"Every so often, throughout our history, a generation of Americans bears the responsibility of seeing this country through difficult times and protecting the dream of its founding for posterity. This is a responsibility that has fallen to our generation. Meeting it will require steering our nation's economy through a crisis unlike any we have seen in our time." - President Barack Obama

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Background / Overview

One of the principal tools provided to the Learning Community Coordinating Council of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (LCCC) to enable it to accomplish the ambitious goals of the learning community statutes is the elementary learning center.

As described in **Neb. Rev. St § 79-2112** (Nebraska Statutes), the Elementary Learning Center is intended to "…serve as visionary resource centers for enhancing the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility."

Because each affected community addressed possesses its own culture and associated problems, the statute granted to LCCC the power (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2104(1)**) to "establish and administer Elementary Learning Centers through Achievement Subcouncils…" Each Achievement Subcouncil, with regard to its district, is tasked by statute (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2117(2)**) with the responsibility to "administer Elementary Learning Centers in cooperation with the elementary learning center executive director"; to submit a plan for the elementary learning center and for the services to be provided by it to the LCCC (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2113(2)**); to collaborate with community resources to provide those services (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2113(2)**); and to recommend to the LCCC those services which may be provided by contracts or grants to entities in the community (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2113(2)**).

In fulfilling its responsibility, on August 27, 2009, the LCCC determined that an elementary learning center should be established in Achievement Subcouncil #2. This Achievement Subcouncil clearly complies with the basic statutory requirement (**Neb. Rev. St § 79-2113**) for the establishment of an Elementary Learning Center (ELC). Free and reduced-price lunch data describe this as an area with a large population of elementary school children living at or below poverty levels. All twenty-five (25) elementary school buildings in the area have at least thirty-five percent of their students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, and twenty (20) buildings report greater than seventy percent of their students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches.

As Achievement Subcouncil #2 began drafting its plan, the LCCC formed an ELC Task Force to establish the overall mission of the ELC System across the entire learning community, and provide guidance for Achievement Subcouncils when drafting its plan. The ELC Task force identified the following standards that all ELCs in the new system should strive to meet:

- ***Achievement:*** Services and programs must be intentionally linked to a child's academic success in the classroom.

- ***All-Around***: The needs of the whole child must be addressed, including the needs of parents and family members, to create a full network of support for student achievement. This includes not only academic support (such as tutoring and mentoring), but also health (physical and mental), wellness and other family support services.

- ***Access:*** ELCs must be designed to facilitate children and their families getting connected to and receiving the support they need. This includes better and easier ways to access the already excellent programs and services in our community.

- ***Accountability:*** Our responsibility is also to ensure that the programs and services that are provided through the ELCs meet high standards of quality and are making a difference. We must use continuous improvement principles to ensure we are addressing the highest priority needs, and using data to monitor and demonstrate the effectiveness of our investments.

The ELC Task Force also recommended as the Achievement Subcouncils should focus on services that enhance the academic success of elementary students by who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as:

- Living at or below poverty level;
- Disproportionate rates of mobility (those who transfer frequently between schools during the school year); and
- Limited English skills.

Finally, the ELC Task Force clearly stated that the ELC Two County System overall mission is ***"to serve as visionary resource centers for enhancing the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility."***

Factors in Subcouncil #2

Poverty – In Subcouncil #2

Free and Reduced-Lunch (F/R Lunch) data indicate a disproportionate level of elementary school children living at or below poverty level within Subcouncil #2. Students growing up in poverty are less likely to perform, due, in part, to a combination of factors associated with poverty, including very young, single or low educational level parents; unemployment; abuse and neglect; substance abuse; dangerous neighborhoods; homelessness; mobility; and exposure to inadequate or inappropriate educational experiences. *Table 1* illustrates that, of 25 elementary school buildings, 24 meet **Neb. Rev. St § 79-2113's** stipulation of at least 35% of students residing in the attendance area to qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and 20 buildings report greater than 70% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches.

School	% F/R Lunch in Attendance Area 08-09	Meets Statute 79-2113: At least 35%	Greater than 70% of students qualify for F/R Lunch
DRUID HILL	95%	☑	☑
FRANKLIN	94%	☑	☑
MILLER PARK	94%	☑	☑
LIBERTY	93%	☑	☑
WALNUT HILL	92%	☑	☑
CENTRAL PARK	90%	☑	☑
KING SCIENCE (5th & 6th Grades)	89%	☑	☑
JACKSON	88%	☑	☑
BELVEDERE	87%	☑	☑
CONESTOGA MAGNET	85%	☑	☑
SKINNER MAGNET	84%	☑	☑
KENNEDY	83%	☑	☑
MINNE LUSA	82%	☑	☑
KING PRIMARY	82%	☑	☑
FONTENELLE	79%	☑	☑
KELLOM	77%	☑	☑
MOUNT VIEW	76%	☑	☑
SHERMAN	75%	☑	☑
WAKONDA	75%	☑	☑
SARATOGA	74%	☑	☑
LOTHROP MAGNET	69%	☑	
FLORENCE	63%	☑	
ROSE HILL	60%	☑	
PINEWOOD	50%	☑	
SPRINGVILLE	37%	☑	

Table 1. Percent of Students Qualifying for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunches in Omaha Public Schools (OPS, 10/2009).

Because F/R Lunch data are relied upon to determines poverty rates in schools, poverty is very much a part of the elementary students residing in the attendance area and attending these 25 elementary schools. Over 8200 **students** are in Subcouncil #2 in 2009. The **average poverty** of the schools in Subcouncil #2 is approximately **80% (about 6600 students).**

Figure 1 is a slide presented to the Learning Community Coordinating Council by Omaha Public Schools, reflecting a distinct difference in academic proficiency between students participating in the free / reduced lunch program and those who do not. The gap in academic achievement between these groups is the most pronounced at the elementary school level, where 14% fewer students are achieving academic proficiency in reading / language arts.

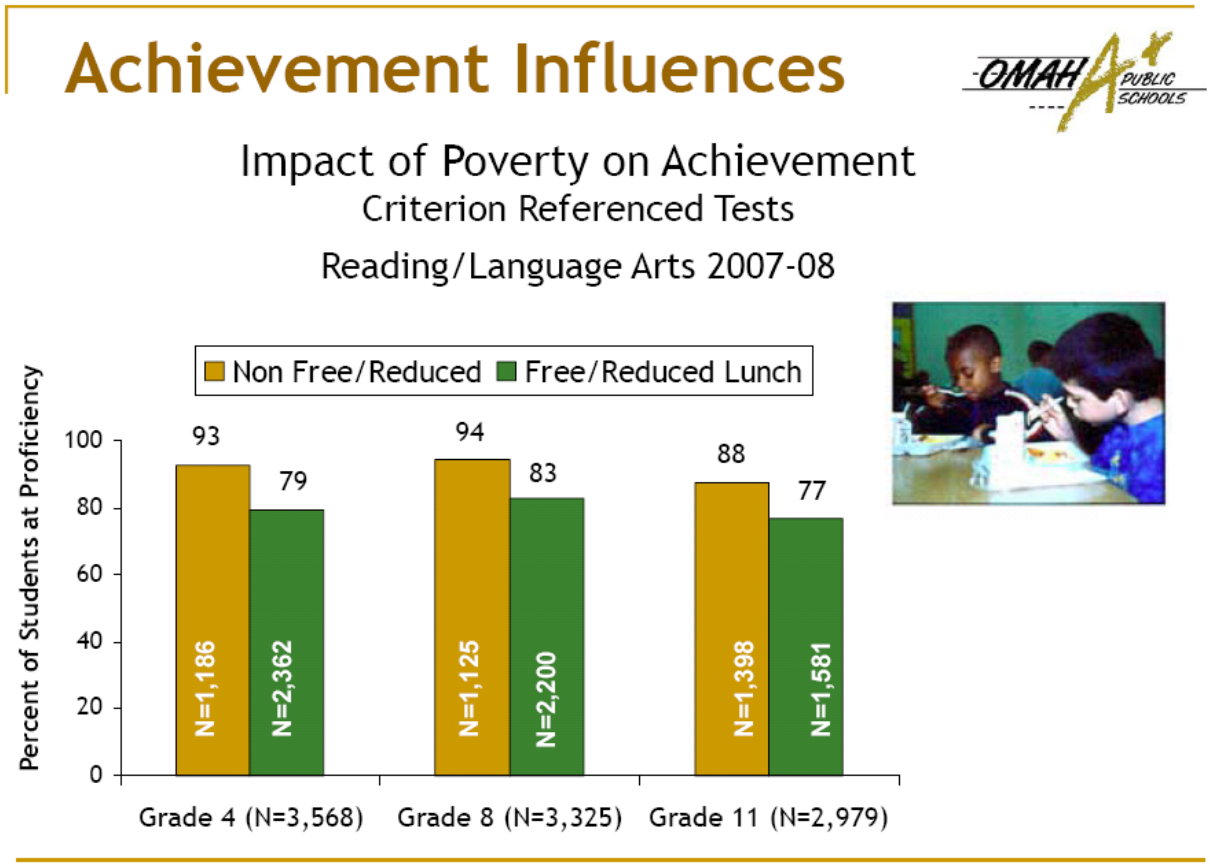

Figure 1. Impact of Poverty on Achievement (Sources: OPS Reading/Language Arts 2007-08 Criterion Referenced Tests).

Mobility – In Subcouncil #2

Students in Subcouncil #2 also face academic challenges due to "High Student Mobility" – students frequently changing schools for reasons other than grade promotion. Mobile students have been proven to be at greater risk for academic and behavioral problems[1], with cumulative damage to student achievement[2] and higher risk of dropping out.[3] With each move throughout the school year, experts say, such students are at risk of falling some six months behind, or more, in their studies.[4]

US Census data (2004) showed that between 15-20% of school-aged children had moved the previous year.[5] *Table 2* shows that all but one of the elementary schools in Subcouncil #2 with high F/R Lunch participation exceeds the national average for students transferring schools.

Echoing this statement is Omaha Public Schools. *Figure 2* provided by Omaha Public Schools shows that only 34% of 4th graders considered "mobile" achieved proficiency in reading / language arts, compared to 88% of non-mobile 4th graders. The data also shows how student mobility erodes academic achievement over time, with the gap in proficient 11th graders expanding to 68 points.

School	% Mobility 08-09
KENNEDY	38.6
KELLOM	31.9
FRANKLIN	31.1
KING	29.3
MILLER PARK	27.5
SARATOGA	27.4
WALNUT HILL	27.2
DRUID HILL	27.1
LIBERTY	26.5
WAKONDA	25.6
MINNE LUSA	24.0
JACKSON	22.2
CONESTOGA MAGNET	21.5
SKINNER MAGNET	21.4
FONTENELLE	21.2
LOTHROP MAGNET	19.7
CENTRAL PARK	19.5
ROSE HILL	18.6
SPRINGVILLE	18.5
MOUNT VIEW	17.3
BELVEDERE	15.1
SHERMAN	15.0
FLORENCE	10.9
PINEWOOD	9.7

Table 2. Mobility Rates for Subcouncil District 2 Elementary Schools (Source: OPS, 10/2009).

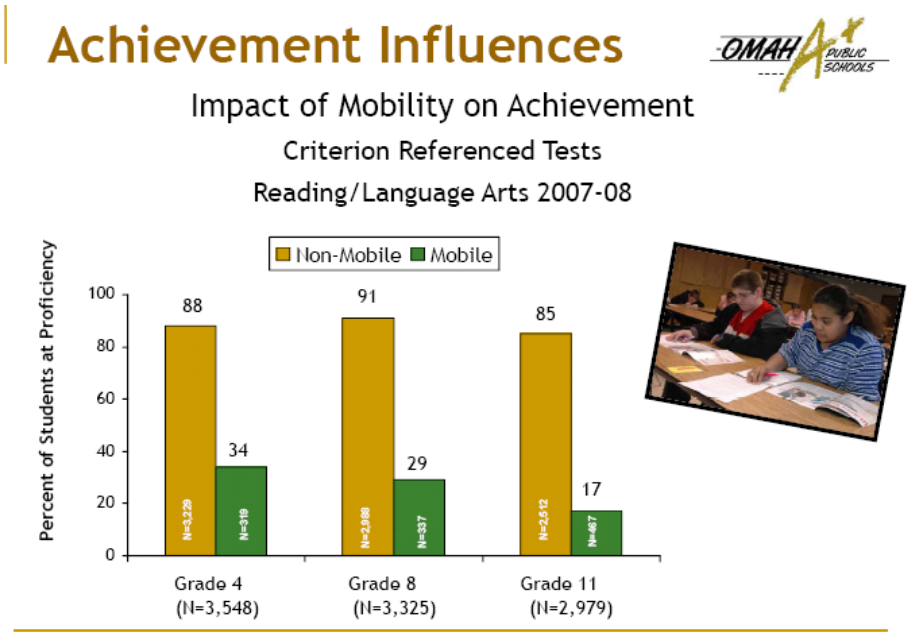

Figure 2. Impact of Mobility on Achievement (Source: OPS Reading/Language Arts 2007-08 Criterion Referenced Tests).

English Language Learners – In Subcouncil #2

Compounding the issues of poverty in Subcouncil #2 is a lack of proficiency in the English language. Among the 24 elementary schools with high F/R Lunch Program participation, nearly one-third of the students were identified with limited English skills.

Table 3 illustrates the percentages of students considered "English Language Learners" (ELL). The National Center for Educational Statistics estimates that the nation's ELL student population now comprises 10% of all students. Nearly 30% of the elementary schools in Subcouncil #2 exceeds the national average, with Jackson Elementary reporting 3 out of every 4 students as ELL.

The parents of the ELL students also lack English language proficiency and, therefore, cannot engage in many of the typical parent involvement activities associated with higher reading achievement[6] and academic success in general.[7]

Subcouncil #2 has an increasing refugee and immigrant population. For example, there are over 100 Burmese students in Subcouncil #2, speaking four Karen dialects and there are over 100 Sudanese and Somalian Bantu students in Subcouncil #2.

School	% ELL OM 08-09
JACKSON	75.2
LIBERTY	41.4
KELLOM	28.0
WALNUT HILL	24.1
SHERMAN	19.6
CONESTOGA MAGNET	15.2
FRANKLIN	12.3
ROSE HILL	9.1
CENTRAL PARK	7.7
FONTENELLE	7.0
PINEWOOD	5.6
FLORENCE	5.3
BELVEDERE	4.7
WAKONDA	4.5
SPRINGVILLE	4.5
KING	4.2
SARATOGA	3.6
DRUID HILL	3.2
MINNE LUSA	3.1
SKINNER MAGNET	2.6
KENNEDY	2.5
MOUNT VIEW	2.1
MILLER PARK	1.5
LOTHROP MAGNET	1.1

Table 3. Percentage of Students in Subcouncil #2 Elementary Schools with High F/R Lunch Participation, Considered English Language Learners. Source: (OPS, 10/2009).

Academic Needs

The anecdotal evidence gathered at the public forums is consistent with both local and national research on students' academic needs.

The *SRI International Report* conducted for Building Bright Futures (2007) suggested that while OPS may appear to be performing well in teaching children basic reading and mathematics, these students are not being held to the same expectations as national assessments, and these children may not be prepared to meet national standards:

> *"Although results on the tests used in Nebraska to measure achievement on core skills show Omaha schools performing well, there is evidence to suggest that Nebraska, like many other states, does not hold students to the same expectations as national assessments. When comparing results for OPS and the state of Nebraska*

overall on STARS with results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), overall state level and OPS scores are similar. The overwhelming majority of students meet standards (88% of Nebraska students and 78% of OPS students, for example, in reading in 4th grade in 2005). However, results on NAEP for the same year indicated that just 34% of 4th grades in public schools in Nebraska were reading at or above the proficient level. There are similar discrepancies between STARS and NAEP results for 4th grade mathematics. These discrepancies do not mean that students in Nebraska and OPS are failing. In fact, Nebraska students perform well on NAEP relative to students in other states. These data simply suggest that when educators raise the bar for what it means to be "proficient," fewer students meet the stricter criteria."[8]

Analysis of national assessment results for Subcouncil # 2's elementary school students in *Table 4* that the majority of students meet the standards for School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) Reading and Math proficiency. Without NAEP data on the school level, it is difficult to make a similar comparison to the *SRI* report.

But looking at the number of schools achieving 100% proficiency, the question arises: why aren't 100% of our children proficient in reading and math? What can be done to ensure that each child is equipped with the tools s/he needs to reach at least minimum proficiency standards?

School	STARS Reading Grade 4 % Proficient	STARS Math Grade 4 % Proficient
BELVEDERE	95.5	95.5
CENTRAL PARK	100.0	98.3
CONESTOGA MAGNET	97.4	100.0
DRUID HILL	80.5	90.5
FLORENCE	98.0	100.0
FONTENELLE	75.0	92.2
FRANKLIN	82.1	79.3
JACKSON	96.7	96.8
KELLOM	94.7	100.0
KENNEDY	80.0	90.0
KING	85.3	88.2
LIBERTY	98.6	100.0
LOTHROP MAGNET	85.9	89.1
MILLER PARK	80.5	97.6
MINNE LUSA	100.0	98.4
MOUNT VIEW	84.6	96.2
PINEWOOD	96.3	100.0
ROSE HILL	83.7	95.5
SARATOGA	94.4	88.9
SHERMAN	100.0	100.0
SKINNER MAGNET	97.3	96.0
SPRINGVILLE	89.5	89.5
WAKONDA	96.9	87.5

WALNUT HILL	86.8	95.0

Table 4. Comparison of School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) Reading, Math proficiency and State Writing average scores for Grade 4, by Subcouncil #2 elementary school.

At first glance, it may appear that with proficiencies in the 80s and 90s, these schools are doing well by our children. However, many are actually falling behind both District and State proficiency. The Nebraska Department of Education's State Report Card showed the state STARS Reading for Grade 4 at 94.85%, and Omaha Public Schools at 92.2%. *Figure 3* plots the school building proficiencies against these two comparison lines to show that 11 Subcouncil #2 schools scored below OPS's reading proficiency and 14 scored below that of Nebraska.

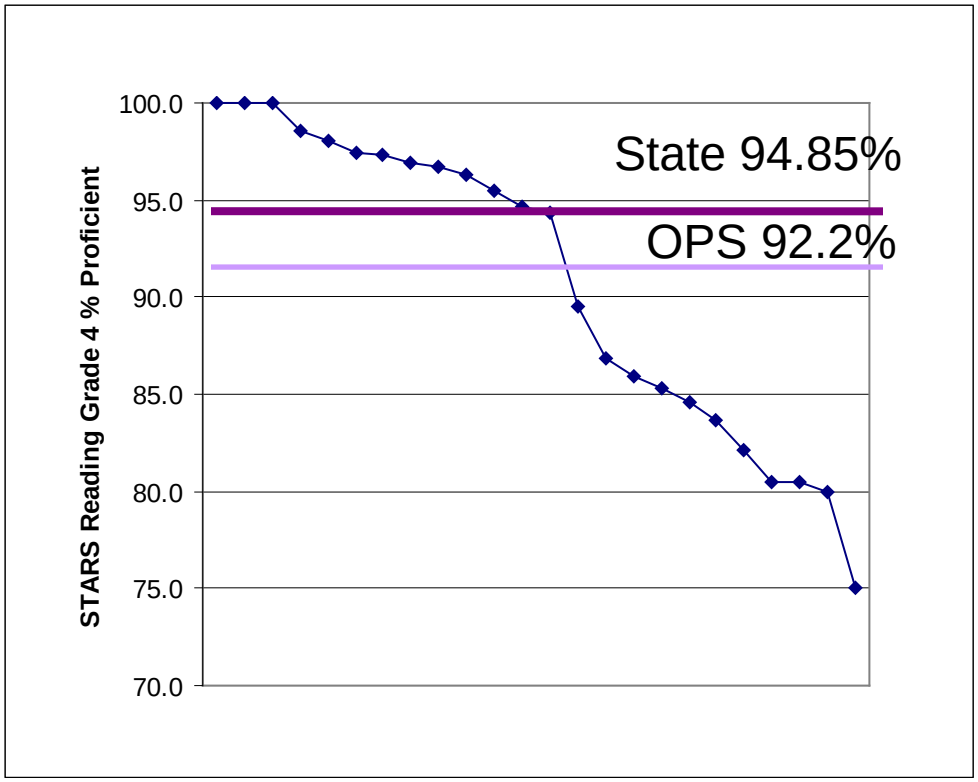

Figure 3. STARS Reading Grade 4 Proficiency Scores by Elementary School, Compared to State and District Proficiencies (2008-09).

Figure 4 shows a similar comparison for the STARS Math Grade 4 proficiency, with 9 Subcouncil #2 schools not meeting the District and State proficiencies (both at 95.5%).

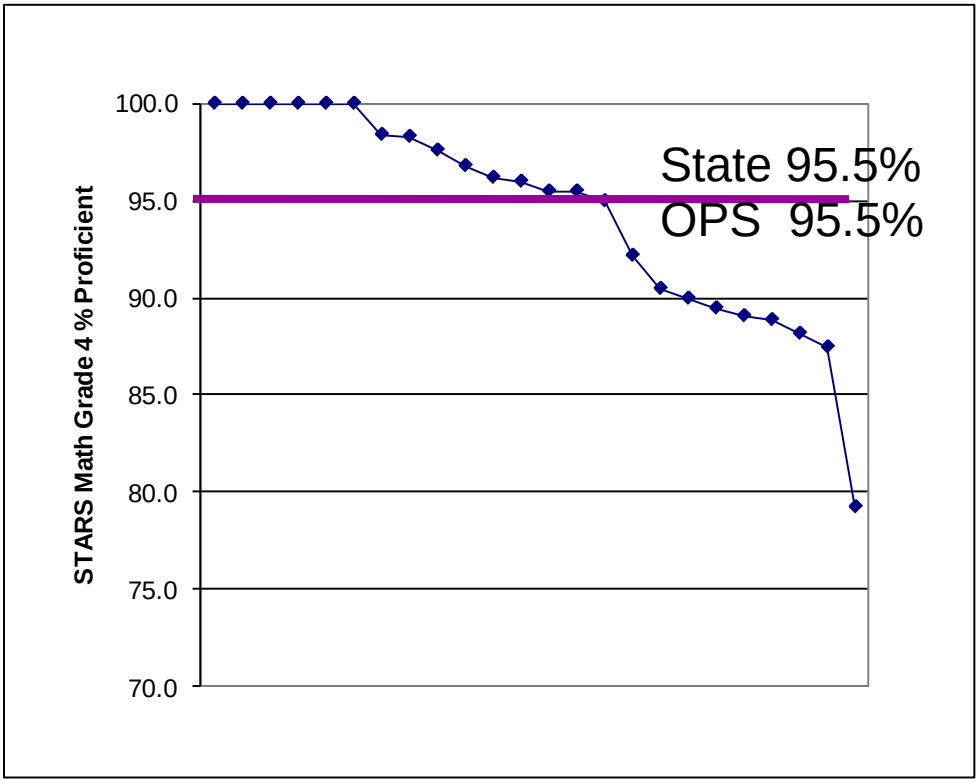

Figure 4. STARS Math Grade 4 Proficiency Scores by Elementary School, Compared to State and District Proficiencies (2008-09).

Nevertheless, one of the most reliable long-range indicators for academic success is a school's graduation rate. However, inconsistency in computing graduation rates makes it difficult to make true comparisons. A team of researchers led by Robert Balfanze, Nettie Legters and Johns Hopkins University have introduced the best practice of "promoting power" to identify success in drop-out prevention.

Promoting power compares the number of 12th grade students in a school to the number of 9th graders three years earlier. It is designed to estimate the proportion of high school students who make it to their senior year. For example, if a school's promoting power is 80%, it means that the number of 12th graders is 80% of the number of 9th graders 3 years before. If a school does not have a 9th grade, the indicator is calculated as the ratio of 12th to 10th grades instead. It is not a graduation rate because it does not measure how many students received diplomas. In order to mitigate data anomalies that might particularly affect one year of promoting power (such as a neighboring school closing), researchers also calculate a 3-year promoting power average.

At Nebraska's 2009 Drop-out Prevention Summit, Nettie Legters equated any school with promoting power of 60 or less as a "dropout factory". There are seven such schools in Nebraska – five are in OPS. *Table 5* illustrates the promoting power of the five OPS high schools falling into the "dropout factory" category.

High School	3-Year Average	2007	2006	2005
BENSON HIGH SCHOOL	45.6	46.7	47.5	42.4
OMAHA NORTH HIGH SCHOOL	48.9	53	49	44.7
OMAHA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL	50.5	46.2	47.3	58
OMAHA NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL	56.9	50.3	59.9	60.5
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	58.2	58.3	56.2	60

Table 5. Omaha Public Schools with Lowest Promoting Power, 2005-2007 and 3-year Averages.

Achievement Subcouncil #2 has three (3) of the five (5) dropout factories in OPS. In real life terms, according to Omaha Public Schools Fall 2009 Membership Data, over 5,595 Subcouncil 2 students attended: Benson High School (1,408), Omaha North High School (1,826), and Central High School (2,361). Using the percentages listed above, over 2900 students will drop out over the next three years—Benson High School (642), Omaha North High School (893), and Central High School (1,374).

For African-Americans in Subcouncil #2 the rate is worse. According to the June 18, 2009 Omaha World Herald article *Omaha in Black and White: Poverty amid prosperity*:

> *While states and school districts measure dropouts by various methods, two studies that tried to make apples-to-apples comparisons ranked Nebraska among states with the highest school dropout rates for blacks. Both calculated black graduation rates below 50 percent and placed Nebraska in the bottom handful of states nationally.*
>
> *Omaha Public Schools officials use a measure they say is more accurate and puts their black graduation rate higher, at 65 percent. But they say there's no doubt poverty and school struggles go hand in hand. "Poverty is not an excuse for not learning," said Superintendent John Mackiel, "but it is a factor in not learning".*
>
> *Omaha also ranks in the bottom third among the U.S. cities in the percentage of its blacks who have four-year college degrees.*

According to Omaha Public Schools 2009 Membership Data, over 2,360 African-American students attended Benson High School (635), Omaha North High School (827), and Central High School (902) in the fall of 2009. Under the Omaha Public School standard of 65% black graduation, over the next four years 827 African-American students will dropout in these three high schools in Subcouncil #2.

The impact of drop-out rates is compounded when highly concentrated in particular neighborhoods. As school drop-out rates increase, these communities can anticipate that the rates of violence, crime, and other detrimental behaviors to increase over time.

Additional Needs

Table 6 summarizes the risks identified in the *SRI International Report* for Building Bright Futures (2007) by developmental stage.

Age	Major Risks Associated with Stage
6-11	▪ Emotional or behavior difficulties associated with not being prepared to learn surface; ▪ Bad attitudes and habits may develop as children fall behind in elementary school and become disillusioned; ▪ Increasingly difficult for children to keep up with their peers in the classroom as they get older
12-16	▪ Students become disengaged and unmotivated to continue academic efforts as they enter adolescence; ▪ May do less homework and start skipping school; ▪ Belief that they have little to gain from school leads to dropping out altogether; ▪ Vulnerability may lead to dropping out of school, experimenting with drugs, becoming pregnant, and/or joining gangs
17-18	▪ Unengaged at-risk youth likely to have been "lost" in the shuffle; ▪ Vital to engage youth through some form of intervention earlier in their developmental process

Table 6. Major Risks Associated with Age Developmental Stages from SRI International Report for Building Bright Futures (2007).

Community Input and Results

Achievement Subcouncil #2 held three (3) elementary learning center community input meetings in Achievement Subcouncil #2 to collect information and input from the community. These meetings were held on September 24, 2009 at North High School, October 7, 2009 at Liberty Elementary, and October 15, 2009 at Florence Townhall. In additional to the three (3) public input meeting, Achievement Subcouncil #2 held over fifteen (15) meeting discussing Elementary Learning Center. Many concerned parents, educators, after school coordinators, and community leaders attended to discuss Achievement Subcouncil #2's need for an Elementary Learning Center.

A joint meeting with the Achievement Subcouncil for Achievement Subcouncil 5 provided a forum to discuss maximizing efficiency and effectiveness through collaborations. The Preliminary ELC Plan was presented for additional community input at a Public Form at University of Nebraska at Omaha's Thompson Alumni Center.

This community input, along with input from other community resources, identified problems specific to Achievement Subcouncil #2, including:

a. Academic Equity and Access

(1) Disproportionate number of minority, English second language, and poverty students assigned to special education.
(2) Disproportionate number of minority, English second language, and poverty students receiving short - and long-term suspensions.
(3) Disproportionate number of minority, English second language, and poverty students dropping out of school.
(4) Disproportionate number of minority, English second language, and poverty students currently functioning below grade level.
(5) A persistent, pervasive, and significant disparity in educational achievement and attainment among minority, English second language, and poverty students as determined by standardized educational measures.

b. Literacy and Mathematics

(1) More support is needed for K – 3rd Grade students in literacy and mathematics.
(2) More support is needed for students who struggle with reading and mathematics in 4th grade through high school

c. Parent/Community Involvement

(1) Concern regarding a lack of parental involvement and education to improve the learning process at home and at school.
(2) Concern regarding a lack of English Second Language classes for parents.
(3) Parents voiced a lack of connection to the school, the school district and programs/services in which their children participate

d. Teaching Diverse Populations

(1) Additional preparation is needed of classroom teachers and administrators to ensure the successful teaching of a diverse population of students.
(2) Under-recruitment of teachers, including minority males, who are prepared to be successful with diverse populations.

Goals and Objectives Specific to Subcouncil #2

In response to the needs identified by the community, three strategic goals with supporting, measurable objectives have been identified for the proposed Elementary Learning Centers.

Goal 1: To enhance the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students who need it the most, by strengthening academic achievement programs to more directly support improved student achievement.

Objective A: All third-graders will be proficient in reading at least at the third-grade level;

Objective B: All fourth-graders will be proficient in writing and math at least at the fourth-grade level.

Goal 2: To increase the social capital for Subcouncil #2 by connecting with parents, guardians, caretakers, and the community to the education and service networks.

Objective A: Increase the parental / community involvement and connectivity with each school and community.

Goal 3 To effectively use available resources in a focused approach regarding priority areas of need and be accountable and transparent to the public.

Objective A: Develop effective methods of monitoring and measuring effectiveness.

Objective B: Understand what schools are already offering and do not duplicate efforts, but expand and supplement those programs that are effective.

Goal 1 and Goal 3 require little explanation. However, the concept of social capital introduced in Goal 2 is a more abstract idea rooted in evidence-based research. This concept is built on the idea of building the community itself to increase academic achievement.

Like economic capital, social capital is another valued asset. Communities strong in reciprocal social interactions, or social capital, tend to have lower crime rates, better health, higher academic achievement, and greater economic growth.[9,10,11] Social capital encompasses the resources made available through a person's social relationships. In the case of the Elementary Learning Center, these relationships include students/parents, parents/teachers, teachers/students, family/school, as well as relationships these individuals may have with nonprofit services providers, and in some cases, with providers of community services like support for food, shelter, health and other non-academic needs.

Research has shown that these relationships have a significant influence on student achievement.[12,13] The interaction between the principals and the parents, teacher and parents, and/or student and students within the schools exemplifies how schools can operate as a source of either "negative" or "positive" social capital.[14] Where connections between school and community are weak, urban public schools are more likely to operate as negative social capital.

Studies have also linked parent involvement to academic success, including school attendance and classroom behavior.[15, 16, 17] The literature in the US documenting the effects of parental involvement on the educational success of children is truly massive. As one review of this literature summarized simply, "*When parents are involved at school, their children go further in school, and the schools they go to are better.*"[18] Higher reading and math achievement has been linked to increased parental participation.[19, 20, 21] Limited English Proficiency programs also see better results when incorporating parent involvement.[22, 23]

There is also a practical reason for building the community's social capital. No one doubts that schools can be powerful influences on youth, when those schools are safe and have engaging curriculum and experienced and caring teachers who possess subject matter competency and pedagogical skill. But America's public schools often come up short in these regards. Even near perfect schools can show disappointing results, since school effects have limits. In part, this is because of time: U.S. students spend about 1,150 waking hours a year in school versus about 4,700 more waking hours per year in their families and neighborhoods.[24]

One study of literacy achievement in 16 secondary schools with students from 437 neighborhoods showed the power of neighborhood as an independent factor in student achievement.[25] The neighborhoods were scaled to reflect socio-demographic characteristics, including overall unemployment rate, youth unemployment rate, number of single-parent families, percentage of low-earning wage earners, overcrowding, and permanently sick individuals. In this study, significant school-to-school variance in achievement was found, even when controlling for family background and neighborhood characteristics. This study and many others demonstrate that school effects on achievement are real and powerful. Research like this provides support for those who choose to focus on schools as the primary influence on achievement, and who downplay the effects of out-of-school factors influencing achievement.

In this same study, however, the variable labeled "neighborhood deprivation" also showed a very large negative effect on educational achievement. This was true even after variation in the individual students and the schools they attended were stringently controlled. That means, for two students with identical prior achievement background, with identical family backgrounds, and even with identical school membership, the differences in educational achievement as a function of their neighborhood deprivation was estimated to be a difference of between the 10^{th} and the 90^{th} percentile on an achievement test. In another study, these findings were essentially replicated using mathematics achievement as the outcome.[26] It is indisputable that neighborhoods independently have significant effects on achievement, often by weakening parental influences associated with better student achievement. Consequently, Achievement Subcouncil #2 has set a goal to increase social capital, anticipating improved academic achievement among the target school students, and optimistically aspiring to garner trickle-down benefits for the neighborhoods that may include increased safety, reduced youth unemployment, and decreased juvenile criminal mischief.

Structural Approach

Creating a Service Delivery Model

While it would be optimal to have sufficient financial resources to fund the services that are needed in the area, it is recognized that funds are limited. What can be done is to utilize the existing funding to (a) produce an effective and efficient model that will be flexible and responds quickly to meet the needs of the community, (b) support priority services that are most vitally needed to the extent possible, and (c) have a laser focus with a pragmatic and systematic approach that will engage the community, business leaders, and service providers. This plan seeks to incorporate community input with the statutory requirement for the establishment of an elementary learning center (**Neb. Rev. St. § 79-2113**).

Examination of the current service delivery network for remedial academic programs among schools in Subcouncil #2 shows isolated clusters of programs (both internal and external) serving area schools. Omaha Public Schools building often operate in isolation of each other. It was clear from the community input parents find it challenging to identify services/programs in their neighbors and connect with them initially. School building reading and math proficiency scores lead to questions regarding the current network's effectiveness and accountability.

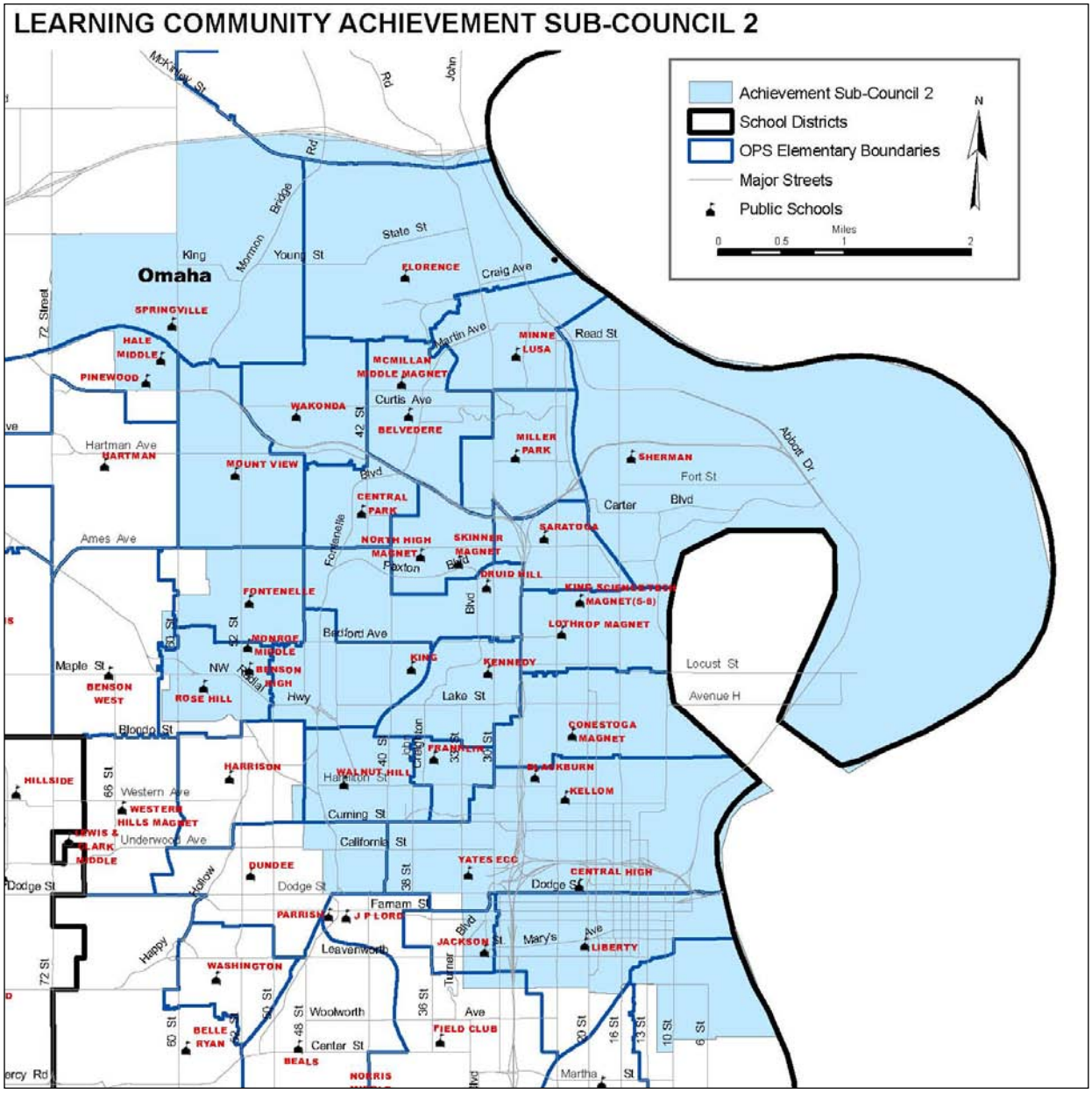

Figure 5. Elementary Schools in Learning Community Achievement Subcouncil District 2.

To align operations with Subcouncil #2's goals for academic improvement, an efficient service delivery model capable of meeting needs at the whole school and individual levels are vital. Income, race, ethnicity, and religion are all are factors that affect the residential options of

different people. Neighborhoods, therefore, have different characteristics and each neighborhood may have unique and different needs. The centralized nature of the hub and spokes model provides high efficiency in support the whole school and the individual student. The Elementary Learning Center would serve as the hub, or principal base of support for the schools benefiting from the services, arranged like spokes around a wheel (*Figure 6).*

In addition to the efficiencies associated with a centralized infrastructure, customers find the hub and spokes model more intuitive, allowing them to access a "one-stop shop" for service identification, registration, scheduling, etc. This is particularly crucial in trust-based institutions. Since the Elementary Learning Center is intended to increase individuals' social capital by facilitating connections, disseminating information, and increasing knowledge, customer convenience (customers, in this case, including parents, students, teachers, and community service providers) will be a key factor in the model's success. The chief weakness of the hub and spokes model involves the dynamic of trust: if the hub disappears, the entire network fails. While, even without the continuing connecting role of the hub, the social capital and academic improvements built during the pilot program still exist, research cautions that the community will likely feel that their trust has been violated.

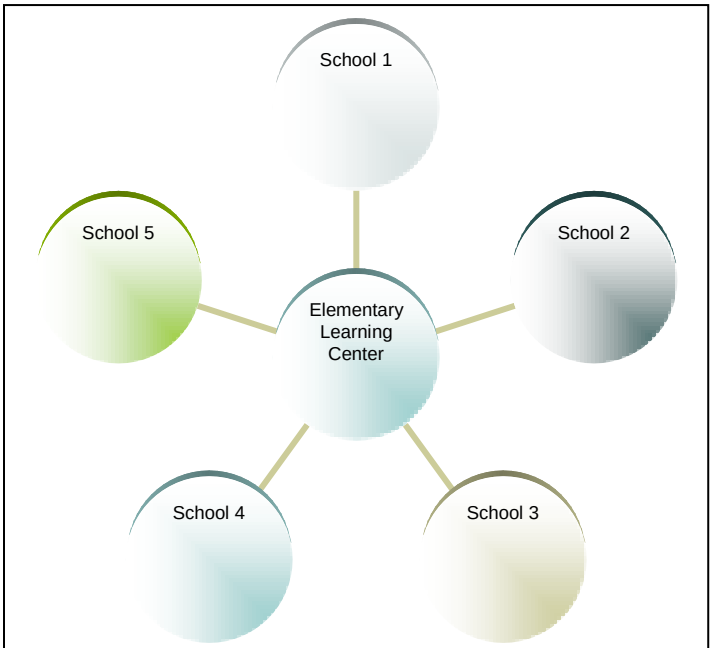

Figure 6. Hub & Spokes Service Delivery Model for Elementary Learning Center in Subcouncil District 2.

The hub and spokes model allows the network's more complicated operations to be carried out at the hub rather than at every participating school. This allows higher levels of control over the data collection and analysis for monitoring and measuring of program effectiveness.

The hub and spokes model for service delivery also allows for efficient expansion. When the Elementary Learning Center pilot is applied to additional schools in Subcouncil #2, multiple Elementary Learning Center hubs may each connect to as many as five schools, with the hubs in close communication with each other. As other Achievement Subcouncils develop Elementary Learning Centers, the hubs will act as high quality connections among a core of peers working together on overlapping collaborations and projects.

Criteria for Location

In August 2009, the LCCC determined that an Elementary Learning Center placed in Northeast Omaha (Subcouncil #2) would place a facility and services in close proximity to a major community of need – within range 25 elementary schools exceeding the statute's

requirements with at least 35% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, with 20 of those buildings exceeding 70%.

Careful scrutiny of the disproportionate levels for poverty, limited English skills, and school mobility within the community revealed a great deal of overlap, compounding problems in Subcouncil #2. Existing facilities, staff, programs, and projected enrollment were considered, to ensure the most efficient use of resources. *Figure 7* shows the overlaps for the elementary schools among the top ten in each category. In addition to identifying a location capable of serving the students with the highest needs, these overlaps are also vital in planning services to help the targeted population overcome these barriers to academic success.

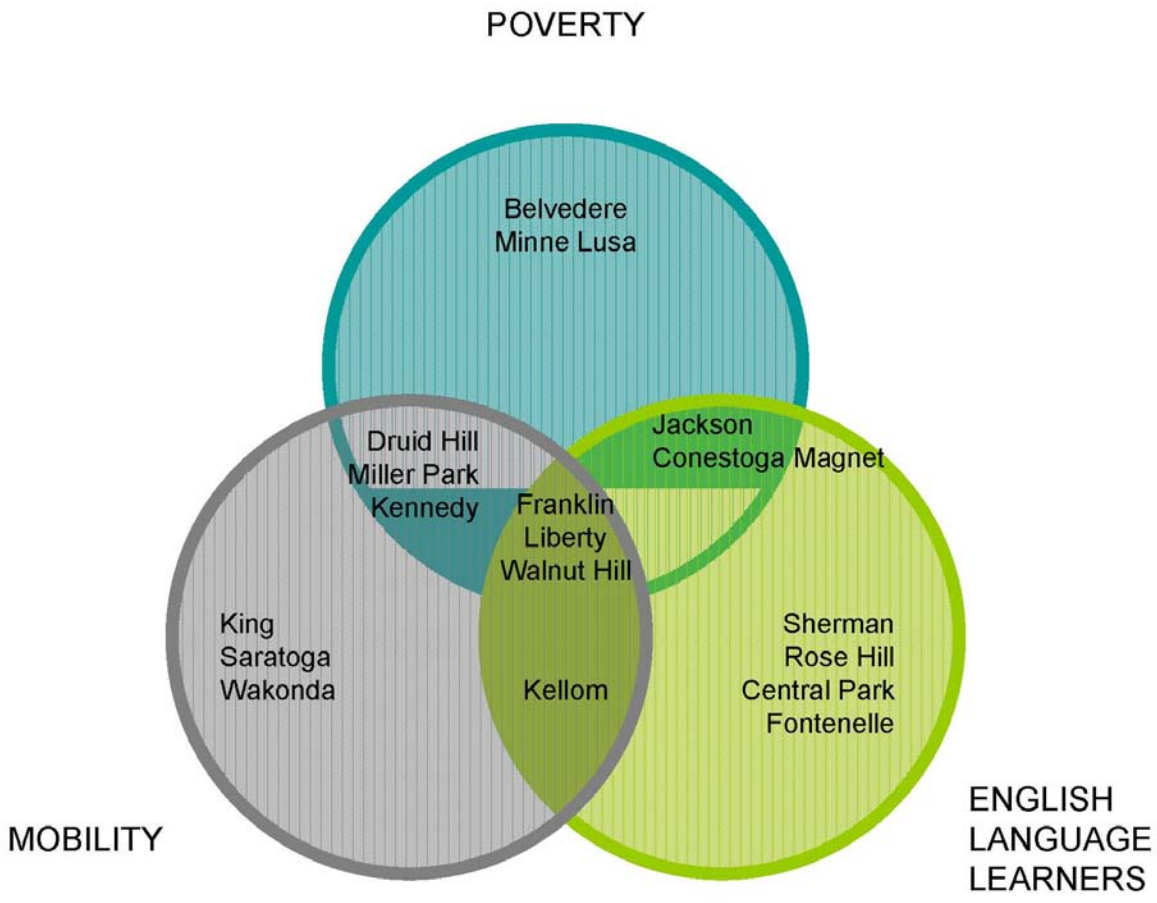

Figure 7. High Concentrations of Mobility, Poverty and English Language Learners within the Highest Ranking Elementary Schools for these Barriers in Subcouncil #2 (Sources: OPS data).

Structural Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Adams Park Project

A survey of existing community facilities and the needs of Subcouncil #2 identified Adams Park as the best place to start with an Elementary Learning Center hub. *Figure 8* shows how this location can expediently function as a central hub for 5 "spoke" schools, serving Franklin, Druid Hill, Kennedy, Skinner, and King Elementary Schools.

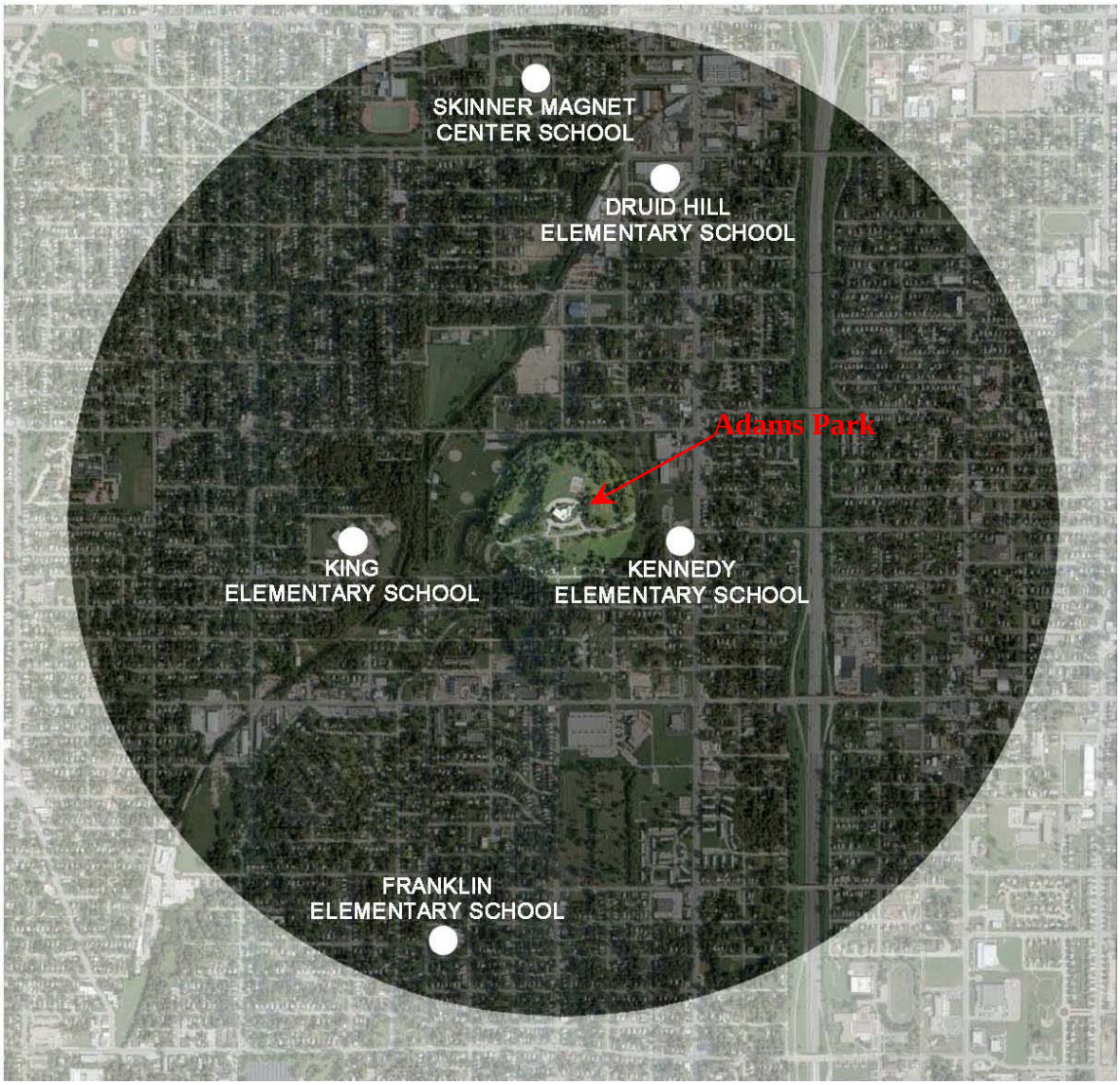

Figure 8. Area Schools in Vicinity of Adams Park (Source: Alley, Poyner, Maccietto Architecture, 10/30/2009).

Adams Park is well positioned to serve as the Elementary Learning Center's access point to five neighborhood schools, connecting the schools, students, parents, families and neighborhoods to vital academic resources. All five schools have percentages over 88% for students participating in free or reduced-lunch. Extending services to Druid Hill and Franklin Elementary Franklin Schools would be particularly effective, since they rank first and second

highest in free or reduced-lunch participation at 95% and 94% respectively. Similarly, the area also allows service to the first, third and fourth ranking buildings for high mobility rates. Figure 2 above demonstrates that mobility has a significant impact on academic achievement. These five schools are neighborhood schools with minimal busing. Since the students attending these schools are from the immediate neighborhood, transportation to and from Adams Park is not an issue for most families.

In terms of academic proficiency, by serving these five schools, the Elementary Learning Center will be able to deliver services to four schools scoring in the bottom ten on the 4th grade STARS Reading test (including the second, third and fourth lowest proficiencies); along with four schools scoring in the bottom ten on the 4th grade STARS Math test (including the Franklin Elementary, the lowest in Subcouncil #2 with 79.3% -- a full 8.2 points behind the next lowest score). The inclusion of Franklin Elementary also allows this Elementary Learning Center hub to extend services to the 7th highest percentage of English language learners in Subcouncil #2.

It is recommended that the Learning Community Coordinating Council, along with Achievement Subcouncil #2, collaborate with the City of Omaha, Chamber of Commerce, Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District, Malcolm X Foundation, local businesses, nonprofits, and private donors to accomplish this project. Some recommendations for Adams Park Project include:

- **Programs**
  - Academic Program
  - Health & Life Skills
  - Character & Leadership
  - Sports, Fitness, and Recreation
  - Arts
  - Saturday Academic Enrichment Camps
- **Develop Expeditionary Learning** experience that takes advantage of forest and lake.
- **Develop Community & School Gardens**
  - Each school in the hub, and neighborhood association will, if they chose to, establish a community garden.
- **Emphasize community wellness** by incorporating trails, places for informal recreation and facilities for active recreation.
- **Unify Adams Park and Malcolm X Birthsite.**

Recommendation 2. Organizational Structure

The Elementary Learning Center would be initially staffed by a community liaison / case worker, to work with site coordinators, community organizers, targeted school buildings, and school district.

Staffing

Consultants

- Experts in project design and implementation for Adams Park Project
- Experts in after school programming
- Experts in Closing the achievement gap

Enrichment Liaisons (2 - 3)

- Will coordinate academic enrichment programs through schools and ELC's enrichment activities.

Instructional/Data Facilitator – Hired by the LCCC

- Coordinate gathering of assessment data on the impact of enrichment on educational outcomes of students via multiple measures

Parental Involvement Coordinators (Site Coordinators) – (4)

- Will work with schools to identify families where assistance can be provided. For example:
    - Teach parents how to effectively use PIRC rooms (most schools have a parent resource room with a computer, educational aids, etc.)
    - In-person reach out to every family identified to introduce the family to the school more thoroughly, offer support and translation assistance during meetings with school staff and parent/teacher conferences
    - Provide/coordinate transportation of parents to school functions
    - Provide outside parent development (speakers, trainers) to work with parents, at schools, using school technology, so that parents understand what students are doing/using/required to learn and to assist parents in learning the same thing
    - Provide parenting skills development

Health and Community Services Liaison

- Serve as a resource to refer families to community programs that are in existence, such as SAFE, social workers, the Snack Pack program, food pantry access, etc.
    - For example, Alegent has offered a program where there is an immediate link between the school and families who need prescriptions, access to a physician, access to another provider etc. The program has placed an Alegent employee in schools part-time. The program was funded by Alegent but resources have been lost. Reinstitute this program in schools, based on a needs assessment of each school in Subcouncil #2, and fund the cost instead of Alegent.

Community Advisory Committee

An ad hoc Community Advisory Committee will be formed to inform, gather community input, and develop recommendations for Subcouncil #2 Elementary Learning Center's facilities and programs. Subcouncil #2 recommends the formation of an ad hoc Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the schools, ELL programs, nonprofit organizations, parents, and other stakeholders. The Advisory Council would provide guidance, along with vital community connections, to ensure better identification of service gaps and avoid duplication of services. Care will be taken in assembling the Community Advisory Committee to ensure that members' views reflect community values and are in the best interests of the neighborhood school children.

Procedures for appointment of members of the Community Advisory Committee:

- Each Subcouncil member may appoint up to two (2) members of the Community Advisory Committee.
- Each member of the Community Advisory Committee must be approved by majority of Subcouncil #2.
- Members are selected for a term of two (2) years and are annually staggered.

Guiding Principles of the Community Advisory Committee

1. Sustain and create academic effectiveness
    - Keep, relocated, replicate and / or add effective programs
    - Demonstrate benefits to students and families
2. Equity
    - Ensure all Elementary Learning Centers provide high quality education for students
    - Ensure needed programs and services in each quadrant of the Subcouncil
3. Minimize disruption to students, families and staff
    - Keep school communities intact
4. Engage the community in finding solutions
5. Effective connections with community

Recommendation 3. Truancy Reduction Intervention Program(TRIP)

Attendance is directly related to academic achievement. The significance of attendance on academic achievement was confirmed by the Legislature in **Neb. Rev. St. § 79-2109 (a-d)**, by requiring all Learning Community schools districts to generate Truancy Reports to LCCC. Achievement Subcouncil #2 recommends to the LCCC a collaboration initiative with all 11 school district, community leaders, other key community groups, and Douglas and Sarpy County Attorneys. The goals of the Truancy Reduction Intervention Program (TRIP):

1. Reduce the rate of truancy;
2. Increase connectedness between community and school; and
3. Improve high school graduation rates.

Recommendation 4. Engaging the Business Community via Reading Corps

Reading Corps is a way to engage the business community, help every Learning Community child become a successful reader by the end of 3rd grade, and maintain reading proficiency onto 6th grade. The program places business leaders and community members in sites to implement a researched-based early-literacy effort to help struggling readers. The Learning Community Reading Corps strategies are designed for preschool-aged students through 6th grade students. Learning Community Reading Corps members can choose to serve in a preschool setting, a Kindergarten – 3rd grade setting, or 4th grade through 6th grade setting. The state's businesses require workers who are ready. Programs such as Reading Corps have helped get at-risk kids on the road to reading and success.

The Reading Corps goal is to improve reading abilities of K-6 students across Learning Community. This is achieved through research-based tutoring of struggling readers and effective

collaborations among schools, families, community members, businesses, and state partners. Data is regularly collected for each child in order to tailor literacy interventions for individual children, children in small groups, and for whole classrooms.

- *LC Reading Corps in preschool settings*—Reading Corps members work with preschool-aged children in their classrooms to create literacy-rich environments, focusing on the literacy skills.

- *LC Reading Corps in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade Settings*—Reading Corps members serve as one-on-one tutors and provide research-based interventions to students who are just below proficiency in reading. The members tutor to build phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency skills.

- *LC Reading Corps in 4th through 6th Grade Settings*—Reading Corps members serve as tutors (group setting) and provide research-based interventions to students who are just below proficiency in reading.

Subcouncil #2 will work the LCCC, ELC Task Force, and business community to develop and implement this program.

Recommendation 5. Evaluation Process

What is academic success? How will Achievement Subcouncil #2 define it and measure it in a way that really gets to the core of the disparities that exist, allows for ongoing input from and collaboration with the all stakeholders involved within a school, principal, administrative team, teachers, paras, parents, students, etc within its boundaries? Effective methods of monitoring and measuring effectiveness must be developed, to ensure accountability and transparency to the public. An evaluative approach for the Achievement Subcouncil #2 will be developed using a "Student Centered" Growth Model.

Generally speaking, growth models measure learning, as demonstrated on statewide assessments, in order to determine the degree to which elementary learning centers are helping their students make significant progress toward meeting standard.[27] The Student Centered Growth Model focuses attention on maximizing student progress over time and reveals where, and among which students, the strongest growth is happening and where it is not. The "Student Centered" Growth Model is based on the idea that students are given an individual "growth target." Features of these targets include:

- The target may be below standard, but represents significant closure in the student's achievement gap.
- Targets typically require the "gap" to reduce by 40% or more.
- Low performing students must exhibit more growth.
- The targets are aggressive, yet achievable, for all students.

Measuring Academic Success though Multiple Measures

Attaining true academic success must involve designing an academic performance index (API) that takes into account multiple measures including both cognitive and non-cognitive factors.[28] Multiple measures of achievement provide students with more than a single opportunity to show what they know and can do. Using multiple measures affords people the opportunity to make better decisions and more accurate inferences than they could if they looked at only one source of information. Multiple pieces of information about student proficiency can be combined at the student level to provide an overall picture of how the student is doing, and at the school level to provide an overall picture of how the school is doing. Results may be combined within a single content area, as is the case when results of two tests of math are combined into an indicator of overall math achievement, or across content areas, as is the case when writing, reading, and math results are combined into an indicator of overall academic performance.[29]

Goal 1: To enhance the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students who need it the most, by strengthening academic achievement programs to more directly support improved student achievement.

Objective A: All third-graders will be proficient in <u>reading</u> at least at the third-grade level;

The LCCC must define what being on grade-level means. For example, OPS uses CRTs to determine proficiency. Multiple measures for 3rd grade reading might include: Reading CRT, Reading CBTs, report card grades for reading, CAT reading comprehension battery, ELDA reading items, Reading Acuity tests (pre, mid, final), TCS (tests 2-4), Reading First scores (for schools that still have it), etc. *Note: LCCC should not add more tests, but create a true academic performance index for measuring the students who come into contact with the Elementary Learning Centers or its programs.*

Objective B: All fourth-graders will be proficient in <u>writing and math</u> at least at the fourth-grade level.

Again, The LCCC must define what being on grade-level means. Multiple measures for 4th grade reading might include: Math CRT, Math CBTs, report card grades for math, CAT math battery, ELDA reading items, Reading Acuity tests (pre, mid, final), TCS (tests 1), etc. *Note: LCCC should not add more tests, but create a true academic performance index for measuring the students who come into contact with the Elementary Learning Centers or its programs.*

Three general approaches to combining data are used: conjunctive, compensatory, and mixed. A conjunctive approach requires satisfactory performance on each criterion (or measure) in order for overall performance to be deemed satisfactory; a compensatory approach allows less than satisfactory performance on some criteria to be offset by satisfactory or better than satisfactory performance on other criteria. A mixed approach combines the conjunctive and compensatory approaches by requiring a minimum level of performance on one or more

measures and allowing performances above the minimum to compensate for each other. Achievement Subcouncil #2 recommends a mixed approach.

Addressing Academic Success through Non-cognitive Factors

In addition to focusing on cognitive factors, like the ones discussed in Goals 1, Achievement Subcouncil #2 is also choosing to address non-cognitive factors to achieve academic success such:

- poverty level
- limited English skills
- high mobility
- attendance
- behavior
- promotion
- parent engagement
- community engagement
- teacher-student relations
- mental health
- physical health
- attitude/motivation
- high risk behavior/experimentation

The Learner Centered Principles provide a framework that divides 14 academic success factors into 4 domains:

- Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors
- Motivational and Affective Factors
- Developmental and Societal Factors
- Individual Differences

As the LCCC develops its Academic Performance Index and standards, Subcouncil #2 recommends that any standard adopted by the LCCC include the following:

1. **Short-Term Outcomes**
    a. Fewer suspensions
    b. Improved behavior
    c. Improved attendance (including suspension and in-house suspensions)
    d. Promotion rate
2. **Annual Outcomes**
    a. Attending school 80% or more of the time in current grade
    b. 80% of participants receive a "C" or better in current reading/language arts grade
    c. 80% of participants receive a "C" or better in current math grade
3. **6th Grade Outcomes**
    a. Attending school 80% or more of the time in current grade
    b. 80% of participants receive a "C" or better in current reading/language arts grade
    c. 80% of participants receive a "C" or better in current math grade
4. **Long-Term Outcomes**
    a. Graduation Rate
    b. National Test Scores – participation and scores in national test
5. **Student Growth Model**

Subcouncil #2 Annual Evaluation

Subcouncil #2 will institute a formal and informal review, which serves an on-going process that takes place at every level. Key programs will be reviewed monthly by the management staff. The entire plan should be revalidated, updated, and revised on an annual basis. The achievement of these goals will become benchmark measures of success over time.

Subcouncil #2 believes in the *continuous evaluation model*, rather than solely pre- / post-evaluation procedures. The Elementary Learning Center director will evaluate at all levels to ensure continuous feedback allowing for continuation of successes in our programs and necessary adjustments for improvement in our programs, services, and activities. The Community Advisory Committee, students, parents, and teachers at the targeted schools will provide feedback on the project on a quarterly basis. The student council / senate and principal will receive information on the after-school activities. The continuous evaluation of Elementary Learning Center programs will occur through a variety of mechanisms:

1. Informal communications among all staff and volunteers will occur on a daily basis;

2. Aside from intensive orientation and training in the beginning, there will be monthly "mini" in-service training for staff and volunteers;

3. The Director / Site Coordinator will attend the schools' Student Council Meetings and PTO / PTA / Parent Advisory Group meetings, and will be in weekly contact with the schools' principals;

4. All student / adult workshops / training will have an evaluation form submitted at the end of the workshop / training.

Annually, the Elementary Learning Center will conduct a thorough evaluation. The evaluation plan (see flow cart in *Figure 9)* is an integral resource enabling the staff to plan, monitor, and refine the objectives and activities, and to collect and analyze empirical information that can be used to improve strategies and control costs. At the end of the year, the Elementary Learning Center will combine the evaluations and give the resulting product to every stakeholder.

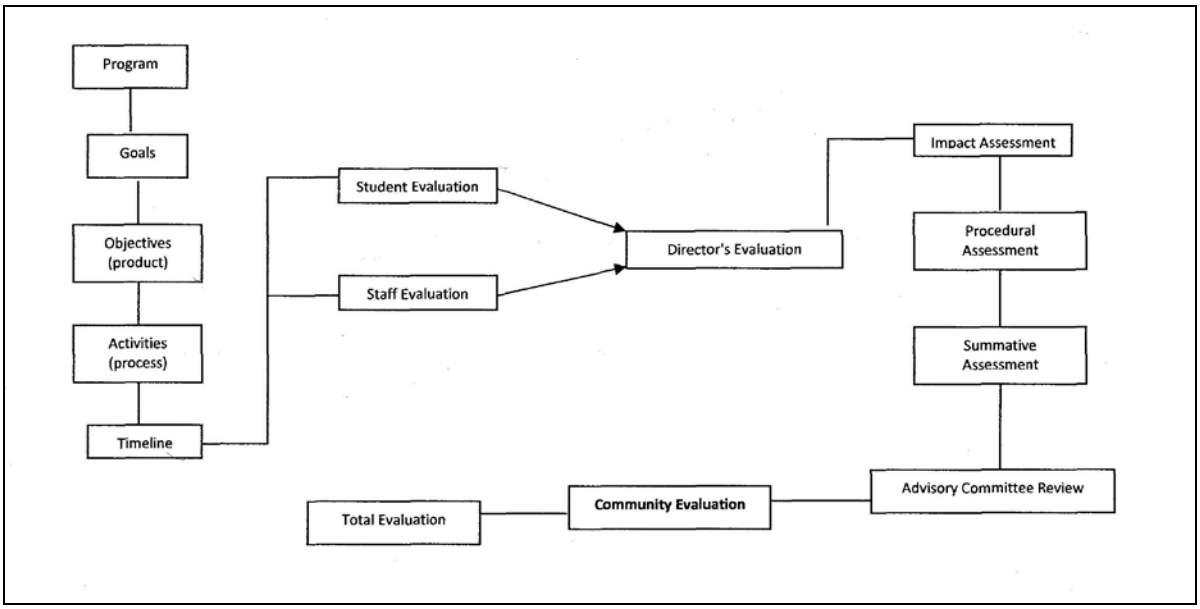

Figure 9. Annual Evaluation Flow Chart for Elementary Learning Center Subcouncil #2 Evaluation Process**.**

Each program will be evaluated by its goal, objectives, activities, and timeline. Then, the students and staff will evaluate the program. The Director / Site Coordinator must evaluate staff and read the students' and staff members' evaluations and produce an Impact Assessment summarizing how well the program worked, Procedural Assessment summarizing how well the staff and procedures succeeded, and an assessment including future suggestions.

These policies and procedures will ensure that all of the staff, students, parents, and the community will have a voice in providing feedback to the Director / Site Coordinator, as well as to Subcouncil #2. The Elementary Learning Center's top priority is to make sure that the community has a voice in the daily activities and programs, because effective management and quality service depend on frequent feedback to document progress and detect problems.

ELC System Evaluation

Achievement Subcouncil recommends the LCCC adopt *CIPP Model,* which has been around for many years, and it has been very popular in education. The CIPP Model is a simple systems model applied to program evaluation. A basic open system includes input, process, and output. Stufflebeam added context, included input and process, and relabeled output with the term product.[30] Hence, CIPP stands for **c**ontext evaluation, **i**nput evaluation, **p**rocess evaluation, and **p**roduct evaluation. These types are typically viewed as separate forms of evaluation, but they can also be viewed as steps or stages in a comprehensive evaluation.

Programming Approach

Creating a Program Model

Best practices in the literature indicate that early-warning indicators predicting whether or not a student is likely to drop out of school can be identified as early as age six[31]. By developing a continuum of focused interventions, an Elementary Learning Center can not only respond to early warning signs such as low proficiency in math and reading, but also embed prevention strategies into the schools with the most at-risk students and reduce the need for the remedial interventions[32] (it stands to reason that children who are prevented from falling behind will not require the resources to catch up). *Table 7* illustrates how a tiered system of strategies will allow the Elementary Learning Center to use broad prevention strategies and hone interventions to reach individual students most in need.

This three-pronged approach provides academic support for all students in the participating schools, while focusing on those who need help the most. *Table 7* provides prevention and intervention examples for each program focus.

Program Focus	Examples of Academic Prevention / Intervention	Examples of Behavioral Prevention / Intervention
Whole School—preventive strategies that concentrate on the whole school.	Research & Standards-Based Core Curriculum Extended Time Math and Literacy Blocks Benchmark Assessments	Positive Behavior Supports Truancy Programs Hands-On / Minds-On Courses (Music, Art, Science, Debate, Sports)
Targeted—grouped targeted to address particular risk factors.	Reduced Class Size Credit Recovery Program	Behavior / Attendance Team-Problem Solving Mentoring
Intensive—individual oriented strategies to reach the most challenged students.	Tutoring One-on-One Class Instruction	Social Service Supports

Table 7. Examples of Preventive and Intervention Supports by Whole School, Targeted and Intensive Program Focus.

This systematic and pragmatic approach serves as the criteria for the programs recommended for the first Elementary Learning Center to be piloted in Subcouncil #2.

Program Recommendations

Recommendation 6. Short-term Summer Intervention Program

Focus	Target
Students Served	1st – 3rd graders who did not meet the ELC standards or AYP
Program Focus	Targeted Intervention
Location	At students' current school
Targeting Method	Teachers / Principals recruit students
Duration	2-4 weeks
Staff	Certified teacher, volunteers, student teachers
Partnership	OPS & Nonprofit Organization
Program Components	Small group tutoring Phonics instruction Computer-assisted instruction
Program Outcomes	Based on Ohio study, more than six-month grade equivalent gain in reading proficiency
Comments:	Research has clearly shown that focusing on K-3rd grade produces the best results for closing the achievement gap.

Recommendation 7. Summer School Model

Focus	Target
Students Served	Elementary students in participating schools
Program Focus	Mixed: Targeted & Intensive
Location	Elementary Learning Center facility
Targeting Method	Students recruited through outreach efforts
Duration	3-4 weeks
Staff	Certified teacher, volunteers, student teachers

Partnership	OPS & Nonprofit Organization
Program Outcomes	Extending Time on Task / School[33] Preventing summer learning loss[34, 35]
Comments:	Research suggests that regular participation in programs that provide academic and social activities contribute positively to children's academic and social development. Programs that extend the school year can do more than reduce summer learning loss—they can increase academic achievement, especially for children in poverty.

Recommendation 8. Jump Start Model

Focus	**Target**
Students Served	Elementary students in participating schools
Program Focus	Mixed: Targeted and Intensive
Location	Elementary Learning Center facility & schools
Targeting Method	Students recruited through outreach efforts
Duration	3-4 weeks
Staff	Certified teacher, volunteers, student teachers
Partnership	OPS & Nonprofit Organization
Program Outcomes	Research demonstrates that providing students with extra time to catch up and/or preview upcoming topics closes the achievement gap.

Recommendation 9. Grant Process/Contracted Services

Focus	**Target**
Students Served	All elementary students in participating schools
Program Focus	Mixed: Whole, Targeted and Intensive
Location	Elementary Learning Center facility & schools
Targeting Method	Nonprofits/school programs recruited through Request for Proposals process

Duration	To be determined per program parameters
Staff	Nonprofit service providers, certified teachers, volunteers, student teachers
Partnership	OPS & Nonprofit Organizations
Program Outcomes	Year 1 funding for unique/innovative education programs. May include summer programs, out of school programs, after school tutoring/programs, Saturday Academies, Safe Places, drama, arts, sports, et al., to extend time on task.
Comments:	Please See Appendix A for Sample Criteria for grants. The grant process will be available to any non profit organization with its primary service/programs located in Achievement Subcouncil #2.

Recommendation 10. Community in Schools

Focus	**Target**
Students Served	All students in participating schools and students identified as being at risk of dropping out
Program Focus	Mixed: Whole, Targeted and Intensive
Location	Elementary Learning Center facility & schools
Targeting Method	Students recruited through schools by teachers, counselors, parents, service providers, etc.
Duration	Ongoing
Staff	Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, Data Analyst, Program Director, Site Coordinators
Partnership	CIS National Office, OPS, Empowerment Network, numerous service providers
Program Outcomes	Level 1: Provide at least eight different Level 1 services to a total of 75% of the student population over the course of the school year. They are short-term prevention services with durations of a few hours or days that build assets in the "Five Basics." They are provided or brokered on an as-needed or as-available basis. Students do not need to be enrolled in a specific CIS initiative to benefit from such resources and services, but simply need to

	be members of the school population at large. Some examples of Level One resources or services include providing clothing or school supplies, assemblies, events, career fairs, field trips, health screenings and grief counseling. Level 2: Provide Level 2 services to between 5 and 10% of the school population, depending on the size of the school so that • students tracked for poor attendance improve their attendance • students tracked for behavior problems show improvement in behavior • students tracked for suspension risk have fewer suspensions • students tracked for academics show improvement in academic achievement • students tracked for promotion risk are promoted to the next grade
Comments:	Communities In Schools (CIS) is the largest dropout prevention organization in the United States. As stated in the Academic Needs Section above, Achievement Subcouncil has three of the State's seven dropout factories. It is vital that Subcouncil #2 begin with elementary but have a system in place to monitor and evaluation the over impact on graduation and achievement. CIS provide that long term system along with a comprehensive solution to the issues that place young people in jeopardy of dropping out. Rather than duplicating services or competing with other youth-serving organizations or agencies, CIS identifies and mobilizes existing community resources and fosters cooperative partnerships for the benefit of students and families. Today, CIS is the national leader on school-based, integrated student services.

Future Recommendations

The systematic, pragmatic approach for the structure of the Elementary Learning Center and programming to be conducted acknowledges that a laser focus is essential to success at the pilot facility. Therefore, a small number of recommendations have been vetted and approved by Subcouncil #2, to ensure manageability and likelihood of success.

Should, however, additional resources become available, these additional recommendations would promise enhanced results within Subcouncil #2:

A. Adult Limited English Proficiency Programs
B. Newcomer Programs for Immigrants (i.e., drivers' training)

Sites that appear to have high potential for hosting future Elementary Learning Centers include:

- The Florence Project, serving Florence, Belvedere, Minne Lusa, Miller Park, and Sherman Elementary Schools
- The Downtown Project, serving Kellom, Liberty, Jackson, Conestoga Magnet, and Walnut Hill Elementary Schools
- The 52nd & Ames Project, serving Wakonda, Mount View, Central Park, Pinewood and Fontenelle Elementary Schools

Implementation Timeline

Time is of the essence. In February of 2010, Achievement Subcouncil #2 will provide the LCCC with an implementation timeline and budget.

Appendix I

SUBCOUNCIL #2 GRANT APPLICATION FOR ELEMENTARY LEARNING CENTERS SPRING 2010

HIGH EXPECTATIONS, HIGH ACCOUNTABILITY, HIGH RESULTS

ITEMS IMPORTANT FOR ALL APPLICATIONS

- No handwritten grant applications will be accepted. You may download the application as a word document from www.learningcommunityds.org. All applications must be in 12 pt font.
- Provide the information in the order requested and number and restate the headings.
- Submit the number of copies required by each grant maker.
- Do not staple the proposals or put them in binders, notebooks, or other presentation packages.
- Only one proposal per agency per funder will be accepted. Do not send additional materials (articles, brochures, letters, etc.) unless they contribute to our understanding in an important way.
- All grants submitted to Subcouncil #2 of the LCCC become the property of the funder to which it was submitted. This information may be shared with other agencies and community donors.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this document is to provide information and a grant application to nonprofits, community organizations and the general public.

Pursuant to Nebraska Statutes, section 79-2113, as amended, "Each achievement subcouncil shall submit a plan to the learning community coordinating council for any elementary learning center in its election district and the services to be provided by such elementary learning center." Under section 79-2112, elementary learning centers "shall serve as visionary resource centers for enhancing the academic success of elementary students, particularly those students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility." The statutory requirements governing ELCs are set forth as an attachment in Appendix A.

On August 27, 2009, the Learning Community Coordinating Council of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (LCCC) decided to establish its first ELCs in Achievement Subouncils #2 and #5. These two Achievement Subcouncils' plans were submitted on December 17, 2009 and approved on _____. This document sets forth the elements of what is expected to be included in the grants submitted to the Achievement Subcouncils of LCCC. Elementary learning centers are one of the key tools that the Nebraska Legislature gave the LCCC to improve academic achievement of young people in Douglas & Sarpy counties.

Subcouncil #2 will seek only to partner or approve grant applications for programs that strive to meet the following standards:

- ***Achievement:*** Services and programs must be intentionally linked to a child's academic success in the classroom.

- ***All-Around*****:** We recognize that the needs of the whole child must be addressed, including the needs of parents and family members, to create a full network of support for student achievement. This includes not only academic support (such as tutoring and mentoring), but also health (physical and mental), wellness and other family support services.

- ***Access:*** ELCs must be designed to facilitate children and their families getting connected to and receiving the support they need. This includes better and easier ways to access the already excellent programs and services in our community.

- ***Accountability:*** Our responsibility is also to ensure that the programs and services that are provided through the ELCs meet high standards of quality and are making a difference. We must use continuous improvement principles to ensure we are addressing the highest priority needs, and using data to monitor and demonstrate the effectiveness of our investments.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE:

Four (4) pages maximum. Clarity and brevity are essential. The program narrative should address the following items in the order they are listed. Number each response and write the bolded portion of each section before your response (i.e. Funding Request). Please answer the bulleted items in paragraph format and be sure to answer with complete sentences.

1. FUNDING REQUEST

- A brief description of your organization.
- Amount requested and purpose of your request (the need, problem, or opportunity).
- Discuss how your proposed program relates to the funder's stated priorities (see specific funder's "Fact Sheet" for priority areas).
- Effect your action will have on need, problem, or opportunity.
- Target populations you plan to serve, including location, socio-economic status, race, school building, age, grade, poverty, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, number served, physical ability, and language.
- Strategies you will employ to implement the project, including, if applicable, collaborations with other agencies.
- Why programs/services were selected. What criteria were applied? What priority needs is being addressed?
- Indicate by when the goals will be accomplished and any specific school buildings, grade levels or types of students who will be targeted for improvement.

- List three other organizations that offer similar services. Discuss if and how services are coordinated and/or compliment each other.
- What programs/services or assistance does the school district(s) currently your organization when working with your target audience.
- How do you communicate, coordinate, and/or collaborate with students' families to maximize family involvement?
- Provide the details of any cooperative agreements (Memorandum of Understanding, contracts, etc.) with community organizations, Health and Human Services, and agencies that assist with providing services addressing poor attendance
- How best practices research was used
- How programs/services will enable the ELC to meet one or more of its stated goals and/or objectives.

2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION (Use budget format provided)

- Program budget: list expenses, sources, and amounts of all income, including this request, and the status of each confirmed or pending request.
- Describe how your organization will sustain this program once grant funds have been spent.
- How many people will be/can be served – estimated cost per client?

3. EVALUATION

- Discuss how you will know if you are successful.
- How will you measure this?

All grants submitted to the Subcouncil # of the Learning Community Coordinating Council become the property of the Foundation. We maintain a file on all organizations that have applied for or received grant funds. This information may be shared with other agencies and community donors.

Checklist: These items must be included with your application and should be provided in this order.

- ☐ Cover page*
- ☐ Program narrative, no more than three pages (check the Funders Fact Sheet)
- ☐ Budget summary (both organization and program)
- ☐ Organization budget*
- ☐ Program budget*
- ☐ List of current Board Members and the role they serve (not to exceed two pages)
- ☐ IRS 501(c)(3) letter
- ☐ Most recent audited financial statements

* May not exceed one page and enclosed forms must be used.

End Notes

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[4] Times Magazine, March 10, 2009. Summarizing the report from National Center on Family Homelessness

[5] 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the U.S. Census The U.S. Census Bureau, "Geographical Mobility: Population Characteristics March 2002 to March 2003," 2004.

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