Baltimore's School-Centered Neighborhood Investments

An Analysis of the Implementation and Emerging Outcomes of the 21st Century School Building Program (21CSBP)

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List of Abbreviations

21CSBP – 21st Century School Buildings Program

BCPSS – Baltimore City Public Schools System

BCRP – Baltimore City Department Recreation and Parks

BLM – Black Lives Matter

BNIA – Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

CBO – Community-Based Organization

CHCDC – Cherry Hill Community Development Corporation

HCD – Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development

IAC – Interagency Commission on School Construction

MSA – Maryland Stadium Authority

MPN – Maryland Philanthropy Network (formerly the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers)

MVA – Market Value Analysis

Planning – Baltimore City Department of Planning

SCNII – School Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative

SECDC – Southeast Community Development Corporation

Executive Summary

The 21st Century School Buildings Program (21CSBP) is an unprecedented state and local investment in the renovation and construction of Baltimore City Public Schools System (BCPSS) schools. The State of Maryland's Baltimore City School Construction and Revitalization Act authorized the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to leverage $60 million into bond money, providing $1.1 billion in funding to support the renovation and/or replacement of Baltimore City public schools. The Maryland Philanthropy Network's (MPN) School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative (SCNII) aims to leverage this historic investment not only for schools but also for their surrounding neighborhoods. SCNII's vision positions the new and renovated schools as community assets and anchor investments that can strengthen communities, increase homeownership, and attract new real estate and business investments.

MPN SCNII funded our research team to conduct an initial analysis of the 21CSBP efforts. The analysis sought to document the 21CSBP's implementation process, understand the complex relationships among responsible agencies (BCPSS, the MSA, and city agencies), and explore the implementation and emerging outcomes of the program in three neighborhoods. Between November 2018 and March 2020, our team reviewed documents provided by the MPN SCNII committee, analyzed administrative data on neighborhood and school characteristics, conducted participant observations of meetings and events, and interviewed philanthropic stakeholders, advocates, BCPSS and city agency staff, non-profit staff, and other community-level stakeholders.

This report's findings reflect data collected and analyzed in "the before" – before COVID-19 became a global pandemic and before widespread protests for racial justice happened in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, fundamentally altered access to school buildings and re-affirmed the importance of schools not only as a site of learning but also as a source of meals, services, and safety for many communities. Together, these two events brought to the forefront five overarching questions about the 21CSBP:

- What is – and what should be – the role of a "community school?"
- How do we define "community," and who in the community has the capacity to partner?
- What systemic change would build equity and reverse the harms that racist policies and practices have caused minoritized communities in school and neighborhood development?
- What are holistic and meaningful measures of "impact"?
- Can 21CSBP simultaneously meet the educational and social-emotional needs of students and the opportunity for community development in neighborhoods?

These five questions bridge our findings with the current context and aim to prompt reflection and additional conversations about the 21CSBP in the face of the "dual pandemics" of COVID-19 and systemic racism in the United States.

Process Documentation

Our analysis of the 21CSBP implementation, which draws on interviews with key stakeholders and focuses on the period between 2010 and 2019, revealed five key findings about the program's implementation:

- MSA, BCPSS, and the City (agencies) are responsible for the implementation of a process they did not fully or collaboratively design or formulate.
- Legacies of mistrust and misunderstanding hamper inter- and intra-agency collaboration.
- Implementing organizations are co-equal partners in name but have different and sometimes conflicting philosophies and practices.
- Individual agents within and among individual organizations collaborate in spite of, rather than because of, organizational systems and structures.
- Disjointed outcomes in schools and neighborhoods reflect the disjointed implementation process.

These findings have important implications for the emerging outcomes at the neighborhood level.

Neighborhood Case Profiles

Our team profiled three neighborhoods — Southeast, Southwest, and Cherry Hill — to understand the potential of the 21CSBP to catalyze neighborhood change. The SCNII committee selected the three neighborhoods for their variation in geographic location, demographic composition, and phase of school implementation. The case profiles seek to provide a snapshot of each community to understand the neighborhood conditions and early effects of the 21CSBP investments. Across all three neighborhoods, findings reveal insights about community relationships, trust, and the potential of the schools to activate organizing:

- 21CSBP efforts are tied to school closures and trust gained (or lost) in communities through the closure process.
- CBOs and anchor institutions need geographic (i.e., place-based), resource, and strategic alignment to meet the needs of their communities.
- Collaborations between the school and community often hinge on school and CBO leaders' commitment and capacity to partner.
- Families and neighborhood residents see school building conditions and 21CSBP investments as a reflection of the public sector's commitment to their communities.
- Market and demographic characteristics are dynamic and diverse, requiring targeted strategies to ensure development and stability without the displacement of existing residents.

The unique contexts of each neighborhood revealed key insights about the implementation of the 21CSBP:

Southwest

- A neighborhood's connection to its school is not a given, especially in the face of damaged trust from prior school closures.
- Community-based organizations, churches, anchor institutions, and intermediaries are working hard to meet tremendous needs, but a lack of shared resources, aligned strategy, or a cohesive approach challenge their efficacy.
- Collaborations between the school and the community hinge on school leaders' willingness and capacity to partner.
- Residents' needs, neighborhood market conditions, entrenched poverty, and barriers to development overwhelm any singular investment.

Southeast

- Changing demographics of the neighborhood mean dynamic and diverse resource needs, even in the context of relative stability.
- A high-capacity anchor organization can facilitate reciprocal connections between school and neighborhood activities.
- School building conditions and locations activate parent organizing and capacity-building.

Cherry Hill

- Historic segregation and intentional isolation have fostered a tight-knit community identity and long-standing leadership.
- School stability requires a comprehensive housing strategy that focuses on new development without the displacement of existing residents.
- School closures and 21CSBP investments have increased enrollment, but the long-term fiscal sustainability of operating two schools looms.

Data Inventory

As stakeholders pursue additional research on the outputs and outcomes of the 21CSBP, we developed a set of possible indicators to track the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of the 21CSBP for students, families, and the broader community. The indicators include a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, which will help create a complete picture of the 21CSBP's potential to catalyze neighborhood change in communities. The measures are organized into three levels: the building (i.e., physical condition; environmental health; operational expenses, efficiencies, and management), the school (culture, climate, and composition; experiences of the school community), and the neighborhood (culture, climate, and composition of the surrounding neighborhood; experiences of the place-based community). The data inventory is not exhaustive, but meant as a starting point to motivate continued and new data collection and think about ways 21CSBP stakeholders can maximize the rich research community in Baltimore. As stakeholders pursue additional research on the 21CSBP, additional measures can generate important insights about the potential of the 21CSBP for neighborhood change.

Recommendations

Our process documentation, neighborhood case profiles, and data inventory reveal opportunities to bolster the impact of the 21CSBP. We present recommendations, grouped into four categories, that aim to cultivate a shared vision for the 21CSBP, strengthen trust among stakeholders, bolster capacity at the neighborhood level, and promote shared learning:

- Cultivate cross-sector and agency collaboration through a formal "community of practice"
- Strengthen connections between public agencies and local communities
- Continue documentation, analysis, and evaluation
- Mobilize for legislative, policy, and funding changes at the local, state, and federal levels.

While these recommendations are grounded in the evidence gathered through our research over the past 18 months, we expect that they have salience beyond the 21CSBP to other school communities, particularly given the current conditions and the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and persistent racism.

Maryland Philanthropy Network's School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative (SCNII)

The 21st Century Schools Buildings Program (21CSBP) is an unprecedented state and local investment in the renovation and construction of Baltimore City Public Schools System (BCPSS) schools. In 2013, after a three-year campaign led by community advocates, the State of Maryland's Baltimore City Public Schools Construction and Revitalization Act authorized the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to leverage $60 million into bond money, providing $1.1 billion. As of 2020, the monies will help transform 28 Baltimore City public school sites.

The Act authorized collaboration between the City of Baltimore, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, the Maryland Interagency Committee (IAC) on School Construction, and the MSA in order to:

> Design schools that allow for recreational opportunities for the community, combined with other cooperative uses and school partnership programs… [and] be good stewards of Maryland taxpayer dollars and champions for education, economic development and neighborhood revitalization in the City of Baltimore.[ii]

The Maryland Philanthropy Network (MPN)[iii] School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative (SCNII) focuses on how the philanthropic community is aligning their funding interests and actions around schools and neighborhoods. Launched in 2015-2016, SCNII aims to leverage the historic $1.1 billion investment not only for schools but also for their surrounding neighborhoods. Working in collaboration with the Baltimore City Department of Planning, Baltimore City Department Housing and Community Development, Baltimore Development Corporation, the Mayor's Office, BCPSS, and the Family League of Baltimore, SCNII aims to spur neighborhood revitalization within communities that are currently planning for new or renovated school buildings, helping to transform schools as centers of the community and as anchors for leveraging larger physical development. The ultimate goal is that new and renovated schools will help strengthen communities, increase homeownership, and attract new real estate and business investment.

> The Maryland Philanthropy Network's School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative is a strategic effort to leverage the 21st Century Buildings program $1.1 billion investment in school construction and renovation through the alignment of resources, partners, and programs that can support transformational neighborhood revitalization.[i]

In fall 2018, SCNII funded this research team who worked for nearly two years to research, analyze, and document 21CSBP work to date. The analysis sought to understand how schools matter in communities not only for their school-based stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, and school staff) but also for neighborhood and citywide stakeholders.

This report presents findings from this exploratory research and a set of recommendations for ongoing data collection, evaluation, and engagement with these new schools and their neighborhoods.

Report Scope and Methods

This report draws on findings and lessons from three interrelated tasks designed to document the multi-agency design and implementation of the 21CSBP, understand emerging outcomes in three neighborhoods, and establish a framework for further inquiry and analysis. Our process documentation sought to understand the implementation process and timeline as well as the complex relationships among responsible agencies. We drew on this understanding of the process to uncover a more granular understanding of the emerging outcomes of program implementation in three neighborhoods: Southwest, Southeast, and Cherry Hill.[iv] The MPN SCNII committee selected these three focal areas. These neighborhoods vary in geography, neighborhood characteristics, and school demographics. The neighborhoods also include a mix of 21CSBP year 1 and 2 schools. Finally, we constructed a data inventory designed to capture indicators of success that 21CSBP stakeholders articulated.

Findings draw on several key data sources (Figure 1). Findings from the process documentation draw on reports, memos, and meeting minutes provided by the MPN SCNII committee; observations of relevant meetings and events; and interviews with city, BCPSS, philanthropy, and non-profit organization staff. Neighborhood profiles draw on administrative data and interviews with neighborhood stakeholders. We retrieved administrative data from the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA), BCPSS, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). We used BNIA's neighborhood Vital Signs data, which includes sociodemographic data (e.g., race, ethnicity, income), a neighborhood racial diversity index, and poverty rates. Data from BCPSS include student enrollment for the 2018-19 school year; we supplemented these data with archival data from NCES on student enrollment for the 2010 and 2016 school years.

Figure 1. Data Sources by Task

	Document review	Administrative data	Review of prior research	Interviews	Meeting observations
Process Documentation	●			●	●
Neighborhood Case Profiles	●	●		●	
Data Inventory	●		●	●	

We also drew on The Reinvestment Fund's market value analysis (MVA), which is a neighborhood market typology developed through analyses of key indicators, including median and variability of housing sales, housing and land vacancy, rate of owner occupancy, mortgage foreclosures, commercial land use, proportion of subsidized rental properties, and density. Census Block Groups are rated A through J, with A representing the most competitive housing markets and J neighborhoods representing the most distressed markets. We conducted a series of interviews with community-based organization staff, philanthropic stakeholders, city and school district personnel, school-site staff, and other advocates in the three neighborhoods (see Table 1). These interviews provided insights into the neighborhood context and response to the new 21CSBP schools.

Table 1. Case Profiles_Respondent Groups

Neighborhood	Role	Number
Southeast	CBO partner	1
	Community school coordinator	1
Southwest	CBO partner	2
	Neighborhood association leader	1
Cherry Hill	CBO partner	1
	Community organizer	1
	Community school coordinator	1
All neighborhoods	City agency staff	15
	School district staff	8
	Philanthropic partner	5
	Other respondents	4
	State staff	2

We complemented this local data with a review of prior research on comprehensive community development initiatives,[v] school facilities and school construction programs,[vi] and ecological theories of human development that articulate learning and growth in the context of multiple, overlapping environments.[vii] Bringing these concepts together and keeping MPN's SCNII vision front-and-center, we analyzed relationships among individuals, collaborative organizational structures, and structuring policies – all of which may enable, constrain, or otherwise shape the dynamics and conditions of a particular school and neighborhood. We consider both the physical and social conditions of schools and neighborhoods and the deliberate processes of collaboration and engagement across scales of intervention.

An Unprecedented Moment for Schools and Communities

We conducted research and wrote most of this report in the 18 months leading up to March 2020. Neighborhood, school, and city leaders spoke passionately about a collective commitment to the children and families of Baltimore and the promise of the 21CSBP. Although they face real and complicated challenges in implementation (which we discuss in fuller detail), overall, respondents affirmed the community schools framework on which the 21CSBP is built: schools are centers of community and hubs for wrap-around services, activities, and resources not only for students for but also their families and members of the surrounding neighborhood community. Strong schools and strong neighborhoods are reinforcing mutually constitutive, and all Baltimore children and families are entitled to a high-quality school building in a high-quality neighborhood.

And then everything changed.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.

BCPSS closed all of its campuses on March 16, 2020, and Governor Hogan issued a stay-at-home-order for the state of Maryland on March 30, 2020. The global pandemic's impact on the economy reverberated across the state and the city, and, on May 6, 2020, Governor Hogan vetoed the Maryland General Assembly's approved comprehensive and historic education reform legislation – the Kirwan Commission's "Blueprint for Maryland's Future" – due to fiscal constraints.

Amid the pandemic, millions of people across the globe joined Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and participated in uprisings in response to the May 25th murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis – the latest of too many deaths of Black people at the hands of police. News media, scholars, and the general public began talking about the "dual pandemics" of COVID-19 and racism that plague the United States. Locally, we acknowledge the work of Baltimore's leaders who have publicly addressed these dual pandemics and are grappling with the city's, state's, and federal government's history of racist city planning, housing policies, school zoning, and education policies that have perpetuated generational racialized inequities in its schools and neighborhoods.

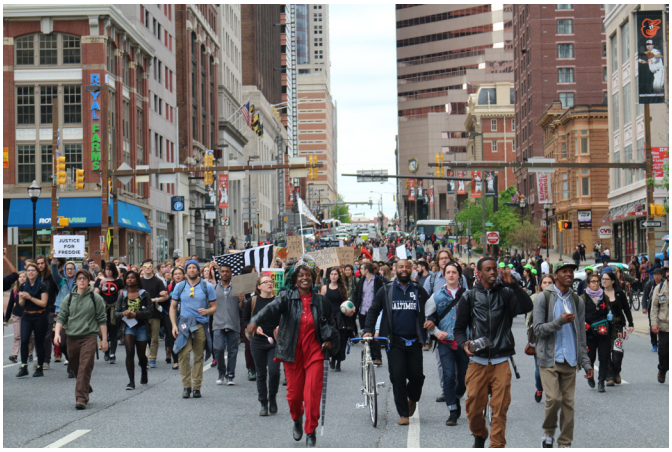


Photo Credit: Baltimore City Demonstrations, May 1, 2015, Arturo Holmes Collection.

Our findings herein represent reflections from stakeholders in the "before;" we cannot change that, and we recognize that perspectives in this current moment may very well be different. But what we can do is think differently about the implications of our findings and how some of the conditions, actions, and reactions over the past three months have shed new light on the role of schools, BCPSS, the city, the state, and community-based organizations in supporting families. Following, we pose and offer insights to five overarching questions that capture the complexity and persistent challenges in the face of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism.

What is – and what should be - the role of a "community school"?

The COVID-19 school closures laid bare the extent to which schools serve a critical role in the delivery of our social safety net. In many ways, the void that these closures have created is a testament to the reach, power, and efficacy of the community schools approach. The work of community school coordinators and family engagement specialists employed by BCPSS and non-profit community-based organizations became a literal lifeline for so many families in the midst of this crisis.

The community schools model thus holds great promise; yet this extreme event also reveals some of the pitfalls that need further consideration and raises critical questions about what schools should or should not have to take on. Why was BCPSS the organization figuring out how to build mesh networks for WiFi access in neighborhoods? What happens to medical or counseling services delivered at school-based clinics when the schools close down? Are those families now without critical mental or physical health services? Likewise, what happens when a closed school is the only remaining public or private building in a neighborhood with a loading dock big enough to receive bulk food deliveries for family meals? What are the trade-offs of centralizing social service supports inside a single institution and building? What kind of balance does Baltimore need across its service providers, institutions, and public agencies? How can we extend the community schools' model of bringing services into the school building to one with a more porous boundary between the school and the neighborhood? How could we envision linking students, families, and other community members to public libraries, health clinics, community gardens, recreation sites, and other community-based assets? How does this alternative model shift the onus of intervention to other public and non-profit organizations?

How do we define "community" and who in the community has the capacity to partner?

21CSBP schools include "community spaces," and accessing these spaces surfaced as key tension in the definitions of "community." For some, "community" means those affiliated with the school – students, parents, educators, and school partners. Others looked more broadly to the surrounding neighborhood, relying on a place-based definition. This tension challenges the vision of 21CSBP schools as place-based institutions and vehicles to bring "community" into the school. Many (including those in the SCNII Community Based Organization network) are working on common vocabulary and culture shifts with city agencies to get beyond this, but change is slow, particularly given administrative procedures and policies.

The depth and quality of partnerships between school sites and the "community" are varied across Baltimore. Our research confirmed a concern we heard early on: community-based organizations have very different levels of capacity in staffing and funding to activate and maintain partnerships with 21CSBP community schools. But in response to COVID-19, some of those that had been described as "lower capacity" neighborhoods have launched mutual aid networks to support neighbors with food, financial, and emotional assistance. This pivot raises an important question: can resident-led organizing, smaller social networks, and resident capacity beyond community-based organizations be better mobilized in the context of 21CSBP and community schools to support vulnerable people in neighborhoods? Although these strategies and possibilities are outside of the scope of this initial analysis, additional study could build a better understanding of the kinds of community assets available outside of formal and established organizations. This approach would challenge the philanthropic community to revisit their funding priorities outside of more established non-profit organizations.

What systemic change would build equity and reverse the harms that racist policies and practices have caused minoritized communities in school and neighborhood development?

As we will describe, silos within and between agencies, and a lack of institutionalized practices for cross-sector and cross-agency collaboration have challenged the 21CSBP implementation process. Each agency came to this work with different perspectives, needs, and agendas for the 21CSBP. As described below, each agency started with a different operating premise. Respondents from BCPSS, for example, saw their primary goal as building "schools for our kids" and ensuring that students in Baltimore have access to the same quality buildings as their peers across Maryland. City agencies, in contrast, managed from the perspectives of "schools for our neighborhoods." Certainly, the 21CSBP investments are necessary, but they are not sufficient to accomplish the vision of schools as physical and social assets in neighborhoods.

But collaborative governance is not the only kind of systems change we, collectively, should consider. Continued momentum of the BLM movement, their calls to action, and the most recent uprisings across the country require us to examine the 21CSBP mandate and efforts across these public agencies through a racial justice lens. Collectively, we must ask about the deeper underlying infrastructure of legislative and budgetary systems that crafted and executed 21CSBP. How have generations of racist perceptions of Baltimore's public school children and families shaped the ways that policies, budgets, and relationships are structured, and therefore constrain present-day efforts at cross-sector collaboration? How have decades of state-control of BCPSS and its operations likewise impacted this collaboration?

Further, our findings about variable community-based organization (CBO) capacity are rightly questionable without a rigorous examination of racist federal, state, and city policies that have created cumulative damage and disadvantage to neighborhoods with predominantly Black residents. Likewise, we must consider the history and working culture of the State of Maryland and its elected leadership in Annapolis, and its relationship with the City of Baltimore. How do current school construction funding formulas perpetuate inequity by approaching calculations in an ahistorical way that avoids a full accounting of the cumulative harm by prior decades of racist disinvestment in schools, neighborhoods, and local community organizations?

What are holistic and meaningful measures of "impact"?

Our interviews and the written materials reveal that evaluative questions are still very much focused on quantitative metrics (e.g., building utilization and student enrollment on the school side, and miles of sidewalk, number of trees or vacant houses, and homeownership on the neighborhood side). On their own, quantitative metrics are not sufficient to capture the full scale and scope of impact. Qualitative insights from neighborhood stakeholders reveal experiential metrics of impact, which show up earlier and differently than quantitative metrics.

The BLM movement and uprisings have foregrounded the need to center the voices, stories, and experiences of Black people and other people of color. Including racial demographics in descriptive statistics or race as a variable in quantitative analyses are important, but they are not substitutes for finding ways to actually amplify the nuanced stories that individuals and communities share about the lived impacts of policy decisions.

Can 21CSBP simultaneously meet the educational *and* social-emotional needs of students and the opportunity for community development in neighborhoods?

This question is complicated and points to the tensions between short, medium, and long-term investments; the equitable allocation of scarce resources; varying philosophies of place-based community development investments; and the challenges to cross-sector planning and implementation. Almost every neighborhood in Baltimore suffers from an acute need for new school buildings. But would new schools serve as an opportunity for catalytic development everywhere? If not, how should 21CSBP resources be allocated? How should BCPSS think (if at all) about their capital improvement plans in light of broader city trends, plans, and markets?

Likewise, how might city agencies consider capital investments that ensure the stabilization of families with public school children through investments in housing, recreation, public amenities, and the like? What is the role of non-school district actors to address acute needs and maximize opportunities in different communities across the city? How can the narrative of opportunity – embodied in the original legislative 21CSBP mandate – be realized in practice, given resource constraints and implementation challenges?

21CSBP Design and Implementation

Understanding the implementation process of the 21CSBP provides critical context for the emerging outcomes at the neighborhood level. As with all public policies, implementation is the stage of moving the concept or the idea embedded in legislation to reality. A challenge in itself, implementation is especially challenging when legislative directives are ambiguous, when hierarchies and integration within and among implementing agencies are unclear, or when multiple agencies are involved, causing disruption, competition, or conflict with their existing priorities and processes.

We start our documentation in 2010 with the early policy design led by advocates and community-based organizations, BCPSS, and funders. We move through the policy formulation during the General Assembly Session of 2013 led by advocates and Baltimore City state legislators, and continue to 21CSBP implementation by the MSA, BCPSS, IAC, and the city through 2019. Finally, we offer five findings on the process, below.

The first step of the process is the design: identifying the issue and building an agenda, usually as a result of lobbying efforts and public outcry. For many years, the BCPSS, the city, and multiple consultants grappled with the complexities and urgencies of public and private partnerships to finance school repairs and reconstruction. But in early 2010, the ACLU and Baltimore Education Coalition, a collaborative that works to mobilize the Baltimore community to advocate for education improvement, began work with Baltimore City state legislators to identify innovative solutions to publicly finance capital improvements to school buildings. In June of that year, the ACLU of Maryland published a report calling for the urgent need for upgrades or replacement of 70% of BCPSS's buildings at an estimated cost of $2.8 billion.[viii] Then, in December, the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute recommended the creation of a partnership organization that would issue bonds and manage the $2.8 billion school construction program to be completed over 10 years.[ix]

With these two reports and subsequent media attention calling for action, MPN members responded in 2011 and funded high-capacity community-based organizations, including the ACLU, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), Child First Authority, Strong City Baltimore (known at the time as Greater Homewood Community Corporation), Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Elev8 Baltimore, and Citizens Planning and Housing Association, Inc. (CPHA), to educate and mobilize neighborhood associations and residents in support of proposals to fully renovate and modernize all public school buildings. From 2011 through 2013, community-level organizing coalesced into a full-blown grassroots campaign: Transform Baltimore: Build Schools. Build Neighborhoods (Transform Baltimore).

With a clear issue identified and an agenda set by a diverse, city-wide coalition, legislators at the state and city levels took notice. During the election year, Transform Baltimore organized multiple events highlighting the importance of the facilities funding and increased pressure on city leadership to support new ways to fund school construction. With knowledge that the city's financial contributions to the school construction process would need to be expanded to gain state-wide support, in November 2011, with City Council leadership, city residents approved a charter amendment for a school facilities modernization fund.

The second step of the process is formulation: the proposals of politically feasible alternatives to address an issue and agenda. In February 2012, the Baltimore City State Delegation proposed its first 21st Century School Building policy in the Maryland General Assembly, a bill to establish a new Baltimore City Public School Construction Authority empowered to use alternative financing methods and issue bonds to finance public school construction projects. The bill would also require the state to provide an earmarked block grant each year to Baltimore for specified public school construction projects. Widely seen by legislators outside of Baltimore City as financially imprudent to trust "the sinkhole" of Baltimore City, the bill stalled. Meanwhile, although the city charter amendment to create a fund for school improvements had passed a few months before, the city had yet to allocate any funding.

With the issue of school construction gaining increased attention, in June 2012, BCPSS released the State of School Facilities: Baltimore City Public Schools, commonly known as the Jacobs Report, which detailed BCPSS buildings' poor conditions and estimated $2.4 billion would be needed for repairs and reconstruction.[x] Following the state legislative session in 2012 and given this projected need, the Transform Baltimore campaign increased its pressure to support the 21CSBP agenda and worked citywide to advocate for the city's beverage bottle tax to increase from two to five cents to generate additional revenue to fund school construction. Due to advocates' support, this additional tax was approved by the Mayor and City Council in the summer of 2012.

Following the successful bottle tax effort, BCPSS published its ten-year renovation plan, calling for closing 26 school buildings and upgrading 136 others, utilizing at least 77 percent of its space (versus 65 percent), by shrinking the district as a whole from 163 buildings to 137.[xi] Meanwhile, at the state level, just prior to the start of the 2013 legislative session, the IAC issued a report affirming that alternative financing plans for Baltimore public school construction were legal and possible.[xii] In February 2013, the Transform Baltimore Campaign organized thousands of residents, school parents, children, teachers, and allies to support the passage of a bill for alternative financing, believing that new and renovated schools (costing $20-40 million each) had the power to transform learning and neighborhoods.

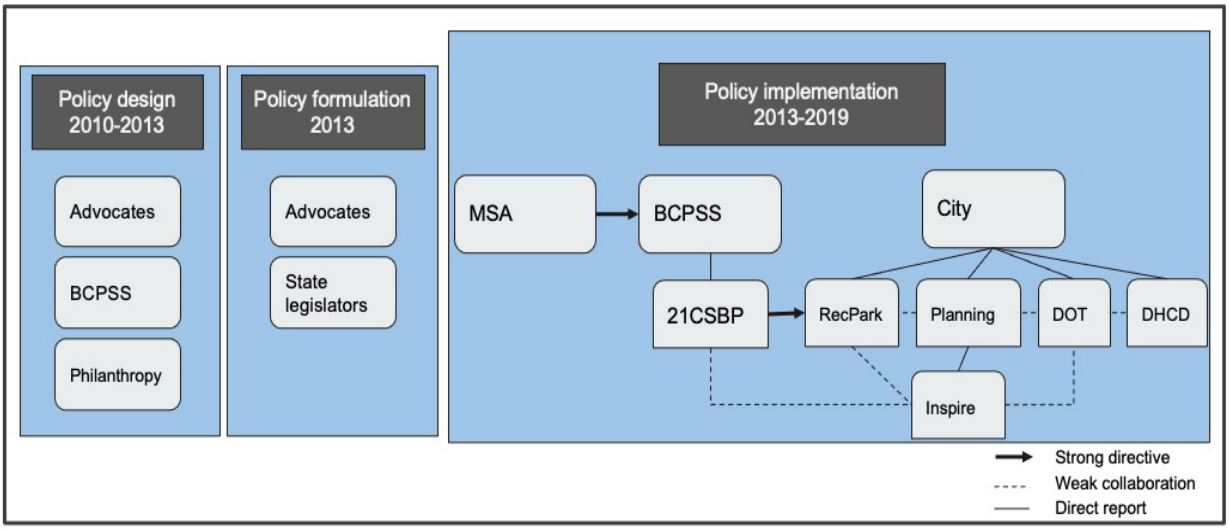
Photo Credit: Baltimore Education Coalition via Facebook

As the Maryland General Assembly session closed in 2013, the final 21st Century School Buildings legislation granted school construction and financing authority to the already existing Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA), permitting BCPSS, the IAC, the MSA, and Baltimore City to leverage $60 million, estimated to provide approximately $1.1 billion in funding, and officially established the 21CSBP.

Finding 1: MSA, BCPSS, and City (agencies) are responsible for the implementation of a process they did not fully or collaboratively design or formulate

Advocates of the Transform Baltimore campaign who designed 21CSBP and the legislators who crafted its parameters were absent as this implementation phase began (Figure 2). Accordingly, their relationships and deep local knowledge and context were absent from implementation.

Figure 2. Schematic of the 21CSBP Policy Design and Implementation, 2010-2019



Once the legislation passed, responsibilities transferred to the partners named in the bill: MSA, IAC, BCPSS, and the city. The legislation spelled out their charge to:

> Design schools that allow for recreational opportunities for the community, combined with other cooperative uses and school partnership programs… [and] be good stewards of Maryland taxpayer dollars and champions for education, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization in the City of Baltimore.[xiii]

In one implementing agency director's words, "Once [the legislation] passed, it was overwhelming." For some agencies, this was the first time they had worked with the other named agencies or considered school construction a priority. For MSA, for example, this was the first time they had been charged with financing and developing public schools (they had previous experience with the Orioles and Ravens athletic stadiums and Baltimore Convention Center hotel). For all implementing agencies, the ambiguous legislative directives presented discretion in how to administer the program, causing confusion, competition, and conflict. Further, the urgency to begin constructing schools prevented the possibility of a slow, structured implementation process.

While the Transform Baltimore organizers who set the agenda for 21CSBP never intended to be involved in its implementation, their knowledge of the previous design and formulation stages and guiding vision for "build schools, build neighborhoods" was also minimized.

Finding 2: Legacies of mistrust and misunderstanding hamper inter- and intra-agency collaboration

In the summer of 2013, as the implementation process began, the four partnering agencies began designing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to outline roles and responsibilities and thus enable work to begin. At this time, partnering agencies shared little trust, culture for collaborative governance, understanding of each other's decision-making rules, hierarchical integration within and among implementing agencies, shared language or values, or metrics of success. As the MOU committee met, one stakeholder explained, "every single one of the parties had their own attorneys there. It was an absolute grind to shape the framework."

These tensions were not new, and as one stakeholder explained, largely a function of the historic relationships and governance structure of BCPSS:

> There wasn't this comprehensive framework. It was more like, "This is happening here. This is happening there. We're all going to collaborate." It just doesn't work that well. I think that part of that has to do with the history of this city and how these entities work. The city school system is not technically a city agency. Back in the 90s, it became independent. It's considered a state agency. There are appointed school board members from the governor and the mayor. So, I think that worsened the relationship between city schools and the city. City Council has no control over the city school system except approving a budget. It's state law that oversees schools.

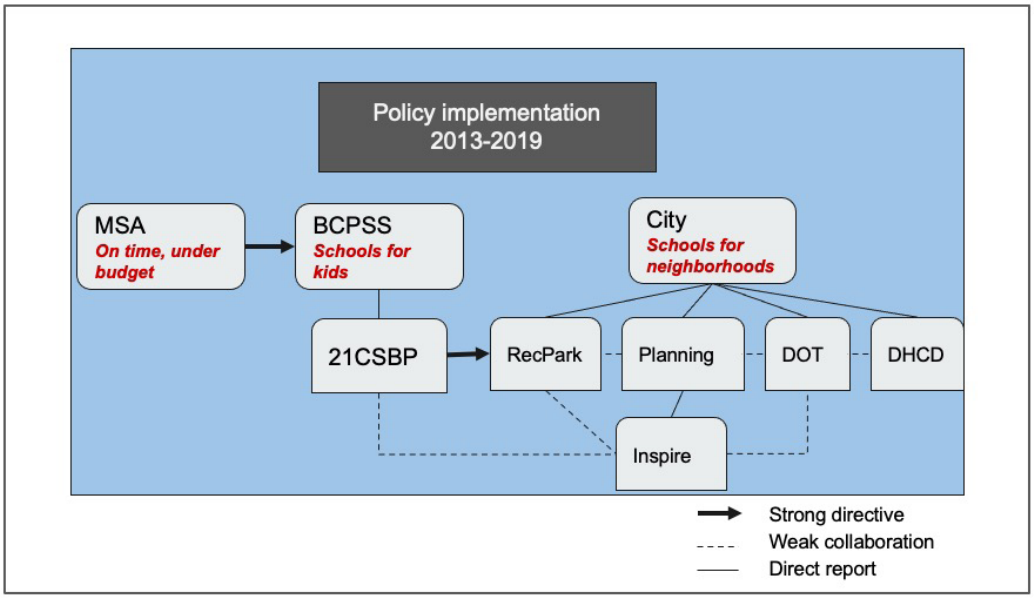
These disconnects yielded challenging negotiations, described by one stakeholder as "mind-numbing." Another described sitting on the MOU committee as its "own brand of torture."

The stakes were high to demonstrate "productive use" of the buildings through this collaborative structure, specifically because the dominant narrative was, according to one respondent, "you're throwing money into the sinkhole of Baltimore City." Unfortunately, the spirit of collaboration and transformative investment was "often sidetracked by turf battles and micro-legal battles," especially around shared use of facilities. For example, BCRP continued to prioritize previously approved improvements to their own facilities rather than pivot resources to coordinate with BCPSS for shared school facilities. Much of this and other resistance was because of a deep history of mistrust and misunderstanding among the participating agencies.

Finding 3: Implementing organizations are co-equal partners in name but have different and sometimes conflicting philosophies and practices

Each of the implementing agencies approached their 21CSBP role and priorities differently, reflecting competing philosophies and organizational priorities. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Schematic of the 21CSBP Implementation and Operating Philosophies, 2010-2019



MSA managed from "buildings on time and under budget." The financing arm of 21CSBP, MSA operated from a commitment to cost-effectiveness. Fully aware of cost increases with any project delay, MSA's priority was delivering as much funding as possible to support as many schools as possible.

BCPSS managed from "schools for our kids." BCPSS selected 21CSBP sites prior to the design and signing of the MOU. Some leaders at other implementing agencies suggested that "there was a veil of secrecy around decision making, the system was a closed, controlled process." Yet, BCPSS recounts that their priority was (and is) to provide 21CSBP investment to school sites that had the most need and had been most historically disadvantaged. They saw 21CSBP decisions as a way to meet BCPSS's commitment to racial justice and equitable education, and as a non-negotiable element of their planning.

The City of Baltimore, through its Planning Department and BCRP, managed from "schools for our neighborhoods and their residents." The Planning Department's leadership, both on the MOU committee and through the INSPIRE program, positioned new and renovated schools as key pieces of neighborhood infrastructure that will provide resources to residents and help revitalize neighborhoods. This approach presumed a prioritization for local resident and community use of new and renovated schools, and an understanding to plan the school into already existing neighborhood plans, rather than to plan for the school first and then fit it into the neighborhood through a secondary design process. Similarly, BCRP presumed a prioritization for local resident/community use of new and renovated schools to ensure existing residents and their recreation needs were met, regardless of whether a resident had a child in that school. For HCD stakeholders, new or renovated schools would be best sited in neighborhoods where economic and social opportunity was emergent or existed but under threat. New school investments could then be coupled with market forces and other public subsidy in housing and retail development and support neighborhood stability and growth, and, by extension, resident social and economic mobility.

Figure 4. Operating Philosophies, Outputs, and Outcomes

	Operating philosophy	Decision-making rubric	Short-term output	Outcome
MSA	"On Time, Under Budget"	Cost-benefit	Buildings, balanced books	Buildings, balanced books
BCPSS	"Schools for Our Kids' Needs"	School building utilization, condition, enrollment trends, level of need	New or renovated building for kids	Safe and healthy learning environment for children
City	"Schools for Neighborhood and Resident Vitality"	Housing market; development potential; benefit to neighborhood residents and families	New or renovated building for community use	Neighborhood asset that stabilizes community, incents investment and promotes a healthy community for all

Finding 4: Individual agents within and among individual organizations collaborate in spite of, rather than because of, organizational systems and structures

As described above in findings 2 and 3, the history of mistrust and the different, and sometimes conflicting, philosophies meant that there was little structural or institutional support for collaborative implementation. This left individual staff within these agencies to muddle through in order to align skills, will, and interests across organizations to meet common goals for schools and neighborhoods.

For example, BCPSS and 21CSBP staff organized community meetings with families and community-based organizations to engage residents in the design processes of specific schools. INSPIRE leadership worked with other city agencies to shift and align their resources towards 21CSBP school developments. For example, INSPIRE's efforts resulted in the Department of Transportation re-channeling some of their scarce infrastructure investment to residential sidewalk repairs that would provide safe walking routes to new 21CSBP schools. INSPIRE staff also mediated between BCRP and BCPSS to move forward school-recreation center MOUs that would ensure residents, including seniors and families without children had access to neighborhood recreation amenities located in 21CSBP schools.

Notably, public agencies are not static entities, and multiple leadership changes (at BCPSS, city agencies, and of the mayorship) from 2013 through today affected 21CSBP and the ability of agencies to collaborate.

Photo Credit: John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Finding 5: Disjointed outcomes in schools and neighborhoods reflect the disjointed implementation process

The pervasive mistrust, competing philosophies, and non-systematic collaboration described above yielded a disjointed process. An integrated approach would have connected visions, strategies, and measures for success across education, recreation, housing, transportation, and economic activity. Instead, the disjointed implementation process has resulted in disjointed and uneven outcomes for 21CSBP neighborhoods.

Certainly, many of these communities have seen improvements, largely driven by the INSPIRE planning process and INSPIRE staff's competent facilitation of implementation projects. In neighborhoods across the city, INSPIRE planners have coordinated projects through the one-mile plans and small capital investments in place-making, such as parks, murals, and streetscape improvements. As mentioned above, they masterfully worked with colleagues in the Department of Transportation to implement larger-scale infrastructure like sidewalk repairs for safe walking routes to schools.

However, beyond these wins, systemic infrastructure for residents and neighborhoods remained ad hoc and highly uneven across the city. Neighborhoods in which exceptional and significant resources exist (e.g., Pimlico with its casino revenue or Cherry Hill with a community benefits agreement with Port Covington) have been able to garner more systemic change and larger-scale housing and neighborhood development strategies coordinated with the HCD and national non-profit partners (e.g., Cherry Hill with Purpose Built Communities).

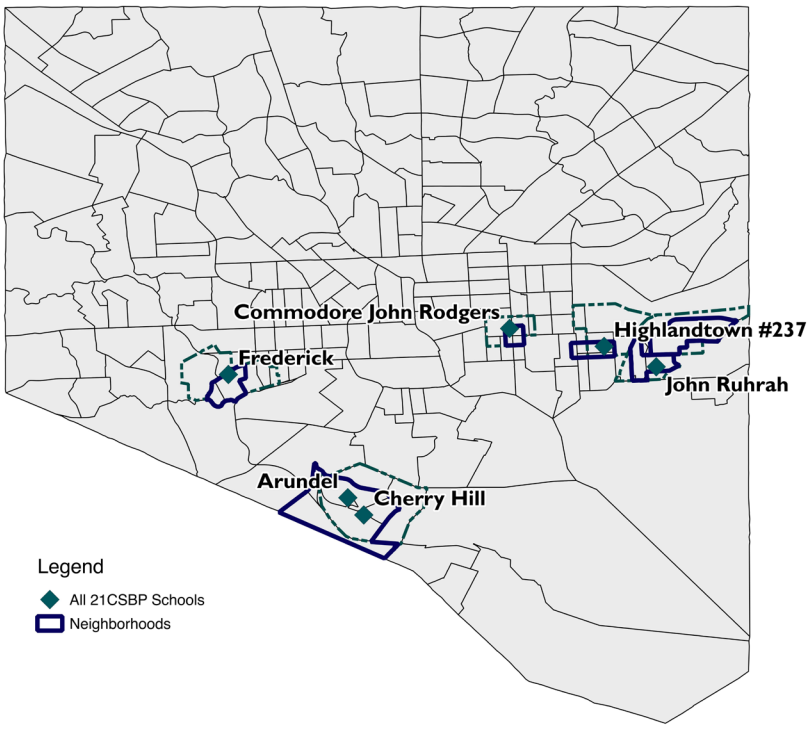
The Transform Baltimore campaign had envisioned public agencies driving a social agenda centered on school change in all neighborhoods – not only those that have access to exceptional resources. But to see that vision realized would have required neighborhood-level organizations to collectively re-imagine their existing and new facilities, and top-down agency leadership to integrate this strong design and move away from isolated projects.

21CSBP Neighborhood Profiles

To understand the potential of the 21CSBP to catalyze change in neighborhoods, our team profiled three areas of Baltimore and their new 21CSBP schools: Southeast, Southwest, and Cherry Hill (Figure 5). The neighborhoods, selected by members of the SCNII committee, vary in geographic location, demographic composition, and phase of school implementation.

These profiles are not intended to draw comparisons across neighborhoods or be exhaustive evaluations of efforts on the ground. Rather, they are preliminary snapshots of each community which can help provide insight into the neighborhood conditions and early effects of the 21CSBP investments.

Figure 5. 21CSBP Neighborhoods and School Sites



The profiles – individually and taken together – provide insights about community relationships, trust, and the potential of the schools to activate organizing:

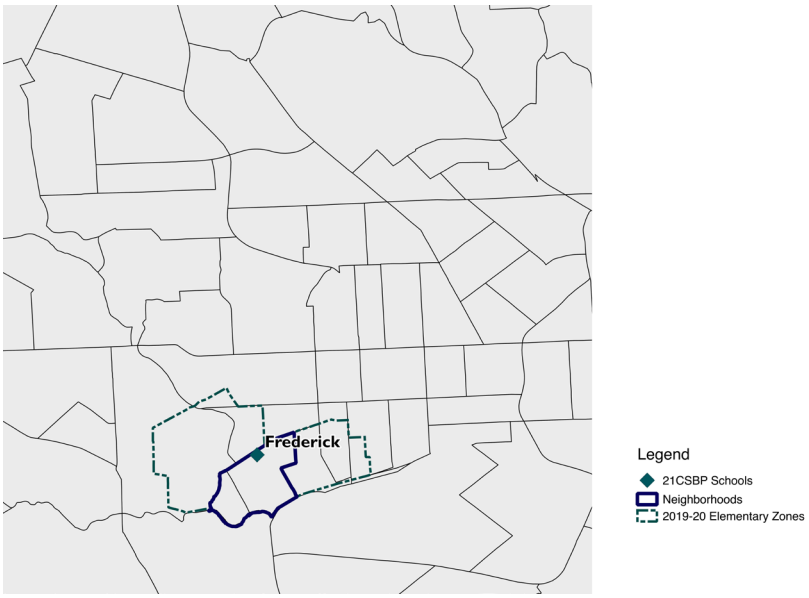
- 21CSBP efforts are tied to school closures and trust gained (or lost) in communities through the closure process.
- CBOs and anchor institutions need geographic (i.e., place-based), resource, and strategic alignment to meet the needs of their communities.
- Collaborations between the school and community hinge on school and CBO leaders' commitment and capacity to partnerships.
- Families and neighborhood residents see school building conditions and 21CSBP investments as a reflection of the public sector's commitment to their communities.
- Market and demographic characteristics are dynamic and diverse, requiring targeted strategies to ensure development and stability without the displacement of existing residents.

Southwest Baltimore

Neighborhood history and context

"Southwest Baltimore" describes a collection of neighborhoods located west of the city's downtown, bounded by Carey Street to the east, Route 40/Franklin Street to the north, Carroll Park to the south and extending westward to Gwynns Falls (Figure SW1). We focus on a quarter-mile radius surrounding Frederick ES, which includes Millhill as well as sections of five other neighborhoods: Shipley Hill, Carrollton Ridge, Boyd Booth, Gwynns Falls, and Carroll South Hilton.

Figure SW1. Southwest Baltimore



In the late 1800s and early decades of the 20th century, Southwest Baltimore was home to a diverse mix of residents, including working-class Black and white residents, who settled in homes near the neighborhood's factories. Like many areas of the city, Black and white residents lived in segregated communities within the neighborhood. Segregation was maintained by racial covenants that aimed to keep Black residents from entering communities west of Fulton Avenue. As in neighborhoods across the city, starting in the middle of the 20th century, white residents left the neighborhood, and by the 1970s, Southwest Baltimore was home to a majority-Black community. At the same time, the neighborhood also lost a population of middle-income residents.

Photo Credit: Frederick Elementary School. 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

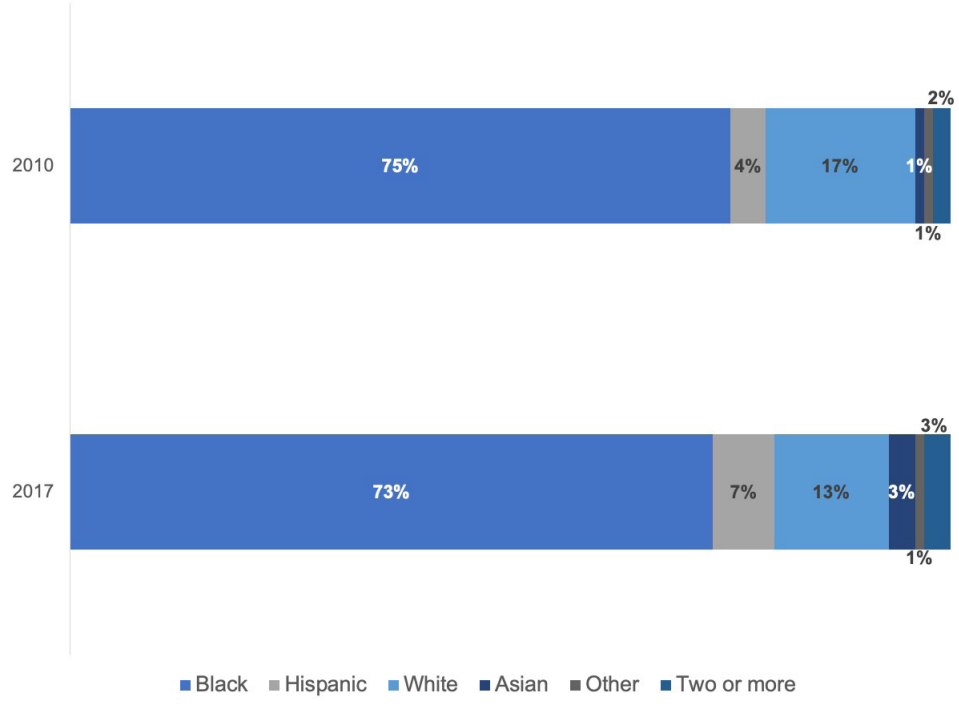
The history of Southwest Baltimore, like many Baltimore neighborhoods, is marked by periods of intentional disinvestment. One community partner, for example, described the neighborhood as one that has "been historically left behind in terms of having a voice and opportunity to participate in larger Baltimore discussions about investment and revitalization."

Plans to build an I-70 extension – known colloquially as the "Highway to Nowhere" – led to widespread demolition of neighborhoods along the route, including those in Southwest Baltimore that middle-class Black residents called home. Similarly, plans for the Red Line, a transit hub that would have connected Southwest Baltimore to the city's burgeoning downtown, was stymied by Governor Hogan in 2015 after being approved for preliminary construction four years prior.

Southwest Baltimore, like many Baltimore neighborhoods, has also seen recent population loss. Between 2010 and 2017, Southwest Baltimore saw an eight percent decrease in the total number of households, twice the decline experienced citywide. As one community partner observed, although many neighborhoods in the city lost residents, "the population loss is not evenly distributed. It's concentrated in certain neighborhoods, and we [in Southwest] are certainly one of those."

The Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance's (BNIA) demographic data show that Southwest Baltimore remains majority Black; however racial diversity is growing. The racial diversity index, which measures the probability that two residents in an area will be of a different race or ethnicity, was 43 percent in 2010. The index increased to 50 percent in 2017. In 2010, 75 percent of all residents identified as Black (non-Hispanic/Latinx), 17 percent of residents were white (non-Hispanic/Latinx), and 4 percent of residents were Hispanic/Latinx. The proportion of Black and white residents decreased in 2017, but the neighborhood gained Hispanic/Latinx residents (Figure SW2)

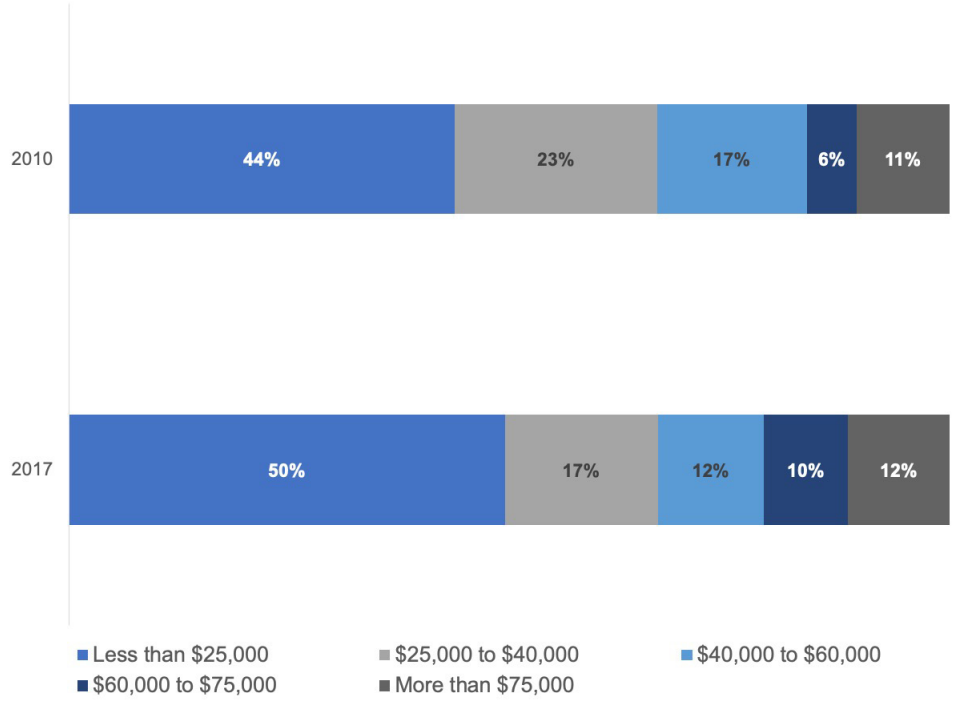
Figure SW2. Racial Demographics, 2010 and 2017



Source: BNIA

Today, Southwest Baltimore faces high poverty rates and significant economic need. The area's median income has traditionally been lower than the city's median. In 2010, the median income in Southwest Baltimore was $28,513 (compared to $38,346 citywide). In 2017, although the city's median income increased to $46,641, the median income in Southwest Baltimore decreased to $25,427. In 2017, close to half of all children (49 percent) lived below the poverty line in Southwest Baltimore. The majority of residents in Southwest earned incomes less than $40,000. Between 2010 and 2017, however, the neighborhood saw a slight increase in the proportion of residents earning between $60,000 and $75,000 and more than $75,000 (Figure SW3).

Figure SW3. Income Levels in Southwest Baltimore

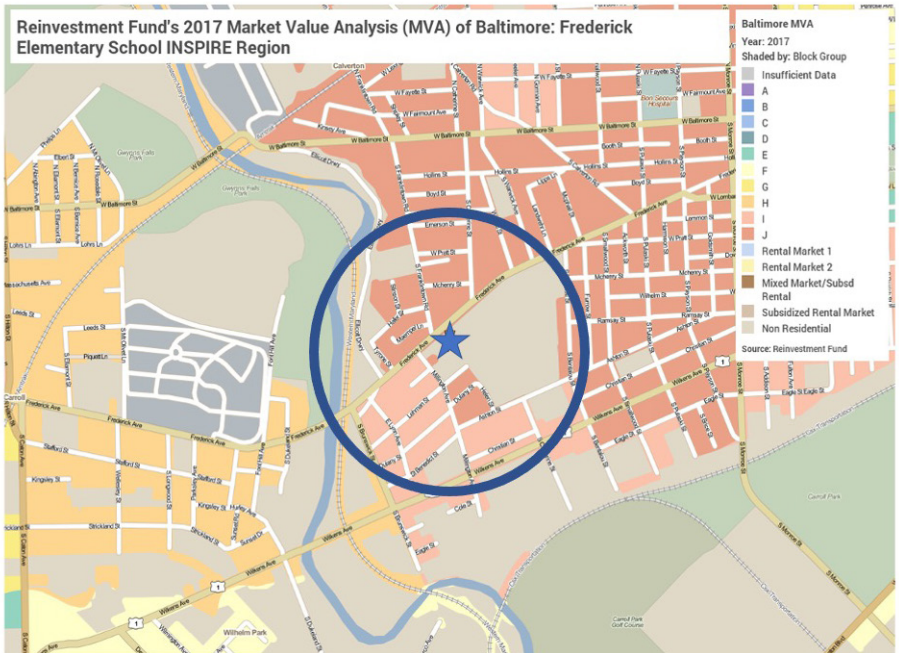


Source: BNIA

Despite these data, the neighborhoods are home to a diversity of residents. One community partner critiqued what he called "the tyranny of statistics" as he described who lives southwest. For this partner, aggregate data do not necessarily capture the neighborhood's demographic composition: "There's a lot of diversity within that. There's not a whole lot of income [diversity], but there's a lot more middle-class incomes than you would think."

Southwest's housing market is among the weakest in the city. Market Value Analyses (MVA) classifies the neighborhoods within the INSPIRE area and adjacent as Type I and J. Median home prices were $16,508 and $9,249, respectively. Type I and J neighborhoods have among the highest percentage of vacant land and buildings, at 16 percent and 21 percent, respectively. Less than half of properties were owner-occupied (Figure SW4).

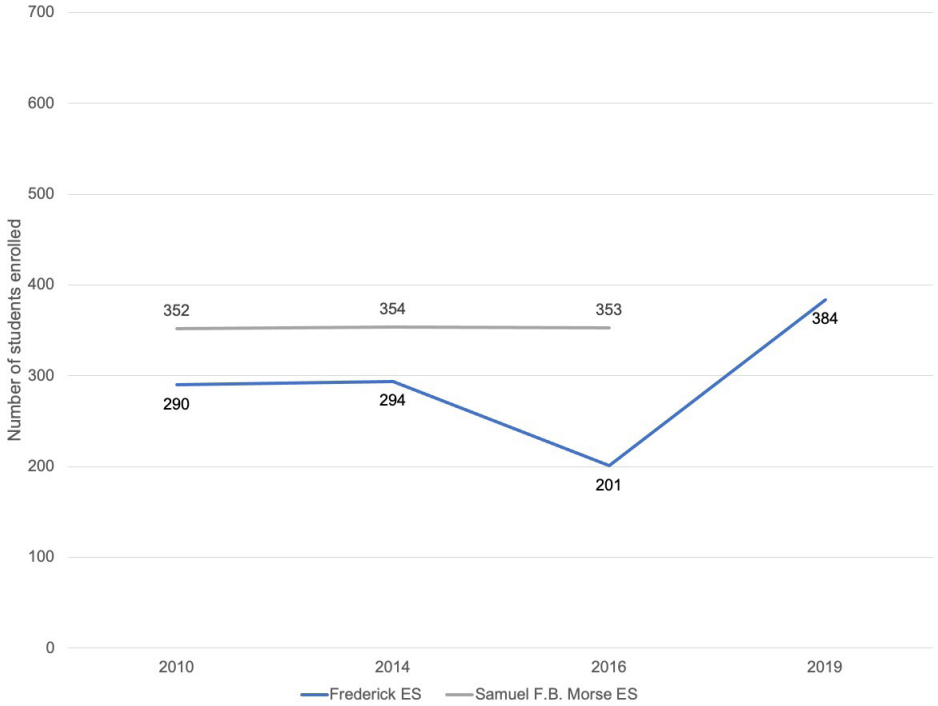
Figure SW4. Market Value Analysis, 2017, INSPIRE Area Surrounding Frederick ES



Note: The radius represents the INSPIRE region's quarter-mile area surrounding Frederick ES.
Source: The Reinvestment Fund. Map generated by PolicyMap

Southwest Baltimore's school-age population remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2017. At both timepoints, school-age children (i.e., ages 5-17) comprised approximately 19 percent of all residents in the neighborhood. The racial and ethnic demographics of Frederick ES reflect the neighborhood population. Today, the majority of students at the school are Black (84 percent), and the school serves smaller populations of white (10 percent) and Hispanic/Latinx students (3 percent). Similar to schools across the city, Frederick ES saw declining enrollments between the 2010 and the 2017 school year: over the seven-year period, the school saw a 46 percent decrease in its population. To stabilize enrollment, the expansion of Frederick ES was coupled with the closure of Samuel F.B. Morse Elementary School in the Carrolton Ridge neighborhood. Students from Morse were reassigned to Frederick ES, and this consolidation boosted enrollment at Frederick ES when the school opened at the start of the 2017-18 school year (Figure SW5).

Figure SW5. Student enrollment, Frederick ES and Samuel F.B. Morse ES, 2010-2019



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2010, 2017), BCPSS (2019)

Finding 1: A neighborhood's connection to its school is not a given, especially in the face of damaged trust from prior school closures.

For some, Frederick ES's renovation is a source of optimism. One school-level partner, for example, observed that some parents were excited that they and their students would have access to a "beautiful new building." Others observed that the inclusion of Frederick ES among the first round of schools signaled a commitment to strengthening communities across the city and not just in areas that were of interest to developers. One community partner referred to Frederick ES as a "leading investment" for the community: "It was really exciting that the school district would say, 'We're going to put a 21st Century school in [the neighborhood]. Let's put our money where our mouth is.' We're not cherry-picking when you do this neighborhood."

The expansion of Frederick ES was coupled with the closure of Samuel F.B. Morse ES, which was located in the Carrolton Ridge neighborhood. The closure and merger process for this neighborhood proved difficult for the community. According to one community stakeholder, when the school district announced that Morse would be closed, the community rallied: "[Parents] came out because they believed that we could save our neighborhood school." When Morse closed, families "felt betrayed" and "lost faith in the community association, BCPSS, and the city at large." Another respondent commented that the closure process was "broken" and set up to let families down.

In the aftermath of the closure process, school-level partners and the school district worked to create a unified school identity. These efforts included pen pal programs between the two schools, an ambassador program, and community meetings. One school-level partner observed that there was "limited capacity" among school and district staff for more intentional efforts to restore trust and merge the two school communities.

One community stakeholder noted that, for some parents, Morse's school community – including its administrators, teachers, students, and parents – felt like a family. For this stakeholder, although Frederick ES is geographically close to Carrolton Ridge, Frederick ES does not yet have the same connection to the community: "We don't have a neighborhood school; we have a zoned school." It is important to note that Frederick ES's staff did not necessarily act intentionally to damage trust with Morse families; rather, respondents' comments suggest that the school carries the legacy of the negative impact of the closure process.

The response to Frederick ES has been further complicated by issues related to students' safe passage to schools, which was a key concern for community members. One community stakeholder explained, "On the ground, it was like, 'Hey, our kids have to leave their neighborhood and it's not that far and it doesn't look any different.'" This stakeholder, however, was careful not to trivialize parents' concerns about their children's safety as they traveled to school:

> There's stuff that does on in those neighborhoods. I don't want to belittle it because there's also, "Hey, you got to go by drug dealing and prostitution to get to the school that's closing. You just have to go by more of it to get to the new school." As a parent, you can see where that would be something you'd be concerned about.

As part of the INSPIRE plan, a walking school bus was implemented to help students safely travel to and from school. Although one community partner believed that the walking school bus helped mitigate the challenges of getting students to school, a second community stakeholder saw student travel to school as yet another "sore spot" for the Carrolton Ridge community. She observed, "It was one thing to walk through our violent neighborhood but then we were going to another neighborhood with violence. Parents did not want their babies walking." A school-level partner echoed these concerns and commented that a walking school bus was not an adequate solution to safe passage, especially as even many adults were hesitant to walk through the neighborhoods on their own.

Finding 2: Community-based organizations, churches, anchor institutions, and intermediaries are working hard to meet tremendous needs, but a lack of shared resources, aligned strategy, and cohesive approach challenge their efficacy.

Southwest Baltimore benefits from a number of local organizations and anchor institutions that support projects to improve residents' health; neighborhood conditions; and access to educational, housing, and workforce opportunities. Churches play a key role in serving the community by providing meals and social services at drop-in centers. Several nonprofits operate in the area, providing food service, health screenings, and job training to residents. Several anchor institutions provide funding, networks, and other capital to support community development in Southwest. However, while technically in "southwest,"many of these organizations work outside of the neighborhoods immediately served by Frederick ES.

The Bon Secours Baltimore Health System is one of Southwest Baltimore's longstanding institutional partners dating from 1881. Today, Bon Secours Community Works supports several initiatives, such as community clean-ups, Head Start, and housing. Bon Secours Community Works engages community residents in designing and implementing projects to address issues that they identify as priorities. As one Bon Secours staff shared, "It doesn't mean we just ask the neighborhood what they want, and then we do it. It's more that we engage them in the identification of where are the issues." Crime has been a large focus, and increasingly, residents have sought supports to mitigate the effects of trauma on residents' mental health. LifeBridge Health recently purchased Bon Secours Hospital. According to one respondent, this acquisition has introduced a new partner to bolster efforts to improve the Southwest community: "We're working very closely with LifeBridge. Part of why they're engaged is because they want to partner with us, and we're doing stuff with them already."

Enterprise Community Partners has also supported housing and development in Southwest, by providing financial support for Bon Secours Community Works development and construction projects. Enterprise has also served as a connector between Bon Secours Community Works and other community partners as they worked on the Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan. Kaiser Permanente is a new partner in Southwest Baltimore; the health system has implemented a place-based initiative targeting ZIP code 21223, which includes the communities surrounding Frederick ES.

With Kaiser Permanente and Enterprise, Bon Secours Community Works supports a new umbrella initiative called "Future Baltimore," which seeks to increase health, education, housing, and green initiatives in Baltimore. This work includes providing targeted supports to a cohort of principals designed to improve student-level outcomes. Funding from Enterprise and Kaiser Permanente also supports the community school coordinator at Frederick ES. The community school coordinator's initial work included opening a food pantry at the school and initiating programs to support students and their families. Although Future Baltimore has linked the work of three anchor institutions, respondents perceived that these efforts often do not always reach the communities immediately surrounding Frederick ES. Further, other local organizations and neighborhood associations have limited capacity to implement plans for development. One respondent, for example, noted that although community organizations were able to start the walking school bus to help students travel to Frederick ES, local organizations have not yet been able to support development projects, such as the redevelopment of vacant lots, near the school.

Finding 3: Collaborations between the school and the community hinge on school leaders' willingness and capacity to partner.

The connections between schools and their surrounding neighborhoods have ebbed and flowed over the years. According to interview respondents, school leaders play a key role in determining the strength of these relationships. One community partner recalled, "Over the years, I can recall particular [people]; it's usually a principal…but, of course, that varies, and those folks tend to cycle through." The longevity of a principal's tenure matters as well as the extent to which they are "outward-focused" not just on their school building but also on the broader community context and activities.

Although Frederick ES is a community school, community partners characterized the school's position as inward-facing. Frederick ES may serve as an anchor and as a safe haven for students and families, but the outward-facing work and engagement with the broader neighborhood may be more limited.

An outward-facing relationship between school and community can be facilitated by the community school coordinator. One community partner sees potential; the principal at the school is new to the community and is focused on building community within schools. The community partner explained, "It's a matter of timing; [the school has] a new principal who may not have the roots and connections to the [neighborhood] community." Personnel changes at the school complicate Frederick ES's story: the school's community school coordinator, whose position is funded through Bon Secours Community Works, left Frederick during the 2019-20 school year.

Photo Credit: Frederick Elementary School. 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Finding 4: Residents' needs, neighborhood market conditions, entrenched poverty, and barriers to development overwhelm any singular investment.

The new 21CSBP Frederick ES is a significant public investment in this neighborhood. However, the overwhelming needs, including residents' service needs and the overall market conditions, cumulative harms from generations of disinvestment, and persistent barriers to other public and private development raise doubts about the school's impact on broader community development efforts. Given the existing challenges in the neighborhood's housing market, respondents were skeptical that the investments to Frederick ES could transform the neighborhood's overall development potential: "What someone at [HCD] used to tell me is that neighborhood is essentially where people would move when they had no other choice, and as soon as they have a choice, they move out. Can a school combat that? Doubt it." Similarly, another respondent observed that Frederick ES "on its own, wouldn't make a community impact. There's no reason to think it would. I'd be shocked if it did."

State and federal policies create additional barriers. For example, Bon Secours Community Works has primarily funded its housing projects through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. New stipulations make LIHTC applications in distressed neighborhoods less competitive, resulting in fewer public dollars to help subsidize construction and renovation.

One community partner suggested that the renovated school building and the INSPIRE plan may be an incentive to funders, especially the state of Maryland, to support projects in the area. Other respondents suggested that community stakeholders see the hope that the investments to Frederick ES could bring broader changes to the neighborhood. For one community partner, the new school has created a groundswell of support for investing in Southwest rather than giving residents an alternative to move: "There's a lot of residents who are organized and involved in these neighborhoods. They're saying, 'Hey, we got a new school. Let's build up this neighborhood. I don't want to leave."

Photo Credit: Frederick Elementary School. 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Southeast Baltimore

Neighborhood history and context

"Southeast Baltimore" is a collection of more than 20 neighborhoods with a diversity of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic demographics. This profile looks at three of these neighborhoods: Hopkins Bayview, Greektown, and Highlandtown. Their 21CSBP elementary schools have been renovated and expanded through 21CSBP: Commodore John Rogers ES/MS (expansion) and Highlandtown ES/MS School #237 (expansion) and John Ruhrah ES/MS School (renovation and expansion). (Figure SE1)

As Baltimore rose in prominence as an east coast industrial center in the latter half of the 19th Century, the three neighborhoods became home to immigrants from Europe, including newcomers from Poland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, and Ukraine. Racial demographics shifted throughout the 20th Century, as Black residents increasingly settled in southeastern neighborhoods; however, the roots of working-class, European immigrant enclaves are visible today, especially in the neighborhoods of Greektown and Highlandtown. Historically, some Southeast Baltimore neighborhoods fought back against neighborhood demolition required for Urban Renewal and other infrastructure projects. For example, resistance to highway projects, led by former Senator Barbara Mikulski, spared several neighborhoods, such as Fells Point and Canton, from demolition. These neighborhoods later became sites of investment and growth, such as the Inner Harbor and Harbor East developments.

Figure SE1. Southeast Baltimore

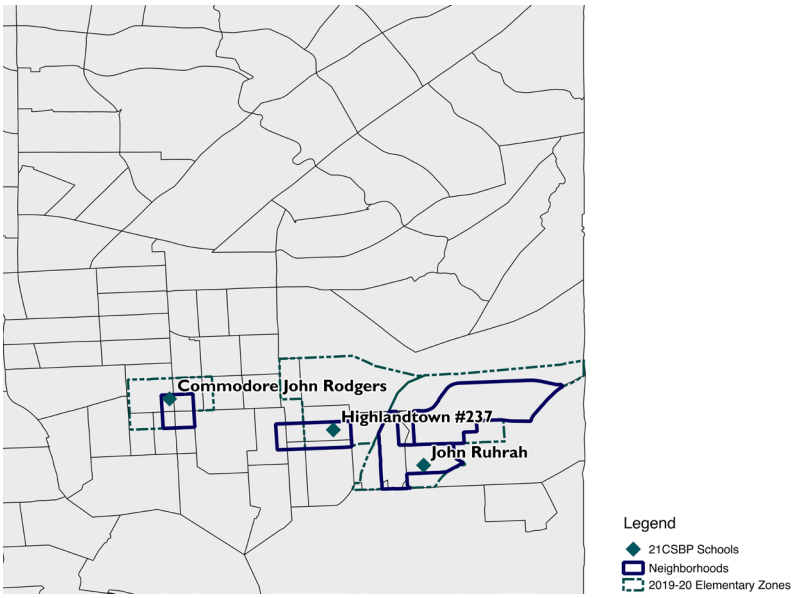
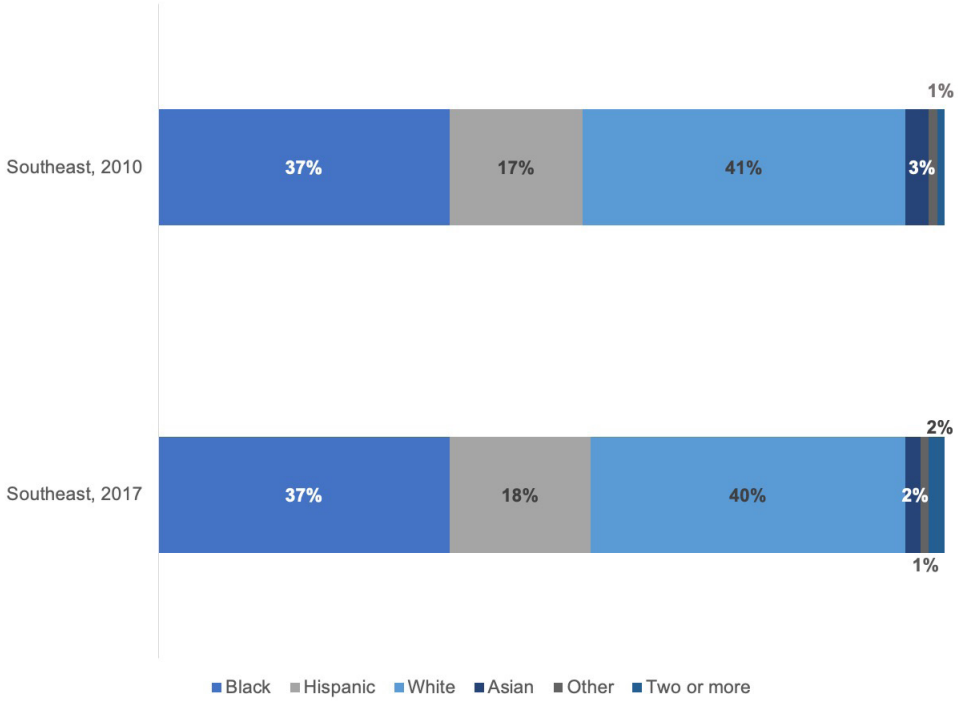


Photo Credit: John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Figure SE2 displays the aggregated racial demographics in the three focal neighborhoods. Hopkins Bayview remained a majority Black neighborhood between 2010 and 2017. In 2010, the majority of residents in Greektown and Highlandtown were white. The neighborhoods continue to see changing demographics: during the latter half of the 20th Century, the three neighborhoods saw an increase in the population of Latinx residents, many of whom have settled in what were once majority Black neighborhoods in the region.

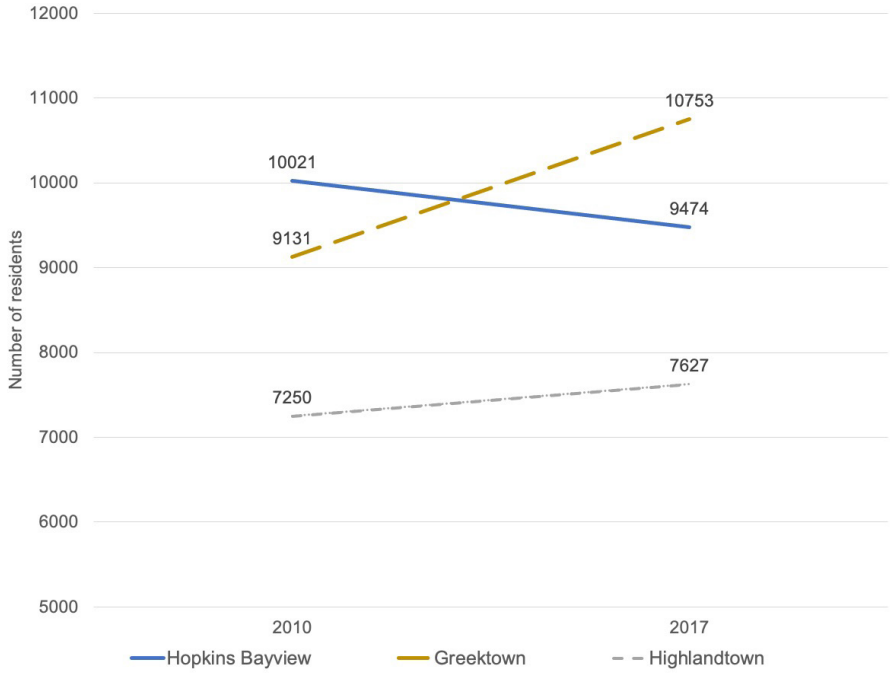
Figure SE2. Aggregated Racial Demographics, Greektown, Highlandtown, and Hopkins Bayview, 2010 and 2017



Source: BNIA

While the Highlandtown and Greektown communities have seen total population growth between 2010 and 2017, the Hopkins Bayview community saw a slight decrease in population during the same period (Figure SE3).

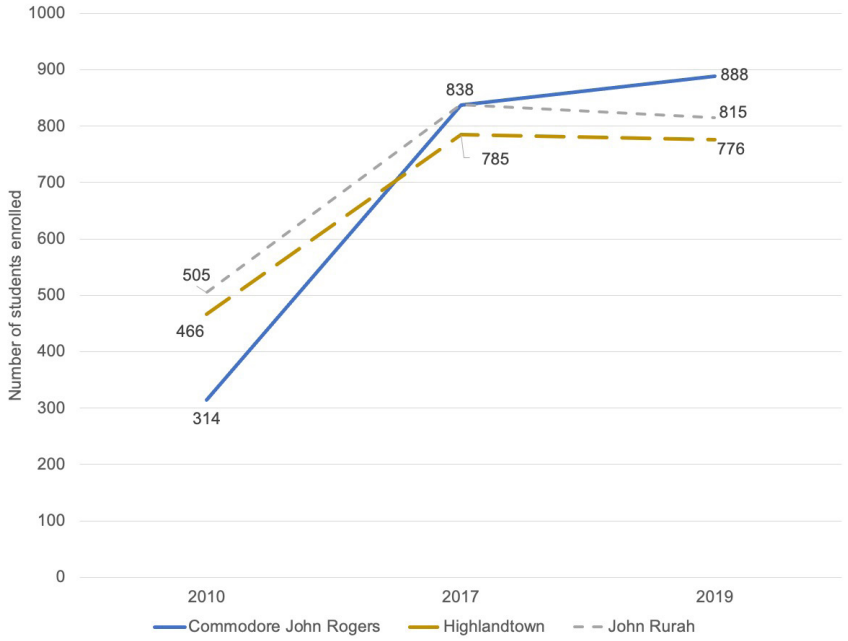
Figure SE3. Total Population Change in Greektown, Highlandtown, and Hopkins Bayview



Source: BNIA

Similar to the neighborhoods' overall population trends, school enrollment has increased since 2010. (Figure SE4). The growth in the student population created a need for additional space to mitigate overcrowding. According to one community partner, original conversations about the investments to schools centered on adding a new school to the community; instead, the school officials decided to renovate or expand the existing schools to accommodate the student population.

Figure SE4. Student Enrollment, Commodore John Rogers ES/MS, Highlandtown ES/MS, and John Ruhrah ES/MS, 2010-2019



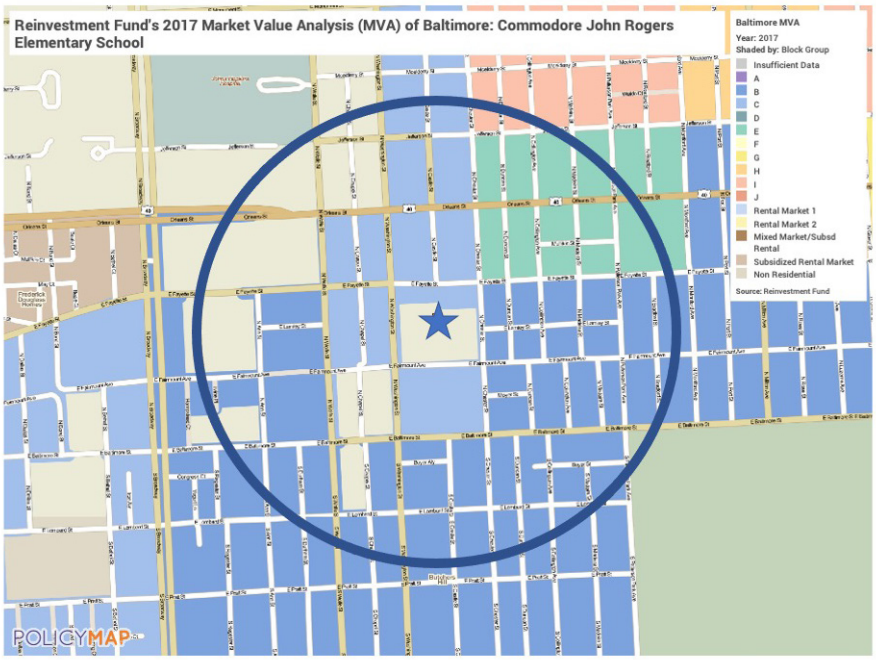
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Housing market conditions in these three neighborhoods have been described as relatively stable compared to other parts of the city. One city employee, for example, stated, "Things are going well in southeast…we're gaining population, houses don't sit vacant, [and] development's coming in."

This perspective is reflected in the MVA. The neighborhoods surrounding the 21st Century Schools in Greektown, Highlandtown, and Hopkins Bayview are among the higher MVA categories. Within the quarter-mile radius of Commodore John Rogers, MVA show B, C, E neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have high median home sales (ranging from $89,397 in E neighborhoods to $223,970 in B neighborhoods).

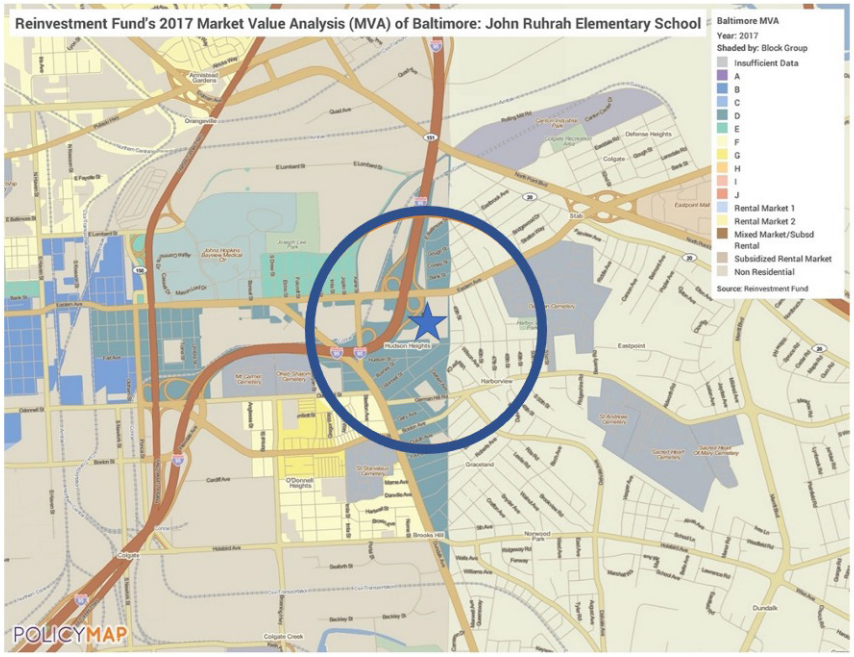
Finally, the neighborhoods surrounding Highlandtown are categorized as B, E, and F neighborhoods, where the median home prices were $52,015 (see Figures SE5, SE6, and SE7). These categories of neighborhoods typically have low building and land vacancies; one-third to half of all homes are owner-occupied. Both Highlandtown and Greektown are categorized by city and philanthropic efforts as "middle neighborhoods" and receive support from Healthy Neighborhoods, which seeks to increase home values in middle-market neighborhoods.

Figure SE5. Market Value Analysis, 2017, INSPIRE Area Surrounding Commodore John Rogers ES/MS



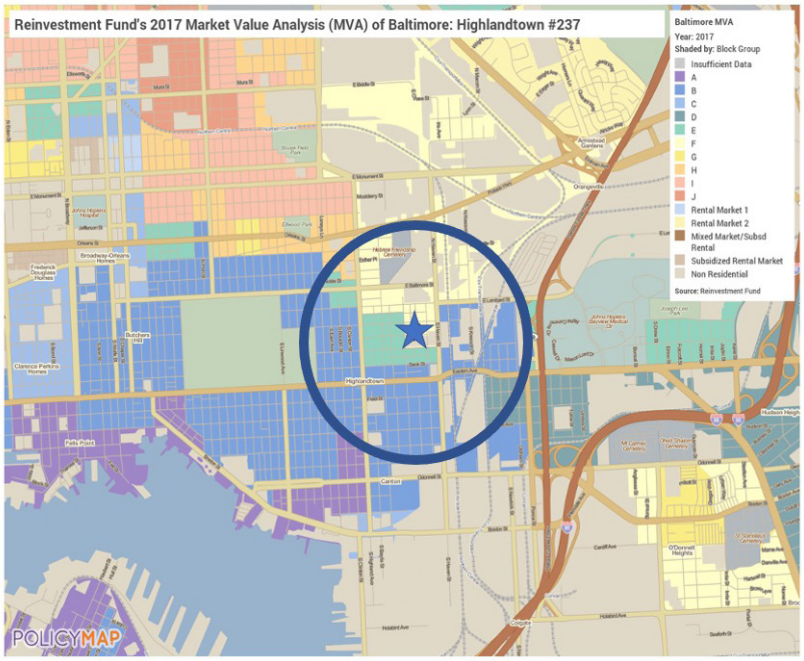
Note: The radius represents the INSPIRE region's quarter-mile area surrounding Commodore John Rogers ES/MS.
Source: The Reinvestment Fund. Map generated by PolicyMap

Figure SE6. Market Value Analysis, 2017, INSPIRE Area Surrounding John Ruhrah ES/MS



Note: The radius represents the INSPIRE region's quarter-mile area surrounding John Ruhrah ES/MS.
Source: The Reinvestment Fund. Map generated by PolicyMap

Figure SE7. Market Value Analysis, 2017, INSPIRE Area Surrounding Highlandtown #237 ES/MS



Note: The radius represents the INSPIRE region's quarter-mile area surrounding Highlandtown #237 ES/MS.
Source: The Reinvestment Fund. Map generated by PolicyMap

Finding 1: Changing demographics of the neighborhood mean dynamic and diverse needs, even in the context of relative stability.

The three planned school renovations are key components of the Southeast Community Development Corporation's (SECDC) strategy to market the neighborhoods to developers. SECDC's work began in the 1970s to serve the 22 neighborhoods comprising Southeast Baltimore and works in the areas of housing, commercial and retail development, and neighborhood services and amenities. SECDC serves as the primary community-based organization partner and employs the community schools coordinators for schools in the area.

The area behind John Ruhrah ES/MS will be the site of a mixed-use development project that includes retail, a hotel, and residences. According to one community partner, the investments to the schools have been part of the development story: "Look at all this investment in Greektown. It's a growing area. It's a great place to live. Don't you want to be here, invest here, put your money here?"

The shifting racial and socioeconomic demographics also represent an opportunity for residents from diverse backgrounds. As wealthier residents move to new developments in the neighborhoods, they have taken an interest in the renovated school buildings. One community partner explained:

> A lot of the people who live there have young children. They're making a decision about where they want to put their kids. They were skeptical about John Ruhrah before, but now – we see it on Facebook feeds, we see it through their communication with our community group coordinator – they're like, "Ah! Look at this really beautiful building." Because we put the designs out there as much as we can and they're starting to think "maybe I'll put my child there."

The community school coordinator elaborated on the student growth: "In terms of who's moving in and who's showing up at our doors throughout the year, a lot of them are newcomer immigrant students of all different age groups." These populations come with different needs. In response, schools have increased services for newcomer immigrants and multilingual learners. The 21CSBP expansion plan includes a Newcomer Center that will be available to families across the city.

Moving forward, balancing the needs of these newcomer families with those of incumbent residents, who are predominantly white, U.S.-born, and more affluent presents a challenge to both the school and SECDC staff. Improving conditions for residents who currently live in southeast Baltimore, as well as new families who may move to the area in the future, is at the core of SECDC's work. The diversity of residents, however, has raised questions. For example, community partners agree that the community school coordinators have done a lot to engage the "majority population," which has increasingly included the growing number of Latinx residents, but others sense tension about if that support is at the expense of other populations. As one school-level staff member reflected, "Usually, it's the Latino family that's like, 'I don't belong. I can't speak the language.' Here, we offer so much. … How are the different groups and demographics within our school feeling that they are represented?" For the same staff member, engaging the full diversity of the neighborhood is an important lesson for engagement around 21st Century Schools and INSPIRE: "If [21st Century and INSPIRE] really want meaningful engagement, valuable input, we have to think through 'are we doing this to the best of our abilities for everyone?'"

Finding 2: A high-capacity anchor organization can facilitate reciprocal connections between school and neighborhood activities.

Generally, city officials and philanthropic partners described the SECDC as a high-capacity anchor institution. SECDC views schools as "the hubs and hearts" of neighborhoods, and its work in schools is grounded in reciprocity. SECDC sees its role as not only helping to improve school-centered outcomes, such as increased attendance and improved climate, but also connecting families to opportunities to engage in other neighborhood and community development activities. According to one community partner, this work emerged from a growing desire to engage residents beyond those who participated in neighborhood association meetings:

> We really realized if we wanted to be connecting with community members, that frankly, more accurately fit the demographics of the community, we needed to be in schools where the community's really showing up.

Work with families in schools has helped SECDC organize parents to support improvements in their neighborhood. At Highlandtown ES/MS, for example, the community school coordinator formed a parent leadership group that has advocated for improvement projects on beautification and greening projects around the school. As parents strengthen their leadership within schools, SECDC is also looking for strategies to engage families in neighborhood-based committees and work with neighbors. Recently, SECDC has recognized parents who have taken an active role in their neighborhoods at a community clean-up and fair for residents. As one community partner explained, this work is part of a larger strategy to "work pretty smartly to make sure [community schools coordinators] are weaving people together throughout the neighborhood."

Finding 3: School building conditions and locations activate parent organizing and capacity-building.

Among parents, including many new immigrants from Central America, there is a sense that their children deserve to attend a clean, safe school. In fact, families within the school communities have been working to improve school conditions themselves through school clean-ups and advocating for improved conditions with school staff and administrators. Interviews with community and school-level partners suggest that neighborhood residents and families of current students are excited about the 21CSBP investments. One school staff member recalled visiting a local restaurant and hearing memories of the school: "There's a lot of memories, but they're fun and good memories of the school. I think they're excited about the expansion."

The physical conditions of schools are a symbol of where communities stand in the city. For families of current students, the investments are particularly important as school conditions in the neighborhood and in the swing spaces during school construction sparked parent organizing and advocacy. A school site staff member offered her perspective:

> The building matters, and I think kids get the message that they count. Whereas right now, I think they get the message that we're at the bottom rung. We're in these inadequate spaces. We have to put up with freezing cold or rodents running across the reading rugs or overly hot temperatures.

Although families did engage in the INSPIRE process, one school-level partner explained that parents were more concerned with the specific plans for their school sites, rather than the surrounding neighborhood projects. The staff member explained, "I felt at a certain point, our parents didn't really care about INSPIRE. Anything was going to be an upgrade. They didn't want to get into the nitty-gritty. Is it clean? Is it safe? There are no rodents? Great!"

Cherry Hill

Neighborhood history and context

Cherry Hill is bounded by the middle branch of the Patapsco River and West Hanover Street as well as the West and South ends of the city's light rail system (Figure CH1). In the 1940s, Cherry Hill became a site for public housing developments designed to house the growing population of Black residents in the city. Segregated public housing was increasingly concentrated in the neighborhood after World War II, even as public housing units were integrated elsewhere in the city. Cherry Hill's intentional segregation has had a lasting impact on the neighborhood's demographics. As one community partner explained, "Cherry Hill by design is a low-income area. It was made that way to stay that way."

Figure CH1. Cherry Hill

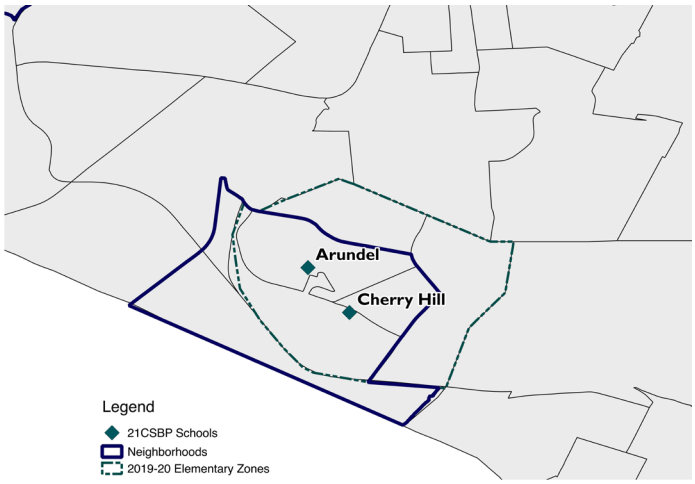
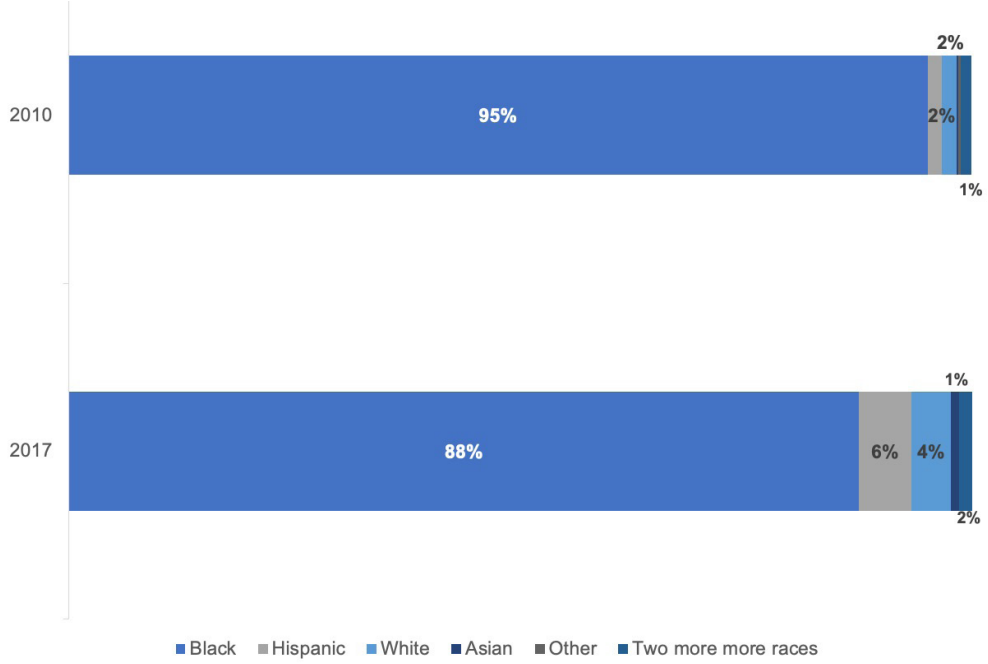


Photo Credit: Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School. 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Today, Black residents still comprise the largest share of residents (Figure CH2). However, racial diversity is growing. In 2017, the neighborhood saw small increases in the proportions of white, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx residents.

Figure CH2. Racial Demographics, 2010 and 2017



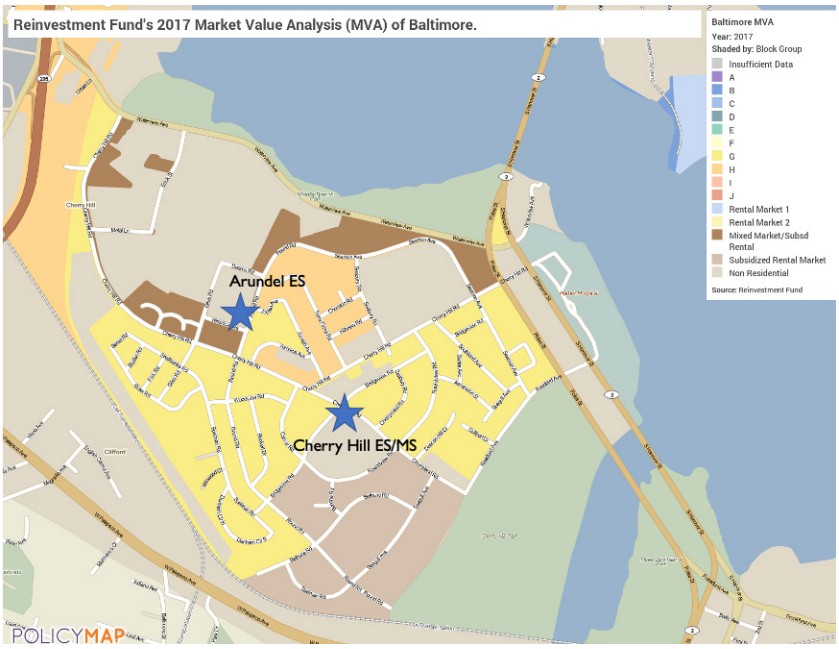
Source: BNIA

Both Cherry Hill ES/MS and Arundel ES serve predominantly students from the neighborhood, and consequently, their demographics mirror the demographics of the broader community. Black students comprised the majority of students at both schools in 2010 and 2017; however, racial demographics were more variable at Cherry Hill ES/MS as the proportion of Hispanic/Latinx and white students increased at the school. One school partner has noticed demographic shifts anecdotally but has not reviewed demographic data: "I think last year we had—we got our first Asian family. Then our Hispanic population has been growing as well. I think that's probably the biggest shift that I've noticed in the short time."

The Housing Authority remains the largest landowner in Cherry Hill, which shapes the housing market conditions. The 2017 MVA categorized Cherry Hill's neighborhood as Type G and H neighborhoods, which typically include home prices that are below city-wide averages (Figure CH3). In Type G neighborhoods, the median home sale price was $20,000; in Type H neighborhoods, the median home sale price was $28,525. These markets are also categorized by relatively low rates of owner-occupied properties. Population estimates for 2014-2018 reveal a 47 percent owner-occupied housing rate in Baltimore City; in Cherry Hill, population estimates show owner-occupied housing rates ranging from 7 percent to 31 percent.

Cherry Hill has lower residential vacancy rates[xiv] than the city-wide average: in 2017, 6 percent of residential properties in Cherry Hill were vacant compared to 8 percent in the city. Four percent of vacant properties in Cherry Hill were owned by Baltimore City[xv], compared to 14 percent across the city.

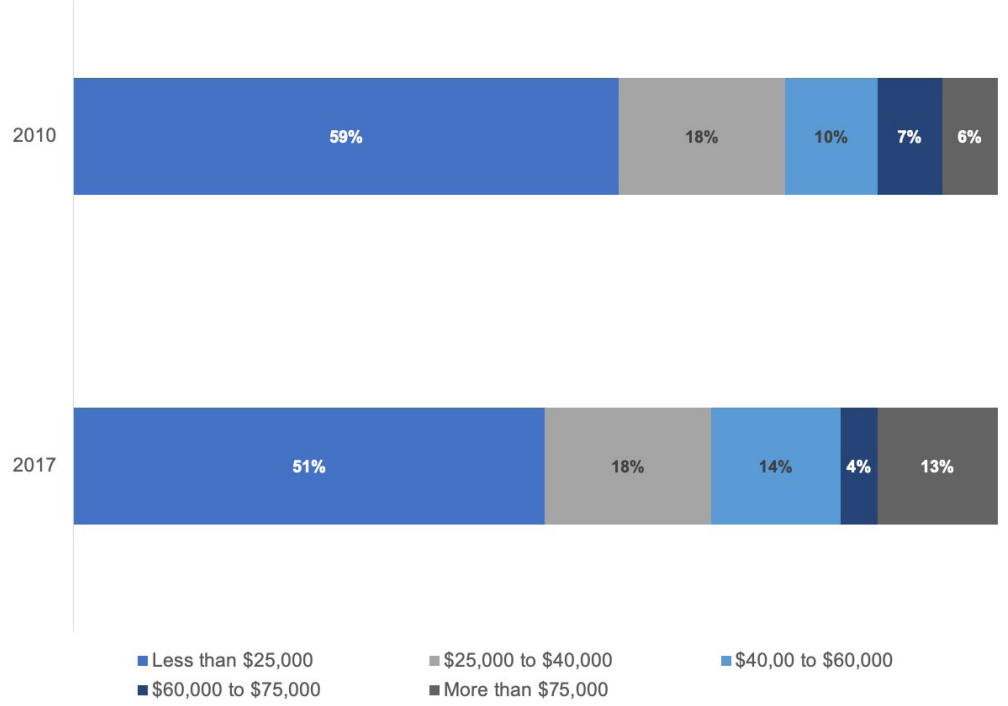
Figure CH3. Market Value Analysis, 2017, INSPIRE Area Surrounding Cherry Hill ES and Arundel ES



Source: The Reinvestment Fund. Map generated by PolicyMap

Like its history of racial isolation, poverty is also concentrated in Cherry Hill. The neighborhood's median household income has typically fallen below citywide medians: in 2010, Cherry Hill's median household income was $18,602 ($38,346 citywide); similarly, in 2017, the neighborhood's median income was $24,251 ($46,641 citywide). In both 2010 and 2017, approximately half of all households had incomes less than $25,000 (Figure CH4).

Figure CH4. Income Levels in Cherry Hill, 2010 and 2017



Source: BNIA

Finding 1: Historic segregation and intentional isolation of Cherry Hill have fostered a tight-knit community identity and long-standing leadership.

The legacy of segregation and isolation in Cherry Hill has engendered a strong sense of community among residents. One community partner, who described herself as "third-generation Cherry Hill," highlighted that the neighborhood's "closeness" is one of the community's greatest strengths. She explained, "It's not just the neighborhood. We're very tight-knit [and] take care of our own…We definitely look out for each other." Similarly, a city agency employee described Cherry Hill as a "resource-rich" community, in part, because of its community institutions, including churches and community-based organizations, and its strong self-image. According to one community stakeholder, the closure and consolidation of schools may enhance that community cohesion: "Before [21CSBP], we had four divided elementary schools. Now that we have all kids going to school together, there's no more division. There's no more "I can't be your friend because you live in this part of Cherry Hill."

Cherry Hill benefits from the support of long-standing community leaders and organizations working to stabilize the community. The Cherry Hill Community Development Corporation (CHCDC), founded in 1982, views its mission as supporting the neighborhood's general welfare and economic development. Elev8, a non-profit organization that supports out-of-school time opportunities, school outreach to families, and school-based health services support the community school coordinator at Cherry Hill ES/MS. The Wright Family Foundation focuses on early childhood education in Cherry Hill and played a key role in supporting the Judy Center at Arundel ES. Enterprise Community Partners has supported coordinated conversations around community development around the 21st Century sites, including the spaces within the quarter-mile radius of Cherry Hill ES/MS and Arundel ES. Enterprise has also helped bring Purpose Built Communities to Cherry Hill. First implemented in Atlanta, Purpose Built's model helps communities set up a "quarterback" organization that can lead cross-sector and multi-agency action to bring mixed-income housing development and wrap-around services to the neighborhood.

Photo Credit: Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School. 21st Century School Buildings Program via Flickr

Finding 2: School stability requires a comprehensive housing strategy that focuses on new development without the displacement of existing residents.

As suggested above, increasing student enrollment in Cherry Hill requires a comprehensive housing strategy. The large number of public housing units in Cherry Hill emerged as an opportunity and a challenge for housing development. One respondent, for example, observed that housing development strategies must be done in conjunction with the city's Housing Authority because Cherry Hill is a unified community – whether residents live in public or private housing. Yet, the respondent perceived some hesitancy at the city agency to move forward with public housing development plans: "We've got resources that have never been available in this community before, ways to take advantage of this small window that is not going to stay open because the Housing Authority says, 'We got to wait until we're in a better position.'"

Although community members were optimistic about the direction of development in Cherry Hill, stakeholders also acknowledged that some residents were wary of the changes coming to the neighborhood. One community stakeholder, for example, saw the developments as an opportunity to attract middle-class residents to Cherry Hill: "I want more diversity in my neighborhood. Diversity from an economic standpoint. More 9 to 5 job holders and teachers living in the neighborhood who could hold you accountable." Likewise, a community partner saw a similar opportunity for greater diversity in the neighborhood: "With the nature of the schools that we have – the principals we have, the teachers, excellent education systems. With a pipeline that exists within the community itself, it becomes an education campus that we dreamed of. I think others would want that."

Other stakeholders described the 21CSBP schools and other investments as potential harbingers of gentrification. One school stakeholder, for example, described residents' responses to school construction:

> [The reaction to the school] ranges from "That's great, it's about time" to "That ain't for us." On one side, people are in awe of it. They love it. It's like "About time. We've been needing this for a long time, so I'm glad that we finally have it." Then, there's people who feel like it's just another step in the gentrification process.

The Port Covington development and other projects leave open questions about the future of Cherry Hill. Stakeholder reflections and comments suggest that residents recognize that change is inevitable given the neighborhood's location on the harbor and planned developments at the Port Covington site and around the 21CSBP schools. As one respondent described, developing pathways to homeownership is one potential strategy to mitigate possible gentrification-related displacement. However, a philanthropic partner described, how partners communicate the type and purpose of development to residents matters in Cherry Hill. The partner, for example, described a vision for mixed-income housing that prioritizes a neighborhood's current residents.

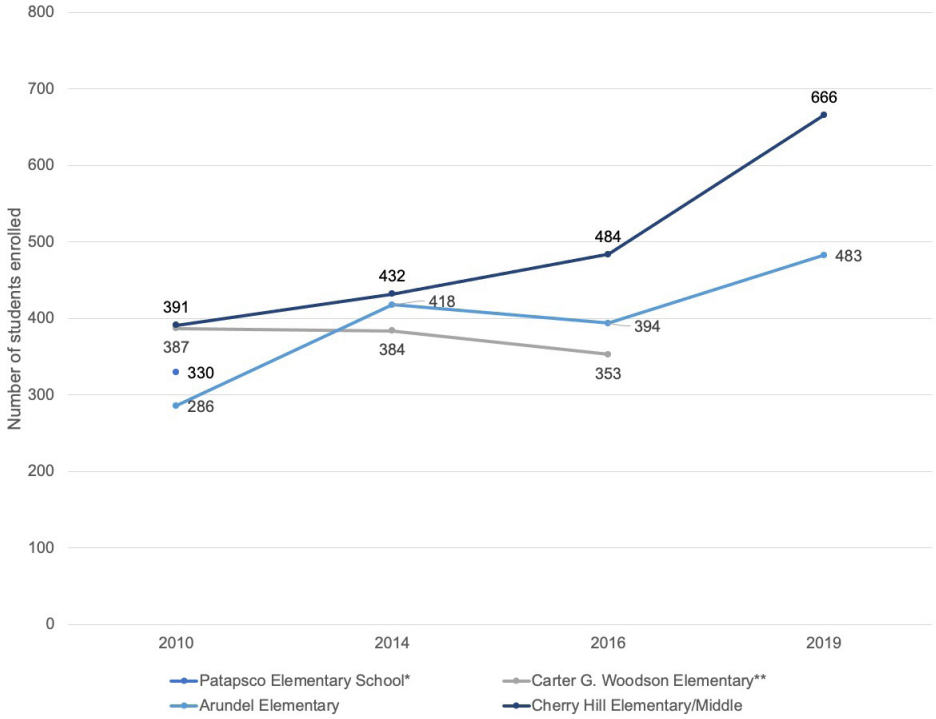
The growth of development in and around Cherry Hill, including the Port Covington development, suggests an opportunity for both longtime and new partners to mitigate fears of displacement. Stakeholders described efforts underway to create pathways to homeownership for current residents. Community stakeholders described homebuying education programs designed to position the neighborhood's existing residents to purchase homes. The CHCDC serves as a community land trust and is working with programs to renovate and sell homes to Cherry Hill residents who want to buy homes in the community. As one community partner described, the community organizations are taking a lead and pursuing a staged approach to housing renovation and construction so that current residents do not have to leave the community.

Finding 3: School closures and 21CSBP investments have increased enrollment, but the long-term fiscal sustainability of operating two schools looms.

Historically, four elementary and middle schools served Cherry Hill: Arundel ES, Cherry Hill ES (now ES/MS), Dr. Carter G. Woodson ES/MS, and Patapsco ES/MS. Patapsco ES/MS closed in 2014 and Woodson ES/MS closed in 2018. Arundel ES and Cherry Hill ES/MS opened new and renovated spaces for the 2018-19 school year.

Cherry Hill's school-age population (i.e., children between the ages of 5 and 17) has remained relatively stable, comprising approximately one-quarter of the neighborhood's population. Student enrollment at Arundel ES and Cherry Hill ES/MS increased steadily prior to the opening of the 21st Century school buildings. Both schools gained additional students during the 2018-19 school year with the new facilities opening and the merger with Woodson ES/MS's population. (Figure CH5)

Figure CH5. Student Enrollment Cherry Hill ES, Arundel ES, Patapsco ES, and Woodson ES, 2010-2019



Note: * Patapsco Elementary School closed in 2014; ** Carter G. Woodson Elementary closed in 2018.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Both schools have seen increases in enrollment and operate at over half of their building utilization: Arundel was 78% occupied as of the 2018-19 school year, and Cherry Hill was 68% occupied as of the 2018-19 school year. However, the IAC's Facilities Planning Guide defines an appropriate space-utilization ratio for elementary schools is at least 95% during normal operating hours. Based on enrollment numbers and projections, it is unlikely that the standard state-level operating procedures for school facilities funding would have called for the renovation and construction of two schools in Cherry Hill. In fact, some respondents have questioned the fiscal sustainability of operating two new school buildings, given Cherry Hill's size and demographic trends. Census trend analyses included in the Education Specifications project increasing enrollment at Cherry Hill ES/MS but more stable enrollment at Arundel ES. Other respondents critiqued these concerns and argued that relying on these quantitative metrics ignores other important factors that are critical to achieving equity. A full cost accounding would consider the deep history of racially discriminatory, systemic disinvestment in schools and neighborhoods that serve majority Black and brown communities like Cherry Hill, and seek to remedy some of these harms through current policy and funding mechanisms.

This tension reveals a disconnect among school facilities funding, state policy, and school district priorities. This presents an opportunity for increased alignment across local and state agencies as they implement strategies to reinvest in schools and neighborhoods.

A Framework for Ongoing Analysis

We present the following proposed set of indicators as possible ways to measure the progress and impact of the 21CSBP for students, families, and the broader neighborhood communities. Our indicators draw from prior research on community development and similar neighborhood investment projects; interviews with two national experts on school facilities and community investments; interviews with 12 stakeholders from philanthropy, city agencies, and BCPSS; and a review of documentation from SCNII efforts from 2016-2019.

Our interviews revealed diverse visions of what the 21CSBP's success would look like. Respondents described potential improvements to school building and school climate quality (e.g., air and water quality, improved test scores, and enrollment growth and/or stability), school experiences (e.g., teacher workplace satisfaction, school community pride and stewardship), neighborhood social and organizational connections (e.g., community-based organizational capacity), and neighborhood development and stability (e.g., increased housing construction, homeownership, reductions in vacancies).

With a few exceptions, interviews and document review revealed that evaluative questions emphasized quantitative metrics. Yet, on their own, quantitative metrics may not be sufficient to capture the full scale and scope of impact of the 21CSBP. In addition to quantitative metrics, our indicators include qualitative, experiential measures, which may show up earlier and differently than quantitative metrics. Some of the measures are drawn from data sources that are readily available, such as BNIA's Vital Signs Portal and BCPSS's school profiles. Other measures will require new data collection efforts, particularly interviews and focus groups with community partners, neighborhood residents, educators, students, and other 21CSBP stakeholders.

We have organized the indicators into three levels – building, school, and neighborhood:

> **Building**: school buildings physical condition, environmental health, and attention to operational expenses, efficiencies, and management
>
> **School**: culture, climate, and composition of the school and the experiences of the school community (students, parents/guardians, teachers, staff)
>
> **Neighborhood**: culture, climate, and composition of the surrounding neighborhood and the experiences of the place-based community (residents, community-based organizations)

Potential indicators can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Inventory Indicators

Building		
Category	**Measure**	**Potential Data Source**
Environmental Health	Asbestos levels	Maryland Department of Environment
	Building CO2 concentrations	New data collection using CO2 detection protocols
	Heating/Cooling	Baltimore City Public Schools Building Maintenance
	Presence of VOC's	Maryland Department of Environment
	Reverbation time	New data collection using sound level meters and other tools
	Water quality	Baltimore City Public Schools Building Maintenance
Operations and Maintenance	Maintenance requests	Baltimore City Public Schools Building Maintenance
	Utilities and other operating costs	Baltimore City Public Schools
Usage	Amount of facility space per student (Sqft/student)	Baltimore City Public Schools Facilities plans
	Availability of community space, percent space the school used, types of use	Interviews with school prinicpals and/or commmunity partners who use space in the school.
	Student enrollment	Baltimore City Public Schools

School		
Category	**Measure**	**Potential Data Source**
Culture and Climate	Community based partnerships	Survey, interviews, and focus groups of schools and commuinty organizations
	Parent satisfaction	Interviews and focus group with parents
	Security cameras	Survey of school-based educators/personnel
	Security guards/police officers	Survey of school-based educators/personnel
	Student suspensions/expulsions	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Student-teacher ratio	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Student, teacher, and staff safety	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles Interviews, focus groups, surveys with students, teachers, staff
	Vandalism occurances	Baltimore City Public Schools Building Maintenance; interviews with school principals, teachers, parents, and students; Baltimore City Public Schools Climate Survey
Educator/Staff health and satisfaction	Amount of long-term sick leave	Baltimore City Public Schools
	Rates of symptoms of occupational burnout	Surveys/interviews with teachers
	Teacher compensation	Maryland Public Schools
	Teacher retention	Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center
Student Attendance, Retention, Performance	Attendance	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Chronically absent	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Enrollment stability/student mobility	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Graduation rates	Baltimore City Public Schools
	Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	School effectiveness	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
	Tardiness	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
Student composition	Enrollment and Student Demographics (race, socioeconomic status, special education status)	Baltimore City Public Schools, School Profiles
Student Health	Number of school-related asthma cases	Survey of school-based health professionals
	Students with elevated blood levels	Survey of school-based health professionals

Neighborhood		
Category	**Measure**	**Potential Data Source**
Collective efficacy	Connections to government agencies	Interviews, focus groups, surveys of CBO leaders, community organizers, school site personnel, etc.
	Partnerships among community-based organizations,city government, and/or schools	Interviews, focus groups, surveys of CBO leaders, community organizers, school site personnel, etc.
	Resident social cohesion, trust, willingness to work together	Interviews and focus groups with residents and community organization staff
Community assets	Resident-defined community assets (churches, social services, community-based organizations, local businesses, early childhood resources, community centers, local businesses, parks, etc.)	Interviews, focus groups, and/or participatory action research with residents to map and analyze community assets
Community-based organization capacity	Paid staff, board composition, financial viability, meetings and events, resident trust, etc.	Interviews, focus groups, and surveys of CBOs to gather administrative data, collateral, and other information
Crime and policing	Part 1 crime rates	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Vital Signs - Crime and Safety
Economic development	Neighborhood businesses, banks, businesses, etc.	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Vital Signs - Workforce and Economic Development
Housing and community development	Affordabilty, demolitions, vacancies, new construction	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Vital Signs - Housing and Community Development
Public realm	Open space, trees, sidewalk condition, public art, etc.	Interviews, focus groups, and/or participatory action research with residents to map and analyze community assets
	Walkability, proximity to public transportation	Baltimore Walk Score
Resident composition	Race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sex, racial diversity index	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Vital Signs Census Demographics
	Educational attainment	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, Vital Signs - Education and Youth, Workforce and Economic Development
Safety	Resident safety	Interviews, focus groups with residents

We recommend using this data inventory to identify potential measures and data sources that can be used in evaluations or other research of the 21CSBP. In our recommendations, we call for continued efforts to document, analyze, and evaluate the 21CSBP. Below, we propose an initial set of possible research questions for which the indicators in the data inventory can be used to explore the impact across a range of scales and across short-, medium-, and long-term timeframes. These questions are not exhaustive; rather, they represent a starting point for future studies of the 21CSBP.

Building:

- What are 21CSBP school utilization rates for both classroom and community space?
- How are 21CSBP schools performing in terms of ongoing operations and maintenance (e.g., energy efficiency, environmental health, etc.)?
- What are the cost savings of 21CSBP for the school site and school district?

School:

- How do 21CSBP school building conditions (e.g., noise levels, VOC, water quality, etc.) affect classroom culture, instructional quality, and/or student academic outcomes?
- How do 21CSBP school building conditions (e.g., noise levels, VOC, water quality, etc.) affect student, teacher, and/or staff physical and mental health outcomes?
- How do 21CSBP schools affect student, parent/caregiver, teacher, and/or staff satisfaction, sense of safety, sense of pride, and stewardship of the school building?
- How have enrollments and retention changed and/or stabilized since 21CSBP schools opened?
- How has the 21CSBP altered students', parents'/caregivers', teachers', and/or staff members' access to high quality school facilities?

Neighborhood:

- How have the physical conditions (e.g., public amenities, vacancy, etc.) in the neighborhood changed since the 21CSBP school was initiated?
- How have the rates of housing construction in the neighborhood changed since the 21CSBP school was initiated?
- How have the rates of economic development in the neighborhood changed since the 21CSBP school was initiated?

Recommendations for Maximizing 21CSBP Impact in Neighborhoods

Our recommended action steps aim to cultivate a shared vision for 21CSBP, strengthen trust among stakeholders, bolster capacity at the neighborhood level, and promote shared learning. While these are grounded in the evidence gathered through our research over the past 18 months, we expect that they have salience beyond the 21CSBP to other school communities, particularly given the current conditions and the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and persistent racism.

Recommendation 1: Cultivate cross-sector and agency collaboration through a formal "community of practice"

Working across sectors and agencies, and multiple levels of government is challenging on a good day. Starting collaborations in this climate of crisis and facing constrained resources, more so. However, given the urgency, scale, and scope of need, this moment may actually open up pathways to practices and policies that were unimaginable before. A formal "community of practice" (CoP) that includes 21CSBP stakeholders from the state, city, and neighborhood levels can create space for consistent communication, resource sharing, and continuous improvement.

A 21CSBP CoP could be facilitated out of an existing public agency, by MPN SCNII, or through a partnership with a university or other non-profit organization. The City of Baltimore already has some administrative infrastructure and programmatic efforts that could be activated to facilitate collaboration, including the Mayor's Subcabinet on Neighborhoods, the Department of Planning's Coordinating Committee, and the Department of Housing and Community Development's 2019 *A Framework for Community Development*.[xvi]

A 21CSBP CoP will recognize the complexity of the institutional arrangements and that collaboration in this case is both "vertical" (from state to local agencies to community-based organizations) and "horizontal" (across sectors like schools, housing, planning, recreation and parks, and transportation). It will provide the space for communications and enhanced transparency about school facilities decisions and neighborhood planning activities through consistent connection. This kind of transparency can yield better alignment and synergy in public engagement and infrastructural investments across public agencies.

A CoP focused on specific projects and initiatives will provide an opportunity for coming together around tangible projects, not just abstract ideas of "collaboration." For example, a CoP could work to develop a shared vision, clarify metrics for success, and create tangible outcomes like MOUs across participating agencies or generating new funding for collaborative efforts.

By incorporating thought leadership and resources from outside of Baltimore, the CoP can foster a culture of learning around relevant projects and infuses new ideas to support the ongoing efforts of local stakeholders. Baltimore stakeholders have experience with a collective impact model, which may be a useful framework to return to by creating a school-centered neighborhood investment collective impact team. Other models that may be helpful include the PLUS Leadership Initiative facilitated by the Center for Cities and Schools at UC Berkeley[xvii] or the Research Practice Network of the Coalition for Community Schools.[xviii]

Recommendation 2: Strengthen connections between public agencies and local communities

21CSBP represents an opportunity for greater alignment of public agencies' priorities and efforts to bolster trust between them and the communities they serve. We propose four avenues to strengthen these connections and foster trust in school and neighborhood communities.

Community-based organizations and local residents require more support for capacity-building. MPN SCNII can continue to facilitate spaces for CBOs from across the city to connect and network. Additional funds from MPN and member foundations should support community organizing work, general operating funds, and even smaller organizations that historically have difficulty getting philanthropic support. Funds could be targeted to specifically hire local residents to provide technical assistance and support for advocacy and engagement with city, BCPSS, and school site processes. The Trust-Based Philanthropy Project[xix] may have models and approaches that can inform the Baltimore-area funding community on ways to support CBOs that meet these goals.

City agencies can use INSPIRE as a model for strengthening the alignment of priorities around 21CSBP sites and neighborhoods. INSPIRE's local project-level activities reflect careful engagement with local communities and the top priorities of residents. The INSPIRE planning process and proposed implementation projects should inform larger-scale agency practices. For example, INSPIRE neighborhood plans can serve as guiding documents for more extensive alignment of budget priorities in housing, transportation, recreation and parks, and school facilities. In the short-term, MPN SCNII and philanthropic partners can fund INSPIRE implementation projects starting in communities with school closures. Bringing these projects to fruition will continue to engage community residents and build trust, especially in communities who faced hardship because of school closures.

BCPSS and city agencies can better coordinate and improve their communications strategies with CBOs and local residents around school closures, 21CSBP planning processes, and other neighborhood-level improvement projects. Local communities are inundated with information about multiple efforts, which can be overwhelming. Additionally, residents do not necessarily discern which planning processes come from BCPSS versus Planning versus some other public agency; lived experience is not easily parsed along administrative agency silos. Public agencies can leverage each other's communication channels and figure out ways to improve communications in mode (e.g., social media, flyers, phone calls, etc.), venue (school sites, cultural events, neighborhood meetings, etc.), frequency, and timing around projects. INSPIRE may provide a model for BCPSS and other agencies to follow in order to create more accessible and creative public outreach and participatory activities to engage residents.

BCPSS, intermediaries, and CBOs that fund and manage community school coordinators can align their approach for more consistency across communities. Community school coordinators can play a critical role in bridging between school sites and the local community. Across school sites, the extent of coordinators' external-facing work, neighborhood partnership-building, and knowledge of resources vary by community and by the coordinators' lead agencies. The lead agencies – be they BCPSS, CBOs, or other intermediaries – could share professional development, communications infrastructure, standard protocols for engagement, and/or resources on health, housing, job training, and neighborhood issues. Further, additional guidance from BCPSS can create a unified vision of community schools that expands beyond the school to the broader community and ensures consistency in outward-facing efforts of all coordinators.

Recommendation 3: Continue documentation, analysis, and evaluation

Additional research can generate insights about the intermediate and long-term outcomes of the 21CSBP and examine how outcomes emerge in different neighborhood contexts. These efforts should integrate both qualitative and quantitative metrics to paint a complete picture of the implementation and outcomes of the program. Case profiles like the ones contained herein could be initiated across all 28 21CSBP sites and could be updated at regular intervals.

MPN SCNII or other philanthropic partners could develop a small grants program for research and evaluation. A request for proposals could include key questions developed by BCPSS, city agencies, MPN, CBOs, and other key stakeholders with a vested interest in a deeper understanding of the multiple dimensions of 21CSBP and its school and neighborhood impacts. Research and evaluation structured this way could leverage the rich research community in Baltimore.

Research and evaluation funded through small grants will also ensure that the most pressing questions remain front and center, and that BCPSS, city agencies, and community-based stakeholders are driving the research agenda to better inform policy and practice. Research and documentation can also be a tool to build trust with communities. For example, grants could require participatory methods to ensure full and meaningful engagement of CBOs, young people, and residents to tell the stories of their lived experiences of school closure, new 21CSBP schools, and neighborhood life.

Recommendation 4: Mobilize for legislative, policy, and funding changes at the local, state, and federal levels

The success of the 21CSBP and the broader vision for neighborhood and community development requires support beyond the confines of Baltimore City. Changes to local, state, and federal policies and budgets can facilitate the program's implementation and outcomes.

MPN and philanthropic partners can fund education and advocacy for education, housing, and community development policies and budget at the state and federal levels. Re-establishing the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative offers one possible pathway to funding education and advocacy.[xx] As suggested above, stakeholders could better leverage community schools coordinators and position them to play a larger role in these efforts. With proper training and support, they could incorporate outreach, advocacy, and information dissemination on local, state, and federal level issues that touch their core work and constituents.

Research and documentation described above can create the content to develop policy briefs, podcasts, digital stories, story maps, and other materials that are easily accessible for state and local elected officials.

Our analysis of the implementation and emerging outcomes of the 21CSBP reveals that the investments to schools has brought incremental improvements to neighborhoods. These improvements were driven by the INSPIRE planning process and, in some neighborhoods, the efforts of CBOs and other partners. Longer-term impacts of the 21CSPB are more distal, and we acknowledge the groundwork that stakeholders have laid for community development. As our analysis suggests, realizing 21CSBP's full potential for community development hinges on a shared vision of the 21CSBP's goals, deeper cross-agency collaboration, and capacity-building at the neighborhood level. MPN has critical role to play in creating the context for continuous learning, collaboration, and supporting local capacity-building efforts. This vital work will bolster the 21CSBP's impact beyond the initial wins for students and families and in neighborhoods to systemic transformations that will improve the lives of Baltimore's residents.

Notes

[i] Maryland Philanthropy Network, "School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative." Accessed 2020. https://www.marylandphilanthropy.org/school-centered-neighborhood-investment-initiative
[ii] Maryland Stadium Authority, "21st Century School Buildings Program." Accessed 2018. https://www.mdstad.com/21st-century-schools
[iii] Formerly The Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG)
[iv] We use the term "neighborhood" to describe the three geographic areas profiled; Southwest, Southeast, and Cherry Hill. Although some of the neighborhood boundaries are clearly defined (i.e., Cherry Hill), we use the broader terms Southeast and Southwest to describe the geographic areas included in the analysis.
[v] See, for example, H.S. Baum, "How Should We Evaluate Community Initiatives?" Journal of the American Planning Association, 67, no. 2 (2001): 147–158; J. DeFilippis and S. Saegert. (Eds.), The community development reader (2nd ed.) (2012) Routledge; G. Galster, C. Walker, C. Hayes, P. Boxall, & J. Johnson, "Measuring the impact of community development block grant spending on urban neighborhoods," Housing Policy Debate, 15, no. 4 (2004): 903–934; P. Rosenblatt, & S. DeLuca, "What Happened in Sandtown-Winchester? Understanding the Impacts of a Comprehensive Community Initiative," Urban Affairs Review, 53, no. 3 (2017): 463–494.
[vi] See C.A. Neilson & S.D. Zimmerman, "The effect of school construction on test scores, school enrollment, and home prices," Journal of Public Economics, 120, 2011:18–31. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.08.002
[vii] See J. Leonard, "Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory to Understand Community Partnerships: A Historical Case Study of One Urban High School," Urban Education, 46 no. 5, 2011: 987–1010.
[viii] Verdery, B. and Patinella, F., "Buildings for Academic Excellence: A Vision and Options to Address Deficient School Facilities in Baltimore City." ACLU of Maryland. 2 June 2010. https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/buildings_academic_excellence.pdf
[ix] Bergsman, N. and McNear, D., "A Proposal to Finance a Full Scale Modernization of Baltimore City Public School Facilities" Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute. 2 Dec. 2010. https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/mbtpi_finance_plan_dec_2010_.pdf
[x] Jacobs, "State of School Facilities, Baltimore City Public Schools." June 2012. https://baltimore21stcenturyschools.org/sites/default/files/2012june-jacobsreport.pdf
[xi] Baltimore City School Board of Commissioners,
"21st Century Buildings For Our Kids: Baltimore City Public Schools' 10 Year Plan." 8 Jan 2013. https://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/Baltimore_10_Year_Plan.pdf;
[xii] The Interagency Committee on School Construction. Baltimore City Public School Construction Program Block Grant Funding: A Report to the Legislative Committees" 8 Jan. 2013. "http://www.pscp.state.md.us/Reports/2012_p196_PSCP_Report%20on%20Baltimore%20City%20Block%20Grant.pdf
[xiii] Maryland Stadium Authority, "21st Century School Buildings Program." Accessed 2018. https://www.mdstad.com/21st-century-schools
[xiv] BNIA draws on data from the Baltimore City Department of Housing in its reporting of vacant residential properties. The Department of Housing classifies units as vacant or abandoned if: the property is not habitable and appears boarded up or open to the elements; the property was designated as being vacant prior to the current year and still remains vacant; and the property is a multi-family structure where all units are considered to be vacant.
[xv] City-owned include those properties acquired by eminent domain, unpaid tax or water bills, and direct purpose.
[xvi] Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, "Framework for Community Development." Accessed 2020. https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/m/community-development-framework
[xvii] Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, "PLUS Leadership Initiative." Accessed 2020. https://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/plus
[xviii] Coalition for Community Schools, "Research Practice Network" Accessed 2020. http://www.communityschools.org/about/research_practice_network_rpn.aspx
[xix] The Trust-Based Philosophy Network. Accessed 2020. https://trustbasedphilanthropy.org/
[xx] The Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative (BNC) engaged 45 local and national funders to pool funding and support strategic grantmaking for neighborhood revitalization. BNC's work included funding policy research, training community development practitioners, and funding a range of initiatives in the city. BNC transitioned its work to partner organizations and the Community Investment Affinity Group within MPN in August 2014.

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About MPN

The Maryland Philanthropy Network (MPN) is a membership organization that brings together more than 100 philanthropic organizations and community partners across the state to bolster the impact of philanthropic contributions to communities. MPN offers its members a range of programming, services, and consulting expertise designed to connect funders, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to bolster the capacity of member organizations and promote collaboration and coordinated investment across the state's social sector.