

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

REPORT ON AN OCTOBER 4, 1994 SEMINAR

Sponsored by
the Domestic Policy Council
in Cooperation with
the Policy Exchange
of the Institute for Educational Leadership

INTRODUCTION

On October 4, 1994, the Domestic Policy Council, in cooperation with the Policy Exchange of the Institute for Educational Leadership, held an invitational bipartisan seminar on "Comprehensive Strategies for Children and Families." Participants were senior staff members of the chairs and ranking minority members of many of the Congressional committees and subcommittees, as well as representatives from relevant Executive Branch agencies, with jurisdiction over federal programs affecting children and families. Seminar participants are listed in the appendix to this report.

Featured guests from the Clinton Administration were Bill Galston (Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy), Elaine Kamarck (Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice President), and Isabel Sawhill (Associate Director for Human Resources of the Office of Management and Budget). Margaret Dunkle, Director of the Policy Exchange at the Institute for Educational Leadership, moderated the discussion.

This seminar built on a meeting the Domestic Policy Council convened last July that brought together practitioners and policy makers from across the country to share what they were doing and to spark a broad inquiry into "going to scale" with promising comprehensive strategies for children and families.

At the July meeting, it became clear that local schools, human service providers, foundations and others are doing the hard work of building local coalitions that strengthen families, foster learning and provide a focal point for community re-integration.

It also became clear that the current system has too many fragmented programs, confusing and conflicting eligibility rules, multiple budget cycles, and too many funding streams that must be combined in order to effectively serve children and families at the local level.

(The July 15, 1994 White House meeting is summarized in a report, *Comprehensive Strategies for Children and Families: the Role of Schools and Community-Based Organizations*, that was published in September 1994. For additional information about this meeting, contact Gaynor McCown at the address listed in the appendix.)

The October 4 seminar moved the discussion from the July meeting one step further, providing a forum to explore ways in which the Administration and the Congress could work together to make programs affecting children, youth, families and communities more effective as well as more efficient.

The seminar was spirited and constructive. It was a rarity in that it crossed branches of government and political parties. Yet, the comments and ideas expressed were not predictable by branch of government, by political party, or by committee or agency. The dialogue addressed both practical and philosophical barriers and suggestions for making governmental efforts for children and families work as well as most policy makers would like—and the American people deserve.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The two and one-half hour October 4 seminar was designed to surface ideas, not to reach consensus. What follows are some of the themes—the issues and the questions—that emerged.

The conversation began with a summary of the responses seminar participants had given to open-ended questions on their RSVP forms.

When asked to identify the most important barriers to comprehensive programs for children and families, participants cited categorical programs and piecemeal solutions, lack of flexibility, the Congressional committee structure, turf, conflict over resources and money, and lack of consensus about who is responsible, what strategies should be pursued, and what the right solutions are.

In response to a question asking what should be done to overcome these barriers, participants suggested: consolidating programs and making them more flexible, focussing on families, providing leadership, supporting local decision making, simplifying the system, and training professionals more effectively. One person added that "divine intervention" would be required.

Against this backdrop, Bill Galston opened the dialogue, saying that President Clinton's belief that the federal government is at its best when it provides "top-down support for bottom-up reform" led the Domestic Policy Council to pursue the issue of comprehensive strategies for children and families.

"We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us"

Underlying much of the discussion at the seminar was the assumption that the federal government—and consequently the participants sitting in the room—is a significant part of the problem. Both the Executive Branch (the President and all of the departments) and the Legislative Branch (the House of Representatives and the Senate) are seen as

creating a structure of programs, convoluted eligibility requirements, regulations and administrative procedures that makes it far more difficult than it has to be for people to come together and work effectively at the state and local levels. One participant lamented: "What Congress does not mandate in statutes, the agencies mandate in regulations."

This depressing conclusion was tempered by the parallel realization that, with sufficient political will, hard work and tenacity, the federal government also has the potential to become part of the solution.

Federalism

The federal government does not have all of the answers and often does not even ask the right questions. Too often, improvements and innovation at the local level are stifled by the structural relationships between the states and the federal government, making it difficult if not impossible to respond to local needs. What is the appropriate federal role on issues affecting children and families? How can the Congress and the Administration work together, and with state and local governments, to be an asset in efforts to rebuild communities and families, rather than part of the problem? What policies will foster new governance entities that build consensus and engage new voices as states and localities plan and operate programs?

There was lively discussion about the relationship between states and the federal government around the issue of welfare reform. Should states have broad options to start with, should they be allowed to apply for waivers from specific requirements, or should the federal government impose mandates that states cannot waive or ignore?

Turf

The fragmentation and turf battles at the federal level are mirrored at the state and local levels. In fact, they are often more fierce, more personal and more hostile at those levels. How can carrots and sticks be fashioned so that they do not create bogged-down prescriptive processes (by, for example, describing too precisely exactly what a "partnership" should look like)? Should there be more federal incentives for local comprehensive approaches, such as the "glue money" in the recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act? One participant said: "If the thing that is driving turf battles at the state level is the federal funding structure, then you have to change the federal funding structure."

Vision and Values

There is not widespread agreement about what the role of government should be when it comes to children and families. A straw poll during the seminar showed that participants varied widely in the degree to which they thought the federal government could effectively address these issues. While more than half thought the federal government could play an important role, only a few participants indicated that the federal government could, by itself, solve the problems.

Should the federal government simply "set the goals broadly and give states big blocks of money," as one seminar participant suggested? Or should the federal government work with communities to "achieve a consensus vision for children and families, so that we [the federal government] can then begin to shape a system and a series of laws and regulations" to meet these goals?

Performance Measurement

The recently enacted Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) has moved the discussion of looking at outputs and outcomes—rather than inputs and processes—from theory to reality. Now performance measurement is the law of the land, and 100 GPRA pilots are being operated by the Office of Management and Budget.

But how can the federal government get rid of the "process junk" and move to outcome measures? How can there be meaningful and measurable outcomes for governmental programs if there is not a clear vision about what these programs are supposed to achieve?

Several participants indicated that clearer goals and benchmarks were the key to providing local flexibility. One participant said: "The flip side of moving to measuring outcomes is a new mode of checking each other and untying so much of the red tape that binds the system." Another commented that, until there is some consensus about what programs are trying to achieve—and until we have the ability to measure whether or not programs have been successful—it is almost impossible to provide local flexibility because there isn't any accountability against a set of benchmarks.

One participant suggested three broad and measurable goals for the child welfare area: "We don't want those kids in foster care very long. We want a quick decision about whether they are going to be returned to their family. And, if not, we want them quickly adopted."

Multiple Roles of Government

An example from the seminar illustrates that government, no matter what the level, has many roles and implementing clear performance measures may well require re-thinking what these roles are and how they are filled. The budget for the municipal records department in Sunnyvale, California contains only one item: "The city of Sunnyvale shall give its customers necessary records in under five minutes 85 percent of the time." It does not specify all of the inputs, such as the number of staff and desks and telephones, to get to this goal. Rather, when officials review the budget, they ask: Have you delivered records in under five minutes 85 percent of the time? If so, can you do it with less money? And, if not, why haven't you?

This is a clear goal. But what, speculated one participant, would happen to this outcome measure if a very aggressive newspaper reporter investigated the records department and found that Hispanics only received their records in under five minutes 50 percent of the time? Low-income people only received their records in under five minutes 37 percent of the time? Employees of the records department were paid 30 percent more than comparable employees in the private sector? And 30 percent of the records were inaccurate?

The Current Rule-Driven System

The typical governmental reaction to a problem is to add more rules. Efforts to prevent abuse by the three percent may prevent the 97 percent from doing things in an innovative or particularly effective way. How do you make government a learning organization, allowing the flexibility for well-intentioned people to make honest mistakes while quickly punishing people who make severe mistakes (such as fraud)? How can federal programs be accountable without imposing bureaucratic barriers that divert the energy of practitioners and the children and families who are the ultimate customers?

One participant asked: "If we want a government that is the kind of government we *say* we want—more responsive, more efficient, less rule-bound and less hide-bound—there is a price to pay. Bureaucracy was invented to ward off the worst case. And warding off the worst case can prevent the best case. Is the American public willing to tolerate a greater dispersion of outcomes and behaviors in these programs? I don't know what the answer is, but if the answer is 'no,' then we are stuck with the rules."

Leadership

Who leads and who follows came up during the seminar in a number of ways. Should we look to the Congress to collapse the many categorical funding streams into a few with clear measures of success? Or is the Congress unable or unwilling to make those tough choices? Is it the responsibility of Congress to insist on clear accountability mechanisms for spending federal dollars? Should the responsibility for tying programs into a seamless web lie with states and localities? Or should the Administration take the lead by proposing major consolidation of categorical programs, something that may well take years, not months?

Trust

The public is skeptical about the ability of government at any level to do things well. In a time when there simply isn't enough money to do all of the things we want to do, we need to figure out ways to do things differently—to build public confidence and to make resources go further. There is a need for more trust and communication across political parties, levels of government, and the Legislative and Executive Branches. There are far too few opportunities to have this kind of discussion: the frank discussion at this seminar was the exception, not the rule.

WHAT NEXT?

The seminar ended with brainstorming about ways to improve federal programs for children and families. In response to the moderator's request to think about the programs they know best and to identify what they would most like to see happen in the next year, seminar participants offered some concrete suggestions:

Have a single point in the federal government where a local organization, city or town, or state could apply for a grant. Then, let the federal government figure out what programs the request fits under.

Have the federal government, across agency lines, take seriously the Oregon benchmarks project to see if, at least in one place in this country, we could pull the programs together and support a local government that has determined outcomes.

Have the Administration refuse to fund programs that are appropriated but not authorized.

Consolidate job training programs, rather than have 154 separate programs. "When people need a job, they need to be able to go some place. It doesn't matter *why* they need a job."

Have a national child care policy, and use that policy to fund programs.

Since most family and children's programs aren't run by the federal government, have the federal government develop more and stronger partnerships with states and communities.

In youth development, look at the whole range of preventive services for adolescents and pre-adolescents (from drug-abuse prevention to pregnancy prevention and dropout prevention). "It's all the same kids, it's all the same interventions. Put that money together and get it out to local governments."

Have the federal agencies ask the Congress for enough money in their budget submissions to fund the development of performance measures. "This is an expensive activity, but it will be essential if we are going to move ahead on these matters."

Have more opportunities for the type of discussion we have had during this seminar—an engaged and unfettered discussion across the lines dividing one branch from the other and one party from the other.

About a third of the participants shared their thoughts about the seminar on an evaluation form. Of these:

More than half said that the most important thing they gained from the seminar was an exchange of ideas from different points of view. "Differing views from agencies/hill." "Congress *might* be open to some change."

Several people cited the discussion of performance standards as the most important aspect of the seminar. "An understanding of the real tensions and contradictions masked by banners such as 'performance standards' and 'flexibility.' Everyone is for them in the abstract, but, as usual, the devil is in the details."

About half said that they would use what they had learned at the seminar in the context of their regular work. "Consider performance standards in budget discussions." "I will try to keep in mind consolidating legislation." "When welfare reform or other issues that I handle come up next year, I will ask [such questions as]: What should be the federal role in allocating funds, in setting standards? And will Congress give the states a chance to experiment?"

And, finally, all but one participant indicated that he or she had met new people or made useful connections at the seminar.

As these comments show, this seminar was a beginning, not an end. The Domestic Policy Council plans to move ahead by continuing the discussions with the Legislative Branch and working with federal agencies and interagency teams on this agenda. And the IEL Policy Exchange will continue its efforts to foster effective and cross-cutting initiatives for children and families through seminars, site visits and other activities.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

**Comprehensive Strategies for Children and Families:
The Role of Schools and Community-Based Organizations**

**Report of the July 15, 1994
White House Meeting**

September 1994

Acknowledgments

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Bill Galston, Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, conceived the idea for the meeting and was an observant and diplomatic facilitator. Carol Rasco, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, offered a heartfelt and insightful luncheon address. Peter Edelman, Counselor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Tom Payzant, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, gave perceptive and informative presentations on legislative and policy matters.

Gaynor McCown, White House Fellow, took the lead role in planning and organizing the meeting. Other planners included Terry Peterson and Judy Wurtzel, Department of Education; Margaret Dunkle, Institute for Educational Leadership; Sheldon Bilchik and Reggie Robinson, Department of Justice; and Ellen Haas, Department of Agriculture.

A special thanks to Policy Studies Associates' Leila Fiester, who documented the meeting and wrote the final report, and Elizabeth Reisner, who provided editorial guidance.

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Andre was 16 when he met Urban Family Institute president Kent Amos. Andre's father had been killed by Andre's mother eight years earlier. A self-described gangster, Andre carried a gun, dealt drugs, and had witnessed a murder. But under Amos' guidance, Andre learned to read and to enjoy simpler pleasures, like trimming a Christmas tree. Andre flourished; he became animated and alive--until a drug dealer from his past gunned him down.

"We have to understand these children run a gauntlet every day, a gauntlet of fear and terror," Amos says. "Our children are crying out to us in the only way they can. We have an obligation and a responsibility to give them more than platitudes."

Summary

Andre's compelling story was one of many shared by participants in a discussion about comprehensive strategies for helping children and families and the role of schools and community-based organizations in developing and implementing these strategies. The working meeting, held July 15, 1994, in Washington, DC under the direction of President Clinton's Domestic Policy Council, convened a diverse group of 56 people with practical insights and policy experience concerning comprehensive strategies. The group included experts on education, social services, and policy development from foundations, universities, and non-profit organizations. Participants were local practitioners; public and private funders; representatives from federal and state governments; policy analysts; academicians and researchers; consultants; and journalists.

The purpose of the meeting was to spark a broad inquiry into "going to scale" with promising programs that already exist, in response to President Clinton's premise that every problem in the United States has already been solved by someone somewhere in the nation--and that the real problem is not inventing solutions, but disseminating and replicating them. "We are drawn here by a shared understanding that most of our children and young people need more opportunities to develop and to thrive than they now enjoy....[Yet] the fragmented ways that we typically try to help them are part of the problem," said meeting moderator William Galston, deputy assistant to the President.

The meeting acknowledged the fact that in communities around the country, schools, human service agencies, and community-based organizations are collaborating to develop comprehensive strategies for helping children and families. Schools and community-based organizations are staying open in the afternoon, evenings, and on weekends to allow students, families, and community members access to recreational and educational activities; coordinating with other agencies to provide social and health services; opening their doors to parents and other community members for adult

education programs; and forging partnerships with businesses to provide on-the-job training, paid apprenticeships, and training in entrepreneurial skills. Although this meeting focused on school-based and school-linked programs, participants recognized that these efforts are only part of a larger set of issues involving comprehensive services--and that these strategies are part of a broader agenda of reform in education, health, and human services.

Domestic Policy Council staff asked participants to address the following questions:

- What are the key issues regarding the development, sustainability, and effectiveness of comprehensive strategies for helping children and families?
- What are some of the federal strategies to promote comprehensive strategies?
- What are some of the specific federal, state, and local barriers to developing school-linked or school-based comprehensive strategies?
- How might the federal government play a role in reducing these barriers?

The resulting discussion included reports from participants about activities in local communities--the "front lines" of education and social service reform, a similar assessment of state-level efforts, and an update on proposed federal legislation that will affect efforts at all levels. Although participants in the diverse group advocated differing approaches, for all participants the objective was the same: building strong children, families, and communities. As participants shared their experiences with each other and with the Administration representatives, the following themes emerged as central to current efforts and expected needs:

Effective support for children and families requires changes in philosophy and focus.

Educators and funders should shift their efforts as much as possible from fragmented, piecemeal, and often inadequate supports and services to comprehensive strategies that emphasize development, opportunities, and prevention, viewing children and young people as assets rather than bundles of problems. Moreover, children and youth are best served in the context of families, and families are best served in the context of communities.

Both schools and community-based organizations have a role in "community partnerships" that are essential to meeting the comprehensive needs of children and families. Leadership may vary among communities or even neighborhoods, and a variety of effective models exist. Regardless of who leads the effort, true collaboration requires shared planning, implementation, and assessment.

Community-building efforts should be an important component of comprehensive strategies. These efforts involve not only services but the active and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders.

Effective, comprehensive strategies require new funding structures that are more flexible and reliable than current arrangements. Possible approaches include consolidation and decategorization of federal programs, improved waiver options, and more options allowing units of local government and community-based organizations to deal directly with federal grant programs. Participants did not unanimously endorse any of these changes, however.

Comprehensive strategies must be held accountable to outcomes. Implementing this priority will require the improvement of current evaluation methods for monitoring and assessing the impact of these programs.

Certain policies, practices, and realities are barriers to comprehensive strategies. These barriers include: hostility or contradictory philosophies within entities necessary to successful collaboration; lack of trust or participation by parents or communities; an overly competitive, inflexible, or categorical funding process; differing eligibility rules for funding; lack of funding; cultural misunderstanding or insensitivity; community violence; and turf battles.

This report highlights these themes and summarizes the discussion by participants in the meeting. Enclosed as appendices to the report are a list of participants and a summary of pending legislation.

This report is intended to be a jumping-off point for further action. Domestic Policy Council staff will next determine key areas that must be addressed at the federal level and will ask federal agencies or interagency teams to develop additional plans for addressing these issues and identify existing initiatives that are relevant to comprehensive strategies for children and families. The agency plans may include:

- Recommendations, such as improved mechanisms for federal interagency coordination (e.g., consultation on policy guidance, development of agreed-upon principles, or procedures for funding comprehensive strategies)
- Possible regulatory or statutory changes
- Changes in policy guidance
- Improved or coordinated technical assistance
- Coordinated research
- Evaluation strategies

After the plans are developed, the White House will work with the agencies to develop a plan for the federal response.

What's Happening on the Front Lines

Participants laid the groundwork for discussion by describing comprehensive efforts in selected local communities. These projects included Intermediate School (I.S.) 218 in New York City; the Beacon Schools in New York City; the Austin Project in Austin, Texas; two initiatives in Chicago sponsored by the Chicago Community Trust and the MacArthur Foundation; New Beginnings in San Diego, California; the Vaughn Family Center initiative in Los Angeles; Caring Communities in St. Louis, Missouri; Birmingham, Alabama's Community Schools; the Healthy Learners program in Miami; Kentucky's Family Resources Youth Service Center initiative; and the Youth Futures Authority in Savannah, Georgia. Participants described their projects' goals, philosophies, structure, activities, partners or collaborators, resources, and accomplishments.

Goals and Philosophies

The inspiration for most of these programs arose from community concerns. "Most successful programs have deep roots in the community. They are not 'parachuted' into communities, but carefully integrated with specific local community needs and strengths, so that local communities share a genuine sense of ownership," noted participant Lisbeth Schorr. The Beacons, for example, began as a drug reduction and prevention effort that would simply extend the school day, but a wave of crime and violence stirred interest in funding broader youth programs and led to priorities on crime prevention and community building. The inspiration also came from successful efforts already being conducted by community-based organizations within schools--and a recognition that these organizations have strengths that schools can build on, including organizational flexibility and the ability to link with communities.

Participants listed active community involvement as both a goal of comprehensive strategies and a crucial element of program success. With this orientation, the school becomes "a presence of change" in the community and students are empowered by making a positive contribution to their environment. The Urban Family Institute in Washington, DC, tries to create a "village" mentality--in which community members have clear expectations of positive behavior and achievement--by providing intervention, guidance, and support to at-risk children and youth. A Beacon School in Central Harlem built community support by asking residents to clear their cars from the school block every weekday morning so children could play in the street. Young people established connections with the community by going from door to door asking residents to agree to the plan, and residents had to make a conscious commitment to support the effort and create a safe place for children. Slowly, the relationship grew; now students help keep the street clean and have raised money to plant trees on the block. Beyond the block, students help register voters and hold hunger drives to feed

homeless people. "We're trying to give people a sense that Central Harlem is a place on the rise," explained Geoffrey Canada, president of Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families. "We wanted to instill a desire to become part of that change."

Community and neighborhood involvement is closely related to building family strength and individual empowerment. "Successful programs do not work with one generation alone, but with two and often three," Lisbeth Schorr observed. "Successful schools, Head Start programs, and family support centers make special efforts to nurture parents so they can nurture their children." The Beacons, for example, focus on the "upbeat factors" associated with healthy development and create opportunities to cultivate those elements:

- Caring adults are available for interaction with young people consistently and during extended hours. "Programs alone are not enough," said one Beacons representative; the school offers "somewhere to go, something to do, someone to be with."
- Beacon schools use high expectations and clear standards to establish respect and motivate achievement for the neighborhood and school.
- Participating students have opportunities to engage in the same high-quality after-school and weekend activities as more economically advantaged students.

The Chicago Community Trust Initiative, described by University of Chicago professor Harold Richman, also builds on the notions of investment and community building--not merely services to children--to serve children and families. Richman and others make a distinction between asset-oriented services that promote youth development, and deficit-oriented efforts that focus on treatment. "We'll succeed when it's as easy to enroll a kid in Little League and to buy a uniform as it is to buy an hour of counseling," Richman said. The community trust's strategy was to "broaden and deepen the sense of what it means to deal with a child," Richman said: Broaden by including activities such as Little League or library visits as much as traditional services, and deepen by involving all levels of government. The resulting \$30 million project in seven Chicago communities revolves around collaborations that are representative of each community.

The Barrier: Institutions that deal with only a small part of people's lives
The Solution: Expand the range of services in response to community needs to include literacy, sports, and community efforts that benefit children and families

In one racially mixed community in Chicago, a very traditional library used the Community Trust collaboration to create a Little League team. When the team wins, each player receives a book instead of the traditional T-shirt. When the team loses, players get a story hour. Players' parents also meet at the library. In another community a library holds a "lock-in" sleepover for neighborhood children, who read together and tell ghost stories.

New Beginnings in San Diego, which placed integrated social and health services at a school-based center, began as a partnership among public agencies with the goal of making the service delivery system more holistic and responsive to clients. New Beginnings focuses on serving families rather than individual children, with a prevention-oriented approach that uses public funding where possible.

A foundation representative noted that local program administrators have to be trusted--and allowed--to make their own decisions regarding program operations. Administrators at all levels must face some tough issues, including what services should be offered, who should have access to them, how the quality of services can be improved, how continued funding can be obtained, what structures are needed to operate the program, and who should be responsible for decision making.

Several programs, including New Beginnings and the Vaughn Family Center initiative in Los Angeles, turned to parents to help establish goals and make decisions. The Vaughn Family Care Center program--a collaboration between the Los Angeles Educational Partnership and the United Way--devoted an entire year to planning, with the mission of eliminating educational barriers in a community of high crime, single-digit test scores, and families so poor that some lived in chicken coops or cars. Parents identified a need to focus on health services and child care. "My job is not to set the agenda...but to hold up mirrors in front of this community and say, 'See how brilliant you are? See how much you know?' and to turn up the light," said program director Yolanda Trevino. The result? "Nobody asked for parenting classes...[or] financial help," Trevino said wryly. "They were asking for opportunities to do for themselves." Through a partnership with Head Start and a local child care resource center, the program began to address the community's child care needs; now, 20 homes provide licensed care. A partnership between a local hospital and the UCLA Medical

Center provides education and prenatal support services to expectant families, using trained mothers in the community as mentors.

Similarly, based on needs identified by a parent group, a collaboration in Miami established a bilingual information center in the school, staffed by trained parent volunteers. The center has served more than 500 families that are more comfortable with the volunteers than with traditional counselors or social workers, giving the professional counselors more time to perform other work. The program also negotiated with the school to open its library in the evenings for monitored homework sessions. These after-school sessions now serve about 200 students a day; with aides provided by the parents' group or paid by the local Boys and Girls Clubs.

The student-operated CARES Program in Birmingham allows participants to set their own agenda. This initiative brings social service agencies into the school on a weekly basis to address student needs. Activities include AIDS awareness and testing; special classes in schools, churches, and community centers; paid employment, community service credit, and free training for youth as tutors for younger students; counseling; a dropout prevention program funded by the Job Training Partnership Act; nutrition education; GED classes; and computer instruction.

In some cases, such as Caring Communities in St. Louis, inspiration for a comprehensive program came from a combination of efforts by state agencies (i.e., Health, Mental Health, Social Services, and Elementary and Secondary Education) and private concerns (i.e., the Danforth Foundation). In these cases, participants noted the importance of uniting multiple providers under one vision with a strong director. Caring Communities, which provides school-based comprehensive services, focused on addressing the fragmentation of available services, lack of access to services, and the challenge faced by schools in dealing with children's multiple problems. Like other programs described in the meeting, Caring Communities' goals included promoting school success for all children, increasing safety for children and families, and building a moral and ethical foundation in the community to increase family support and improve opportunities for education, housing, and employment. "Communities are to families what families are to children," said Director Khatib Waheed. "To focus on one without focusing on the other would be a serious mistake."

Caring Communities' activities include an early-morning latch-key program for school-age children with working parents, co-dependency counseling intervention, behavior therapy, periodic "respite nights" for parents in which students participate in a sleepover at the school, and drug marches and rallies in the community. These activities, which reaffirm the program's commitment to the community, often have dramatic results.

The Barrier: Violence that hinders access to services

The Solution: Using programs to establish a community support system, not just to provide services to individuals

In 1993, the father of a student at a Caring Communities school tried to organize his neighbors to push drug dealers out of the community. Under threats from the dealers, however, he stopped--until Caring Communities began anti-drug marches on his block. After 20 community members attended a meeting in the man's home, his house was fire-bombed. Caring Communities responded by holding a support rally with 100 participants, and Caring Communities members stayed in the man's gutted house every night for two weeks to protect his home. The drug dealing decreased.

"This was a support system we felt we had to provide," said Director Khatib Waheed. "These are the kinds of challenges many of us need to face if we're really going to deal with the problems children face...in order for families to feel a sense of hope."

Finally, participants noted that it is not enough simply to add new services; comprehensive strategies must focus on clear and specific outcomes, addressing what comes out of a program as well as what goes into it.

Location and Structure

Participants agreed that comprehensive programs can be located at a variety of sites and controlled by a variety of stakeholders, as long as the program is accessible, versatile, and family-oriented. For example, after conducting an extensive feasibility study of parents and front-line workers in education and social services, New Beginnings' planners realized that parents viewed schools as a place that they trusted--but didn't think that schools had a system for providing services. Thus the school became the site for New Beginnings services, but the program added extensive partnerships to form a structure that reached far beyond the site.

Educators in Kentucky based comprehensive services at Family Resource and Youth Service Centers within schools because they viewed schools as the institutions that were most accessible to all community members, said Charles Terrett, superintendent of schools in rural Fulton County, Kentucky. Operating under a formal agreement among the schools, social service agencies, and business community, the Centers focus on building community pride, involvement, and program ownership.

Locating comprehensive services at school sites can help solve a "disconnect" between schools and communities and clarify the relationship between the two, said an organizer of the Beacon Schools in New York. Geoffrey Canada said the group chose an old, run-down elementary school in Central Harlem as one of the first Beacon sites because "it was extremely important to us to face the same challenges that children and communities face in making collaborations work." This was not a hollow choice; the day before the school re-opened under the Beacon plan, a man was fatally shot in front of the school. But with its year-round schedule, open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to at least 11 p.m., this Beacon School now offers a safe zone where children can learn and play.

I.S. 218 in New York City demonstrates the power of a school site working in collaboration with a community-based organization, in this case the Children's Aid Society. The school is open six days a week, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., for before- and after-school programs, teen and job-related programs, and adult education. More than 1,300 students and 1,000 parents use the school weekly; services include a health and dental clinic and an in-school store, and assemblies draw standing-room-only crowds. Success came from developing "real, organic" partnerships between the entities instead of a host-and-guest arrangement, said Children's Aid Executive Director Philip Coltoff. The impact: "Before, the community was isolated from the schools," said I.S. 218 principal Mark Kavarsky. The effort also has had an "internal" impact on families who now view the school more positively and have become involved in designing new programs.

The question of location is not simple; sometimes, programs occur at a combination of sites. New Beginnings, for example, found it most effective to work with families of preschoolers in the place where parents are most comfortable--their homes. In conjunction with home visits, however, a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program clinic is available three times a month at the New Beginnings school, providing a nonthreatening way to help families make connections with other services. Clients don't come to New Beginnings in convenient, class-sized groups, noted San Diego Schools Administrator Jeanne Jehl; staff must try to reach clients individually and as families.

Location needs also vary depending on activities. The Caring Communities program in St. Louis found that adults participating in evening education activities at the school felt threatened by the presence of youth participating in after-school programs at the same site. Although this situation was not a defining issue for the program, it did raise complications that leaders had to address.

The Austin Project emphasizes neighborhoods, not schools, in order to promote full employment, strong communities, and healthy children and families. The project, which serves 50,000 Hispanic and African American residents with incomes below the poverty level, has no eligibility requirements other than residence in the targeted neighborhood. The project's support

structure relies on tax abatements, waivers, and money from private capital markets. However, the project began with the backing of the "white, upper-middle class and upperclass power structure" in Austin--not with a structure that solicited involvement by the targeted community. In an attempt to rectify this gap, the project established five neighborhood development committees, whose locally elected members form part of a larger advisory council; at least half of the project's \$100 million budget will be controlled by these committees. In addition, project leaders decided to rehire the social workers who will be displaced by the planned system reforms, in part so that they will not become barriers to the project.

Although the structure and leadership of comprehensive strategies varies, all successful programs share a view that people who are to be "served"--children, families, and community members--must have a significant role in identifying their own needs as well as designing and operating programs. The Vaughn Family Center in Los Angeles, for example, uses an advisory committee of whom half are parents and half are service providers, public agency representatives, and public officials, in order to "equalize" the relationship between service providers and recipients. Approximately 25 parents volunteer daily to help teachers at the family center.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Successful partnerships require preparation and true collaboration, participants said. "We only wanted [the I.S. 218 program] if it was going to be a partnership...and we were not going to be invited out once we started to cause trouble," said Children's Aid's Coltoff--a statement echoed by others. In the case of I.S. 218 and Children's Aid, the agency insisted on a legal resolution ratified by local boards of education that invited the organization into the school. "That was very important in terms of the structure and our ability to participate from the beginning of the project," Coltoff said. Now, "we're accomplishing as a social service agency what we believe in...and we're finding educators aren't too tough to deal with."

Partnerships also require flexibility. Although the Beacon Schools program provides guidelines for each participating site, the structure and activities of each site are individually tailored by local community advisory councils that consider each site's cultural, size, and demographic differences. The Chicago Community Trust collaborations are dominated by "citizen collaborators," not professionals, according to Harold Richman. As a result, commitment is strong--but progress is slow. "When you're trying to work with a community from the bottom up, ability is variable and it takes time," Richman advised.

All collaborations require attention to leadership, noted Edward Tetelman, director of legal and regulatory affairs for the New Jersey Department of Human Services. New Jersey's School-Based Youth Services program has learned the following lessons about leadership:

- Strong state leadership can keep programs politically viable at state and local levels
- Local collaborators need plans that address both core services and optional service needs
- States should be flexible and avoid establishing extensive hierarchies when they create state and local collaborations
- Collaborative programs that are spread across all areas of the state reinforce statewide investment--programmatically and politically
- State technical assistance to local collaborations is crucial to success

It isn't always easy for foundations and government agencies to form partnerships with communities, but it is essential for foundations to try, several participants said. One problem is that many collaborations involve subordinate-superordinate relationships rather than equal partnerships. "The pain of watching foundations ask communities to be partners...and then [showing] their own inability to model that behavior is very corrosive" to efforts, explained Richman. The same problem exists in some partnerships between public agencies and local communities. "We have not clearly articulated what the terms of such partnerships might be," Richman warned--and until those terms are clear, local communities are likely to view public agencies with distrust. Finally, if programs are to become self-sufficient, collaborators must learn to trust local administrators to make their own decisions.

Resources

Many projects draw from a variety of funding sources and find that funding must constantly be considered. The Beacons, for example, receive direct funding from New York City but also help sites draw child welfare funding from city agencies and blend these sources to form a basis for programs. The politics of funding can have an impact on programs beyond material support, however. In the first round of Beacon funding, political issues prevented the local board of education from participating in Beacon site planning; now that those issues have been resolved, a joint decision-making process allows principals from the schools targeted for change to become more involved.

Some programs encountered unexpected funding dilemmas. When the Vaughn Family Center in Los Angeles gained charter school status and the new school found it could save \$1 million through more effective practices, auditors wanted the school to return the saved money. "What incentives are there to be accountable?" asked Yoland Trevino. "If you're making a difference, they punish you."

Participants also described cultivating human resources to build support for comprehensive strategies. Beacon Schools are organized around membership rather than a client-provider relationship; participants have identification cards and are asked to contribute their time to the program. "Everybody who comes is seen as a resource instead of someone who wants something," said Michele Cahill, a Beacon funder. Tania Alameda, director of Miami's Bureau of Children's Affairs, agreed:

We have got to rely on our families as resources. They may be dysfunctional in some ways, but they are very functional in others. We have to learn how to identify those strengths in families....If we rely more on their expertise, we're going to feel a lot more satisfaction and have a lot more help in what we're trying to accomplish.

The Barrier: Health needs that affect education

The Solution: Cultivating parent and community involvement; focusing efforts on families and communities as well as children

When Tania Alameda realized that many children in Miami were missing significant amounts of school--as many as 60 days a year--because of head lice, she organized parents to solve the problem. The parent group formed a "Lice Busters" patrol; armed with a small vacuum cleaner, detergent, and donated treatment supplies, parents visited the homes of children with the most severe cases. One parent even gave haircuts.

The Lice Busters' success increased parent involvement at school in other ways, as educators began asking parents for advice on improving attendance. When parents offered to visit the homes of absent students to help address the extenuating circumstances--health needs, lack of clothing, or parents' scheduling problems--contributing to truancy, the principal agreed to help. She gave parents access to normally confidential home addresses--and then watched the attendance rate shoot from last to first place in the district.

Accomplishments

In addition to the stories of individual lives saved, participants described the development of program infrastructure, improvements in academic achievement, and positive impacts on communities

as major accomplishments. Building on its infrastructure, the Beacon project has noted decreased crime rates and increased reading skills. Caring Communities focuses on mental health and removing other barriers to education so that teachers can focus on academic improvement.

Urban Family Institute founder Kent Amos had many success stories from his experience of "adopting" 87 urban youth into his own home. Seventy-three of these youth attended college, 49 graduated from college, and 7 obtained advanced degrees. The Vaughn Family Center's Trevino was also able to provide hard outcomes. Test scores for students in this program rose 48 percent, the high transiency rate among students fell, and the attendance rate improved from "horrific" to 99 percent. Trevino also described her program's success in eliminating the "us versus them" mentality that fosters gang rivalry. When Trevino noticed one self-described gangster urinating outside the school, she learned that he felt unwelcome inside the building--so she invited him to join her "gang." That youth is now the center's program coordinator. "If we create this kind of opportunity for youth, the money you provide for gang diversion will not be necessary," she told meeting participants.

Accomplishments can be difficult to assess, however; program evaluation is an important aspect--and predicament--that most participants noted. Furthermore, services, programs, goals, and structures alone do not guarantee success. One participant likened the situation to a game of musical chairs in which 12 players compete for eight chairs:

We tend to blame the participants because they don't get a chair. We want them to move quicker, position themselves better, try harder. We should really look at the game: Four people are always going to be left out....We can only do so much with support services and counseling, and then people have to find a way to live.

What Needs to Be Changed?

Participants discussed many barriers that they have experienced or anticipate. In some cases, participants suggested needed policy changes; in other cases, they simply warned colleagues about situations that can be avoided or ameliorated.

What Are the Barriers and Where Do They Come From?

Participants identified the following challenges to developing and implementing comprehensive strategies for children and families:

Philosophical barriers. Community-based activities require providers and planners to have a philosophical "investment" in providing adequate services, supports, and opportunities for children and families. "Every day, the normal world...is fighting this philosophy," said one participant. For example, the parents of students not targeted by comprehensive strategies often have trouble understanding the need for the services within schools and may oppose them. Such "hostility" makes it important to regularly reiterate the underlying vision of the initiative, focusing on positive development rather than punishment and control.

Effective programs take nothing for granted; goals, issues, and services must be revisited and addressed continuously. In particular, effective community participation is "a hard-won treasure"; the goal of participation and development of the capacity to participate are not givens and must be addressed early in a program's evolution, participants said. Programs may have to cultivate participation skills in community members. One participant described holding three informal meetings for every one formally scheduled by her program--one meeting to explain to parents what they would be expected to discuss, one to hold the actual discussion, and one to evaluate the discussion and formulate responses.

Effective programs also must solicit feedback from clients at least as much as from experts, several participants said. In Miami, an attempt to create a full-service school--combining education and access to multiple social services under one roof--failed at first because it provided services selected by experts, not families, a participant said. After realizing their mistake, planners successfully redesigned the school with only eight agencies providing services--but chose the services most wanted and used by families.

Funding barriers. In addition to the funding issues discussed earlier, the nature of funding for comprehensive programs can present barriers. The bidding process for state and federal grants creates competition rather than collaboration, many participants said, leading programs to "cannibalize" each other. Even after funds are awarded, different providers may retain a competitive orientation. Programs need to find ways to erase the distinctions between providers and focus on common goals, participants said. "We've learned that cooperation is easy, but collaboration hurts a little bit," said one participant.

In some cases, state and federal funding is so inflexible that programs are unable to address certain issues that affect school attendance, participants said. Many called for fewer federal restrictions linked to funding, which would allow programs greater flexibility to address needs that affect students' ability to attend school--say, to purchase eyeglasses. Leaders of the Lice Busters group, for example, had to turn to donations to pay for lice detergent because Medicaid would not cover it. Other programs find it difficult to use federal funding to pay for staff development, transportation, and evaluation. "Maybe all we need from the federal government is a little help and empowerment to make our own decisions," said a participant from a rural area.

The categorical nature of federal programs "forces us to squeeze people into boxes and then go around trying to find ways around the boxes," agreed a participant from an urban area. Chapter 1, the Job Training Partnership Act, and Medicaid are among the programs that should allow schools and agencies to provide services to all members of communities in which a high percentage of members meet program guidelines, several participants said. Categorization "labels the poor as special, needy people, which they are not," said one, adding that the problems addressed by these categorical programs are not limited to poor people. But decategorization is not a simple solution, nor is categorization the only barrier, other participants warned; it is naive to think that simply decategorizing funding will solve these complex issues.

The multiple eligibilities required for various similar but separate federal programs also produce funding barriers, participants said; the differences among requirements create inefficiencies and make it difficult for children and families to qualify for the services they need. Eligibility requirements such as the assets tests used by AFDC, the food stamp program, and in some states Medicaid, are particularly troubling because they pose access barriers to major federal programs that meet basic family needs, said consultant Sarah Shuptrine. "The asset test for the family automobile should be eliminated if we want families to be able to get to work, training [opportunities], and health care," Shuptrine said.

Health care financing presents another barrier to comprehensive strategies, by making it difficult for schools to be access points for health services. The shift toward managed care poses significant barriers to financing school health, because schools will not be reimbursed for all the health services they provide to students--making a comprehensive approach to student well-being less feasible. In addition, schools find it extremely difficult to obtain Medicaid reimbursement for health services because of the heavy paperwork burden and because they are unable to bill Medicaid until they have first billed families; in poor communities, billing families generates overwhelming paperwork but little revenue. And as more states shift to managed care for Medicaid programs, access to reimbursements decreases even more.

Cultural and contextual barriers. Cultural issues present additional barriers; these are solved only by extensive community outreach and a willingness to adapt to local context. For example, the Vaughn Family Center in Los Angeles discovered that pregnant Latino women in the community were not using existing health services because doctors and nurses treated them impersonally. "[Latinos are] not going to tell you anything about ourselves unless we have established a relationship with you," said center director Trevino.

Rampant violence in some communities also complicates comprehensive programs because it requires them to focus on providing safe havens and transportation to children and families, in addition to actual services. Transportation, affordable housing, personal safety, and other basic human needs were recurrent issues that many participants identified as major barriers to program implementation.

Additional barriers identified by participants include:

- Lack of time allowed by funding cycles to develop collaborations
- Squabbles over turf and terminology
- Parents' lack of trust in agencies, government entities, and schools
- Differing confidentiality requirements of schools, medical providers, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the school lunch program, and other providers, which sharply limit information sharing and make it difficult to reduce duplicative paperwork for families and providers
- The political risks required to cause change--"We're talking about changing a bureaucratic system in which a lot of people have financial investment," cautioned one participant. "When you go into the structure...and start empowering those at the bottom of the food chain, that is not going to go over well."

- The "squeeze effect" that occurs in top-down, bottom-up reforms when the players in the middle--often local bureaucrats and service providers--no longer have a role to play or are asked to change substantially, and therefore resist the reform. Collaborations that may displace workers or need union support require strong communication among stakeholders to avoid resistance that can undermine progressive change.
- The difficulty of finding funding for capital budgets or infrastructure for community-based organizations. For example, state-of-the-art technology is a much-needed tool for documenting and implementing programs

What Are the Solutions? State and Local Responses

Participants proposed many solutions, some of which were hotly debated. Some solutions are transitional, while others require long-term commitment. The following menu of ideas represents the breadth of suggestions made by participants and is not an integrated plan; inclusion in this list does not indicate that consensus was reached on a particular solution:

Funding changes.

Funding streams:

- Re-examine the sources of revenues used for funding comprehensive efforts--whether through new or old taxation systems, new financing, or creative strategies for leveraging private funding. Examine the costs, effects, and political feasibility of each to find the most effective approach. Apply the same rigorous standard of return on investment that the private sector uses.
- Change federal eligibility rules to reduce barriers to federal programs. Eliminate the asset tests for family automobiles for recipients of AFDC, food stamps, and Medicaid.
- Promote funding linkages by establishing a new fund for investment in children, families, and communities that requires health, housing, transportation, and education systems to collaborate.
- Direct the federal government to take responsibility for negotiating state matching agreements. Allow states to negotiate rates for different programs; this would likely result in more funding that targets prevention and early intervention programs.
- Consider allowing units of local government and community-based organizations to bypass state governments and negotiate funding directly with the federal government if the state is uncooperative. However, some participants cautioned that cities and counties may need that requirement to enforce collaboration with the state, and others noted that bypassing states would not be a simple or productive solution.

Availability:

- Ensure that funding is permanent, stable, and reliable--not just allocated through demonstration grants--so programs can concentrate on maintenance of effort. "Some of you people are doing heroic things, but you're spending half your time on grant applications," noted one participant. "When we fix these kinds of systems, we cannot stop the fix when they cost too much money," said another. State and local governments and other organizations sometimes cannot match demonstration funding after it expires.
- Streamline the federal funding system by providing multi-year funding on a basis other than entitlement. Year-to-year funding is wasteful, inefficient, and encourages funding fads.

Competition and collaboration:

- Reduce the competition created by the federal discretionary grant process, which sets up "isolated islands" of change but excludes many other needy sites. Instead, concentrate on building links among all types of comprehensive efforts.
- Encourage state funding reforms, because fragmented state funding streams contribute to turf issues at the local level.
- Recognize that funding cuts for programs with large, single sources of funding, while not desirable, can motivate the program to build a stronger base by collaborating with private funders and diverse agencies.

Focus:

- Fund prevention efforts, not just crisis programs. Prevention programs have the additional advantage of being less stigmatizing for participants.
- Grant federal waivers to local programs where needed so they are able to implement comprehensive, radical improvements; consider statewide research and demonstration waivers.
- Retain arts and sports programs as legitimate funding recipients. "Everywhere you go, it's the first thing that's dropped...and then [communities] are concerned about young people and gangs," noted a project funder.

Accountability and evaluation:

- Improve accountability measures to gain a better understanding of who receives services, why, and with what results. Accountability works two ways, noted some participants: programs must answer to service recipients as well as politicians. One participant urged policy makers to link accountability for desired outcomes to the budget process.

- Evaluate program cost-effectiveness as well as achievements.
- Link funding to success rather than failure. "Getting money depends on the failure of programs, the failure of education," said one participant. As a result, programs aim for "studied mediocrity: You try to make things better but not so much better that you lose your job."

Philosophical changes.

Collaboration and community building:

- Have the federal government model collaboration in the ways that departments work together.
- Look at school, health, and education reforms not as separate reforms but as complementary components of "positive development."
- Market collaboration more aggressively among relevant service systems--both from the top down and from the bottom up--to build investment. Continue marketing efforts after collaboration begins.
- Emphasize community building when considering incentives and program evaluation, and consider how new interventions will affect communities. Comprehensive strategies and community building are not the same thing; for example, centers that offer one-stop shopping for a wide service area may force recipients to leave their local communities.
- Focus on empowering site-based professionals, neighborhood organizations, and families. Parent and community involvement is crucial.

Focus and approach:

- Don't focus on existing or potential barriers; be patient and remain optimistic. Don't let concerns about funding, facilities, or staffing prevent the establishment of effective programs or services, one participant advised: "If we are going to get stuck on barriers we have not confronted yet, we're never going to do anything." Maintain an evolutionary, long-term perspective on serving families and children; don't expect quick solutions.
- Require new projects to be built on best practice and research, not failed but familiar programs.
- Build backward from desired outcomes to design your efforts. Focus on outcome-driven projects based on a vision of a continuum of care and support that addresses children's various developmental stages. Focus on issues, not programs, that affect access and capacity for education--such as violence.

- Resist the urge to view school-based services as an innovation that will fix flaws in the education system. Comprehensive services do not let schools off the hook regarding other needed education reforms.
- Don't try to make all changes in all places at once. Concentrate resources in areas where you can demonstrate the applicability of the effort on a large scale.
- Focus on learning as development and schools as operating in concert with a "whole continuum of learning, in and out of school."
- Be realistic. Do not oversell programs; realize that they must operate within a broader social context that is affected by many contradictory forces.

Evaluation:

- Reduce the "hostility barrier" between program and evaluation components.
- Use evaluation data--regarding services, clients, families, and assessment processes--as a planning tool as well as a measurement of program success.

Program and service changes.

Collaboration and community building:

- In addition to formal programs, establish informal networks of supplemental services to address needs that don't fit into clear categories or that fall through the cracks. Remove the barriers between these and more formal education programs.
- Be certain that current reform efforts in education, welfare, and health care support rather than inhibit comprehensiveness and collaboration.
- Provide a continuum of care to children, families, and communities, with new elements added at each developmental stage; make transitions between programs smoother.
- Recognizing that community building is a difficult task, allocate more funding to prepare and sustain community-building efforts. Broaden the type of community involvement activities that programs can use federal funding to support.
- Find more innovative uses and better management systems for public spaces.

Focus and approach:

- Pay more attention to providing mental health services and find a better way to fund these services.
- Be serious about outreach. "We have a come-and-get-it system, [but] we need to be in homes, helping people access services," one participant said.

- Be aware of cultural differences and complexities. The Austin Project is one of several in which the complex politics and relationships between client groups--in this case the indigenous Mexican American, immigrant Mexican, and African American populations--can have an impact on the effectiveness of the program.--"Errors have been avoided just by trying to understand that these are different groups of people," said one project director.
- Find better ways to institutionalize the effort to connect individual children and families with the services they need, in particular by improving training for program staff responsible for matching clients with services.

Structural changes.

- Recognize the difference between social services, which build dependence, and social support, which assists families and communities in rearing children effectively. Instead of only doing things to or for clients, include clients as full partners in planning and discussions.
- Improve the methods used to evaluate comprehensive efforts. Develop and use evaluation tools that measure empowerment and community building; emphasize knowledge development strategies and build co-learning models. "We need evaluations that take family empowerment seriously...and involve families in constructing at least some part of the evaluation," urged a research director. "The strategies we come up with have to be diverse enough and accommodating enough to deal with the community folks, the organizations, the families, and at the same time [outside evaluators]."
- Teach service recipients how to use the political process to bring about change. Increase political savvy at all levels. "We are insufficiently political in marketing our approach. It's not enough to be able to do the right thing," said one participant.
- To resolve turf issues and break the tendency of some agencies to deal only with their own constituencies, the federal government could consider requiring that states determine the allocation of federal funding that flows through them by using a collaborative process involving major state service providers and agencies.

Administrative changes.

- Promote state and local leadership. State leadership at the governor's level is crucial to sustainable, systemic change because it gives state departments clear goals to focus on and permission to collaborate on meeting the needs of families and communities. Although direct funding connections between local communities and the federal government are useful, state leadership must cooperate in order to make longterm change occur.
- To build support for state and local efforts, involve prominent government leaders in articulating the emerging vision of the changes that are required to better serve children and families. Consider convening federal auditors and inspectors-general to

discuss their roles and determine how they could reward high quality and vision, rather than taking punitive positions.

- Make federal regulations easier to understand. "The language is so tough...it's onerous to people in small districts [who] are not specialists," one participant explained.
- Use the information highway to administer programs more effectively. Use electronic databases to enroll program applicants, verify their eligibility, and coordinate services and benefits at one time. Establish a single client identification number, such as the social security number, that will facilitate this process.

No matter what reforms they advocated, all participants urged the federal government to take strong, immediate action to address the barriers outlined earlier. There was an overwhelming consensus that experts and those on the front lines know well what needs to be done. Now they want support in doing it. "I don't think you ought to wait three years," said a state legislator. "You ought to do it next week, or maybe next month."

The Administration Response

Carol Rasco, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, emphasized the importance of taking action--of finding "that fine line" that federal, state, and local players all can walk to improve collaboration. "Often, we aren't there to help [communities] build their dreams," conceded Rasco, a former teacher, counselor, state policy maker, and community activist. Rasco advocated efforts that bring together groups of people in local communities and help them realize what they can do through a problem-identification, problem-solving process. A process that removes participants from their daily routine for discussion with a facilitator and includes follow-up activities significantly improves communication among reformers, Rasco said.

Rasco assured participants that the federal government is trying to build flexibility into its policies to allow communities to conduct their own strategic planning and create environments that foster collaboration among communities, foundations, and state or local agencies. Although she said it is too early to define a national youth policy, Rasco and William Galston have targeted late 1994 for action on developing such a policy, probably with an interagency group including Domestic Policy Council members.

Asked to address the problem of political pressures that result in resources spread too thinly to be effective in some communities, Rasco said the Administration's Empowerment Zones are a

movement toward concentrating resources. "We are also leaving room for foundations and other organizations to make themselves available to new projects," she noted. Collaborative relationships are key to success, Rasco added: "It would be wonderful if foundations would cultivate collaboration between groups," not necessarily with extra funding but by building collaboration requirements into grants. The Empowerment Zone planners also have discussed better ways to build rigorous evaluation components into the funding process, Rasco said in response to a participant who called the current state of evaluation "a crisis."

Thomas Payzant, U.S. Department of Education assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education, told participants that his department is committed to dealing with the changes within schools caused by changes in communities and society at large. Schools will continue to be logical sites for comprehensive program centers because they are closest to families and because schools are facing dramatic changes in the services (ranging from prenatal care to adult literacy) they are expected to provide to meet demographic changes, Payzant said. Payzant acknowledged the challenge of stimulating collaboration both across all levels of government and through relationships between communities and local, state, and federal governments, and he urged participants to find a nexus between the two types of collaboration. The real challenge, he added, lies in bringing solutions to scale.

Peter Edelman, counselor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, echoed the theme of many participants in urging the experts to focus on "rebuilding, recapturing, rediscovering the idea of community" and creating a "specific, visible, identifiable place" in the community for children and families. Edelman also advocated a philosophical shift toward viewing young people as assets to be developed and toward providing incentives rather than punishment. He also emphasized the importance of focusing on outcomes. However, he recognized the difficulty communities face in assembling an effective balance of professionals, community representatives, and parents to implement change.

Clinton Administration officials already are responding to some of the needs identified by participants, Edelman said after the participants' discussion ended. These responses include: (1) discussions with developers of the Benchmarks approach in Oregon, which may have wider applications for outcomes-based initiatives; (2) discussions with officials in West Virginia and Indiana regarding negotiated decategorization in order to make funding more flexible; and (3) strong support for proposed federal legislation that provides a waiver option and negotiated local flexibility. In addition, the Administration is watching activities in several states to determine whether the federal government can play "a catalytic role" beyond funding to encourage collaborative approaches to violence prevention. Policy makers are also examining possibilities for providing technical assistance

to communities that submitted applications but are not designated as Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities. Other changes that may affect comprehensive strategies for children and families are embodied in the prevention portions of the crime bill, while still others, such as health and welfare reform, are still "very much open," Edelman acknowledged. The Administration's proposals include universal health coverage, which would give all children access to health care, and the establishment of more than 1,000 service centers nationally that would connect schools with communities.

Administration representatives assured participants that discussions between federal policy makers and experts in the field will continue--and that the federal government is not only sympathetic to local and state needs but is ready to act to improve policies. "We aren't always going to be able to do everything we want to do, but we'll die trying," Rasco said.

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Summary of Legislation

"Let's give our children a future. Let us take away their guns and give them books. Let us overcome their despair and replace it with hope. Let us, by our example, teach them to obey the law, respect our neighbors, and cherish our values. Let us weave these sturdy threads into a new American community that can once more stand strong against the forces of despair and evil because everyone has a chance to walk into a better tomorrow."

President William Jefferson Clinton
State of the Union Address
January 25, 1994

Congress is well aware that policies and programs affecting children and their families must support and encourage the cooperation of existing organizations such as schools and community organizations. Several major pieces of recent or pending legislation present tremendous opportunities and challenges for schools and community-based organizations as they devise comprehensive strategies to serve children and families. The following list is not meant to be comprehensive, but it provides insight into the type of initiatives that promote comprehensive strategies.

Newly enacted or implemented legislation includes:

- **The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative**, administered by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Agriculture, is one of the Clinton Administration's most ambitious projects to promote community development and provide jobs and economic opportunities. Through this initiative, the federal government offers to create compacts with communities and state and local governments. More than 800 communities have submitted applications under this initiative; each application contains a comprehensive and strategic plan for change, with performance-based benchmarks. By participating in this initiative, community residents, businesses, financial institutions, service providers, neighborhood associations, and state and local governments can form or strengthen partnerships to support revitalization.
- **Goals 2000: Educate America Act**--the centerpiece of President Clinton's education agenda--recognizes and supports the need for a more comprehensive approach by providing resources to states and communities to develop and implement comprehensive education reforms aimed at helping all students reach challenging academic and occupational-skill standards. The law--which addresses school readiness; school completion; competency in challenging subject matter; science and mathematics achievement; literacy; safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools; and parental participation--asks states and local education agencies (LEAs) to create broad-based planning groups that include educators; parents; business leaders; and

representatives of health agencies, social service agencies, and community organizations that work with children and youth.

- **The School to Work Opportunities Act**, jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Labor and signed into law in May 1994, provides seed money for states and districts to develop programs that integrate challenging standards and workplace skills so that students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need enter their chosen professions or continue their education. These opportunities can enable this group--70 percent of American youth--to find employment with career potential.
- **The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994** contains significant funding for efforts to prevent crime and violence among children and youth and in communities. The Ounce of Prevention Council, with \$1.5 million available for 1995, will coordinate new and existing crime prevention programs, including many oriented toward youth; \$88.5 million will be available for competitive grants between 1996 and 2000. The Community Schools provision, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, will provide funding for supervised after-school, weekend, and summer programs. This provision will receive \$37 million in 1995 and \$530 million for 1996 through 2000. The Family and Communities Endeavor Schools (FACES) program, administered by the Department of Education, will provide \$243 million in funding for in-school and after-school activities.
- **PACT (Pulling America's Cities Together)**, administered by the Department of Justice, recognizes that the needs of children, youth, and families vary dramatically from community to community. PACT, a pilot program located in five cities, is a locally planned and operated initiative that brings together the strengths and resources of these communities to meet the needs of each locality.
- **The Family Preservation and Support Program**, authorized as part of the 1993 budget agreement, includes almost \$1 billion over five years for states to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and their families, particularly those experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect. Because the multiple needs of these children and families cannot be addressed adequately through categorical programs and fragmented service delivery systems, states are encouraged to use the new program as a catalyst for establishing a continuum of coordinated, integrated, culturally relevant, and family focused services. Services range from preventive efforts to strengthen families by providing crucial support to services for families in serious crisis or at risk of having children removed from the home.
- **Youthbuild**, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, was authorized as "Youthbuild (Hope for Youth)" under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. With \$40 million available for program implementation and development in fiscal year 1993, Youthbuild's goal is to provide economically disadvantaged youth with education, employment, and leadership skills through opportunities for meaningful work with their communities. Training includes on-site construction work and off-site academic and job skills development.

- **Head Start**, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, has an impact on child development and day care services, the expansion of state and local activities for children, the range and quality of services for young children and their families, and the design of training for staff involved in such programs. Head Start has served more than 13.8 million children and their families since 1965; grants are awarded to local public or private non-profit agencies.

Proposed or prospective legislation includes:

- **The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, currently in conference, strongly encourages states and LEAs to coordinate services. ESEA's priority is high standards for all children, with the different elements needed for a high-quality education well aligned so that the education process works smoothly to help all students reach those standards. The proposal requires LEAs to identify in their Title I plans (distributed on a formula basis) exactly how they will coordinate education, health, and social services. The House and Senate versions of the bill both contain strong provisions addressing the need for collaboration.
- **The Welfare Reform Bill** would support teen pregnancy prevention programs at 1,000 middle and high schools. The programs would emphasize counseling and a skills-based approach while providing opportunities to develop sustained relationships with adults. National Service volunteers would play an important role in staffing programs.

Several other ongoing initiatives support the role of schools and community-based organizations in developing comprehensive strategies for children and families:

- **Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities**, administered by the Department of Education, supports comprehensive strategies that include drug prevention curricula and programs linking schools and communities; the version proposed for reauthorization has an increased focus on communities.
- **Youth Fair Chance**, administered by the Department of Labor, is designed to provide comprehensive employment and training services to youth (14-21 years old) and young adults (22-30 years old) in high-poverty areas of urban and rural communities.
- **Even Start**, administered by the Department of Education, is a family-focused program providing participating families with an integrated combination of early childhood education, adult literacy, basic skills instruction, and parenting education.