New Schools Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

A MOU was entered into by Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and New Schools Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) to improve and expand preschool operations and related services to the children of Los Angeles County through the financial support of First 5 LA. LAUP has developed a provider application process that includes three formal phases as well as an Early Development Pre-Phase where mapping of providers and derived needs are used to inform site selection. NSBN was asked by LAUP to provide services in the Early Development Pre-Phase, not LAUP’s three-phase process of licensing and rating providers.

Under the MOU, NSBN was to conduct pre-planning (start-up activities) for four sites in LAUP “Areas of Greatest Needs (Tier I and Tier II zip codes)” with at least one being a school-based site. The project sought to use NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise in three key areas—1) leveraging resources, 2) creating collaborative partnerships and 3) developing innovative strategies to bring new or expanded services to impacted communities. The majority of the work was to focus on those areas of LA County where the current preschool service level was below 39% but above 10%.

This report is an assessment of NSBN’s work to date with LAUP in its Early Development Pre-Phase, addressing the question, how has NSBN used its expertise on this project? In addressing this question, organizational and project documents were reviewed; and meetings, interviews and surveys were conducted with project staff and participants.

KEY FINDINGS

1) Leveraging Resources

Given the short time frame, NSBN’s role in leveraging resources is impressive. This is particularly true in light of the fact that over the tenure of the project, questions regarding the vision and goals for the project and participant roles and responsibilities had to be repeatedly addressed.

NSBN’s success in leveraging resources is evident in the willingness of participants at various sites to sign LOIs and MOUs that put land, modular units, and funds from other sources on the table to build new preschool seats. Similarly, LAUP approval of several of the NSBN sites also points to exceeding the initial expectations for the partnership. More importantly, recent statements from LAUP senior management point to an alignment of interests between LAUP and NSBN.

A total of 608 possible new seats resulted from NSBN’s work. To date, NSBN/LAUP approved projects have already yielded 360 new seats. In addition, another 208 new seats at NSBN sites are pending LAUP funding approval, while 40 new seats were denied funding. With a total of 512 seats approved or still pending approval, NSBN far exceeded its LAUP contract goal of 96 seats.

2) Creating Collaborative Partnerships

Building on existing relationships was a great way to jump start these projects. Here, NSBN was able to use relationships with Paramount Unified School District, Lennox School District, and Lawndale Elementary School, established during the master planning work, for additional LAUP projects. In addition, NSBN was able to
build new relationships in Bellflower, Watts, Lake Los Angeles, and Lancaster to expand seats in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Throughout this collaborative process, NSBN has had to take time to address various stakeholder issues, concerns, and questions that arose during the course of its work at particular sites in order to keep projects moving forward. More directly, as a result of NSBN’s efforts, partnerships have been established that have served to expand access to preschool in LAUP “Areas of Greatest Needs”.

3) Developing Innovative Strategies

Once again, the timeframe for this project impacts the ability to gauge NSBN’s ability to develop innovative strategies for preschool facilities development. In particular, the goal of 96 seats in a year meant that modular units would have to be used. However, the fact that collaborators talk about short-term (Phase I) and long-term facility (Phase II) development opens the door for more opportunities for innovation. For example, the individual site projects show that participants are excited about being able to dialogue about how to meet the needs of their relevant community of interest, while at the same time, focusing on ways to meet the needs and interests of others.

It is also clear that innovation will only happen once a common language has been developed: stakeholders need to clearly understand property, preschool programming, and planning issues in order to expand their capacity to develop new (or improved) service delivery models.

Interviews make it clear that most participants understand ‘their’ issues—for example, providers understand preschool programs, but may struggle with property and planning issues. Without some entity leading or facilitating the discussion of the broader issues, participants will fall back into their old responses, models, and strategies for getting their work done, leading to yet another missed opportunity for disadvantaged communities.

4) Summary

Appendix A provides a short list of the statements given to date on the role that NSBN has played in helping to find creative ways to meet the preschool needs of Los Angeles County. Drawn from a variety of sources, these comments show broad-based support for the NSBN approach to building preschool seats through building relationships.
CONTEXT

LOS ANGELES UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL (LAUP)

In its’ Master Plan, the LAUP Facilities Content Committee raised the following question: “Can you really do more for everybody else, while the children who have nothing continue to get nothing from this tremendous investment in early education?” As a result, the following set of recommendations was developed to focus resources in communities that currently have very few early education facilities:

• The Universal Preschool system will permit a special supplement, or “up-charge” on base funding so that programs in these zip codes can lease renovated space;

• Any funds raised for facilities will be directed to these areas before consideration is given to other communities;

• Support funds will be directed to these areas for community capacity building; and

• Efforts to secure private or public facilities financing will be targeted for these areas until equity with the rest of the county is reached.

This in turn led the Facilities Committee to set five goals. These are to:

• Create equity such that facility capacity matches need and facilities are accessible and located where the need is;

• Provide adequate, stable, continuous resources for facilities,

including new construction and upgrades and maintenance of existing facilities;

• Establish design and maintenance standards for new, upgraded or renovated, and retrofitted facilities;

• Embark on regulatory and system reform so that barriers to building new facilities are lowered and efforts are collaborative across the board;

• Ensure that the workforce, higher education community, and licensing agencies are trained and informed about new design and maintenance standards.

In addition, the Facilities Committee argued that creating new opportunities for construction and renovation – accomplished through relationship-building with the school districts, private developers, financial institutions, municipal agencies, and foundations – will also be a high early priority for the facilities agenda.

Finally, the LAUP Master Plan noted that there were huge challenges in developing preschools—including the cost of land, high population density, and a limited funding stream for facilities and capital outlays. As such, the relationship building listed above would be critical to the realization of the LAUP vision for preschool for every 4 year old in LA County, and a key reason for LAUP’s partnership with NSBN.

NEW SCHOOL BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS (NSBN)

In New Relationships with Schools: Organizations that Build Community by Connecting with Schools (November, 2004)

David Abel of NSBN stated that with large
urban areas in Los Angeles and similar areas now almost completely developed, there is no place for people to come together and be a part of community. He further argued that this is because of the tendency of public agencies (particularly schools), to plan and act alone, ultimately reducing the quality of schools because they are unconnected to other services and supports and function in isolation from community influences and constituencies for changes. In response for such insular practices, he called for integrated development—more than simply putting different programs in the same place—of scarce open space in urban areas.

NSBN’s initial work with First 5 LA involved putting these ideas into practice through joint-use master planning for schools in several Los Angeles County communities. The work showed the benefits of engaging a host of stakeholders in developing a vision for what a school COULD be for a larger community of interests than are traditionally linked to schools. As a result, joint-use planning for schools also led to the integration of affordable housing, family resource centers, health care, and transportation in various communities throughout the county.

Hoping to capitalize on these planning efforts, LAUP and NSBN entered into a MOU to improve and expand preschool operations and related services to the children of Los Angeles County through the financial support of First 5 LA. LAUP has developed a provider application process that includes three formal phases as well as an Early Development Pre-Phase where mapping of providers and derived needs are used to inform site selection. NSBN was asked by LAUP to provide services in the Early Development Pre-Phase, not LAUP’s three-phase process of licensing and rating providers.

Under the MOU, NSBN was to conduct pre-planning (start-up activities) for four sites in LAUP “Greatest Areas on Need” with at least one being a school-based site. The project sought to use NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise in three key areas—1) leveraging resources, 2) creating collaborative partnerships and 3) developing innovative strategies to bring new or expanded services to impacted communities. The majority of the work was to focus on those areas of LA County where the current preschool service level was below 39% but above 10%.

This report is an assessment of NSBN’s work to date with LAUP in its Early Development Pre-Phase, addressing the question, how has NSBN used its expertise on each of the sites for this project?

NSBN-LAUP KEY INFORMANTS

In its previous work with First 5 LA, NSBN was able to document the perspectives of both formal (project coordinators, developers, school district employees and representatives, and other service providers) and informal (parents, community residents) participants in the master planning process for several schools over a three-year timeframe. However, the current project with LAUP involved a clear mandate—add preschool seats; and a much shorter timeframe (one-year). As such, only the perspective of formal participants was collected. Key informants from the NSBN/LAUP projects were asked specific questions about their respective projects: 1) stakeholder issues and relationships; 2) skills and resources; and 3) project impact. Statements by participants and/or general themes that arose during these discussions are highlighted below.
STAKEHOLDER ISSUES AND RELATIONSHIPS

What do you believe have been the most important issue(s) for you and for other participants in the project?

…..the need to find common ground for each agency is critical...

…..critical that both partners keep the other agency’s need in mind when forming or working in a partnership….that is, what you need is also what I need.

…..the architect, the most important issue and challenge is to create a project which has an identity and a sense of “place”.

…..using portable buildings, we are striving to design these projects so that they feel and look more like unique, permanent facilities, which I believe conveys a sense of stability, order, respect and commitment which many of these communities are in need of...

…..the need for services for pre-school children

Here, locating common ground, keeping others issues in mind, creating a sense of stability, and providing needed services were seen as key issues for project participants.

SKILL AND RESOURCES

What skill sets do you believe are critical to the success of this project?

…..common desire for a positive outcome, regardless of who gets credit...

…..from a skill point of view, one must have the ability to collaborate and work as a member of a team....

…..perseverance and commitment to overcoming obstacles; .....patience to play out the struggle to overcome them; .....need to be flexible and creative enough to recognize that some obstacles are unconquerable and we must be prepared to take a different and unforeseen direction....

the ability to distinguish between an unconquerable and a conquerable obstacle is of course, the most critical skill...

…..the commitment and expertise of NSBN in facilitating the development of a pre-school center with expanded social services....

The respondents make it clear that we need to do the work, no matter who gets the credit. We also can’t look for quick fixes—we must be committed, flexible, and creative to address the preschool service needs of diverse communities. Finally, we need to recognize that different participants bring unique skills to the table and all such projects will have to have the commitment to stay at the table long enough for projects to benefit from this different skill sets.

What areas of expertise do you believe are critical to the success of this project?

…..I believe one must have a value system that is inclusive and recognizes that multiple agencies can better serve a community than a single agency....
experience with other LAUP projects would always be useful. 

having someone on board who is very familiar with the specific requirements of the project (ex. end user teacher or director) early in the project would be very helpful.

someone who manages the ongoing communication with the provider, the community, and other stakeholders is vital……

knowledge of how to interface governmental agencies and their resources……

It is clear that multiple perspectives and skill sets are needed to successfully develop and/or expand preschool facilities in disadvantaged communities. More directly, efforts to expand preschool facilities in disadvantaged communities may have to rely on these ‘shared’ perspectives and skill sets more than other communities.

Do you believe the community is better off (will be better off) because of this project? Why do you feel this way?

...certainly yes…if I did not believe this I would not be supportive of the project….there is a continuing need for preschool services, especially all day services…thus, our ability to increase preschool availability will clearly serve the needs of the community...

the community is in great need of the projects….underserved communities with a high percentage of working families with young children….given the low performance and high drop out rates of our city’s students, we need to do as much as we can to get them started on the right track from an early age….

...yes, the boys and girls in this area are underserved and in need of the additional assistance…

Here is it clear that by addressing the communities of greatest need for preschool services, participants expect other educational needs in the community will be impacted. The connection between preschool, performance, and graduation, while not specifically on the table, is on the minds of project participants. Although this is a long-range issue outside the one year time frame of the initial MOU, this spillover into critical educational areas of the communities will certainly be the focus of additional work on these projects.

Would you be willing to participate in another project with NSBN? Under what conditions?

Yes …the only conditions being the nature and details of the project. All projects must meet the needs of our community. With this one condition, I would absolutely participate in future projects…

...I believe in the premise that the most successful schools are those which are a real part of the community. To best achieve that requires communities to have a direct role in the planning and design of their schools. NSBN can be a great asset because they have the experience in organizing and managing this process. I would be
more than happy to participate in other projects… absolutely—they are outstanding

No…projects could have come on their own…not clear where they brought value…seem to have informed others about funding—no personal value…no budgets…didn’t make it easier…

Any other comments you would like to make about the project?

…working with NSBN has allowed me personally, as well as the District, to expand our offerings and thinking…this is been an outstanding relationship and one that I have recommended to others……

….to answer your question, they are of course, all similar in their great need for child care. They are also all similar in that they need help in the development process, putting together the team of people required to get the project in place, organizing and coordinating the process, etc. For the most part, they are understaffed and don’t have the resources to have people dedicated to pursuing the project and benefit greatly from another entity taking that lead, especially when the project involves several groups and several types of uses…..

…NSBN is truly performing a valuable service; their altruism is to be commended

Participants have seen themselves grow and they want to expand that opportunity for growth into as many communities as possible.

**Summary**

In general, the individuals that were most involved in the day-to-day activities associated with the LAUP NSBN projects believe that their efforts are being targeted to meet the preschool service needs of disadvantaged communities.

**Site Case Summaries**

A key area of interest for LAUP and First 5 LA is how well NSBN expertise in leveraging resources, creating collaborative partnership, and developing innovative strategies for adding or enhancing services was manifested in the new round of projects. The site summaries that follow are designed to address that question.

**Sites 1-4—Bufford Elementary, Felton Elementary, Moffett Elementary, and Whelan Elementary, Lennox, CA 90706**

**Needs Assessment Results**

- 92% Hispanic, 4% African America 3% White
- 46% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
- 73% of Adults have less than a 12th grade education
- 88% speak a non-English language in their homes
- Greater proportion of families with children 0-6 than countywide
- Very low average 3rd grade test scores
- High risk for child lead poisoning, crime, domestic violence, assault
- Moderate—low birth weight, newborn disability and disease
Lennox is an “Area of Greatest Need” as defined by LAUP and the First 5 LA Commission. In this predominantly Hispanic area of Los Angeles County, 73% of adults have less than a 12th grade education, 88% of residents speak a non-English language in their homes, and an average of 46% of households earn less than $25,000 per year.

In this community, NSBN and Lennox School District (“LSD”) collaborated once again; NSBN’s first partnership with LSD was to master plan new preschool classrooms, adult education, Sheriff Substation office, computer lab, and after-school program in Lennox.

This year, NSBN assisted LSD in planning for a total of 160 new preschool seats at four elementary schools—Bufford, Felton, Moffett, and Whelan. With the exception of Felton Elementary, each of these sites have been approved by LAUP, meaning 120 new preschool seats for the high priority neighborhood of Lennox.

These new preschool seats are being created at a reduced cost because LSD is providing the land (at no cost) for placement of modular classrooms. Further, LSD is providing existing modular trailers from other campuses, thus the cost for new preschool facilities at these locations is limited to solely renovation of the existing trailers.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:

1) NSBN was able to leveraging existing resources by getting LSD to agree to provide both the land and the modular trailer units for these new preschool seats.

2) NSBN was able to build on an existing partnership to add 120 new preschool seats in a high priority area.

3) NSBN has developed an effective strategy with schools to bring additional educational resources and preschool seats to underserved communities.

SITE 5 AND 6—LUTHERAN COMMUNITY SERVICE NETWORK: BETHEL REFORMED CHURCH AND HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH, BELLFLOWER, CA 90706

Needs Assessment Results

- 30% service delivery rate
- 43% Hispanic, 31% White, 12% African American, 10% Asian
- 30% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
- 29% of Adults have less than a 12th grade education
- 46% speak a non-English language in their homes
- Greater proportion of families with children 0-6 than countywide
- Low average 3rd grade test scores
- High risk for child lead poisoning
- Low incidence low infant birth weight

Bellflower has been identified as an “Area of Greatest Need” by LAUP and the First 5 LA Commission due to the 30% service delivery rate of licensed Pre-K sites to demand for seats for every 4-year old in the area.

In this area of Los Angeles County, 29% of adults have less than a 12th grade education, 46% of residents speak a non-English language in their homes, and an average of 30% of households earn less than $25,000 per year.
This project required NSBN to develop a new relationship with the Lutheran Community Service Network (LCSN). LCSN is an excellent partner for this type of collaborative development because: (1) LCSN has already established a California public benefit 501(c)(3) organization (a requirement to receive LAUP funding); (2) LCSN has already conducted some evaluation of the optimal location on the church site to use for Pre-K purposes; and (3) LCSN has already decided to operate the preschool itself, as opposed to leasing the space to another operator. The evaluation of these three items is critical for any faith-based organization that is interested in developing a preschool program.

With regard to the specific sites identified in Bellflower (Holy Redeemer and Bethel Reformed Church), LCSN and NSBN have engaged in numerous discussions about how the new LAUP classroom/playground space could be incorporated into existing church uses.

Through a series of planning meetings with NSBN, it became evident that LCSN required technical assistance to understand the space requirements/demands for a preschool program (both classroom space and outdoor playground space). LCSN staff and NSBN staff/consultants engaged in several discussions about these technical needs and the attendant site plans that address LAUP’s requirements for new preschool programs at both Holy Redeemer and Bethel Reformed Church.

NSBN, through planning funds provided by First 5 LA, has been able to provide broad planning assistance and project support, including architectural support for site planning and site schematics. As a result, LAUP has approved a total of 144 preschool seats at LCSN facilities—48 seats at Bethel Reformed Church and 96 seats at Holy Redeemer.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:

1) NSBN was able to leveraging existing resources by getting LCSN to use existing church facilities to operate its own new preschool seats.

2) NSBN was able to build a new partnership that will help add 144 new preschool seats in a high priority area.

3) NSBN has developed an effective strategy with faith-based institutions to bring additional educational resources and preschool seats to underserved communities.

The needs assessment results for zip code 90250 make it clear that this is an “Area of Needs Assessment Results

- 16% service delivery rate
- 44% Hispanic, 30% African American 16% White
- 37% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
- 32% of adults have less than a 12th grade education
- 55% speak a non-English language in their homes
- Greater proportion of families with children 0-6 than countywide
- Very low average 3rd grade test scores
- High risk for child lead poisoning
- Moderate—low birth weight, newborn disability and disease, crime, domestic violence, assault
“Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. With a 16% service delivery rate and a diverse population racially and ethnically, this is also a community with significant risk factors for children—very low 3rd grade test scores and child lead poisoning. More importantly, this community has a higher proportion of families with young children than the LA County average. As such, efforts to expand preschool opportunities here are consistent with LAUP strategies outlined above.

At this site, NSBN first encountered the issues of potentially competing preschool providers. The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start had preliminary plans to add a Head Start program on this school campus. At the same time, NSBN was proposing an LAUP funded preschool program to be operated by the Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD). With NSBN facilitating conversations between the relevant parties, Head Start concluded that due to the number of income eligible children in the area, another site would be better for the program.

As a result of NSBN’s intervention, there will be a new partnership between LACOE and LESD for a LAUP-funded preschool that will serve at least 72 children in an “Area of Greatest Need.” Moreover, these seats are being created at a notably reduced cost because LACOE is providing the real estate (at no cost) for placement of modular trailer units. Other collaborators on this project are Century Housing and David Campbell and Associates.

It must be added that there are challenges still facing NSBN at this site, namely serving LACOE’s existing student population. The Jonas Salk School is now a community day school operated by LACOE for 100 junior high and high school students that face a multitude of issues—i.e., probation, expulsion, living in group homes or foster care. In exchange for agreeing to house a new LAUP-funded preschool, LACOE has requested that NSBN develop programs that will directly serve the Salk students: (1) an on-site health clinic; and (2) a park on the eastside of the campus.

In response to these requests, NSBN is currently fostering relationships with the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities and Trust for Public Land – Parks for People in order to try and meet the program requests expressed by LACOE.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:

1) NSBN was able to leveraging existing resources by getting LACOE to agree to provide land for the placement of modular trailer units (exact location still to be determined).

2) NSBN was able to create a collaborative partnership between LACOE and the LESD to expand the number of preschool seats.

3) NSBN is developing an innovative strategy to bring additional services to students and the larger community with an on-site clinic and a park on the campus.

**Site 8—Zamboni/Orange Avenue School**  
15733 Orange Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723  

**Needs Assessment Results**

- 17% Service Delivery Rate
- 90% Hispanic, 2% African American  
  6% white
• 34% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
• 70% of Adults have less than a 12th grade education
• 84% Speak a non-English language in their homes
• Greater proportion of families with children 0-6 than countywide
• Below average 3rd grade test scores
• Incidence of low-birth weight babies lower than countywide
• High risk for child lead poisoning
• Moderate crime, domestic violence, assault

The needs assessment results for zip code 90723 make it clear that this is also an “Area of Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. This community has a 17% service delivery rate and a significant majority of Hispanic families that speak a language other than English. Moreover, 70% of the adults have less than a 12th grade education. This is certainly a community with significant risk factors for children—below average 3rd grade test scores and child lead poisoning. Given its higher proportion of families with young children than the LA County average and language barriers, successful efforts are needed to expand preschool services in this community.

Building on an existing relationship, NSBN and Paramount Unified School District (PUSD) are collaborating once again. NSBN’s first partnership with PUSD was to master plan new preschool classrooms, a city park, and primary center project in Paramount (Los Cerritos). PUSD owns Zamboni/Orange Avenue School, which is currently a public school for 730 students in grades K-8. PUSD had previously worked with LAUP at two sites within the district. PUSD reported to us that they generally found this experience to be frustrating and bureaucratic. As a result, PUSD was reluctant to work with LAUP on additional projects. NSBN overcame this barrier by agreeing to be an intermediary party between PUSD and LAUP so that the district would not have to work directly with LAUP.

NSBN is working with PUSD to plan and put in place a minimum of 48 new preschool seats to high priority neighborhoods in Paramount and in North Long Beach (see below). These new preschool seats will be added at a reduced cost because PUSD is providing the land (at no cost) for placement of modular classrooms.

The other collaborator on this project is Westgroup Designs.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is mixed:

1) NSBN was able to leverage resources by linking to PUSD’s expansion of early education services in its existing schools

2) NSBN was able to build on its existing collaborative partnerships with PUSD, not necessarily creating new partnerships

3) NSBN is in a position to help develop innovative strategies to bring new or expanded services to impacted communities as it participates in PUSD’s broader District Facilities Master Plan.

**SITE 9—C O L L I N S / C A P T A I N R A Y M O N D S C H O O L**  
6125 COKE AVENUE, LONG BEACH, CA  90805

**Needs Assessment Results**

• 47% Service Delivery Rate
• 74% Hispanic 10% African American 4% White
• 60% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
• 62% of Adults have less than a 12th grade education
• 74% Speak a non-English language in their homes
• Greater proportion of families with children 0-6 than countywide
• Low average 3rd grade test scores
• Moderate incidence of low-birth weight babies
• Low incidence of infant death
• High incidence of crime, domestic violence, assault

The needs assessment results for zip code 90805 make it an “Area of Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. This community has a 47% service delivery rate and a significant majority of Hispanic families that speak a language other than English. Over 60% of the adults have less than a 12th grade education. Other risk factors for children include low average 3rd grade test scores and a high incidence of crime, domestic violence and assault. Given its higher proportion of families with young children than the LA County average and language barriers, successful efforts are needed to expand preschool services in this community.

NSBN is also working with the Paramount Unified School District at the Collins/Captain Raymond School, a public school for 713 students in grades K-8. In addition to creating much-needed new preschool seats, NSBN is also facilitating the relocation of one preschool classroom at Collins Elementary to a new location with more appropriate outdoor playground equipment. Specifically, the existing preschool classroom currently shares outdoor playground with the Kindergarten students at Collins. The proposed new location would provide dedicated outdoor playground equipment utilized solely by preschool students.

The other collaborator on this project is Westgroup Designs.

Given that the players are the same as those listed for site 8, the overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is also mixed:

1) NSBN was able to leverage resources by linking to PUSD’s expansion of early education services in its existing schools

2) NSBN was able to build on its existing collaborative partnerships with PUSD, not necessarily creating new partnerships

3) NSBN is in a position to help develop innovative strategies to bring new or expanded services to impacted communities as it participates in PUSD’s broader District Facilities Master Plan.

SITE 10—WATTS/WILLOWBROOK 1233 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY, LOS ANGELES, 90059

Needs Assessment Results

• 45% Service Delivery Rate
• 54% Hispanic, 45% African American, 7% White
• 55% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
• 56% of Adults have less than a 12th grade education
• 51% Speak a non-English language in their homes
• Very low average 3rd grade test scores
• High incidence of low-birth weight babies
• High risk for child lead poisoning
• Moderate incidence newborn disability and disease
• High incidence of crime, domestic violence, assault

The needs assessment results for zip code 90059 make it an “Area of Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. With a 45% service delivery rate and a diverse population racially and ethnically, this is also a community with significant risk factors for children—very low 3rd grade test scores, high incidence of low birth weight babies and high risk for child lead poisoning.

This is a site in the Watts/Willowbrook area of Los Angeles County that Century Housing has had for several years. Until NSBN’s involvement, minimal progress had been made towards either the development of this site by Century Housing or to the realization of a joint use, new pre-k seat development plan for the neighborhood. Drew Child Development Corporation (“DCDC”), the provider partner for project, is currently facing displacement of its childcare operations on the Drew University campus. Drew, motivated to move and to partner with Century Housing has willingly engaged in NSBN’s collaborative master planning process for the site. As a result of NSBN’s predevelopment assistance DCDC has been given the opportunity to not only maintain its preschool programs, but also expand its vital programs in the Watts/Willowbrook community.

Century Housing is willing to contribute the land (in the form of a low-cost long-term lease with DCDC) and is paying for the pavement of the vacant land. Matching Century Housing’s contributions, DCDC is committing a portion of its funding from the California Department of Education (approximately $150,000) to the components of this project that are not funding by LAUP. As a result of this new partnership and collaborative planning, a new childcare center on this currently vacant land will serve up to 135 toddlers and preschool students – these new seats represent both a relocation of existing programs and the addition of new childcare seats.

NSBN’s participation in this project also provides an opportunity for Century Housing to re-energize its plans for a permanent joint-use facility on this site. One the project was first discussed several years ago, a number of partners such as Drew Head Start, Easter Seals, and a senior center were interested in providing services at this location. Due to delays in the project, the services provided by these partners have not come to fruition. NSBN is working with Century Housing to re-engage these partners to bring much-need services for both children and adults to this community.

NSBN has faced barriers from LAUP regarding ambient air concerns at the site. In response to these barriers, NSBN project staff have conducted research on air quality issues and has forwarded this information to LAUP for review. In addition, NSBN project staff are investigating alternative filtration and landscaping schemes that will address air quality concerns.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:

1) NSBN was able to leveraging existing resources by getting Century Housing to agree to contribute the land and pay for the pavement of the vacant land. And, NSBN got DCDC to commit funds to cover components of the project that are not covered by LAUP.
2) NSBN was able to create a collaborative partnership between Century Housing and the DCDC to expand the number of preschool seats.

3) NSBN is developing an innovative strategy to bring other players, once interested in the area, back to the table to provide other services for the community.

SITE 11—LANCASTER CHURCH OF CHRIST
1655 E. LANCASTER BLVD. LANCASTER, CA 93535

Needs Assessment Results

- 47% Service Delivery Rate
- 29% Hispanic 16% African American 50% White
- 31% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
- 24% of Adults hold less than a 12th grade education
- 25% Speaks a non-English language at home
- Greater proportion of families with children ages 0-6 than countywide
- Moderately Low 3rd Grade Test Scores
- Moderate Incidence of Low-birth Weight Babies.
- Low Incidence of Newborn Disability and Disease

The needs assessment results for zip code 93535 make it an “Area of Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. With a 47% service delivery rate and a diverse population racially and ethnically, this is also a community with fewer risk factors for children than previous project sites—moderately low 3rd grade test scores and moderate incidence of low birth weight babies.

At this site, NSBN encountered issues related to a lack of qualified service providers. Through a series of ‘cold calls’ in the Antelope Valley area, NSBN staff became acquainted with the Children’s Center of Antelope Valley (CCAV). CCAV currently provides a host of services for children and their families, including child care. After meeting with NSBN staff, CCAV staff were excited about the prospect of a partnership in order to expand an existing preschool operation at the Lancaster Church of Christ. When CCAV staff brought the proposed project to management, there was a concern about the projects because CCAV’s mission statement is focused on child abuse prevention and not providing childcare or preschool. This uncertainty was overcome by continuing the dialogue between NSBN staff and CCAV staff, resulting in CCAV management signing a letter of interest for this project.

One of the other challenges faced by NSBN with regards to this site was property owners with no knowledge of LAUP programs and procedures. Specifically, decisions about programs at this site must be approved by a group of church elders. At first, the elders were relocation to expand existing preschool operations at the site. Once again, as a result of conversations with NSBN staff on the details of the LAUP funded programs, the elders felt comfortable signing a LOI for the project.

This new LAUP-funded preschool will be operated by CCAV, and will serve at least 48 children in an “area of greatest need.” Significantly, these seats are being created at a notably reduced cost because the Lancaster Church of Christ is providing the real estate (at below-market rental rate) for placement of modular trailer units. In addition, as noted below, NSBN is working with Wilsona School District to obtain modular
trailer units for this site at a reduced cost to LAUP.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:

1) NSBN was able to leveraging existing resources by getting the Lancaster Church of Christ to again agree to provide land for the placement of modular trailer units; and the modular units can be purchased from Wilsona School District at a reduced cost.

2) NSBN was able to create a collaborative partnership between the Lancaster Church of Christ, CCAV and the WSD to expand the number of preschool seats.

3) NSBN used cold calls to develop an innovative strategy to bring services to this community.

**SITE 12—WILSONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

41625 N. 170TH EAST, LANCASTER, CA 93535

**Needs Assessment Results**

- 47% Service Delivery Rate
- 29% Hispanic 16% African American 50% White
- 31% of households with incomes less $25,000 per year
- 24% of Adults hold less than a 12th grade education
- 25% Speaks a non-English language at home
- Greater proportion of families with children ages 0-6 than countywide
- Moderately Low 3rd Grade Test Scores
- Moderate Incidence of Low-birth Weight Babies.
- Low Incidence of Newborn Disability and Disease

The needs assessment results for zip code 93535 make it an “Area of Greatest Need” for additional preschool services. With a 47% service delivery rate and a diverse population racially and ethnically, this is also a community with fewer risk factors for children than previous project sites—moderately low 3rd grade test scores and moderate incidence of low birth weight babies.

NSBN has faced concerns from the Board of the Wilsona School District (WSD) about a LAUP funded project. Specifically, the Superintendent of WSD has faced uneasiness from the school board due to an ‘anti-Rob Reiner’ sentiment in the community. As with other projects, NSBN staff has utilized persistence, communication, and education to overcome these initial objections and concerns.

At this site in North Los Angeles County, NSBN, the WSD, and the Children’s Center of Antelope Valley (CCAV) have partnered for the creation of a new licensed preschool facility on the campus of Wilsona Elementary School. This new LAUP-funded preschool will be operated by CCAV, and will serve at least 24 children in an “area of greatest need.” These seats are being created at a notably reduced cost because WSD is providing the real estate (at no cost) for placement of modular trailer units.

One of the promising leveraging opportunities that has resulted from this project is a potential arrangement for the purchase (by LAUP) of surplus trailers owned by WSD for use at new LAUP sites.

The overall assessment of NSBN’s previously demonstrated expertise on this project is high:
1) NSBN was able to leverage existing resources by getting WSD to provide land for the placement of modular trailer units; and for the modular units to be purchased from WSD at a reduced cost.

2) NSBN was able to create a collaborative partnership between CCAV and the WSD to expand the number of preschool seats.

3) NSBN used cold calls to develop an innovative strategy to bring services to this community.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Leveraging Resources

Given the short time frame, NSBN’s role in leveraging resources is impressive. This is particularly true in light of the fact that over the tenure of the project, questions regarding the vision and goals for the project and participant roles and responsibilities had to be repeatedly addressed.

NSBN’s success in leveraging resources is evident in the willingness of participants at various sites to sign LOIs and MOUs that put land, modular units, and funds from other sources on the table to build new preschool seats. Similarly, LAUP approval of several of the NSBN sites also points to exceeding the initial expectations for the partnership. More importantly, recent statements from LAUP senior management point to an alignment of interests between LAUP and NSBN.

A total of 608 possible new seats resulted from NSBN’s work. To date, NSBN/LAUP approved projects have already yielded 360 new seats. In addition, another 208 new seats at NSBN sites are pending LAUP funding approval, while 40 new seats were denied funding. With a total of 512 seats approved or still pending approval, NSBN far exceeded its LAUP contract goal of 96 seats.

2) Creating Collaborative Partnerships

Building on existing relationships was a great way to jump start these projects. Here, NSBN was able to use relationships with Paramount Unified School District, Lennox School District, and Lawndale Elementary School, established during the master planning work, for additional LAUP projects. In addition, NSBN was able to build new relationships in Bellflower, Watts, Lake Los Angeles, and Lancaster to expand seats in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Throughout this collaborative process, NSBN has had to take time to address various stakeholder issues, concerns, and questions that arose during the course of its work at particular sites in order to keep projects moving forward. More directly, as a result of NSBN’s efforts, partnerships have been established that have served to expand access to preschool in LAUP “Areas of Greatest Needs”.

3) Developing Innovative Strategies

Once again, the timeframe for this project impacts the ability to gauge NSBN’s ability to develop innovative strategies for preschool facilities development. In particular, the goal of 96 seats in a year meant that modular units would have to be used. However, the fact that collaborators talk about short-term (Phase I) and long-term facility (Phase II) development opens the door for more opportunities for innovation. For example, the individual site projects show that participants are excited about being able to dialogue about how to meet the needs of their relevant community
of interest, while at the same time, focusing on ways to meet the needs and interests of others.

It is also clear that innovation will only happen once a common language has been developed: stakeholders need to clearly understand property, preschool programming, and planning issues in order to expand their capacity to develop new (or improved) service delivery models.

Interviews make it clear that most participants understand ‘their’ issues—for example, providers understand preschool programs, but may struggle with property and planning issues. Without some entity leading or facilitating the discussion of the broader issues, participants will fall back into their old responses, models, and strategies for getting their work done, leading to yet another missed opportunity for disadvantaged communities.

In community workshops hosted by Health City for LAUP, they sought to develop a countywide set of “planning principles” for how to build new spaces within what were then called Hot Zones, but we now know as the Areas of Greatest Need. After a voting process the top 10 principles were:

1. Community knowledge is key to advancing facilities development and identifying unused or empty lots; planning must include all sectors of the community.
2. Elected officials should be working with the community to find appropriate solutions to zoning and other barriers to preschool facilities development.
3. Partnerships with existing child care facilities, other provider agencies, and other trusted organizations are key.
4. Parent involvement in all levels of site planning is a must.
5. All children within the Hot Zones should have the opportunity to go to preschool; if it is necessary, programs may be half-day so that more children can be served.
6. There is an absolute need for full-day programs.
7. Partnerships with facilities such as parks, gyms, and churches, which are primarily used at night or on weekends, create a good opportunity for preschool programs that have weekday/day time hours.
8. There is a need to create preschool spaces near other existing resources for parents, including programs focusing on job skills training, high school diplomas, or other certificates.
9. School locations are important; ideal sites include elementary, middle, and high schools
10. Preschools should be centrally located near jobs, services, shops, transportation routes, and recreational areas.

For the majority of these principles, the first year of the LAUP NSBN project stayed true to these principles.

4) Summary

Appendix A provides a short list of the statements given to date on the role that NSBN has played in helping to find creative ways to meet the preschool needs of Los Angeles County. Drawn from a variety of sources, these comments show broad-based support for the NSBN approach to building preschool seats through building relationships.
Appendix A—Additional Support for NSBN’s Collaborative Planning Approach

“With the help of New Schools Better Neighborhoods, the promise of schools as centers of neighborhoods will turn from a dream into a reality.”
- Antonio R. Villaraigosa
  Mayor, City of Los Angeles

“I think that NSBN is proving, in neighborhood after neighborhood, the benefits that can come from cooperation and a commitment to the effective use of resources.”
- Bill Bogaard
  Mayor, City of Pasadena

“As a board member and community advocate, I have seen firsthand the work of NSBN in helping communities and public agencies to plan smarter neighborhood-centered, family-friendly educational facilities for our children and families. NSBN’s professionalism and commitment to authentic community involvement has helped develop strong relationships among all stakeholders.”
- Monica Garcia
  Board Member, Los Angeles Unified School District

“What is exciting about the process that NSBN provided us with was the opportunity to include other folks that generally cannot afford to come and join us in that conversation. Through that collaborative effort, the picture expanded.”
- Ken Knott
  Assistant Superintendent, Lennox School District

“NSBN has a proven track record of successfully leveraging school, parks, housing, etc. with capital investments (bond and program resources) to assure the creation of healthy spaces and places for children and families to utilize such services in our county’s most needy neighborhoods.”
- David Fleming
  Found Board Member, Children’s Planning Council; Incoming Chair, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

“One thing that NSBN has done very effectively is to open people’s eyes and show them a way different from the old parochial one…. NSBN expanded my thinking. It caused me to look at our assets differently and therefore meet the needs of a larger community, not just my student community or their parents, but the community at large… With NSBN’s help, we reached out to the surrounding community and sponsored three charrettes. . . . I guess somewhere around 75 to 100 people participated, including officials from the city of Hawthorne. I think the community felt honestly and sincerely engaged and walked away with an understanding that their input had direct impact on the outcome of the project.”
- Dr. Joseph Condon
  Superintendent, Lawndale School District
“We know we needed help to avoid being relocated out of Boyle Heights; and we knew that we needed to reach out to some of the civic organizations in the community, like NSBN, to assist us. NSBN responded quickly, positively, and very professionally, thank God. [The schematic relocation plan developed by NSBN is] a marvelous plan, and it far exceeds our expectations. We were originally thinking just about how to replace the childcare center, but there are some possibilities here that would enable us to provide more services and have a larger presence.”

- Rev. Jim Conn
United Methodist Ministries

“When an organization such as NSBN, who has its own core competencies, comes along, . . . it’s not only to the advantage of the county and providers to use that expertise, but it also lets us leverage our own dollars.”

- Gary Mangiofico, Ph.D.
Chief Operations Officer, Los Angeles Universal Preschool

“We have floated around the idea of how great it might be to have a health clinic on our campus, and how awesome it would be to able to build a new building. And then NSBN came along and helped us to make some real concrete plans.”

- Andy Johnsen
Former Co-Director, Santa Monica Boulevard Community Charter School

“We exist within a very high-need, low-service area and our work with NSBN, an organization uniquely focused on building pre-K seats in underserved neighborhoods, presents an opportunity for us to see if we can add capacity where capacity is needed.”

- Michael Bishop
Assistant Superintendent, Paramount School District

“I am very supportive of working collaboratively with the city and with MTA, but I think that you almost need a third, non-government party like NSBN to help bring all of these agencies together. Public entities are sometimes so focused on our own missions that we need someone else to get us all together and illuminate the possibilities.”

- Jose Huizar
Councilmember, City of Los Angeles; Former President, Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education

“With the assistance of New Schools Better Neighborhoods, we captured a preliminary vision of what can happen in neighborhoods as we redevelop housing, schools, and open space. We successfully managed increasing densities in housing . . . [and] we were able to, I think, create a common vision for what could happen on this site.”

- John Wolter
Project Manager, A Community of Friends

“The vision is to maximize the space available at the site and minimize the loss of housing units and displacement of families from the construction of a school. With the help of NSBN and A
Community of Friends, we have made a good shot mixing in housing and services and complementing the very strict construction schedule of the school district.”

- Ed Reyes
Councilmember, City of Los Angeles

“I believe NSBN’s portfolio of work has laid a solid foundation on which Mayor Villaraigosa, Mr. Hertzberg, and others can now build. NSBN knows how to do this. What’s necessary now is a stronger commitment from civic and educational leaders. I definitely heard the mayor endorse NSBN’s work, and his support offers real promise.”

- Marty Blank
Staff Director, Coalition for Community Schools

“With NSBN-planned neighborhood-centered, joint-use schools as a model, we’d like to see schools designed and built to encourage neighborhood families to use the school campuses for pre-K, for health-promoting recreation, and for access to health care resources. We shouldn’t have to fence the school off from the neighborhood after 3 p.m. or keep the kids locked in during the day and locked out after hours and on weekends.”

- Maria Casillas
Director, Families in Schools

“We are really excited to be able to provide additional preschool services. Without the collaboration or the support of both the Wilsona Elementary School District . . . and NSBN, we wouldn’t be able to provide those additional services. . . . NSBN has helped us meet this need and form our vision.”

- Cathy Overdorf
Children’s Center of Antelope Valley

“We have a certain expertise in developing [preschool] facilities, and in all the facilities we’ve development we’ve looked for qualified, experienced service providers. But we’re smart enough to know our limits. We would like to take advantage of the knowledge and qualifications of NSBN in developing a facility that would provide top-quality childcare services to the area.”

- Robert Norris
Executive Vice President, Century Housing

“Working with NSBN has opened the door to a lot of different services within the community that we probably couldn’t have otherwise brought to our school.”

- Vahe Markarian
Co-Director, Santa Monica Boulevard Community Charter School

“This whole idea [the Sun Valley Health Center] really mirrors what NSBN has been talking about for a number of years. In fact, we took great strength from the NSBN philosophy and implemented it at this location.”

- Zev Yarosklavsky
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
“NSBN provides the expertise of finding that type of facility and real estate . . . . that really helps us to focus on what we do best – providing quality early childhood development.”
   - Maria Uribe
   Coordinator of Childcare Services, International Institute of Los Angeles

“What’s really exciting is this partnership that is happening between the Santa Monica [Boulevard Community] Charter School and the Los Angeles Free Clinic, a partnership that is happening because of New Schools Better Neighborhoods.”
   - Abbe Land
   Director, Los Angeles Free Clinic

“We continue our partnership with NSBN as we need to be much more careful about leveraging our own resources. NSBN is definitely one of the models that could provide a more interesting use of resources in the years to come.”
   - Graciela Italiano-Thomas
   Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Universal Preschool

“The fact that one out of every three students doesn’t technically have a seat is what brought those that gathered at the New Schools Better Neighborhoods Symposium together. It’s not good enough to just put them in seats. We have to take this opportunity, with the money on the table and overwhelming demand, to create school facilities that are better attained to what we know works for students in urban areas – and that’s integrated environments with their communities.”
   - Ted Mitchell
   Former President, Occidental College; Current President and Chief Executive Officer, NewSchool Venture Fund