



**HUMBOLDT PARK – ORR COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL (CAC)
STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL PLAN
SEPTEMBER 2011**

**A ROADMAP FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS IN WEST HUMBOLDT PARK**



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I. Vision and Core Values

Vision

Our vision is that by 2015, all children and youth growing up in West Humboldt Park (WHP) will have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support. This will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college or vocational training and a career. We will accomplish this vision by working as a collective and in collaboration with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to accelerate educational improvement and leverage greater internal and external support for local schools and educational support programs.

Our vision is for WHP to be known for its unity around excellent education, where a larger number of community residents are engaged in creating and supporting a high performing educational system.

We are focused on building upon what is working in the neighborhood, instead of focusing only on problems. This requires understanding the good progress that has already been made and building upon it.

We believe transition points are extremely important, especially transition to kindergarten and the transition from middle school to high school. We believe family engagement and wellness are critical aspects to any successful educational system.

Values and Beliefs

On May 4th, 2011, the Humboldt Park-Clemente and the Humboldt Park - Orr Community Action Councils (CAC) engaged their residents and stakeholders in a Community Dialogue. The main goal of the Dialogue was to engage families, parents, students, and other stakeholders in the community to identify, discuss, and prioritize the most challenging issues and concerns related to education facing CPS. The following is a summary of the community responses on values and commitment:

Top Two Values and Beliefs

- “Equal opportunity of quality education for all children”
- “School as support and resource for the child, family, and community”

Top Two Priorities

- Bridging the gap between families, school and the community
- Schools and community partner to meet student needs

II. History and Overview of Community

The name West Humboldt Park has been used by area residents and community organizations since the mid-1980s to refer to an area to the west of the city park. West Humboldt Park spans roughly three square miles and contains approximately sixteen census tracts.

Over the past 20 years, several community organizations were created or shifted their focus to the West Humboldt Park area, as it has been an isolated community, with relatively few organizations and institutions locating or focusing on the area. For example, organizations like the West Humboldt Park Development Council and Blocks Together have focused on community organizing around issues of community awareness and building social capital, while organizations like Chicago Commons, BUILD programs have concentrated on the provision of essential social service delivery.

Recently, several new institutional partners have been recruited to the neighborhood, such as the Kelly Hall YMCA opening last year, Rowe Clark High School in 2007, and Near North Health Services in 2001. New school leadership has been appointed within the past five years at most of the area public schools. The recent growth in the number and capacity of neighborhood partners and schools presents a wonderful opportunity to engage in more advanced, neighborhood-level coordination and continuous improvement.

III. Community Assets

In 2003, the broader Humboldt Park neighborhood (4.5 square mile area) was selected as one of fifteen neighborhoods to participate in the New Communities Program (NCP), facilitated by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) and funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Through the NCP program, a community-wide plan based on community needs was established directly involving over 250 stakeholder organizations and resident leaders. The NCP planning process has built a high level of trust among neighborhood organizations and resident leaders. It should be noted that school leadership has not usually participated in NCP planning events. The NCP network and planning process is a tremendous untapped community asset for the area public schools.

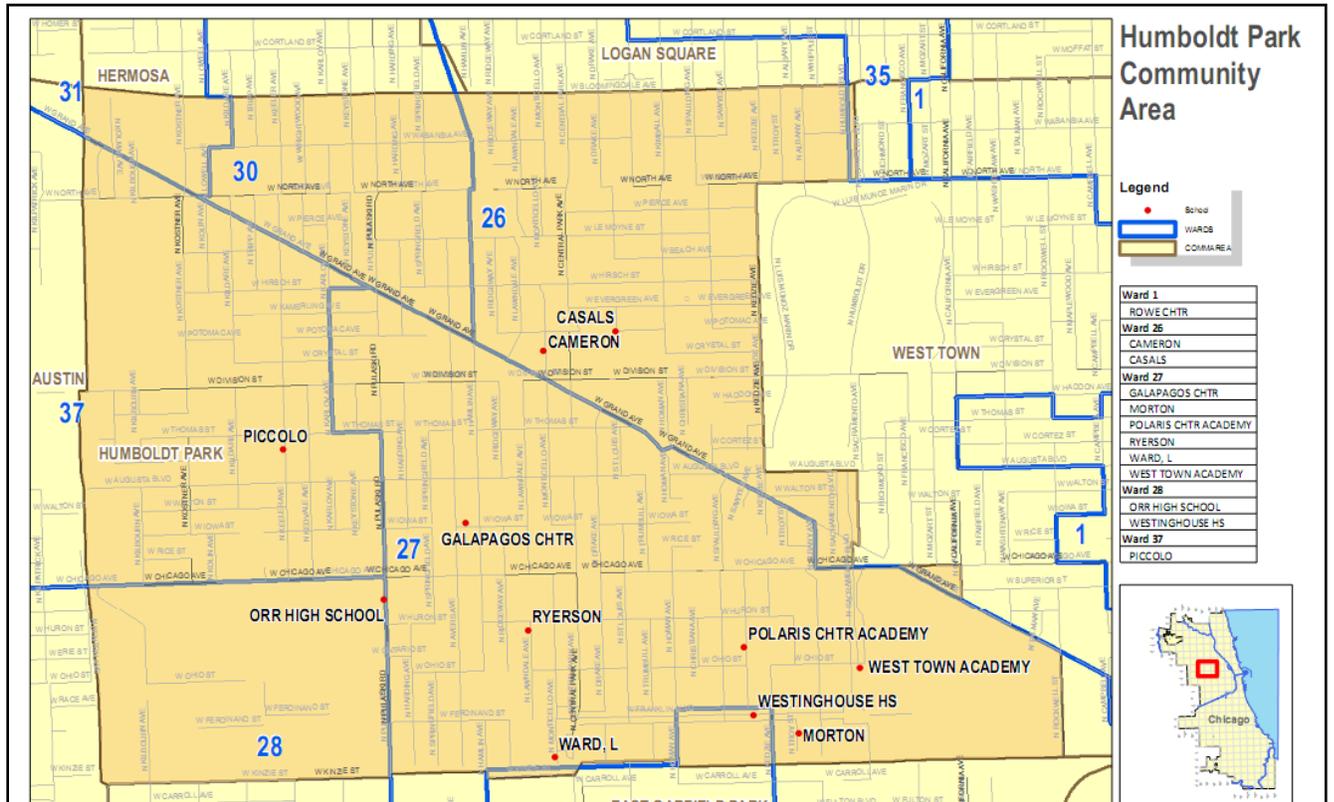
In 2003, the West Humboldt Park Development Council formed a Community Land Trust to build affordable homes on community owned land, thereby preserving long-term affordability. During the same time period, the Council also formed a Block Club network and has worked recently to form a Business Council. In 2006, the Council led formation of the “Healthy Communities Initiative” (HCI) that has resulted in a farmer’s market and healthy stores campaign. Through the Healthy Communities Initiative, the city-wide Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) has supported an organizer focused in West Humboldt Park, leveraging CLOCC’s organizing and research expertise and funding relationships. CLOCC is a nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program.

In 2007, the New Communities Program hired an outreach coordinator to focus exclusively in the West Humboldt Park area. This has facilitated numerous connections, for example the NCP Safety Committee is now planning a safe passage initiative for schools in the West Humboldt Park target area.

Blocks Together, a successful community organizing organization, has devoted a large share of its time to West Humboldt Park, providing training and support to parent leaders at several schools and advocating for more resources such as through House Bill 363, creating the Chicago Educational Facilities Taskforce, that that recently passed Senate Bill 630.

Chicago Commons is the leading pre-school program in the target area, serving 200 children at its Nia Family Center, combining Head Start, Pre-K and Child Care funding to offer full-day program using the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. YMCA Kelly Hall, opened in 2009, has become a key location for youth activities including sports and developmental activities. The YMCA and Chicago Commons both provide community schools support to several of the area schools in form of after school programs and parent resources.

IV. Educational Snapshot



The community currently houses the following CPS schools, including nine elementary schools and three high schools:

Elementary Schools

- Cameron Elementary (Pre-K- 8)
- Casals Elementary (Pre-K – 8)
- Galapagos Charter School (K – 8)
- Morton Career Academy (Pre- K – 8)
- Piccolo Specialty School (Pre- K – 8)
- Polaris Charter School (K – 4; goal is K-8)
- Ryerson Elementary (Pre- K – 8)
- Ward L Elementary School (Pre- K – 8)

High Schools

- Orr Academy High School
- Rowe-Clark Math and Science Academy
- Westinghouse Career Academy High School
- West Town Academy

V. Strategic Recommendations for Future State of Education

a. Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: West Humboldt Park will have a pipeline of quality school options from early childhood through high school that prepares students for post-secondary pathways

Desired Outcomes:

- 1.1 All West Humboldt Park families will have access to quality preschool educational opportunities both within CPS and in the community
- 1.2 West Humboldt Park families will understand the importance of quality early childhood education
- 1.3 Elementary schools in West Humboldt Park will lay the foundation for high school and post-secondary success by meeting the academic needs and interests of students
- 1.4 The West Humboldt Park community will have *real* and *acceptable* local high school options for all students, including high risk students and those not interested in traditional post-secondary pathways
- 1.5 West Humboldt Park families will be proud and eager to enroll their children in local schools
- 1.6 All West Humboldt Park schools will have extended instructional school days and school year

Goal 2: Schools will provide social, emotional, and health services and supports so that West Humboldt Park students are ready and able to learn.

Desired Outcomes:

- 2.1 All students and families will be ready to learn because they have access to programs and services that support mental, physical, and socio-emotional wellness
- 2.2 All schools will provide before school, after school, and summer academic, social and extra-curricular programming for students and their families
- 2.3 All West Humboldt Park students will be safe on their way to and from school and in school
- 2.4 All community resources within the schools will be coordinated and optimized to provide the most student impact

Goal 3: Transparent and ongoing communication will connect the schools, parents, and community members of West Humboldt Park

Desired Outcomes:

- 3.1 West Humboldt Park residents will have access to ongoing, relevant, and user-friendly information about neighborhood educational and enrichment opportunities
- 3.2 West Humboldt Park residents will access information on educational and enrichment opportunities
- 3.3 West Humboldt Park residents will understand the unique features of each of the educational options available in the community

Goal 4: Schools, neighborhood organizations and businesses, residents, and parents will be partners in the education of West Humboldt students

Desired Outcomes:

- 4.1 West Humboldt Park parents will engage in the educational life of their children
- 4.2 West Humboldt Park schools, community-based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and political officials will collaborate to create an accessible, cohesive network of partnerships and alliances

b. Action Plan - To accomplish the plan’s goals, the CAC has proposed a series of actions for each of the outcomes. The underlying assumption driving this action plan is that the CAC will be a true partner with CPS, working collaboratively to achieve academic excellence for all WHP children and youth.

Goal 1 - West Humboldt Park will have a pipeline of quality school options from early childhood through high school that prepares students for postsecondary pathways	
Outcome 1.1 - All WHP families will have access to quality preschool educational opportunities both within CPS and in the community	
Action a:	Define consistent school readiness outcomes across West Humboldt Park
Action b:	Have full day Pre-K options available for all West Humboldt Park students
Action c:	Collect data on existing pre-K resources in schools and the community
Action d:	Identify existing early childhood providers and resources, both formal and informal, in the community and create a repository
Action e:	Convene an annual consortium of West Humboldt Park early childhood providers
Action f:	Work with CPS Pre-K programs in West Humboldt Park schools to ensure that they are using consistent protocol to refer families to qualified community providers when there is no space in CPS Pre-K programs
Outcome 1.2 - WHP families will understand the importance of quality early childhood education	
Action a:	Identify strategies to target parents of young children who are the most difficult to reach
Action b:	Hold community forums to promote the importance of early childhood education
Action c:	Provide parenting classes
Action d:	Continue Parent Social Club to engage parents whose young children are not currently enrolled in a early childhood education program
Outcome 1.3 - Elementary schools in WHP will lay the foundation for high school and post-secondary success by meeting the academic needs and interests of students	
Action a:	Ensure that all elementary schools are meeting the 5 fundamentals for school success (continue learning walks, community meetings with Chief of Schools and principals, etc)
Action b:	Identify CPS and community educational enhancement opportunities and bring to West Humboldt schools
Action c:	Strengthen connections between the high schools and the elementary schools – (ex. more alignment of curriculum)
Action d:	Encourage schools to identify what differentiates them from each other and encourage students and parents to enroll in the schools that are best aligned with their needs/interests
Action e:	Create a referral mechanism that is connected to pre-K to help parents identify elementary choices that best fit their children’s needs
Action f:	Research and study various types of schools and teaching styles to find best fit for West Humboldt Park



Collaboration between CPS and CAC



CAC-driven



CPS driven

Goal 1 (continued)	
Outcome 1.4 - The WHP community will have <i>real</i> and <i>acceptable</i> local high school options for all students, including high risk students and those not interested in traditional post-secondary pathways	
Action a:	Hold ongoing meetings with leadership of Orr, Rowe Clarke, Westinghouse, and West Town to identify ways to maximize enrollment of students from the community
Action b:	Closely follow Westinghouse’s plan to create a pipeline with Morton and other two schools in the community as a potential model for Orr and Rowe Clark
Action c:	Link curriculum and programs across elementary and high schools so there can be a seamless transition between schools
Action d:	Create opportunities for students to engage with each other across all West Humboldt Park schools (ex. mentoring, tutoring)
Action e:	Be part of the discussion with AUSL as they identify career/vocational tracks at Orr that are most appropriate for West Humboldt Park students
Action f:	Identify ways to meet academic and social needs of at-risk students within West Humboldt Park
Outcome 1.5 - WHP families will be proud and eager to enroll their children in local schools	
Action a:	Each of the schools in West Humboldt Park will be able to identify their strengths and what makes them unique
Action b:	Encourage schools to market more to the community (ex. create brochures for each school)
Action c:	Work with leadership of each of the West Humboldt Park schools to help get the message out about the schools
Action d:	Re-introduce Orr so it is not looked at as the dropout or default school of the community
Action e:	Work with AUSL so the community understands their role in schools more clearly
Outcome 1.6 - All WHP schools will have extended instructional school days and school year	
Action a:	Work with CPS to understand how this will be implemented
Action b:	Provide opportunities within the community for CPS to explain implementation details to parents, teachers, and other key stakeholders
Goal 2 - Schools will provide social, emotional, and health services and supports so that WHP students are ready and able to learn	
Outcome 2.1 - Students and families will have access to programs and services that support mental, physical and socio-emotional wellness	
Action a:	Work with CPS and community providers to ensure that evidence-based preventive services and programs are in place at each school in WHP to deal with discipline and behavioral issues (ex. anger management and conflict resolution programming such as restorative justice, peace circles, etc)
Action b:	Work with community organizations to reinforce the values and programs promoted in the schools
Action c:	Ensure that each school in West Humboldt Park has behavioral health services in place to address the needs of all students, not just those with IEPs
Action d:	Introduce recess and/or exercise in all elementary schools
Action e:	Work with CPS to ensure that each school in WHP offers healthy food options for students
Action f:	Find ways to leverage health centers across all schools
Action g:	Identify community partners to provide mental health services to families



Collaboration between CPS and CAC



CAC-driven



CPS driven

Goal 2 (continued)	
Outcome 2.2- All schools will provide students and their families academic, social, and extracurricular programming before and after school and in the summer	
Action a:	Work with CPS and community organizations to make all West Humboldt Park schools part of the Community Schools Initiative
Outcome 2.3 - All WHP students will be safe on their way to and from school and in school	
Action a:	Engage New Community Project (NCP) Safety Committee to evaluate existing safety initiatives, such as CeaseFire, Community Watch, and Safe Schools Network and make recommendations to CAC and CPS about ways to improve effectiveness and alignment within the West Humboldt Park community
Action b:	Expand relationship with CPD (CAPs, DAC, EAVI, etc.)
Outcome 2.4 - All community resources within the schools will be coordinated and optimized to increase their impact on student outcomes	
Action a:	Coordinate ongoing meetings of outside resource providers working in West Humboldt Park schools to discuss resource allocation and also sharing lessons learned about working with schools
Action b:	Identify a parent or community lead coordinator for each school
Action c:	Expand current restorative justice initiatives that are operating in local schools and expand to other schools in the community
Goal 3 - Transparent and ongoing communication will connect the schools, parents and community members of West Humboldt Park	
Outcome 3.1 - WHP residents will have access to ongoing, relevant, and user-friendly information about neighborhood educational and enrichment opportunities	
Action a:	Hold quarterly meetings of West Humboldt Park elementary and high school principals, CAC, and other key community stakeholders
Action b:	Have an annual celebratory summit of all people involved in the schools
Action c:	Find alternative methods of communication to reach parents in addition to those that are computer-based
Action d:	Chief of Schools will hold community meetings, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis
Outcome 3.2 - WHP residents will have access to information about educational and enrichment opportunities in CPS	
Action a:	Encourage CPS personnel to have updated information on the Parent Portal
Action b:	Hold trainings in the community to help parents and teachers navigate the CPS website and Parent Portal
Outcome 3.3 - WHP residents will understand the unique features of all the educational options available in the community	
Action a:	Work with schools to have learning walks, tours, open houses for parents and community members
Action b:	Help schools create marketing materials and put on Parent Portal and Humboldt Park Portal
Action c:	Create a community school resource guide to services, office info, size of school, philosophy on how children learn and school assets



Collaboration between CPS and CAC



CAC-driven



CPS driven

Goal 4- Schools, neighborhood organizations and businesses, residents, and parents, will be partners in the education of WHP students	
Outcome 4.1 - WHP will engage in the educational life of their children	
Action a:	Work collaboratively with the schools to identify ways to encourage more parent involvement in the schools.
Action b:	Identify ways to provide incentives to parent volunteers
Action c:	Identify funding streams to continue and expand on parent leadership training in the community
Action d:	Bring together schools to discuss effective parent engagement strategies
Action e:	CAC will identify and help implement models for parent engagement and involvement
Action f:	Build networking opportunities for parents across all West Humboldt Park schools (ex. Retreats, monthly meetings, WHP Parent Network)
Outcome 4.2 - WHP schools, community-based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations and political officials will collaborate to create an accessible, cohesive network of partnerships and alliances	
Action a:	Increase community representation on LSCs, PACs etc. (targeted representation)
Action b:	Build Orr alumni group
Action c:	Use NCP community resource guide as “go to” document and help distribute to community members
Action d:	Create “ask” list of what programs/services community organizations can provide schools in the community
Action e:	Create a connection with local businesses to encourage entrepreneurship amongst youth
Action f:	Connect youth with local Chamber of Commerce



Collaboration between CPS and CAC



CAC-driven



CPS driven

VI. Next Steps

The underlying assumption driving this action plan is that the CAC and CPS will be true partners, working collaboratively to achieve academic excellence for all WHP children and youth. The CAC intends to continue meeting on a regular basis and is committed to investing time and resources to this effort. We expect the following from CPS:

- CPS will appoint a CAC liaison to ensure ongoing collaboration between CPS and the CAC. This liaison will share critical information with the CAC and connect the CAC with appropriate CPS Departments to facilitate action steps.
- CPS and CAC will work collaboratively to identify resources and supports to implement the action plan.
- CPS leadership will meet twice yearly with CAC for updates with on status of action plan.
- CPS will include the CAC in major decisions related to schools in the WHP community. The CAC will be an active partner in any school action process, such as school closures, change of curricular focus, and turnarounds.