Needs Assessment:

MAYNARD EVANS HIGH SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Findings & recommendations from a cross-sector perspective

Prepared by
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CROSS-SECTORAL GOVERNANCE
In collaboration with
EVANS HIGH SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS

UNDER DIRECTION OF
DR. THOMAS A. BRYER
AND
BRANDY C. HILL, TEACHING ASSISTANT
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MAY 2, 2011

IN MEMORIAM
TINA DAVIA

Ms. Tina Davia, a thoughtful, hard-working graduate student and member of the Cross-Sectoral Governance class at UCF passed away on January 24, 2011. She will be missed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Evans High School is moving to a new location and will become the Evans Community School. A community school provides needed resources for students and parents, such as a medical clinic, arts/dance/language classes, and job/college resources. Teams of students, graduate students from the University of Central Florida (UCF) and Maynard Evans High School (Evans) International Baccalaureate (IB) students, joined together to complete a community needs assessment. Stakeholders across various sectors within the community--students, parents, teachers, faith organizations, and members of the community--participated in focus groups conducted by UCF graduate students and IB students.

This research was carried out over the course of approximately three months as part of a service learning project. Service learning is a type of hands-on experiential learning that encourages students to engage with the communities where they will live and work in the future (Tai-Seale, 2001). This joined up service learning project bridging graduate students with high school students is unique and may offer potential for similar educational opportunities in the future.

Background

The Pine Hills Community has a population of approximately 70,500 within 24,300 households, and a 6% growth expected by 2015. The unemployment rate is approximately 10.5% and 55% of residents are employed in retail, accommodation/food services, healthcare, construction, and finance, insurance and real estate. The median household income is $40,013; 43% of households earn less than $35,000 and there is a recent rise in single-parent households.

Maynard Evans High School serves the Pine Hills community. The graduation rate in 2009-2010 was 79.4%; this is slightly above the District and State average of 79%. It has been found that while the students at Evans High Schools are largely uncertain about their future career paths, they have expressed interest in a plethora of possible career fields and academic areas of interest.

Findings from Evans Stakeholders

This research identified five stakeholder groups with an interest in the future of Evans as it transitions from a traditional high school to a community school. These stakeholder groups are students attending Evans, their parents, Evans faculty, faith organizations located in the Pine Hills community, and members of the Pine Hills community. Through a series of focus groups, each of these stakeholder groups was given an opportunity to weigh-in on how Evans Community School could best support the academic success of its students.

The students highlighted a number of educational and career opportunities such as peer mentor/tutoring, interactive web classes (with the ability to live chat with peers), childcare, after-school counseling, and work-study/job shadowing programs on campus. The students were interested in health resources such as an extended-hours primary care clinic, basic healthcare, free flu shots, and physical exams that are required for participation in sports. Additional recreational options were requested such as better sports facilities and equipment for football, basketball, and cheerleading, a tennis team, a pool, and a dance studio and dance team. Other

potential resources described were more healthy food options, daycare center and better security on campus.

The parents discussed educational and career opportunities that would benefit their children such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, etiquette courses for students and parents, rites of passage/character-building sessions for students, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) courses for parents, and driver education classes. They believed that offering additional health resources and music programs would benefit the students. Also, it was suggested that partnerships with local universities would likely enhance the quality of programs offered at Evans Community School.

The Evans faculty suggested drug prevention programs, driver education, sexual education, and industry certifications. They emphasized the need for a child care center for students, faculty, and educational purposes. The faculty focus groups largely agreed on the need for a full time medical staff at the school, providing routine check-ups and other primary care services such as vision tests, STD testing, and prenatal care. An expansion of afterschool activities was important to the faculty. Finally, the faculty highlighted the need for the creation of mentor programs and establishing liaisons universities and colleges around the area.

The faith-based community assumes that a growing partnership with Evans will be beneficial not only to students but to the entire community. They feel certain that the services they provide will orient students toward a positive path. The faith leaders proposed that a passage to trust be created. It was noted that there was not a high degree of cohesiveness in the faith-based community; Haitian pastors are closely tied to other Haitian pastors and the same for other ethnicities.

The community stakeholders stressed the need for adult and technical education, after-hours GED courses or tutoring, and access to a job center. They also suggested the need for a resource center that could provide guidance on grant and scholarship writing techniques as well as a full service library. As for health resources, they noted the need for additional vaccinations, routine visits, and accessibility to general healthcare such as dental and vision care as well as emergency care to help the community with minor health emergencies. Also, the addition of arts activities and the promotion of volunteerism were discussed.

Recommendations

The research team analyzed the stakeholder recommendations and suggestions as well as scholarly literature research and created a set of recommendations for the Evans Community School. The purpose of these recommendations is assisting the new Evans Community School in becoming a sustainable community school with significant and meaningful participation from the community. The recommendations are summarized below.

1. **To Promote Student Educational Success**
   a. Provide more tutoring opportunities and with smaller tutoring groups.
   b. Increase availability of transportation for students to participate in afterschool activities.
   c. Tailor curriculum (including electives and career training classes) and afterschool activities to students' interest.
   d. Make greater use of technology in delivery of instructions.
   e. Provide basic healthcare services, STD testing and counseling, and women's health services.

     f.   Offer on-campus childcare to students, families, faculty and staff.

2. **To Engage and Provide Resources to Parents**
   a. Continue funding a position for a community liaison.
   b. Fund a position to act as a liaison to parents.
   c. Hold workshops and classes designed to improve parents' skills in areas that will promote trust-building and collaborative competency.

3. **Engage and Partner with Faith Organizations**
   a. Develop mechanisms for effective and ongoing communication.
   b. Understand the interests and concerns of the faith organizations with respect to partnering with the school.
   c. Build strategies that meet the interests of all parties.
   d. Establish specific targeted goals that can be accomplished in partnership with faith organizations.
   e. Goals should be established in such a way they do not appear to be dictated by school officials.

4. **Engage Community Members**
   a. Focus on student achievement.
   b. Gain the trust of the community by engaging members of the community to participate.
   c. Continue to reach out to leaders and members of the Pine Hills Community and Evans Community School.
   d. Ensure open communication among all engaged members of the community and Evans Community School leaders.
   e. Conduct an information-sharing session and/or Community Leadership Forum.
   f. Maintain continual feedback among the stakeholders and Evans Community School Leaders.

5. **Sustaining Relationships**
   a. Establish a governance panel consisting of representatives from diverse stakeholder groups (e.g. business, faith, school, parents) to ensure buy-in.
   b. Develop a community capacity building network that meets the needs of the community, is inclusive of stakeholders, and grants final decision authority to the governance panel.
   c. Hold a retreat for stakeholder groups to facilitate strategic planning.
   d. Diffuse responsibilities across stakeholders to optimize buy-in and prevent dependence on any one set of stakeholders for the success of the school.
   e. Organize non-academic community events to develop social ties and develop trust.
   f. Establish a grant-writing group to secure future and continuing funding.

Conclusion

Based on our research conducted through the various focus groups and the literature review, building trust between Evans High School and Evans Community School stakeholders should be a primary objective. That is accomplished through building relationships between the school and community stakeholders.

There are a number of opportunities for Evans Community School to build relationships with community partners that will ultimately benefit students and promote their academic achievement. In particular, the faith community in the Pine Hills area can provide educational support *and* social support. Additionally, local businesses can provide opportunities for students to take part in shadowing programs and internships, which in addition to providing a safe place for students to spend their outside-of-school hours, can promote the future career and professional success of Evans students.

The key to making Evans an effective community school that will serve as a model for future schools is building and sustaining relationships with partners in the Pine Hills community.

CONTENTS

FIGURES

1. Introduction

This research seeks to provide a community needs assessment to inform the transformation of Evans High School into Evans Community School. A community school places needed resources for students and parents in a centralized location, helping reduce or mitigate factors that might hinder student academic performance and later professional achievement.

To accomplish the research goal, teams of students, graduate students from the University of Central Florida (UCF) and Maynard Evans High School (Evans) International Baccalaureate (IB) students, joined together to complete a community needs assessment. Specifically, the student researchers were charged with learning from the community what resources would best support the educational success of Evans students. The UCF graduate students were enrolled in a course entitled Cross-Sectoral Governance (PAD 6825), which examined the relationships between governments, nonprofit organizations, volunteer associations, and private businesses as they work together to enhance quality of life in our communities. Each of the Evans students who participated in this research was enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Evans. The IB program is an advanced curriculum designed to prepare students for college beyond the freshman level as well as immediately following high school graduation. This report sets forth observations from these focus groups and concludes with a set of recommendations based on what was learned from the stakeholders.

1.1 SERVICE Learning

This research was conducted as a service learning module as part of the Cross-Sectoral Governance course. Service learning is a type of hands-on experiential learning that allows students to engage with the communities where they will live and work in the future (Tai-Seale, 2001). In this way, service learning provides opportunities for self-realization, for gaining insight into the importance of civic involvement, and for seeing the impact of service as a meaningful contribution to the community (Ash & Clayton, 2004). Service learning is the practical application to theory (Robinson, 2000).

Service learning has been shown to increase social capital and civic engagement (Campbell, 2000). This is achieved in a number of ways. First, service learning imparts leadership skills, communication skills, and relationship-building skills (Hunter & Brisban, 2000). Service learning also increases student knowledge in other key areas such as awareness of the social problems particular to the area, public relations, and the policy-making process (Rocha, 2000). There are no known prior instances of graduate and high school students working together as part of a service learning project. Thus, in this way, the research collaboration undertaken here is unique.

1.2 STRUCTURE of this Research

This research was carried out over the course of approximately three months by 25 graduate students enrolled in the Cross-Sectoral Governance course who worked with 18 high

school students in the IB program at Evans. Together, these student researchers conducted focus groups (i.e., moderated group discussions) with various stakeholder groups across sectors within the Pine Hills community--students, parents, teachers, faith organizations, and members of the community. Pairing the IB students with UCF graduate students accomplished several goals including but not limited to (1) the IB students provided local knowledge of the school and community to the UCF graduate students, (2) the IB students helped the UCF graduate students develop a short-term trust relationship with the focus group participants, (3) this research provided a learning opportunity for conducting research for both the IB students as well as the UCF graduate students.

The purpose of these focus groups was to address the following questions in connection with understanding the needs of the community with respect to the new community school.

- What factors outside of school time facilitate and/or hinder student success in school?
- What facility and human resources exist for occupying students outside of school time?
- How does the faith community in Pine Hills perceive their role in relation to youth educational achievement?
- What does the community want out of a community school?
- How are parents of Evans students currently utilizing school resources to engage with their child's learning?

The focus group questions were developed by Dr. Thomas Bryer, who is an Assistant Professor at UCF and professor for the Cross-Sectoral Governance class at UCF, and Brandy Hill, Ph.D. student in Public Affairs at UCF.

At each focus group, one student researcher served as a moderator and at least one high school student researcher served as a recorder or note-taker. The moderator was charged with asking the questions to the stakeholder group. The recorder was charged with recording the participants' responses to the questions posed by the moderator, thereby creating a record of the focus groups' answers. The answers were collected from the recorders and compiled by the UCF graduate student researchers.

Shortly after concluding the focus groups, the IB student researchers were asked to help formulate recommendations based on observations from the various focus groups. Those recommendations are encompassed in the final section of this report together with the recommendations offered by the UCF student researchers. Also included in this report is the in-depth literature review conducted by the UCF graduate students of the Cross-Sectoral Governance class. The literature review entails research on the community school model, parental engagement, and faith organization-school partnerships.

1.3 THE Community School Model

A community school is "a place, a set of partnerships, and a strategy for building communities where learning happens" (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson, 2010, p 3). Some of the strategies aimed at building such communities are resource sharing between school faculty, parents and community partners, the integration of community-based learning into the school curriculum, expanded networks of adult support, and preventive health and social services. The desired results are "more successful students, families, school, and communities" (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson, 2010, p 4) indicated by improvement in areas such as student aspirations, community strength, student attendance and graduation rates, and overall student grades.

Does the Community School Model Work?

> *"Seen as neighborhood hubs, community schools typically stay open after school hours and on weekends. They usually offer health, afterschool, and family support services, and many also provide adult education, ESL, and other programs for parents and neighborhood residents"* **(Warren, 2005, p 139).**

The Brown Center on Education Policy introduced and analyzed the Harlem Children's Zone and Promise Neighborhoods in an effort to provide insight around the question of whether the community school model works.

The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), a non-profit organization, "funds and operates a neighborhood-based system of education and social services for the children of low-income families in a 100 block area in Harlem, New York" (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 1). Based on the principle that "both effective, achievement-oriented schools and strong social and community services [are needed] to support the educational achievement of children in poverty" (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 1), the HCZ system includes a multitude of services for students, parents, and the community including (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 1):

- Early childhood programs with parenting classes.
- Public charter schools.
- Academic advisors and afterschool programs for students attending regular public schools.
- A support system for former HCZ students who have enrolled in college.
- Health components including:
  - A fitness program.
  - Asthma management.
  - A nutrition program.
- Neighborhood services including:
  - Organization of tenant associations.
  - One-on-one counseling to families.
  - Foster care prevention programs.
  - Community centers.
  - Employment and technology center for teens and adults.

The HCZ is the model for President Obama's "Promise Neighborhoods Initiative," which seeks to "replicate the HCZ in 20 cities across the country" through federal funding provided by Congress to the U.S. Department of Education.

The question explored here is whether the HCZ works. Academic improvement data was collected on students, who through a lottery won entrance to the program over those who did not, the analysis of which lent credibility to the efficacy of the HCZ program. Based on this data, it is summarily concluded that the HCZ does work. One of the important factors not considered by Dobbie and Fryer's research, though, was the HCZ's success when compared to other NYC charter schools. To properly conduct such an analysis, the article explained, "random assignment of students to charter schools" would have to be studied. However, such randomization does not exist and is not likely to occur, as parents in NYC are able to select the

charter school they desire their children to attend (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 4). As a result, the influences of "schools and student backgrounds…cannot be separated definitely" (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 4). Thus, the authors ask as well as answer their question as follows: "Does the HCZ produce exceptional academic achievement? If it does, that is promising for Promise Neighborhoods. If it doesn't, it isn't*"* (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 4).

Whitehurst and Croft (2010) utilized the data collected from the New York State Department of Education, which provided test score information for New York City charter schools including the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy. Of the available data, which included subject, grade year, and calendar year, fourteen charter schools, located in Manhattan and Bronx, were compared to the HCZ Promise Academy. The results did not particularly support the notion that investments in charters translated into higher academic achievement. Based on a comparison with other public charter schools, "the inescapable conclusion is that the HCZ Promise Academy is a middling New York City charter school" (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 6). The data showed that HCZ's Promise Academy had been outperformed, in terms of academic achievement, by other public charter schools that did not "depend on community and social services to achieve their academic mission" (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 7). Nevertheless, Whitehurst and Croft pointed out, charter schools in New York City as a group typically produced superior gains for students over those attending traditional New York City public schools. According to the authors, it is important to note from the results of their study that:

> The most powerful educational effects over which we have any societal control occur within the walls of schools. They are the effects produced by good teachers, effective curriculum, and the changes in leadership, management, culture, and time to learn that are incorporated into schools that beat the odds, including successful charter schools (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010, p 7).

Models of Success & Lessons Learned

To further our research, we examined Warren's case-study of Newark, New Jersey's Quitman Street School, a successful community school using the Children's Aid Society organizational model, to elaborate on the structure of community schools (2005). At the time of the study, the Quitman School utilized a variety of programs in order to meet the needs of its community and students. These included what they termed a free extended day program featuring homework assistance, extracurricular classes, and recreational activities. Some of these classes were offered through partnerships with private sector partners. Other programs were a full-service clinic funded mostly by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, which provided no-cost primary-care services not only to Quitman students but also to their siblings and other neighborhood children. The afterschool and health-clinic services were provided by dedicated staff, relieving teachers of undue burden and responsibility, and constant coordination and communication between the teachers and these services was fostered and encouraged in order to meet the needs of the students; this was accomplished through what they termed whole-staff meetings, which were intended to include all faculty and staff. Moreover, in an effort to spatially reinforce the notion of a complete operative reformulation of the school, the school utilized the first floor of the Quitman School to house the afterschool program, clinic, and parent room. Yet, despite all of these efforts, Warren informed that "physical integration proved easier than changing the way teachers operated," with then Principal Jacquelyn Hartsfield adding that "there were a lot of teachers who were [there] that did not need to be, [and] who really inhibited

children from learning" (Warren, 2005, p 142). The strategy used to encourage the expected change among teachers centered on ensuring the teachers that they would be supported along the way. Examples of such included offerings of "resources like books, practical assistance, the use of a photocopier," and "a welcome basket at the start of the school year" (Warren, 2005, p 142). The marked progress was improved relations between teachers and community-school staff, especially in the problem-solving approaches taken. No longer were problems addressed from one point and perspective, rather the approach was more holistic and often involved educational, social, and health-care staff. One staff nurse practitioner pointed to the implementation of staff development programs as key in the development of improved coordination and relations between various members of the Quitman School staff.

An initial problem faced by the Quitman School during its reformulation was community resistance and mistrust. Two key members of the school staff with roots in the neighborhood were identified and found they were able to build trust with the community (Warren, 2005, p 143). Once this trust had begun to build, efforts were made to increase the level of parent involvement at the school. One such effort required parents enrolling their children in the extended day program to volunteer six hours per month at the school; another offered paid group leader positions where parents would serve as teaching staff assistants in the afterschool classrooms. Of course, in order to provide such a broad range of services and activities to such an extended group of students, children, and community members, the Quitman School needed to raise a substantial amount of money. Large amounts of this funding came from partner members from the private community and Federal initiatives.

In sum, Warren (2005) noted that the Quitman School possessed the features associated with successful community schools that "build social capital around the holistic provision of services to children and their families." Warren continued by noting "To get to this point, Quitman had to build trust among teachers and parents but also had to challenge them to change practices and to take on new roles" (Warren, 2005, p 145). The take-away lessons from the Quitman School case study include (Warren, 2005, pp 165-168):

- Independent community organizations play a critical role as builders of social capital.
- There is a demonstrated need to invest resources such as full-time staff in building social capital.
- Issues of power and inequality between the school and other stakeholders need to be dealt with explicitly.
- Effective strategies for working through mistrust and conflicts need to be identified.
- Improving social capital can be achieved through increasing parent and community involvement.
- Reform of governance from "being imposed from the top" toward a more collaborate effort between "experts" and the "engaged community of stakeholders,"

Warren noted such efforts allow strategies that are more in line with "their values, interests, and understanding of local conditions. He concluded that this sort of "Authentic participation creates a sense of ownership of the change process and a commitment to making it a success" (2005, pp. 167). Accordingly, recommendations for policymakers considering adopting the community school model include (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson, 2010, pp. 19-22):

- "Define and support a community school strategy through laws, regulations and guidelines."
- "Provide incentives ... that move schools and community partners toward results-driven public/private partnerships."

- "Fund site coordination and site coordinators in support of community schools."
- "Support the work of intermediary organizations that help align and leverage resources and integrate funding streams to get results."
- "Promote interdepartmental coordination in support of community schools at the federal, state, community, and district levels."
- "Fund professional development that enables people working in school, with community partners, and in federal and state agencies to learn how community schools work and how policy can support them."

2. Background

Pine Hills as a community, and Evans High School in particular, have been the subjects of significant recent attention by public officials, business leaders, and community leaders. It is clear, with the upcoming transformation of Evans to a community school and the re-development opportunities along the main corridors of Pine Hills, that vital and rejuvenating change is coming. Important challenges remain, though, from which the change is emanating.

2.1 THE Pine Hills Community

In November 2010, the Pine Hills Business Redevelopment Task Force released a report, "Neighborhood Economic Development and Market Analysis of the Pine Hills Area," that provided a comprehensive review of the Pine Hills population including characteristics of low-to-very low income, limited educational achievement, population growth, and a recent rise in single-parent households. Core demographics of the community include (p ii):

- Population of approximately 70,500 across 24,300 households, with a 6% growth expected by 2015.
- Unemployment approximately 10.5%.
- 55% of residents employed in retail, accommodation/food services, healthcare, construction, and finance, insurance and real estate.
- Median household income $40,013; 43% of households earned less than $35,000.

The Pine Hills Business Redevelopment Task Force established plans for neighborhood and community revitalization, which centered on the future Evans Community School. Recommendations advanced for the future of Pine Hills consisted of creating a town center, beautifying and enhancing business development in the main corridor around Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads, developing partnerships with the Lynx bus system to enhance intermodal transit opportunities, and strengthening residential neighborhoods.

2.2 MAYNARD Evans High School

Evans High School serves the Pine Hills community. Between 2004 and 2010, the school received grades of "F" three times and of "D" four times. The graduation rate at the school in 2009-2010 was 79.4%, which represented a 5.4% positive change from the previous year, and an even more significant improvement from 2006-2007 (49%) and 2007-2008 (66%).   The graduation rate is slightly above the District and State average of 79%.

Recent FCAT scores revealed an achievement gap across certain demographics. In the subject of reading, 20% of ninth graders scored three or better in 2010. A score of three indicates that the students demonstrated only partial mastery of the test content. Broken down, white students scored better than black students by twenty percentage points and better than Hispanic students by ten percentage points; male and female students achieved about equally; free or reduced lunch students performed less well than those students not on free or reduced lunch by a factor of ten percentage points.

In the subject of math, 40% of ninth graders scored three or better in 2010. Broken down, white students scored better than black students by nineteen points and better than Hispanic students by ten points. Female students performed better than males by five points. Students that received free or reduced-price lunches performed less well than those students not on the free or reduced lunch program by a factor of five points.

There is little disparity across demographics reported in science scores for 11th graders in 2010. Thirteen percent of students scored three or better. No writing scores were reported in 2009 or 2010.

In addition to these scores and achievement gaps, a survey conducted in Fall 2010 by the Pine Hills Task Force found that students at Evans were largely uncertain about their future career paths. Student respondents (n=334) to the survey expressed interest in a plethora of possible career fields and academic areas of interest. The majority of students expressed a desire to attend community college, attend vocational/tech school, join a branch of the military, or pursue an advanced degree. The survey was not structured in such a way to determine which of these options are most desirable amongst students. A small majority of students expressed a plan to continue living in Pine Hills after graduation from high school, and an even smaller majority thought they would take advantage of a career or educational training center located outside of school grounds if such a facility were available.

Evans Signage

3. Findings from Evans Stakeholders

This research identified five stakeholder groups with an interest in the future of Evans as it transitions from a traditional high school to a community school. Those stakeholder groups included students attending Evans, their parents, Evans faculty, faith organizations located in the Pine Hills community, and members of the Pine Hills community.

Through a series of focus groups, each of these stakeholder groups was given an opportunity to weigh-in on how Evans Community School could best support the academic success of its students.

3.1 STUDENTS

Seven focus groups, including 116 students, were conducted at Evans during school hours. Students in the 9th through 11th grades comprised the significant majority (92%) of the students who participated in the focus groups. This was based on the fact that students currently in the 12th grade would not be attending the new Evans Community School.

Figure 1. Student Focus Group Participants by Grade Level
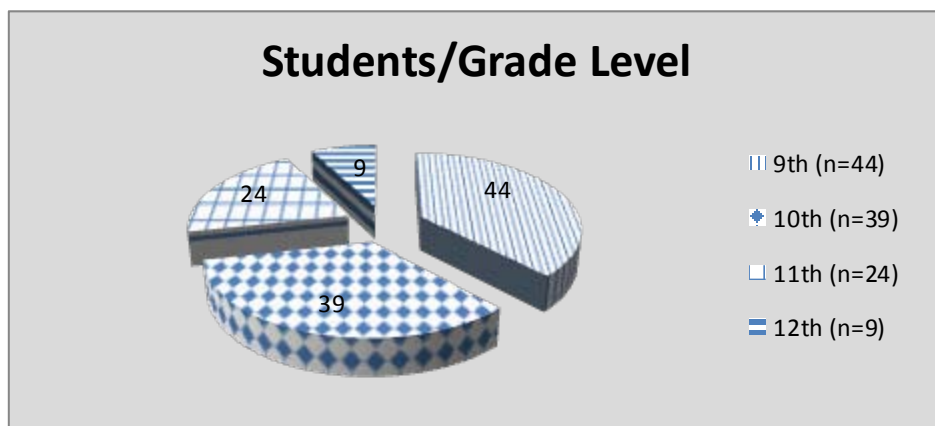
The questions posed to the students were formulated primarily to understand what factors outside of school time facilitated and/or hindered student success in school; what resources in the community facilitated and/or hindered student success; and what Evans students wanted from a community school.

Factors Outside School that Facilitate or Hinder Student Success

To the question of what factors outside of school time facilitate and/or hinder student success in school, most students responded that they either log-on to Facebook, Myspace, or Twitter when they first arrive home from school. Others stated they text friends, watch television, hang out with friends, sleep, and/or play video games.

When asked what activities they thought facilitated or hindered their success in school students mentioned such negative influences as parents fighting, "mean girls", and high school gossip among the main distractions in their lives. These distractions were reported to negatively impacte their success in school as well as their motivation to succeed academically.

Figure 2. Factors Outside School that Interfere with Educational Success Reported by Students

- *Friends*
- *Social / Night Clubs*
- *Noisy Places*
- *Social Networking*
- *Phones*
- *Lack of encouragement / Support from Parents*
- *Stress from Home Environment*

Conversely, students reported that there were factors that helped or encouraged their academic success in school. Some students cited spending time with older siblings, cousins, teachers, and parents as factors in their school success. Based on the assumption that completing assigned homework contributes to a student's academic success, which did not elicit disagreement, students were asked when they completed their homework. Many respondents reported that they would try their best to finish homework while in school, others reported that they finished it after school or on the weekends, when they could get a chance to use the internet (Google search), or whenever they could squeeze it into their schedule, and some reported not doing any homework at all. When asked if homework was done with teachers, most of the students laughed. They reported that homework was done alone, with peers, older siblings, friends, and sometimes with the tutors provided on campus. Many respondents also referenced Google as a source of help for homework. Conspicuously absent from the list was the response that students received help from their parents.

One organization specifically mentioned as helping students was ELEVATE Orlando. ELEVATE Orlando is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides educational support to students in public Orange County schools including Evans. ELEVATE Orlando provides on- and off-campus afterschool activities and provides transportation home from the school campus.

Figure 3. Factors Outside School that Help Educational Success Reported by Students

- *Friends*
- *Family*
- *Coaches*
- *Probation Officers*
- *Tutors*
- *YMCA*
- *Co-Athletes*
- *Internet / Google*
- *ELEVATE Orlando*

Resources in the Community

In connection with understanding what facility and human resources exist for occupying students outside of school time, the focus group moderator asked student participants what time they typically returned home after the end of the school day. Respondents in lower grades showed a marked difference in times they reached home compared to those in higher grades. Students in grades 9-10 showed an average time of arriving home anywhere between 2:45 pm to 9:45 pm. Students in grades 11-12 reported arriving home anywhere between 9:00 pm to 12:00 midnight with some not going home at all, which raised the question of what students were doing between the time they were dismissed from school (at approximately 2:30 pm) and the time they arrived home. Students reported that they would "hang out" with friends, go to local shops and fast food restaurants (McDonalds & Church's Chicken, in particular), or would participate in afterschool sports or night clubs.

Students' Vision for the Community School

Students were asked what type of resources they would like to see included in the community school. Specifically, students were asked what types of educational and career opportunities, health resources, and recreational opportunities should, in their opinion, be included in the new community school.

Educational and Career Opportunities

Evans students highlighted a number of educational and career opportunities they would like to see included at the new community school. Some common responses to the prompt suggested that many students would like to see peer mentor/tutoring, interactive web classes (with the ability to live chat with peers), childcare, after school counseling, and work study/job shadowing programs on campus. They believed these activities would assist in the success of every student at Evans High School. Other responses include:
- Business classes
- Finance training
- Home economics
- Culinary classes (and other classes related to hospitality industry training / certification)
- African culture classes
- Foreign language classes
- Sex education & health classes
- Parenting skills classes
- Driver's education
- Auto mechanic classes
- Lower student-to-teacher ratio
- Medical career training
- College preparation / application counseling
- Internship / shadowing opportunities
- Technology resources (computer labs, laptops, etc.)
- Study hall during school hours
- Fieldtrips to college campuses / college recruiting

Health Resources

When first asked what health resources students would like to see at the new community school, many students appeared unsure of how to respond to the question. This may suggest a lack of understanding on the part of students as to what a community school entails, and what a community school can offer in terms of resources. Moderators explained that other schools adopting the community school model have included such health resources as primary care clinics and on-staff nurse practitioners. With that explanation, students were able to offer a host of suggestions on what they thought should be included in the new Evans Community School. Responses included:

- Extended hours primary care clinic
- Basic healthcare (providing Tylenol, etc.)
- Free flu shots
- Physical exams required for participation in sports
- Testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STD)
- STD counseling
- Availability of feminine hygiene products
- Pregnancy tests
- Psychologist / mental health counselor

Recreational Opportunities

Many students reported a desire for more recreational opportunities to be offered on school campus. Better sports facilities and equipment for football, basketball, and cheerleading were among the common responses for increasing recreational opportunities at the new community school. Having competitive sports teams was seen by the students as contributing to overall school spirit, and perhaps overall interest in school. A few students voiced the opinion that all sports should receive equal attention from the school as well as equal funding. In addition to promoting the major sports at the school, students expressed desire for:

- Tennis courts and tennis team
- Pool and swimming team
- Dance studio and dance team
- Step team
- Band equipment
- Gym / Fitness center

Other Resources

So as not to limit responses to the categories just identified, students were asked if there were any other resources they would like to see included at the new community school. Other resources Evans students reported they would like at the new community school include:

- Better food, vending, and dining facilities, and lower food prices
- More healthful food options
- Daycare center
- Pep rallies
- Cleaner campus

- Better security on campus
- Self-defense classes
- More busses / transportation home for afterschool activities
- Lockers

Resource Utilization

Finally, students were asked if there was any reason they would not choose to use any of the mentioned resources. Here, transportation issues emerged as the primary reason why students reported they would not use resources, even if they were offered on school campus. Without a safe and reliable way of traveling to and from school campus during afterschool hours, students felt that they simply would not be able to use resources that may be offered at the new community school.

3.2 Parents

Parents were identified as an essential stakeholder group. For that reason, parents whose children attended Evans were asked to participate in a focus group. The first attempt to have parents participate in a focus group was accomplished by holding a focus group during a regularly scheduled Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) meeting. Only five parents participated in that focus group. The second attempt to reach parents was made by convening a focus group at a local church. Evans parents as well as the community at large were made aware of that meeting. No parents, however, attended.

3.2.1 A Review of Literature on Parental Involvement

There is a massive amount of scholarly literature that discusses the importance and benefits of parental involvement in children's education both domestically and internationally. For example, Jan Heystek's (2003) analysis of the South African educational policy requirement of parental involvement in school governance found that Black African students and predominantly Black African schools in South Africa were plagued with the same problems that are found in many inner city schools in the United States. These problems include poor facilities, drugs, and violence in the community and in the homes, shortage of teachers, and historical, cultural, and ethnic tensions in the broader society.

Another challenge to parental involvement is the breakdown of the American family. "As the stability of the American family has declined in the past four decades, researchers have become increasingly concerned about the degree to which parents are involved (uninvolved) in their children's education" (Jeynes 2003, p 202). This statement has far reaching implications for the African American communities in which a significant proportion of households are headed by single parents. Persistent common themes in the literature relate to parental involvement in teaching and learning, trust, and school-parent-community partnerships. Such literature provides a framework that informs strategies for improving parental involvement in minority communities and schools such as the Pine Hills community and the emerging Evans Community School.

Conceptualization of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in assisting their children with homework, motivating and encouraging them, attending school functions, setting high academic expectations, and valuing the importance of education is perhaps the most significant cross-cutting aspect of parental involvement in the academic sphere of their children's lives, i.e, assisting with homework (Heystek, 2003; Oliver, Leeming, and Dwyer, 1998; Jeynes, 2003; Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). Oliver et al (1998) found that parental assistance in homework assignments "provided a stimulus" for dialog with their children beyond the curriculum (p 146). Although Oliver et al (1998) focused on the parental role of sex education, they still found that when parents helped their children with homework, children were more likely to complete and return assignments. Furthermore, Jeynes' (2003) meta-analysis of 20 studies which included a study group of nearly 12,000 subjects found that parental involvement plays a significant positive role in children's academic performance, which has positive implications for urban educators and parents.

Discussion & Broader Implications

Institutional structures and opportunities, i.e., procedural changes, conferences, etc., must be put in place to encourage parental involvement, and that parental input must be welcomed and valued (Heystek, 2003; Oliver et al, 1998; Moore-Thomas and Day-Vines, 2010; Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). For example, studies by Moore-Thomas and Day-Vines (2010) and Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey (2010) showed African American parents lacked trust in institutions of authority due to historical ethnic/racial tension and due to their own bad experiences in school. That lack of trust in institutions may be due to their lack of literacy competency which is often required to understand school governance (Heystek, 2003). Trust is very important in forming critical school-parent-community alliances and parents only get involved when they want to criticize the schools and teachers; this lack of trust often leads to blaming and victimization which in turn is counterproductive to growth and alliance-building Heystek, 2003; Moore-Thomas and Day-Vines, 2010).

Increased parental involvement in school functions (i.e. workshops) in which parents improve their listening and communication skills should be encouraged (Heystek, 2003; Oliver et al, 1998; Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). These workshops can also be centers of improving parental literacy and "It should be the priority of schools to improve this area of parental participation, as this would undoubtedly improve the standard of [students'] education" (Heystek 2003, p 338). School educators and counselors should also be encouraged to develop innovative support systems and solve "infrastructural concerns" (p 54-55) such as limited school services and restrictive practices that limit school-family-community participation. Increased cultural awareness should also be encouraged through "cultural reciprocity" (p 57) in which counselors, educators, parents, and children become self-aware and sensitive to the needs of others and themselves (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). Similarly, Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey (2010) found that school counselors can create a welcoming environment by examining their preconceived notions and how misconceptions can be detrimental to parental involvement.

The use of "academic enrichment programs" (p 65) to maximize parental involvement and break down the barriers of distrust and negative perceptions could also be used. Examples of academic enrichment programs are after-school intervention and community-based partnerships (i.e., churches and African American organizations). These programs must not be fleeting; instead they must be long-term in building relationships with the students and their

14

parents. Empowered youth programs (EYP) are structured to be "developmental and comprehensive" by ensuring that children are academically and socially competent; establishing "meaningful communication" between educators and parents, and helping parents to understand the importance of their role in their children's education (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, p 67). To bridge the gap between schools and the community, EYPs facilitate school parent communication via monthly parent meetings, and help parents become "academic advocates" for their children by teaching parents about the postsecondary enrollment process (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey 2010, p 69-70).

Conclusion

According to Heystek, "schools are a formalized extension of the family" (2003, p 328). Likewise, Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey (2010) revealed that schools, particularly public schools must feel connected to the community. Since values, cultural and social norms begin at home and in communities, it is essential that parents form an alliance with schools to ensure that their children do not deviate from the path that is expected of them. Urban educators and parents in the predominantly Black (African American and Caribbean descent) Pine Hills community can benefit greatly from this study. The literature has shown that parental involvement has positive effects on academic performance. As a result, this knowledge should be the foundation of forming critical parent-teacher-student alliances. Furthermore, the known positive effects of parental involvement should encourage higher academic expectations in the Pine Hills community.

Community school models, on which Evans High and its broader community is based, have the potential to provide "social capital for African American families" in a society where a significant portion of African Americans live below poverty level and experience disparities in health and educational attainment (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines 2010, p 53). Despite the documented challenges to parental involvement in education, there is still a glimmer of hope due to inherited African centered values and practices of extended family, reliance on faith-based institutions, and a collective memory of overcoming oppression. The experiences, memories, and aspirations of the Black community can serve as the powerful engine behind improving parental engagement in their children's education and communities.

3.2.2 Key Findings from Parents

Parents were asked to report what they believed were the factors outside of school time that facilitate and/or hinder the success of their children in school. Additionally, parents were asked what resources in the community either facilitate or hinder student success. Finally, parents were asked to describe their vision for the new community school. The observations reported here reflect the opinions of the five parents who participated in the focus groups convened specifically for parents. It is noted at the outset that the observations reported here may not accurately reflect the opinions and beliefs held by the broader set of Evans parents.

Factors Outside School that Facilitate or Hinder Student Success

After school, many of the students whose parents attended the focus group go to the Boys and Girls Club. Transportation is provided by the Boys and Girls Club. Other parents report that their children return home after school—generally arriving between 2:00 and 4:00 pm. At

home, those students do homework, get on Facebook, talk on the phone or via the internet, and sometimes do multiple things at once. As a side note, parents talked about how little their children are being challenged by teachers, even in the Advanced Placement (AP), IB, and Honors courses. They generally reported wanting higher student and academic expectations from teachers. Parents said they usually do not help their children with their homework, because they do not have time, and/or because they are too tired when they get home at night. Parents reported that even if they could help with their child's homework, older students often do not want help from their parents. Additionally, parents reported that students feel like it is acceptable to be average and thus do not complete their homework. Adding to that issue, students fail to bring home their textbooks in order to do the homework.

Without citing any resource in particular, parents mentioned that *other* people could help students succeed. Those potential sources of positive influence include motivational speakers and program staff such as ELEVATE Orlando (targeting at-risk kids), but some parents stated that these programs should be for all students.

Resources in the Community

As for places that help children succeed, parents reported that the media center was open until 5:00 pm and offered tutoring in all subjects, research assistance, and computers with internet access. Other resources that contribute to student success included the Orange County library at Hiawassee and Ocoee streets and the local Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida on Pine Hills (operated by the Walt Disney World Corporation). All of these resources were readily accessible to students and considered by the parents as important resources in the community. The image below shows the media center at Evans.

The Media Center at Evans

The parents reported that certain people could be a negative influence on their children such that they might impede student success. Those negative influences include peers who exerted peer-pressure. Similarly, some physical resources such as the internet, Facebook, ipods, and TV could interfere with student academic success according to parents. Parents found it difficult to monitor how much time their children spend using distracting forms of technology on a day-to-day basis.

Some parents made an effort to be involved at school. That involvement could take the form of using email as a way of directly communicating with teachers, chaperoning field trips, sitting in on classes, and volunteering in the media center.

Parents' Vision for the Community School

Parents were asked about their vision for the future community school. Specifically, parents were asked what educational and career opportunities they thought should be made available to students, parents, and the broader community at the new community school. Parents were also asked what health resources, recreational opportunities, and other resources would best serve the goals of the new community school.

Educational and Career Opportunities

The educational and career opportunities that parents thought would benefit students and the community included expanded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, etiquette courses for student and parents, rites of passage/character-building sessions for students, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) courses for parents, driver education classes, and non-traditional tutoring including the use of rap music to help students grasp concepts the teachers are attempting to teach. Additionally, parents suggested that extending the times tutoring is offered on campus and providing more tutors so that a smaller group of students per tutor could be provided would help support the educational success of Evans students.

With specific regard to the driver education classes, it was noted that State Farm Insurance Company or Allstate Insurance Company could partner with the school to provide those classes. One parent observed that driver education classes were offered at Evans at one time, but that such classes have since been removed from the school's curriculum, and parents wanted the offering back.

Health Resources

Parents did not explore which specific health resources should be offered at the new community school, but there was general consensus that offering health resources of some kind would be a benefit to students and to the community.

Recreational Opportunities

The parents suggested that adding music programs at the new community school would support the educational achievement of Evans students.

Other Resources

Parents were asked if there were other resources not previously mentioned that would enhance the new community school. It was suggested that partnerships with local universities would likely enhance the quality of programs offered at Evans Community School. One parent suggested that a partnership with Full Sail University in Winter Park would enhance music programs. The parents also mentioned that they could use parental support sessions. The structure and function of these support sessions was not fully explored.

Uniforms for students were another issue raised. The parents agreed that uniforms would help to eliminate distractions in the learning environment. The current administration at Evans has explored the possibility of imposing a uniform dress code at the new community school by conducting a survey administered to students, faculty, and parents. These data have not been formally released to the student researchers conducting this needs assessment, but early indications suggest that there is broad-based support for a uniform dress code.

Resource Utilization

Parents were asked whether there are any impediments they could identify that would prevent or otherwise discourage use of any resources or programs that might be offered at the new community school. Here, the discussion centered around security and transportation. The parents suggested that improving security on and around the new campus could be accomplished in part by adding more lights at nearby intersections.

3.3 TEACHERS

A total of 31 teachers and administrators participated in one of four focus groups held on school campus. Two of those focus groups were held during school hours and were attended by teachers and administrators who had a planning session during school hours. The other two focus groups were held during afterschool hours. The primary focus in these groups was on what teachers and administrators wanted out of a future community school.

The teachers and administrators (collectively, the faculty) highlighted what they believed helped the students succeed and what was preventing them from achieving their highest potential. The faculty also offered an array of suggestions for resources they would like to see offered at the new campus.

Factors Outside School that Facilitate or Hinder Student Success

The faculty reported that many issues prevented the success of students at Evans High School. The faculty agreed that students spend too much time unsupervised. They noted that students tend to stay out until very late hours, surround themselves with negative role models, over-engage in social network activities, spend long hours with video games, neglect to complete their class work, and seem to be distracted in general.

Also, according to the faculty, students tend to spend too much time texting, hanging out in groups at the mall, and even go to nightclubs late at night. The staff recommended engaging their parents into the school as a possible way of mitigating these negative forces. Parents would be welcome to come to the new school and receive services such as health care, but they could also take advantage of courses like ESOL and Life Skills classes. There could also be

workshops on how to bond with their kids and even refresher courses so they would be better equipped to help their own children with their assignments. In sum, parental involvement was seen as being of paramount importance, though such involvement was currently severely lacking in the view of the faculty.

Other issue that the school faced was the lack of trust between teachers and students as well as with their parents. One faculty member stated that approximately fifty percent of the students at Evans were of Haitian descent, and a large percentage of students come from varied cultures and backgrounds. This created a cultural gap between students. The faculty called this issue "urban vs. islanders" as the students who were raised in the United States or have lived in the United States for a longer period of time have been referred to as the "urban," separating themselves from the students new to this country who have been referred to as the "islanders." The faculty reported difficultly in addressing this issue properly. There is then, a need for workshops for faculty and students alike to understand each others' differences and learn ways of working with each other despite those cultural gaps. These workshops could also enhance the trust parents have for staff at school. Currently, the staff mentioned that immigrant parents and their children fear using school facilities and services because some parents may not have full legal residency. Therefore, it is imperative to educate parents on what the new community school intends to provide, and that those services are given with full confidentiality. The new community school also needs to address language barriers. The information provided for the up-coming services needs to be detailed in at least three languages, English, Creole, and Spanish. This step, in the faculty's view, would also involve and motivate parents to make full use of the services offered.

Faculty members envision the community school having programs that educate teachers and staff, so they can bridge cultural gaps and properly address the issues confronting the students. Some of the faculty mentioned that they would welcome the students to confide in them concerning certain problems they may be facing. These issues range from teenage pregnancy, STD concerns, bullying, and problems at their home. However, faculty may not be equipped with the ability to assist these students with the right advice or guidance, as some of those issues may not be their area of expertise. It is important to emphasize the need to have familiar faces on campus, so that students feel comfortable confiding their problems. Equally important is the need to have on staff those who could address these issues in a professional way.

Resources in the Community

In response to the resources available in the community to support student educational achievement, some faculty lamented that parents seemed to be more of a hindrance than a positive influence. This could stem from the lack of communication among the faculty, specifically with information flow. In the faculty focus groups, there was some disagreement or unawareness over some of the programs being offered at Evans as well as the effectiveness of the programs. Therefore, the faculty should attend a series of informative meetings about current and future programs. With this knowledge, faculty would be able to promote the services better, and advise their own students, parents, and the rest of the community on making appropriate use of the services.

Also, teachers and parents both need to be present at workshops. Some teachers mentioned that whenever they tried to reach parents they were unable get a hold of them. They mentioned a lack of interest from parents on their children's education. It would be beneficial to

have parents and teachers work together at workshops to create programs that would enhance these relationships.

Faculty Vision for the Community School

The faculty appeared well informed on the transformation process from a traditional high school to a community school. This is likely the reason the faculty were able to offer a great deal of insight into what would be most beneficial at the new Evans Community School.

Educational and Career Opportunities

Many ideas were offered by the faculty as possible helpful educational programs. Specifically, faculty reiterated the need for sex education classes as well as for workshops that address good nutrition. In addition, they would like to see the following programs and resources:
- Drug prevention programs.
- Formal education on safe driving.
- More emphasis on standardized test preparation to promote performance on those exams thereby helping improve the school's grade.
- Industry certifications so that students can make a living after high school.

The faculty also mentioned the need for more vocational courses such as mechanics, cosmetology, home economics, welding, and electrical training. They mentioned a media center, reading and computer labs, where they could study for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), as well as receive assistance from tutors on homework, or on any other areas where they might be struggling.

Additionally, the faculty mentioned that it is crucial to include a child care center at the new community school. Some faculty suggested having a child care center run by certified practitioners. In addition, these certified practitioners should teach parenting skills to students. While students spend time learning to take care of their children at the child care center, they could learn about child care and should have the ability to receive credits for these courses. They mentioned the importance of providing low-cost child care for everyone within the community to include students, parents, teachers, and staff.

The staff suggested that the students who have kids would benefit from a child care center because they had been working after school in order to provide for their child. Many times parents rely on their high school-aged children to take care of their younger siblings, which in turn prevented them from doing their school work. This is one of the reasons why the faculty believes that many students at Evans High School cannot find the time to properly complete their assignments and stay at school after hours to receive additional assistance. Therefore, offering child care services on campus, which would stay open after school hours, would be one way of keeping the students on campus, while the younger siblings or children receive the attention they need.

Health Resources

In the discussion around possible health resources, two prevalent themes emerged: health care access and life skills education. The faculty focus groups largely agreed on the need for a full time medical staff at the school, providing routine check-ups and other primary care services. In addition, the faculty suggested that the medical facilities should provide vision tests, STD

testing, and eye glasses for students who are in need. It was also seen as very important to give students access to health insurance. However, the three main areas that the staff would like to have the medical facility address are STD testing, sex education information as well as pregnancy care, which should be included in a women's health care center. The groups unanimously agreed that the medical facility should be open to students, families, and the community as a whole.

Recreational Opportunities

Many of the faculty would like to see an expansion of after school activities. The faculty largely agreed that there was need for recreational opportunities such as an urban lacrosse program, intramural sports, and golf and tennis lessons in partnership with clubs and parks around the community. Furthermore, the faculty would like to see walking clubs, a track program, and better lighting for facilities, since the majority of the community walk around the neighborhood in an unlit environment. They also mentioned theater and art as extra curriculum activities that need to be offered in school, beyond the usual football and basketball programs.

Some of the staff showed discontent with the physical education classes being offered as more of a formal health class called Health Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE). Specifically, faculty commented that the HOPE course took away from the recreational aspect that students admired in the physical education classes. As a result, they mentioned the need for a less formal course on physical education and fitness with more physical activities. The staff noted the school could accomplish this by having a separate class for health and life skills. The new community school should address issues with having successful sports programs. Many good athletes from Evans found it difficult to stay at the school as many other schools offered better sports programs. Faculty reported that these top performing athletes found a way to attend other schools with better programs. This caused a lack of funding for their sports programs and a lack of motivation for students to become involved in school spirit.

Other Resources

When asked whether there were other resources that might facilitate the academic success of students, the faculty emphatically talked about the need for the new campus to create liaisons with universities and colleges around the area. They believed this is important for students, because it is essential to show them what is out there after high school. They suggested seeking collaborations between the new community school and college institutions such as UCF, Valencia Community College, and specifically the UCF Medical School at the Lake Nona campus.

According to the staff, students may be more motivated to engage in their high school education if they were mentored by students who were in their position. With these new collaborations, students could be able to receive college credits while in high school and visit college campuses to learn about college life. The staff mentioned the importance of having college students come to the new community school, to guide them through what their experiences have been in college, educating the kids on what they will face, and tutor students so that they will succeed in high school.

It was seen as important for the faculty to create alliances with Evans alumni. The staff wanted the community school to be a place where the students, after graduating, would be able to return to the campus and receive support. For example, students could receive guidance and

counseling regarding college and/or any issues they may face once they enter higher education. Also, the staff would like to see re-certification programs, where students could regain knowledge on those skills taught in high school.

The creation of mentor programs would also be beneficial according to the faculty. If Evans alumni were to return to the school and mentor the current students on college life, how to get into college, and all kinds of programs offered, the faculty thought that having a positive peer influence of this type could be more welcomed by the students rather than receiving the same information from teachers. The faculty believed that students were more inclined to listen to someone to whom they could relate versus listening to a teacher.

Resource Utilization

Members of the faculty were asked if there was any reason, in their opinion, that the resources offered at the new community school would not be utilized. Here, the faculty raised the transportation issue. Many students, according to the faculty, found it difficult to stay after school because they did not have reliable transportation and/or could not afford daily public transportation. Many of the faculty wanted the new community school to incorporate a program that provided students with Lynx bus passes, so they could travel back and forth between their homes and the new community school. One of the teachers also mentioned that this would be critical for the success of special needs students as well. One of the special needs students' goals to becoming independent was to successfully learn to ride the bus.

Also, a couple of teachers suggested that they would like to receive Creole and Spanish classes so that they could communicate better with students and their parents. Such classes would enhance trust between teachers and parents as they show an interest on the cultural differences in the community.

3.4 Faith Community

While the faith organizations in the Pine Hills community appeared to be strong, well-organized, and influential in the community, only three members from the faith community participated in the focus group convened for them.

3.4.1 A Review of Literature on the Role of the Faith Community in Education Initiatives

Much can be learned about the impact of faith-based initiatives in public school by looking to the successes and challenges faced by other schools partnering with faith organizations.

Successes & Challenges

It has been noted that while the faith-based community can provide effective educational initiatives, there are instances where the faith-based community has been underprepared for the programs they implement. One such initiative was the National Faith-Based Initiative for High Risk Youth (Branch, 2002). Although the faith-based organizations involved with the initiative were able to recruit the largest number of at risk youth, they were underprepared for the many difficulties that such a project entails. This illustrates that faith-based organizations sometimes

lack the structure and focus needed to offer their services efficiently. Branch's work reminds the faith-based community that offering a service to a troubled community involves planning, organization, foresight, and a strictly observed procedure to be efficient and successful. It also shows that the faith-based community may insert a religious component into any coalition that they are involved in as long as it is constitutional.

Branch's 2002 "Faith and Action: Implementation of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High Risk Youth" explained the role of the faith-based community in a program created to assist high risk youth. The National Faith-Based Initiative for High Risk Youth program is a partnership between the juvenile justice system, faith-based organizations, and a nonprofit organization called Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). P/PV was concerned about the lack of programs that dealt with youth that had been or could be involved in criminal activity. It was the belief of the P/PV that the faith-based community could be of great assistance simply because of its strong ties to the community. The report focuses on four specific questions: "Will faith-based organizations be effective in recruiting high risk youth to their programs, Can faith-based organizations successfully implement sound programs that meet the needs of high risk youth, and what role does faith play in the design and implementation of these programs?" (Branch, 2002).

Branch (2002) reports that less than a third of the participants referred to the program were from the juvenile justice system. The faith-based community lobbied early and was thus responsible for the program's high enrollment. The P/PV was very lenient as to how the faith-based community developed programs for the youth. Many sites that offered mentoring programs had experienced implementation difficulties due to lack of volunteers. Members of the various congregations also expressed no interest in helping the at risk youth. A few of the churches also did not properly screen volunteers which also led to problems. The majority of the youth that participated in the program also needed a great deal of help with their studies; many of the congregations were not prepared for the amount of assistance needed by most of the youth in academics (Branch 2002). The various congregations involved in the program were aware that the main focus of the program was not religious in nature but regardless of this fact, evidence of a few of the congregation's beliefs could be seen in the programs that were offered. Many of the participants were asked to pray and read sacred texts as part of their mentoring. With a coalition such as this, faith played a large role in the programs offered by the initiative.

Dennis (2001) observes a collaborative effort between the faith-based community, non-profits, and the public school system in two Texas public schools. Using the First Amendment as a backdrop, Dennis artfully and honestly conveys the "promises" and "dangers" associated with this kind of collaboration from both the point of view of the community and the associated congregations. Dennis concludes with her advice on how public schools and the faith-based community can maintain a healthy relationship and work together.

To show that collaborations between religious congregations, non-profits, and public schools can work, Dennis (2001) presents two successful examples of joint efforts to improve failing public schools. The schools were Morningside Middle School in Fort Worth, Texas and Sam Houston Elementary School in McAllen, Texas. Both schools are located in underprivileged communities and both schools principals sought out the religious community for help. In these two cases, the involved congregations had aligned themselves with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). The IAF was charged with implementing initiatives that would contribute to the academic achievement of students in low-income neighborhoods. In the case of Morningside Middle School, a local non-profit group affiliated with IAF called Allied Communities of Tarrant

(ACT) offered assistance to Principal Odessa Raven and the African American churches of Fort Worth (Dennis, 2001).

Dennis (2001) notes that people don't often view schools as a part of the community because schools tend to be viewed as rather secluded. While other facilities are open to the community, schools force visitors to follow strict protocol when coming onto the campus—which has an unwelcoming feel. Dennis also makes the observation that the faith-based community has to have a strong open relationship with the community to establish trust. She says that a Reverend or Father's advice may carry more weight than school faculty because of the relationship that members of the community already have with their churches. Although Dennis admits that there are many promising benefits of a school-faith-based community partnership she also concedes that there are many dangers as well.

The first danger is that the religious community might use their involvement with schools to push their religious beliefs and agendas. This would be a clear breach of the separation of church and state. Dennis admits that this issue never came up in either the case of Morningside Middle School or Sam Houston Elementary School. Her rationale is that the faith organizations involved had civic, and not evangelical, missions in connection with the initiative. There is not only a danger for the public school system when involved with the faith-based community, unfortunately when the religious community begins a partnership with public schools they also take on a certain level of risk. On many separate occasions the public school system has tried and succeeded in taking advantage of the religious community's generosity. A school principal in Houston actually suggested moving all new after school programs to churches or synagogues so that she could leave early at the end of the school day (Dennis 2001). In the case of Morningside Middle School, almost as soon as the school began receiving recognition for its improvements it slowly severed all ties with ACT and the faith-based community.

Gardner (2001) discusses the disturbing high school dropout rate in the United States with special attention to the state of Ohio. In the under-served districts of Ohio the graduation rate is only 43% (Gardner, 2001). In response to this horrifying statistic, Ohio State University and the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church developed an after-school program for urban academic at-risk youth. The after-school program has an allotted time for tutoring and homework. Within this allotted time the students are also prepared for state wide standardized tests that will determine whether or not a child will move on to the next grade level. Church members, doctorial students, and teachers were responsible for working with the children after school.

Those who participated in the after-school program were below average reading and math scores. Each student that attended the after-school program at least part time showed improvement in their targeted academic areas. The elementary age children could pass addition and subtraction but had difficulty with multiplication. Children who attended the after-school program increased their multiplication accuracy and speed. The after-school program also kept children out of trouble and minimized the amount of time spent watching television and playing video games (Gardner, 2001).

Feelings of mistrust toward governmental actors do not simply disappear if a faith organization is engaged in service delivery (Mundell, 2010). Initial suspicions of a church group called Bainbridge House were observed in connection with a mentoring program carried out by a faith organization with students of E.M. Stanton School in Philadelphia. Mundell's work is invaluable because it shows the adaptability of the faith-based community and the importance of establishing relationships within the community. Mundell suggests that there can be cohesive

relationships formed between the faith-based community, the public school system, and the overall community (Mundell, 2010).

Bainbridge House is a Christian prayer group that meets at the homes of working class families to pray in the morning five days a week. The group also has dinner once a week at member's homes and has a yearly retreat. The purpose of this group is to create a "presence" within their community. In 2002 Bainbridge House offered mentoring services to nearby E.M. Stanton School. Things went well for a year. In 2003 due to budget cuts the city council decided to close E.M. Stanton School and relocate all its students. Instead of abandoning the school, Bainbridge House worked with parents to keep the school's doors open. Before the decision to save E.M. Stanton School parents had little to do with the decisions made at the school. With the help of Bainbridge House parents began to actively fight for the school and the decisions surrounding it (Mundell, 2010).

With each meeting regarding the closure of the school more parents spoke on behalf of the school. Many parents used the fact that another school within the district was set to close alongside Stanton and that if both were closed the schools that the children would be relocated to would become overcrowded. One woman even cited her rights as a taxpayer. Another parent claimed that when she attended Stanton in the eighties that the city council had threatened to close down the school. She claimed that an angry group of parents convinced the city council to keep the doors open. The members of the Coalition to Save Stanton School met with city and school district members almost constantly for two months arguing their case. The Coalition also demonstrated at many local events and passed out flyers in an attempt to gather support for the school. In the end the city council was impressed with the level of organization presented by the community, Stanton staff, and Bainbridge House and decided to keep the school open. The work of Bainbridge House and the community shows that the faith-based community can be a valuable asset to the public school system if the cause is worth fighting for and if the coalition remains focused (Mundell, 2010).

There is little research on how faith-based initiatives can serve the emotional needs of students. Pierce and Scott (2005) focus on the emotional rather than the educational needs of the children as well as the lack of community involvement displayed by many congregations and ways to encourage the reluctant faith-based community to offer assistance. This article reminds the reader that the children who seek aid from the faith-based community and non-profit organizations are people with emotions not just a task to be completed.

Pierce and Scott (2005) discuss KIDS HOPE USA's efforts to mentor children that attend public schools in under-served communities. They find that faith-based organizations rarely become involved with outreach to these schools because they simply do not understand what the children need mentally and emotionally. KIDS HOPE USA asked educators, health providers, human service specialists, theologians, law enforcement officers, and volunteers to conduct research on the needs of America's children and report back with the results. The results showed that 41% of America's children lacked a father figure and 72% of the children in juvenile detention are fatherless. It was also discovered that above all things, children need a strong relationship with an adult (Pierce & Scott, 2005)

Many congregations wanted to become more involved with community outreach when they read the results of the research. The congregations only needed a direct course of action to become more involved with the youth of the community. Unfortunately, though, many congregations were not very involved with the community. To help the congregations become more involved with the mentoring program at the local public school, KIDS HOPE USA

developed a mentoring model. This model focuses on keeping the partnership within the church, assisting the youngest children first and foremost, and establishing relationships with respect to the separation of church and state (Pierce & Scott, 2005).

Smith (2001) suggests that in the past there has been a lot of focus on the faith-based community entering into collaborative efforts to achieve some kind of education reform. To personally help a child pass a standardized test and move onto the next grade level or go into a school in an under-served community and clean it up for the good of the children must be an amazing feeling, but other factors surround whether or not a child succeeds academically. If parents lack the money for school supplies or a child doesn't go to school at all no amount of tutoring or tidying up is going to matter. Some congregations have discovered that many diverse services must be offered to improve the conditions of the public school system. To that end, Smith (2001) discusses a number of different programs and services offered by the faith-based community to ensure that children not only make it to school but succeed there as well. Central Baptist Church in Connecticut collects money for school supplies, provides meals for families who are economically stricken, and offers a fuel and emergency assistance program (Smith, 2001). Without these programs students would not succeed in school. In the 1970's Asylum Hill Congregational Church began a tutoring program that served M.D Fox and West middle schools. By 1978 the program had grown and had even taken on a new name ConnectiKids. ConnectiKids recruited businesses, state agencies, churches, non-profit organizations, and volunteers to become tutors to the sixth graders of the city. The church also has members on the school board so that they can observe what the schools needs are. Asylum Hill Congregational Church also gives out scholarships (Smith, 2001).

In connection with studying faith-based initiatives and involvement of faith organization with public schools, it is imperative to take note of prevalent themes that both hinder and facilitate the success of such initiatives and partnerships. Distrust among either public schools, the community, or the faith-based community is counterproductive and weakens collaborative efforts that would otherwise bring forth success to the public school system. The literature suggests that a large number of people do not trust faith-based organizations to assist the public school system without pushing their religious agendas. Much to the discomfort of those that believe the constitution should be strictly followed, it has been found that in some cases the faith-based community has voiced their religious beliefs while working with impressionable youth. It is these kinds of encounters with the faith-based community that encourage negative stereotypes and spread distrust among those that might most benefit from religious agencies (Smith, 2001). However, there have also been instances in which the faith-based community has aligned itself with the general community and the public school system without any reported incident of pushing their religious agenda or beliefs. Research has shown that when all parties involved in collaboration simply adhere to a plan created specifically for the school in question, the success rate of that partnership is typically higher; organization and a strict code of conduct are paramount to a successful church/ school/community partnership (Dennis, 2001).

Although faith-based organizations are often stereotypically lumped into one group, there are actually many different types and degrees of religiosity. Some faith-based organizations place greater emphasis on civic orientation. Those organizations harbor the view that individuals should take responsibility for their own actions. This type of faith-based organization does not take a confrontational stance and tends to feel more comfortable if social constructs remain unchanged. Those faith-based organizations that take a more active role in congregation life are referred to as activist congregations. Activist congregations are more vocal and proactive. These

types of congregations do not take issue with conflict and confrontation and they tend to be very critical of social constructs and they fight aggressively for their beliefs and what they believe to be just. Both civic and activist congregations are seen as "this worldly" because they are primarily concerned with church membership. Some congregations however, believe that church and religion should be seen as a sanctuary. These congregations do not wish to become involved in social reform and would rather quietly carry on with their personal beliefs in the safety of their church. Sanctuary congregations feel that religion and church should offer peace in an otherwise hectic and stressful world. Evangelical congregations are the faith-based organizations that often stand out in people's minds when they think of faith-based initiatives. Evangelical congregations tend to be very active in their communities. Many also attempt to convince others to join their congregations. The evangelical congregation is often the type that toes the constitutional line when working with the public school system. Both sanctuary and evangelical congregations are classified as "other worldly" because their main focus is their faith (Musso, Kitsuse, & Cooper, 2002).

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Although many collaborative efforts involving the faith-based community have been successful beyond expectation, there are still improvements to be made in regards to these types of partnerships. The failures of partnerships between the faith-based community and the public school system should be noted along with the successes. Many faith-based organizations offered their assistance without knowing what was to be expected of them. This simple lack of understanding often caused disorganization within the partnership. It is very important that the faith-based community research the programs and projects that they enter into so that they can offer meaningful assistance (Branch, 2002). It would be best if the faith-based community developed a plan specifically tailored to the needs of those seeking the program or service. The plan should include: the role of the faith-based organization involved, a list of services offered, goals and expectations, a code of conduct, and lastly a methodological procedure to be strictly followed by volunteers to ensure that those seeking assistance are offered helpful and consistent services. The faith-based community, public schools, and the general community should also maintain an open and cooperative relationship. Research has shown that there is a large amount of distrust in regards to these types of partnerships. The best way to facilitate trust is to establish collective goals and to complete each task with the overall vision in mind. It is not productive to deviate from the collective goals because it makes already distrustful partners uncomfortable. Openness and honesty are key themes to a successful collaboration (Smith, 2001).

3.4.2 Key Findings from the Faith Community

Faith organizations in the Pine Hills community are motivated by what they believe they are destined to do. Churches and faith-based organizations are certain that they play a major role within the community by imparting their spiritual, social, and cultural means onto the community and by meeting their needs. Most importantly, the faith-based organizations support public school reform such as the Evans Community School. The leaders in the faith-based community believe that since they are divinely appointed to carry out services by a higher calling, God must be included in the transformation of Evans from a traditional high school into a community school. They believe faith organizations are able to assist greatly in conveying the right messages to the Pine Hills community youth and that their services can transform lives

while helping the Evans High School community with their challenges. However, without sufficient resources or appropriate expertise to contribute to the student's academic success, the faith-based community remains vulnerable. Through collaboration efforts, the faith-based organizations suppose they would be capable of helping even more individuals in need while providing a new perspective for the challenges facing Evans.

Pine Hills is ethnically diverse. The population is mainly dominated by different minority groups and low-income families. In the view of the faith leaders, in order to guarantee youth educational achievement, Evans should start by eliminating barriers that cause student failure. Diverse groups should be provided assistance by the faith-based organizations that support their particular needs. The standardized benchmark that presently exists in the community for all ethnic groups should be replaced with benchmarks that effectively measure each group separately. The importance of not normalizing all minority groups into one category is predominantly necessary for the Haitian-Creole population. The Haitian community is in need of representatives that they can relate to or interpret the provisions needed. In other words, a spokesperson who speaks their language and connects directly to their culture would directly benefit the Haitian community in Pine Hills. For instance, the faith-based leaders believe Haitian students are presently ignored at Evans, because their needs are not identified or analyzed correctly. The school system must find other means for reaching out not only to the students but also to the parents to help secure the success of their education. Pastors from Pine Hills proposed that cultural as well as gender education be given to school officials, community leaders, local residents, and other stakeholders to make sure they will be properly prepared to make the required changes whether social and/or political. Consequently, any change that is undertaken should accommodate and answer to the different demands of students at Evans.

The Pine Hills Community is surrounded by faith-based organizations, yet the faith leaders believe they are not fully represented or recognized. The faith-based community assumes that a growing partnership with Evans will be beneficial not only to students but to the entire community. They feel certain that the services they provide will orient students toward a positive path. The organizations nevertheless feel neglected and not essential enough to be consulted in decision-making processes. The faith leaders suggested that if the school would partner with the faith-based organizations, then they would be able to provide additional educational programs to help with the mission. Not only that, but the faith community could reach out to parents on an individual level by spiritually connecting with them on important matters. Through collaboration, the faith-based community could help designate school chaplains similar to how hospital chaplains are designated. The faith leaders expressed a strong sense that missionary views are needed to help promote their interests in the schools. All religions or spiritual practices should be viewed mutually considering the multi-faith environment. Any resulting programs should be equally accessible to students of all beliefs who choose to participate. Clergy would not promote any personal interest of any faith according to the faith leaders. The school would be the place where students could go to solve all problems.

Another major theme among the faith-based leaders was the lack of trust they had in government. They feel that the government is incapable for solving their real issues in Pine Hills. When the government does contribute--mainly by contracting out services--they provide temporary assistance leaving the community even more in despair. History has repeated itself and left the Pine Hills community unable to rely on the government when most needed. Their attitudes toward government are heavily influenced by the conditions of their society. The high crime rate, increasing unemployment levels, lack of opportunities and security, and cultural

disparities are just some factors that may contribute to the distrust of government. The faith leaders proposed that a passage to trust to be created. To gain trust, the government would have to show consistency in its efforts. The first step from the local officials is to collaborate with the faith-based community concerning major issues, allowing them to have a voice equally effective as other leaders. Until then, the faith-based community will remain doubtful of any governmental community improvement program. It was noted that there was not a high degree of cohesiveness in the faith-based community other than Haitian pastors closely tied to other Haitian pastors and the same for other ethnicities.

3.5 Community Members

A total of 20 community members attended a focus group that was promoted to the community at large.

Factors Outside School that Facilitate or Hinder Student Success

The community members attending the focus group were asked to provide insight on what they believed either facilitated or hindered student success at Evans. The conversation focused primarily on the negative factors in the community.

Resources in the Community

One aim of this research is to understand what resources are presently available in the Pine Hills community. Currently in the Pine Hills Community, the community stakeholders pointed out that there were very few resources for the students to take advantage of to help them succeed. Some of the resources available include the Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida, YMCA, Pine Hills Performing Arts Center, Burnett Park and the Achievers program. They believed that the community environment was a major factor preventing the students from succeeding. Students were hanging out at bus stops, shopping centers and street corners, and the community stakeholders believed that they had too much idle time that could be refocused on positive activities. The foremost missed opportunity is parent involvement with their child's educational needs.

Community Vision for the Community School

It is anticipated that at least some of the resources and programs offered at the new community school will be accessible to the community at large. Therefore, the development plans for Evans Community School should align with the needs of the Pine Hills Community.

Educational and Career Opportunities

Several types of possible educational and career opportunities to support the educational achievement of Evans students and otherwise benefit the community were explored by the community stakeholders. The community stakeholders stressed several critical issues that they would like to see in the development of the new community school. The community stakeholders identified the need for adult and technical education, access to available resources, programs such as after-hours GED courses, tutoring, and access to a job center. They were looking to have a community job center where the students and their families would be able to

gain the professional skills needed to write resumes, demonstrate proper interview techniques and general work force etiquette. These offerings should augment the current programs at the school such as the ESOL program for foreign students.

The community stakeholders suggested that a resource center could provide guidance on grant and scholarship writing techniques. In addition, a resource center could possibly provide a mentoring program to help prepare and encourage the students to seek post-high school education and employment. They recommended seeking mentors with whom the students could easily identify, such as a peer mentor. Evans alumni could possibly fill this mentoring role, because they could help the students feel comfortable and because they could relate to students' situations.

In addition to the resource center, this focus group mentioned the idea of an entrepreneurial center and/or an incubation center where community members could learn how to own and operate their own businesses. They referred to a present incubation center in the Orlando area and how Evans Community School would be a great second location for the center, since the existing incubation center was reaching full capacity.

Community stakeholders stressed the importance of a full service library. The library that was previously located in the Pine Hills areas has been relocated along Colonial Drive outside of Pine Hills, and it is not easily accessible to students. One community member advanced the idea of the implementation of a full-service community library as part of the development of Evans Community School. The suggestion was to incorporate some abandoned property at the intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads. The stakeholders felt that the Evans Community School project would be incomplete if that corner was not included in the development of the Community School.

Health Resources

Community stakeholders viewed health resources as vital to the community school. Inclusion of health services would, in the view of the community stakeholders, provide the students and community members with vaccinations, routine visits and accessibility to general health, dental and vision care. An emergency infrastructure should be in place to help the community with minor health emergencies. Health services would be able to address the rising health needs of the community and to provide comprehensive health education, including preventive care. One community member expressed the view that since the students did not always have access as well as the funding to go to a pharmacy, students and community members should be taught natural and holistic remedies to different virus and diseases. In conjunction with health services, the community members felt that it was important to install a counseling center for the students and other community members. Also, a childcare facility should partner with the community school to provide young parents the ability to continue their education.

Recreational Opportunities

The community members expressed the view that providing the opportunity for students to become active in recreational activities should be a priority. They would like to get students involved in sports beyond football and basketball. Also, they would like to include arts activities. These recreational activities would provide opportunities to the students that they could relate to and enjoy as a positive self-development.

Other Resources

Community member participants in the focus group were asked if there were potentially any other resources that might be beneficial to include at the new community school. Here, the community stakeholders proposed a number of suggestions. They identified the necessity for students to have local restaurants that provided healthier meal alternatives. They noted that several of the students leave campus for lunch and the only options in the area were two major fast food chains. They were hoping that the development of Evans Community School would attract more quick-service restaurants more suited to providing the students with healthier meal choices. One suggestion was to have the school cafeteria provide some of the healthier alternatives to the students. The community stakeholders would also like to see the cafeteria keep the same hours as the school, thereby providing students and community members the opportunity to a healthier lifestyle throughout the day.

The Pine Hills community members would like to encourage the students at Evans to give back to their community through volunteerism. They would like to develop a volunteer program for the students, especially focusing on the senior citizens in the community. This volunteer program would include a tutoring program for students at Evans, along with students in middle and elementary school. Some community members further suggested that they would like to have the community school build a partnership with the faith-based community because they felt students need to become more spiritually grounded. A volunteer program could promote family nights where students and their families could gather at the community school to build the relationships between them.

The members of the focus group brought discipline issues. It was suggested that there may be a need to impose a strict code of conduct, including a standardized dress code. Enforcing a dress code policy would lend needed structure at the school. Additionally, increasing the number of security guards and strictly enforcing school policies would help encourage the students to exhibit good behavior. Promoting positive behavior is possibly accomplished through positive reinforcement for the students with awards and recognition.

Resource Utilization

Safety was perceived as a primary obstacle preventing students from succeeding academically as well as preventing using certain resources at the community school during afterschool hours. The community stakeholders believed that the pawn shop located at the intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads was dangerous and that the students should not be exposed to the business transactions that take place there. In addition, they noted that they had been made aware that this particular corner was contaminated from a previous dry cleaning business. As an aside to the safety concern, the community stakeholders would like to have more community involvement to help decontaminate this real estate. Along with the intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star, the community stakeholders would like to see an overall improvement of the land around the community school location to ensure that it looks ascetically pleasing and is safe.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations set forth here are the product of listening to the needs and wants of the stakeholders that participated in the focus groups coupled with academic research. The researchers advance the view that building and improving social capital—the social ties indicative of strong communities—is essential to achieving the community school goals. Building social capital in urban communities requires close community ties and trust and results in networks with greater capacity to both utilize the resources already available to the community school, and to lobby for greater resources (Warren, 2005).

We additionally note that these recommendations support the goal of the current administration at Evans that every graduate of Evans enrolls in college, becomes career certified, or enrolls in the military.

4.1 RESOURCES to Promote Student Educational Success

Enhancing and fostering the educational success of students at Evans is a primary objective as Evans High School transitions into Evans Community School. To that end, providing resources that promote student educational success is paramount. The recommendations made here primarily address providing educational supports, using technology to enhance students' learning, providing additional recreational opportunities, enhancing the college and career readiness of Evans graduates, and providing health resources.

Educational Supports

Tutoring in all subjects taught at Evans is currently offered to students. However, students reported that they do not take advantage of those tutoring services for a number of reasons. Chief among those reasons is the view that students do not have reliable and/or safe transportation after school, and after tutoring. This is the case despite the fact that it has been reported to the researchers that transportation is provided to students on at least one day per week so that students can take advantage of afterschool tutoring on campus. A secondary concern is that students placed in tutoring groups in the after-school tutoring sessions received little learning during the tutoring sessions because the groups are too large. Therefore, the recommendations that flow are apparent. First, it is recommended that afterschool transportation services be increased so that students are better able to take advantage of tutoring. Alternatively, students might be given the opportunity to take study hall if their schedules and graduation plans allow. Additionally, the school should increase the number of tutors available to students. This can be accomplished in one of several ways. The school could hire tutors, recruit volunteer tutors, and/or partner with faith organizations or other organizations in the community to provide tutoring services to Evans students.

Additional course offerings should be considered. The following courses should be considered for inclusion in the curriculum at the new community school.

- Driver education
- Parenting classes
- Sex / sexual health education
- Cooking / healthy food preparation
- Physical fitness classes
- Peer counseling to promote mental wellbeing and social skills

Technology-Based Recommendations

A large number of students reported that their primary mode of communicating with each other, and sometimes with teachers, is through such internet supported technologies as email and Facebook. Recent media reports remind us that although technology can be valuable resources in promoting educational success, there are certain associated risks that should not be ignored. Those risks include cyber-bullying and cyber-stalking. To the extend that Evans Community School adopts the recommendations set forth here to make greater use of technology and internet-based communications, certain measures should also be taken to address the risk factor. Those measures might include educating students and parents on topics such as cyber-bullying and cyber-stalking. Additionally, the bounds of appropriate electronic communications should be made explicit.

A first recommendation is to host a regularly updated website or other communication portal accessible to students and their parents containing a list of daily assignments (for review purposes and for students who miss class), the assigned homework for the week, a means for communicating with teachers, and a means for viewing the student's current grades in the class. This platform could be further expanded to provide students to video or audio taped recordings of class sessions. The success of this type of technology support is highly dependent on the degree to which individual teachers make use of it. Some teachers may see maintenance of a web-based assignment page and grade book as an additional, and perhaps unnecessary, administrative burden shifting responsibility from students to teachers. Accordingly, to the extent that this recommendation is adopted, there must be some requirement imposed on teachers to maintain these web pages.

A second technology-based recommendation is directed at promoting student interest in content. This might be accomplished through more interactive classroom learning using technology. For example, students might be tasked with completing assignments in a computer lab rather than in a traditional classroom setting. Additionally, multimedia learning tools could be introduced in the classroom.

Recommended Recreational Opportunities

Some students commented that there are already a number, and a broad range, of recreational activities offered at Evans, but students simply do not take part in them. This raises the question of whether the current offerings are not in tune with the student interests or if there are other issues such as communication and/or scheduling which may cause students not to take part in these recreational opportunities.

Students and other stakeholder groups recommended a number of additional recreational opportunities that might be offered at the new community school. Among the most commonly

mentioned desired recreational opportunities are sports such as swimming, tennis, and arts activities such as dance, drama, and step.

In any event, Evans Community School should pay more attention to better communicating the availability of recreational and outside-of-school recreational opportunities. This could be readily accomplished by setting up and maintaining a bulleting board placed in a central common area of the school. That bulletin board should contain a list of all after-school clubs and activities, the way one might go about taking part in that activity, and the scheduled meeting times and dates.

Finally, care should be taken to ensure that afterschool activities are scheduled in such a way that students can take advantage of more than one afterschool activity. At least one student expressed the view that teachers are required to attend so many meetings after school that the result is all afterschool clubs and activities are scheduled on the same day of the week. Consequently, students can reasonably participate in only one afterschool activity.

College & Career Readiness

Students, as well as other stakeholder groups, expressed a desire for school support in the area of college and career readiness. Particularly, the school should provide guidance to students who intend to further their formal education after high school by providing information on required college entrance exams, helping students prepare college admission applications, helping students prepare scholarship and grant applications, and helping students and their parents prepare financial aid applications. Some students as well as teachers reported that contending with the paperwork required to gain admission to college is sometimes a barrier to continued education.

Additionally, students expressed a desire for more opportunities to visit college campuses so that they could gain insight into which college might best suit their career goals and what college life is like more generally. With regard to career readiness, the most commonly requested career training paths include:

- Culinary and hospitality management training
- Financial / Business training
- Pre-professional academics, particularly in the legal and criminal justice fields
- Medical field careers, particularly nursing

These career paths are all in viable and growing fields. The new community school should be equally committed to supporting career training as college preparation. As a means of supporting the post-graduation career motivations of students, students could be given the opportunity to shadow or participate in internships in their chosen career path.

Health Resources

Each of the stakeholder groups expressed a desire for primary care services. Students, parents and the community would benefit from access to primary care services since access to this level of care is lacking in the Pine Hills community. The most needed healthcare resources include:

- Vaccinations, including flu shots
- Annual physical exams, which are required for students to participate in sports
- Health screenings

- STD counseling & testing
- Women's health, including pregnancy tests and prevention counseling and education

The availability of healthful food options emerged as a prevalent health concern across multiple stakeholder groups. There was serious concern that the food options currently available at Evans are either sub-par or even unhealthy. The new community school should consider ways in which the food offerings at the school can promote healthy lifestyles among students and their families.

Additionally, sexual health is a prevalent issue that should be considered in connection with the transformation of Evans into a community school. Multiple stakeholder groups reported a need for improved sex education as well as counseling related to sexual health issues including STDs. The desired outcomes of such education and counseling are lower instances of teen pregnancy and STDs.

Without qualification, providing childcare on campus emerged as the single most prevalent issue across all stakeholder groups. Childcare is discussed here as a health resource that can promote the educational achievement of students. Each of the stakeholder groups expressed concern that students are without viable childcare options after becoming parents. The result is that these teen parents are forced to neglect their academics, sometimes dropping out of school altogether. Childcare is additionally an issue for students who do not have children of their own as many students must care for younger siblings after school with a similar consequence—they neglect their studies. The school as well as the school board should evaluate their positions on providing on-campus childcare in light of the findings set forth here. There was strong support across all stakeholder groups for providing on campus, extended hours childcare to students with children, siblings of students, and teachers with children. There is a learning opportunity embedded in the provision of childcare on campus. Namely, students can receive early childhood and parenting education at the childcare facility.

Figure 4. Summary of Recommendations to Promote Student Educational Success

- *Provide more tutoring opportunities with smaller tutoring groups*
- *Increase availability of transportation for students to participate in afterschool activities*
- *Tailor curriculum (including electives and career training classes) and afterschool activities to students' interests*
- *Make greater use of technology in delivery of instruction*
- *Provide basic health care services, STD testing and counseling, and women's health services*
- *Offer on-campus childcare to students, families, faculty, & staff*

4.2 ENGAGING & Providing Resources for Parents

Parental engagement is largely viewed as one of the major predictors of student success in an academic setting. Therefore, the researchers provide recommendations for encouraging parental engagement at Evans Community School. Additionally, because it is anticipated that at least some of the resources and programs offered at the new community school will be made

available to parents, recommendations are made as to what resources are likely to have the most impact.

Engaging Parents with the Community School

It was suggested across multiple stakeholder groups that lack of trust between parents and the school is one reason parents may not engage with the school. Without addressing this issue, it cannot be expected that parents will place any more trust in the new community school than they presently have in Evans High School.

One way in which other community schools have addressed the trust issue is to hire a staff member to act as a liaison between the school and the community. Ideally, that staff member should have ties to the community (Warren, 2005). Such a person exists in the case of Evans Community School, Ms. Charlene Tolbert-Sears, and she has already been installed as Community School Director. Ms. Tolbert-Sears is a graduate of Evans and has long-standing ties to the Pine Hills community. Continued funding sufficient to support this position is seen as vital to the success of the community school as well as building and maintaining trust between the school, parents, and the larger community.

Parental engagement can also be promoted by requiring parents to volunteer at the school in order to take advantage of resources offered at the community school. While this method of promoting engagement is slightly coercive (and perhaps problematic if the parent cannot qualify as a volunteer due to inability to pass a background check as required by the school system), it has been effective as a means of promoting parental engagement in other community school settings (Warren, 2005). Alternatively, the community school could provide a hiring preference to Evans parents for instructional support positions such as teacher aides and afterschool program facilitators (Warren, 2005).

Another strategy that has been employed with success is hosting workshops for parents (Heystek 2003). The types of workshops that could prove successful in engaging parents with the school include:

- Workshops to improve parent literacy and communication skills
- Workshops for skill building around the subjects being taught in school
- Workshops designed to enhance parent-child relationships
- Workshops on cultural understanding

Finally, it is recommended that the community school support the professional development of its faculty and staff such that those persons are well-equipped to interact with parents and the community (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson, 2010). Such professional development might include cultural sensitivity training, foreign language training and partnership and collaboration training.

Recommended Parental Resources

Parents would likely benefit most from resources that further the education of parents and improve communication and job skills. Most particularly, GED classes and ESOL classes should be made available to parents. Additionally, a job skills center designed to help parents with such skills as filling out job applications, writing resumes, and interviewing would be beneficial to Evans parents.

Figure 5. Summary of Recommendations to Engage and Provide Resources to Parents

- *Continue funding a position for a community liaison*
- *Fund a position to act as a liaison to parents*
- *Hold workshops and classes designed to improve parent's skills in areas that will promote trust-building and collaboration competency*

4.3 ENGAGING & Partnering with Faith Organizations

Faith organizations in the Pine Hills community have the potential to foster the educational achievement and the future success of students. Faith organizations often derive a great deal of support from their congregation or members. There are many methods whereby the faith-based community can provide services to aid in the educational success of a school, especially those attending Evans. One method is to implement an afterschool program in which students can participate in a variety of services that the church may have to offer. With the consent of the parents, a child can be enrolled into a tutoring program which offers tutoring for either the same or similar courses that are taught at Evans. This would help students improve in his or her weak areas and excel in their academics. If the child does not need tutoring, the faith organization can provide a safe environment for students while their parents are away from home.

Another possible program that the faith-based community could provide is guidance for students whether that guidance be general, spiritual, or mental advice. Sometimes adolescents do not have a trusted individual they can communicate with regardless of the topic, which often can be the cause of a student's poor academic record and/or reason behind his or her disruptive behavior. With a guidance program in place, a student can either approach a pastor or a person apart from the clergy for advice. The faith community can also implement a mentoring program where a trusted and respected individual in the community can be specifically assigned to a student to help keep a his or her individual focus, provide a helping hand when needed and also be a positive role model for the student, something very similar to a big brother or sister. Doing so, can help the change the perspective of individuals skeptical about faith-based organizations helping public school and may be change the outlook of certain people may have.

Unfortunately, it is no secret that the faith-based community has certain reservations in regards to working with Evans High School and the public school system in general. All too often, the needs and the concerns presented by the faith-based community are ignored. It is very important that the faculty of Evans High School and all stakeholders involved with the project address the interests and concerns that faith organizations may have in regards to working with the school.   In response to the faith organization's interests and concerns there should be considerable emphasis placed on establishing strategies that meet the interests of all the stakeholders involved with the Evans High School Community School Project. It is imperative that the faith-based organizations are asked to accomplish targeted goals that are specifically created to establish a successful partnership. Because faith-based organizations are so important to this project, it is integral that the reasons behind the targeted goals should be explained to the faith-based community in such a way that it does not appear that they are being dictated to. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, it would be prudent to create a process that would facilitate ongoing communication between the faith-based community and Evans High School.

Figure 6. Summary of Recommendations to Engage and Partner with Faith Organizations

> - *Develop mechanisms for effective and ongoing communication*
> - *Understand the interests and concerns of the faith organizations with respect to partnering with the school*
> - *Build strategies that meet the interests of all parties*
> - *Establish specific targeted goals that can be accomplished in partnership with faith organizations*
> - *Goals should be established in such a way that they do not appear to be dictated*

4.4 ENGAGING Community Members

The main focus of the groups' efforts should be on student achievement as it relates to how the community can be engaged to support or rally behind the educational achievement of Evans High School students. Creating change for the students (the next generation of community leaders) can result in enhancing the quality of life in the community through education, role models, and the pure belief that all people can determine their destination in life, if given the proper tools and guidance to achieve their set goals. In the past, it has been proven that with the right motivation and education, even one person can spark change and move a community.

The purpose of engaging public participation from members of the community is to create opportunities for students to become engaged in the community; develop solutions for how students spend their out of school time in ways that support student academic achievement creating opportunities for parents to empower themselves; and break down the barriers previously identified as standing in the way of parental involvement.

The list of Pine Hills community members who should be included in the development, implementation, and process for the Evans Community School are, but may not be limited to:
- Business Leaders (particularly those who have worked with the Pine Hills Economic Development Task Force)
- Evans Students
- Evans Alumni
- Faith-Based Organizations (including KNEC)
- Community Development Corporations
- Higher Education Institutions (such as UCF)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Police Department Program Directors (e.g., Powerful Education Technologies Mentor Program)
- Central Florida Police Athletic League
- PTA-Active Parents
- Evans High School Faculty and Staff
- Diaspora Organizations
- Teen Court with 9th Judicial Circuit Juvenile Justice Center
- Workforce Central Florida

- Red Cross
- Orange County Public Library
- Department of Children and Families
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- YMCA
- Boys and Girls Club of Central Florida

Each of the above mentioned partners or community members are organizations that, if asked to participate in improving both Evans High School and the Pine Hills community, may likely agree to assist in the efforts to bring positive change to the community.

We recommend conducting an information sharing session (in regards to student achievement, resources/existing opportunities available on- and off-campus) with all community member participates. The sessions should be a deliberative process with a facilitator to maintain a balance of ideas and ensure the meeting is effective. We also recommend conducting a community leadership forum in the form of study circles at multiple tables with random (community) participants and a facilitator at each table. The limitations of utilizing this set of recommendations is that it is primarily school centered because it focuses on advising how to support academic success through after (out-of) school activities and resources for students. The most important element to maintain in the recommended public participation process is the creation of a system that allows continual feedback from engaged community members.

Figure 7. Summary of Recommendations to Engage Community Members

- *Focus on Student Achievement*
- *Gain the trust of the community by engaging members of the community to participate*
- *Continue to reach out to leaders and members of the Pine Hills Community and Evans Community School*
- *Ensure open communication among all engaged members of the community and Evans Community School leaders*
- *Conduct an information sharing session and/or Community Leadership Forum*
- *Maintain continual feedback among the stakeholders in Evans Community School Leaders*

4.5 SUSTAINING Relationships across Stakeholders

Two themes emerge with respect to forging and maintaining relationships across stakeholders: trust and communication. To that end, we recommend developing a community capacity-building network that meets the needs of the community, is inclusive of all stakeholders, and grants final decision authority regarding community school matters to a governance panel consisting of diverse stakeholder representation. Such a network can be facilitated through community-wide study circles convened once a month with randomly selected willing participants to increase trust across stakeholders and institutions in Pine Hills.

After setting up the governance structure, it is recommended to hold a retreat for strategic planning. It is essential that the retreat helps establish a governance panel consisting of representatives from diverse stakeholder groups (e.g. business, faith, school, parents) to ensure primary stakeholder buy-in, and where there will be diffuse responsibilities across stakeholders. The target groups for specific functions can include for example recruitment of community stakeholders to assist in education mission, multicultural for outreach to specific demographics, such as Haitian churches, and Hispanic local businesses.

Transparency in a network is vital for reaching trust and enhancing the flow of communication across all stakeholders. Quarterly meetings with all participants, including faculty and parents, in order to inform and educate all interested parties on the future course of the community school, goals, and steps to follow, will ease preoccupation and enhance confidence and support to the organizations forging the new community school's mission. Another method to allow transparency in network communications is to provide a link on the school's website with the advisory board, the strategic planning, and detailed information on current and upcoming projects.

Creating incentive programs for all stakeholders will make them feel part of the effort as a whole, recognizing their contribution, and showing them the results of all the labor put into the new community school. To this end, it would be ideal to organize non-academic community events to develop social ties and build trust. In these community events, incentives for stakeholders' involvement can be created by developing youth partnerships to showcase student work tied to professions, workshops, and training they have received through the school year. And also, establishing a grant-writing group can enhance trust across all stakeholders as it will secure future funding.

Figure 8. Summary of Recommendations for Sustaining Relationships across Stakeholders

- *Establish a governance panel consisting of representatives from diverse stakeholder groups (e.g., business, faith, school, parents) to ensure buy-in*
- *Develop a community capacity building network that meets the needs of the community, is inclusive of stakeholders, and grants final decision authority to the governance panel*
- *Hold a retreat for stakeholder groups to facilitate strategic planning*
- *Diffuse responsibilities across stakeholders to optimize buy-in and prevent dependence on any one set of stakeholders for the success of the school*
- *Organize non-academic community events to develop social ties and develop trust*
- *Establish a grant-writing group to secure future and continuing funding*

5. Conclusion

Based on what was learned at the various focus groups and what was learned from researching other community schools and faith-based initiatives, building trust between the school and Evans Community School stakeholders should be a primary objective. That is accomplished in part through keeping open lines of communication between the school and community stakeholders.

There are a number of opportunities for Evans Community School to build relationships with community partners that will ultimately benefit students and promote their academic achievement. In particular, the faith community in the Pine Hills area can provide educational support in the form of tutoring and social support in the form of mentoring and other after school programs. Additionally, local businesses can provide opportunities for students to take part in shadowing programs and internships, which in addition to providing a safe place for students to spend their outside-of-school hours, can promote the future career and professional success of Evans students.

The key to making Evans an effective community school that will serve as a model for future schools is building and sustaining relationships with partners in the Pine Hills community.

6. References

Ash, S., & Clayton, P. (2004). The articulated learning: An approach to guided reflection and assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, *29*(2), 137-154.

Bailey, D.F. & Bradbury-Bailey, M.E. (2010). Empowered Youth Programs: Partnerships for Enhancing Postsecondary Outcomes African American Adolescents. *ASCA, 14* (1), 64-74.

Blank, M., Jacobson, R., Melaville, A., & Pearson, S. (2010). *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success.* Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership. Washington, D.C.: Coalition for Community Schools.

Branch, Y, Alvia. (2002). "Faith and Action: Implementation of the National Faith-Based Initiative for High Risk Youth" Public/Private Ventures, 78. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov.

Campbell, D. (2000). Social capital and service learning. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 33*(3), 641-645.

Dennis, Shirley L. (2001). Faith-Based Organizations, Community Development, and the Reform of Public Schools. Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 76, 222-240. http://web.ebscohost.comezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/ehost/resultsadvanced.

Fung, A. (2006). Varities of Participation in Complex Governance. *Public Administration Review, Special Issue*, 66-75.

Gardner, III, Ralph. (2001). "Mt. Olivet After-School Program" *Remedial and Special Education*, 22 (1), 22. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Heystek, Jan (2003). Parents as Governors and Partners in Schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 35, 328-351.

Jeynes, W.H. (2003). A Meta-Analysis: The Effects of Parental Involvement on Minority Children's Academic Achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, 35, 202-218.

Miles, R., Snow, C., & Miles, G. (2000). TheFuture.org. *Long Range Planning*, 33, 300-321.

Moore-Thomas, C. & Day-Vines, N. (2010) Culturally Competent Collaboration: School Counselor Collaboration with African American Families and Communities. *ASCA,* 14 (1) 53-63.

Mundell, Leah. (2010). "A Theology of Presence: Faith Partnerships with U.S. Public Schools". In J. Adkins, L. Occhipinti, & T. Hefferan (Eds), *Not by Faith Alone: Social Services, Social Justice, and Faith-Based Organizations in the United States,* 33-49. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Musso, J.A., Kitsuse, A., & Cooper, T. (2002). Faith organizations and neighbourhood councils in Los Angeles. *Public Administration Development*, 22, 83-94.

Oliver, P. D., Leeming, F.C., and Dwyer, W.O. (1998). Studying Parental Involvement in School-Based Sex Education: Lessons Learned. *Family Planning Perspectives,* 30 (3), 143-147.

Peirce, D. & Walker, S. (2005). "Building Church-School Mentoring Partnerships: Benefits, Challenges, and Powerful Results" North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW), 1-7, http://www.nacsw.org.

Pine Hills Economic Development Task Force (2010). Pine Hills on the Rise: Final Task Force Recommendations to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners. Available at http://www.orangecountyfl.net/YourLocalGovernment/CountyDepartments/CountyAdministration/OfficeofPublicEngagementandCitizenAdvocacy/NeighborhoodPreservationRevitalizationDivision/PineHillsBusinessRedevelopmentTaskForce/tabid/2545/Default.aspx.

Rocha, C. (2000). Evaluating experiential teaching methods in a policy practice course: The case for service learning to increase political participation. *Journal of Social Work Education,* 36 (1), 53-63.

Robinson, T. (2001). Service learning as justice advocacy: Can political scientists do politics? *PS: Political Science and Politics,* 33 (3), 605-612.

Smith, H, Jim. (2001). "Faith Communities and Public Schools: A Collaboration to Improve Education." 10. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov.

Tai-Seale, T. (2001). Liberating service learning and applying the new practice. *College Teaching,* 49 (1), 14-18.

Warren, M. R. (2005). Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform. *Harvard Educational Review,* 75 (2), 133-173.

Whitehurst, G. J., & Croft, M. (2010). *The Harlem Children's Zone, Promise Neighborhoods, and the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education.* The Brookings Institution, Brown Center on Education Policy. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

APPENDIX 1 – FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Student Focus Group

I. What factors outside of school time facilitate and/or hinder student success in school? What facility and human resources exist for occupying students outside of school time?

1. We are interested in knowing what you do outside of school time. Can you tell us what you do during the week once classes are done for the day?

2. [Some of you mentioned that you stay on the Evans campus after classes are done.] What do you do once you leave campus?
    a. Where do you go?
    b. With whom do you hang out?

3. What time do you usually get home?
    a. When you get home, what do you usually do?
        i. Homework?
        ii. Video games?
        iii. Talk on the phone or online?
        iv. Have dinner and go back out?
        v. Other?

4. During the week, when do you take time to complete homework?
    a. Do you work on homework with anybody else?
        i. With friends?
        ii. Familiy?
        iii. Teachers?

5. What happens on weekends?
    a. Do you spend any time on weekends on school work?
    b. Where do you spend your time on weekends when not at home?
        i. What do you do?
        ii. With whom do you hang out?

6. Out of all your time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically helps you succeed in your classes?

7. Out of all your time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically prevents you from succeeding in your classes?

II. What do Evans High School students want out of a future community school?

1. Evans High School will soon be in a new location with new resources available for students and parents. Thinking about the future community school, what resources would you like to see included?
   a. What *educational and career opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?
   b. What *health resources* would you like to see as part of the community school?
   c. What *recreational opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?

Parent Focus Group

I. What factors outside of school time facilitate and/or hinder student success in school?
What facility and human resources exist for occupying students outside of school time?

1. We are interested in knowing what opportunities are known to exist for students after or before school hours for continued learning and studying. Can you tell us, to the best of your knowledge, what your children do after the school day?
   a. Where do they go?
   b. With whom do they hang out?

2. What time do your children usually get home after school?
   a. When they get home, what do they usually do?
      i. Homework?
      ii. Video games?
      iii. Talk on the phone or online?
      iv. Have dinner and go back out?
      v. Other?

3. Some parents work with their children to complete homework, and some do not. Do you find that you have the time and knowledge to help with homework? Why or why not?

4. What happens on weekends?
   a. Where do your children spend their time on weekends when not at home?
      i. What do they do?
      ii. With whom do they hang out?

5. Out of all the time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically helps your children succeed in their classes?

6. Out of all the time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically prevents your children from succeeding in their classes?

II. How are parents of Evans High School students currently utilizing school resources to engage with their child's learning?

    1. Evans High School currently offers opportunities for parents to become directly involved in their children's learning. To what opportunities, if any, do you avail yourself?

III. What do parents want out of a future community school?

    1. Evans High School will soon be in a new location with new resources available for students and parents. Thinking about the future community school, what resources would you like to see included?
        a. What *educational and career opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?
        b. What *health resources* would you like to see as part of the community school?
        c. What *recreational opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?

Teacher Focus Group

I. What do teachers want out of a future community school?

    1. Evans High School will soon be in a new location with new resources available for students and parents. Thinking about the future community school, what resources would you like to see included?
        a. What *educational and career opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?
        b. What *health resources* would you like to see as part of the community school?
        c. What *recreational opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?

Community Focus Group

I. What resources exist in the community for Evans students?

    7. Out of all the time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically helps Evans students succeed in their classes?

    8. Out of all the time outside school hours, is there any resource, place, or person that specifically prevents Evans students from succeeding in their classes?

II. What do parents want out of a future community school?

2. Evans High School will soon be in a new location with new resources available for students and parents. Thinking about the future community school, what resources would you like to see included?
    a. What *educational and career opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?
    b. What *health resources* would you like to see as part of the community school?
    c. What *recreational opportunities* would you like to see as part of the community school?
    d. Is there anything else you would like to see as part of the community school?

APPENDIX 2 – STUDENT RESEARCH TEAMS

UCF Graduate Student Research Teams

<u>Student Focus Group Team</u>

Brian Astleford

Jereme Ford

James "Jae" Lowe

Harolyn Mallette

TeNeika Walker

<u>Parent Focus Group Team</u>

Mattthew Malkemes

Maura McGovern

Pamela Murray

Kelda Senior

Diana "Meredith" Gaines

<u>Faculty Focus Group Team</u>

Michelle Beamon

Elchin Kazimov

Ihab Osman

Heidi Rodriguez

Burt Seearam

<u>Faith Organization Focus Group Team</u>

Elcia "Cia" Joseph

Kurt Oster*

<u>Community Focus Group Team</u>

Harun Hasbi

Elchin Kazimov

Pamela Murray

Kelda Senior

<u>Photo Documentation Team</u>

Jonathan Hammock

Thomas Lee

Luz "Angela" Moreno

<u>Literature Review Team</u>

Meghan Lindsey—*Review of Literature on the Role of the Faith Community in Education Initiatives*

Patrick Panza—*The Community School Model*

Rosemary Young—*Review of Literature on Parental Involvement*

<u>Survey Data Input</u>

Elchin Kazimov

<u>Writing Team</u>

Michelle Beamon

Elcia "Cia" Joseph

Meghan Lindsey

Pamela Murray

Patrick Panza

Heidi Rodriguez

TeNeika Walker

Tashina Walters

Rosemary Young

*Kurt Oster contributed to this research but withdrew from Cross-Sectoral Governance (PAD 6825) before the completion of the term.

Evans High School Student Researchers

Rosa Alcantar

Stephanie Chery

Jade Curtis

Amber Espinoza

Marisol Garcia

Marklyne Joachim

Imani Lowe

Manessa Matthews

Ayona McGann

Lucnise Mettelus

Precious Roberson

Nathly Ruiz

Cheryl Simmons

Kathy Volcy

Ranitra Walker

Jayssa Williams