing the achievement and social-emotional well being of students living in poverty.
Harlem Children’s Zone	http://hcz.org	The website for Harlem Children’s Zone, a cradle to college community initiative focused on increasing student achievement and well-being.
<i>Hartford Community Schools Evaluation: Final Report 2009-2011</i>	http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/HCS%20Final%20Report%20(2-6-12).pdf	A comprehensive analysis of the Hartford Community Schools initiative.
“Injecting Charter School Best Practices into Traditional Public Schools: Evidence from Field Experiments” by Roland G. Fryer, Jr. LA’s Better Education Students for Tomorrow (BEST) After-School	http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/suppl/2014/05/08/qju011.DC1/QJE_C12903_FRYER_ONLINE_APPENDIX.pdf http://www.lasbest.org	An online guide for incorporating charter school practices into public school environments to best support the needs of students. The website for the LA’s BEST program, which focuses on out-of-school learning opportunities.

Enrichment

*Making the Difference:
Research and Practice in
Community Schools.*

http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/HighSchools_CS.pdf

A thorough description and evaluation of Full Service Community Schools initiatives from around the country.

*Raising Graduation and
College Going Rates:
Community High School
Case Studies*

http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/HighSchools_CS.pdf

Discussion of the implementation of community schools on high school campuses and the impact this has on graduation.
