

**THE ARCHITECT'S CHARRETTE:
A PROTOTYPE FOR ADAPTIVE SCHOOL REDESIGN**

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INTRODUCTION

As student enrollment drops, urban public school districts are faced with a crisis. Under the pressure of shrinking budgets and increased accountability, many are forced to shutter neighborhood schools. Not only do these closures disproportionately affect disadvantaged students, they uproot communities. In this paper, I consider the *charrette* as an alternative to school closure for urban public school districts. The design charrette originated in architecture and is an intense, solution-oriented process that engages the community to produce viable, innovative proposals. Through three case studies, I demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the charrette as a tool for school redesign.

THE PROBLEM: DECLINING ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

Since the early 2000s, there has been a rapid increase in school closures nationwide. Many of these can be attributed to declining student enrollment in public schools as population declines and alternatives, like charters and private schools, rise. Between 2000-2010, 70 different urban school districts closed schools with an average of 11 per district (Engberg, Gill, Zamarro, & Zimmer, 2012). A 2009 initiative under the Obama administration contributed an additional \$3.5 billion in federal support to continue this trend (Pappas, 2012), shuttering over 1,800 schools nationwide at the close of the 2008-2009 school year (Brummet, 2014). This momentum carried into the following decade. In 2012, Baltimore announced the 21st Century Buildings Plan, which included the gradual closure of 26 of its 200 public schools (Shiller, 2018); in 2013, Philadelphia closed 23 public schools displacing 14,000 students (WHYY, 2013); and Chicago closed

50 public schools displacing 11,000 students (de la Torre, Gordon, Moore, & Cowhy, 2015).

There are consistent drivers in the decision to shutter schools in urban school districts: declining (and redistributed) enrollment (see Figure 1); poor performance; old, deteriorating buildings; and budget restrictions (Dowdall, 2013; Shiller, 2018; WHYY, 2013). Furthermore, the criteria for selection is similar across cities; the most important are building-utilization rate (enrollment as a percentage of capacity), facility conditions, academic performance, and options for displaced students (Dowdall, 2013). Though quantifiable, these criteria neglect the social role schools play within their neighborhood.

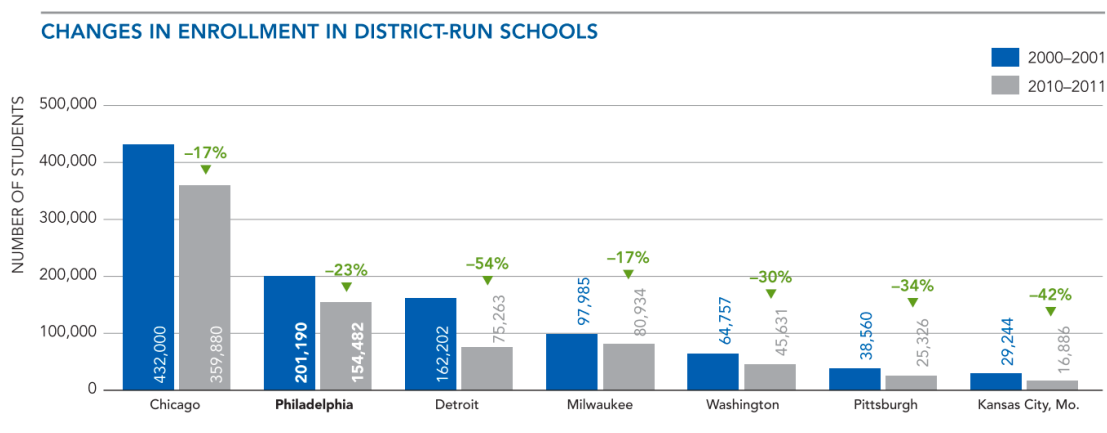


Figure 1: Decreased enrollment in urban districts is a result of both a declining school-aged population and increased enrollment in educational alternatives like charter schools. *Source: Dowdall, 2013*

In Baltimore, school closings were determined by an algorithm that used utilization rates to calculate an optimized ratio of students to square footage of classroom space (Shiller, 2018). Similar methods were used in Chicago (Weber, Farmer, & Donoghue, 2016). Such approaches treat schools as a mechanism for housing bodies and generating output, disregarding their nuanced, social significance (Lipman, Vaughan, & Gutierrez,

2014). Furthermore, despite the purported neutrality of this methodology, historical disinvestment in black and brown communities meant that their neighborhood schools were disproportionately impacted (Shiller, 2018; Vaughan, Gutierrez, & Gutierrez, 2017).

School closings disproportionately impact minority populations and schools serving homeless and special needs children. In Chicago, 88% of displaced students were African American (compared to 39% district-wide) and one-third of closed schools hosted cluster programs for students with severe disabilities (de la Torre et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2017). In the end, only about 36% of displaced students were relocated to a school that performed significantly better than their closed school; 7% relocated to a school with a lower-rating (de la Torre et al., 2015). Overall, displaced students were reenrolled in low-performing, academically weak schools.

The impact on learning was generally neutral. One year later, students remained on their previously expected learning trajectory and this was maintained two and three years out. Upon reaching high school, on-track rates to graduate were no different than those of students attending schools similar to those that closed (de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009). Though school closings have not been shown to substantially impact student academic performance (Dowdall, 2013; Engberg et al., 2012), parents and communities assert harm and disruption that is difficult to measure.

“Root shock” is the trauma that results when one’s connections to community are disrupted (Lipman et al., 2014). When parents and communities voiced their frustration, their concerns included longer, more dangerous commutes for their children; loss of familiarity and rapport between students, teachers, and parents; loss of local histories and community values; misplacement of and lack of support for their

special needs children; disrupted friendships; stigmatization and bullying; and concerns that the new schools would not be academically superior to their current school (they were not) (Lipman et al., 2014; Shiller, 2018; Vaughan et al., 2017). These concerns were not unfounded. In one study, 40% of students responded that their relationships with adults at their new school were weaker than previously; similarly, 40% lamented the loss of peer friendships. Approximately 25% of students in the same study felt they were stereotyped or mistreated at their new school (Kirshner, Gaertner, & Pozzoboni, 2010). Some parents recounted nightmares their children experienced after the closure was announced (Vaughan et al., 2017).

THE QUESTION

How can we revitalize communities that are slated for school closure, or that have already fallen victim to a school closure in their neighborhood? The money saved by school closings is modest in relation to an urban school district budget. Furthermore, since many of these shuttered schools are located in declining neighborhoods, selling or leasing them proves challenging. In 2011, 200 properties remained vacant within six urban districts (Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and Washington). Many remain empty for years. Over time, their deterioration makes them harder to sell, more costly to repair, and magnets for blight and illicit activities (Dowdall, 2013; Oxenhandler, 2015). Rather than allow these institutional spaces to fall farther into disrepair, condemning the community to their loss, can these sites be reclaimed after closure? Or, even better, can under-enrolled schools slated for closure be redesigned in a manner that allows them to continue to serve their students, further serve their

community, and remain financially viable? The charrette offers a tool in which this might be imagined.

THE DESIGN CHARRETTE

What is it?

The term *charrette* originates in 19th century France and roughly translates to cart. At the close of a project at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, a cart circulated the studio to collect final drawings as architecture students feverishly added finishing touches—some articulations of this origin even describe students climbing onto the cart with their drawings (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; Sanoff, 2000; The National Charrette Institute, 2006). It is this frantic, energetic spirit that the charrette embodies.

Charrette's are short, intensive, hands-on, collaborative sessions with various stakeholders that articulate problems, debate solutions, produce consensus, and develop a buildable plan. The charrette itself must be properly framed. It must be preceded by an identifiable problem and extensive organization and research; it must be followed by a commitment to action and practical evaluation (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; Ontario Association of Architects, 2004; The National Charrette Institute, 2006).

The charrette itself is marked by its focus on process. There are four primary tactics: collaboration, constraint, bricolage, and holism. An additional tactic that is ideal, but not always possible or necessary, is working on-site.

Collaboration. A well-run charrette should be an open process that involves all from start to finish. This ensures the development of a shared community vision in which all players are invested. In the months and weeks leading up to the event, it is important to consider and recruit potential stakeholders (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003;

Lennertz, Lutzenhiser, & Faylor, 2008; The National Charrette Institute, 2006). A primary stakeholder is someone that holds strong influence over the project. These individuals often have the power to block decisions. While it may seem counterintuitive, bringing them on board early often means that they become important advocates for the project (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; Lennertz et al., 2008). Secondary stakeholders often hold economic or political interest in the project. Local community groups, businesses, and churches often fall within this category. Finally, general stakeholders are the greater community. The manner and moments of input will vary by stakeholder, but it is important to note that full citizen participation means including even those that may not be directly impacted by the problem (The National Charrette Institute, 2006).

In considering school redesign or reuse, there are groups that deserve special consideration: students, parents, educators, businesses, community organizations and government agencies, the school board and administration, and senior citizens (Steven; Bingler, Quinn, & Sullivan, 2003). Students should be viewed as autonomous social agents capable of civic participation (Sutton & Kemp, 2002). Youth are more inclined to be free of cynicism and can offer valuable insights into their experience of the school and space. Furthermore, participation aids in the development of a civic ethos. Parent involvement fosters greater communication and understanding that allows them to become advocates and allies (see Case Study 2). Educators are necessary because changed environment means changed practice; in a school redesign, educators will be responsible for implementing its new purpose daily. Businesses have a stake in education and community because they depend upon it to produce future employees and attract current ones. Moreover, involvement of local business creates the potential for partnerships and financing, as do community organizations. Government agencies

can provide guidance for regulated areas like safety. School Board and District Administrators are essential because they hold power and influence that can bring in resources and move the project forward (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003).

Finally, senior citizens are an oft overlooked category that is extremely valuable. Senior citizens are a large and growing population. Because their greatest concern is no longer the education of their children, they are less likely to give political support to things like bond issues or referendums for school construction and improvement (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003). Involving senior citizens helps forge intergenerational connections and brings greater consideration to the ways in which these spaces can be not only cross-functional but also cross-generational. A recent poll found that 94% of Americans believe that senior citizens have skills or talents that can help address the needs of children; 89% believe the inverse. Furthermore, 79% of Americans thought the government should acknowledge the potential of this reciprocity by investing in programs that bring seniors and youth together. Schools were a preferred site for such programs (Jayson, 2018). Case Study 3 considers a charrette in which intergenerational use was an important factor.

In addition to the above stakeholders, professionals must be included in the charrette. These individuals can come from within or without the community, but they must offer expertise and advise in a variety of realms. Among those included could be financial advisors, architects, engineers, city planners, designers, lawyers, and social workers. The choice of professionals should consider the initial problem and the potential needs of the project (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; Sanoff, 2000; The National Charrette Institute, 2006)

Finally, in considering the collaborative component, one must also ensure an authenticity of participation for all involved. Experts are “designing with” rather than “designing for” the community (Howard & Somerville, 2014). Professionals must be open to and recognize the value of other contributors—especially the local knowledge of community members. All stakeholders should feel as though they are coauthors of the final product. Authentic participation is essential to producing one of the charrette’s greatest benefits—public trust and investment.

Constraint. The ideal charrette is, at minimum, four consecutive days, and, at maximum, seven days. This constrained schedule generates a sense of immediacy that facilitates creative problem solving, accelerates decision making, limits speculation about impractical idealizations, and minimizes nonconstructive negotiation tactics. Built into the timeline are short feedback loops to test ideas and stimulate participation. “A feedback loop occurs when a design is proposed, reviewed, changed, and re-presented for further review” (The National Charrette Institute, 2006). These feedback loops are crucial for communication, decision-making, and generating input from stakeholders. In order to ensure this compressed period of time is effectively utilized, all stakeholders should be involved from the beginning in an open dialogue in which all points of view can be aired and discussed. “With all parties at the table, the transactive dialogue evolves into decision making” (Sanoff, 2000). Within a only few hours, tentative solutions should go up for public review—feedback loop number one (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; The National Charrette Institute, 2006; Walters, 2007).

Although time is compressed, it is efficiently scheduled. Participants collaborate in various brainstorming sessions, sketch workshops, meetings, and other exercises that feed into one another. Smaller, focused sessions progress simultaneously and only

occasionally come together as a group at established times. Therefore, it is not necessary for all members to actively contribute at all times; community members do not need to leave work for several days to participate. This ensures that, despite its intensity, the charrette remains accessible (Lennertz et al., 2008).

Bricolage. Charrettes are hands-on events that utilize a variety of maker techniques like drawing and model making to aid visualization. Claude Lévi-Strauss coined the term *bricolage* to refer to “working with what is at hand.” In doing so, he drew from an approach to problem-solving inherent in the craftsman—tinkering. “The strength of the improvisational tinkering approach is that it can handle ill-defined problems, and that it realizes a ‘silver lining’ from severe limitations...by focusing on what will work, as opposed to what might be optimum under ideal conditions” (Willis, 2018). Design charrettes use this foundation of making to create a learning space for participants that promotes co-creation, creative problem solving, and shared understanding.

Holism. The charrette is holistic on a number of levels. It is holistic in discipline; working cross-functionally maximizes group learning and productivity. If an area of expertise is excluded, the neglect can result in costly reworks (Walters, 2007). It is holistic in vision; a charrette considers the viewpoints of all stakeholders and seeks to generate consensus. It is holistic in scope; a charrette produces both long- and short-term goals. And finally, it is holistic in process; a charrette works in both large and small scale, oscillating between details and the bigger picture. Working holistically in this manner decreases the possibility that a fatal flaw is overlooked. Again, the goal is to reduce the risk of future rework which can be costly and time-consuming (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003; Walters, 2007).

Why use it?

The design charrette is valuable for a number of reasons. First, its intense, collaborative nature ensures practical and efficient planning that leads to a buildable plan. Second, by engaging stakeholders meaningfully, the charrette generates public trust and investment that helps propel it forward. Finally, this practical, yet wide ranging series of design inputs can generate exceptional designs that would be unthinkable otherwise.

A Buildable Plan. The charrette has a very practical goal in mind—the production of essential documents for implementation. This includes architectural drawings and renderings; impact analyses for traffic, environment, and/or housing; fiscal impact analysis and budgeting; storm water management plans; preliminary agreements for social implementations; and any other documents deemed essential for effective implementation (The National Charrette Institute, 2006). Because the process is open and cross-functional from inception, it rapidly incorporates diverse viewpoints ensuring none is overlooked. This shortens traditional planning timelines from months to days and reduces the risk of costly rework (The National Charrette Institute, 2006)

Public Trust and Investment. If done correctly, the charrette can facilitate meaningful involvement that generates increased public trust and investment. Communities are often frustrated by traditional public hearings which present them with already developed plans. This tokenism leaves the community with only two responses—to “rubber stamp” the decisions, or to block them (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003). Authenticity of citizen participation is key. Even if one has the best of intentions, excluding the public from the decision making process fosters distrust and resentment (Lennertz & Lutzenhiser, 2003).

Instead, the charrette offers a means by which public interest, that might otherwise manifest as uninformed opposition, can be leveraged for support. In immediately seeing the results of their input (through the rapid feedback loops), community members feel heard and valued (The National Charrette Institute, 2006). Community participation creates a shared sense of purpose in which participants can view themselves as visionaries, creators, and owners. As a result, they are inclined to cooperatively solve problems, set goals, and provide ongoing support and financing (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003). Furthermore, through their involvement, communities develop a more informed understanding of the complexities and nuances at play.

By engaging communities meaningfully, previously uninformed critics can become your strongest allies. At Gaylord High School in Michigan, school officials contributed the passing of a school bond referendum to the community's involvement (two previous referendums had failed). In D.C., the J.F. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School credited the community members for the project's momentum. Because of their steadfast support, it was able to withstand rapid turnover of mayors, superintendents, school boards, district governance structures, and school district project managers (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003). By gaining broad support from citizens, professionals, staff, and elected officials, charrettes increase the likelihood that projects will be implemented.

Exceptional Design. The compressed, intense nature of the charrette promotes creative problem-solving (The National Charrette Institute, 2006). End users and community residents may possess valuable local knowledge that would otherwise remain elusive to designers. At Tenderloin Community School in California, the organizers noted the importance of community input which articulated the need for

walkability, greater opportunity for parental involvement, access to social services and daycare in the same building, and a desire for a community garden (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003). The diverse group of participants may also lead to the emergence of creative partnerships. At the Interdistrict Downtown School in Minnesota, collaboration resulted in a number of shared facilities with the local YMCA and nearby by businesses (Steven; Bingler et al., 2003).

CASE STUDY 1: ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT IN CHICAGO

School closings have plagued urban communities like Chicago. In 2013, four schools were decommissioned in the neighborhood of Humboldt Park, including the historic Alexander Von Humboldt School. Humboldt Park is a predominately Puerto Rican community located on the West Side of Chicago with a high concentration of poverty. The neighborhood has a strong history of community organizing and political engagement, but looming gentrification threatens to displace its deeply-rooted residents. Native to this community is a group called Community As A Campus (CAAC). Beginning in 2008, the goal of CAAC was to blur the boundaries of school and community, merging them in a holistic manner.

When Alexander Von Humboldt went up for bid in 2014, community residents felt cheated and lamented the loss of an important community asset. A nearby school, Peabody Elementary, had recently been sold to a real estate developer for \$3.5 million, overshadowing a local non-profit that had offered \$1 million. This triumph of luxury apartments over early childhood and adult education was discouraging to the residents of Humboldt Park.

The CAAC hoped to purchase Alexander Von Humboldt but realized their proposal would have to be powerful and competitive. Though they did not use a charrette, the community organizing roots of CAAC garnered the trust of local residents. Furthermore, the CAAC sought support from an alliance, local Alderman Moreno. In response, Alderman Moreno was able to propose a rezoning prior to the submission of bids. By rezoning the vacant school as mixed-use residential and commercial development, the possibility for others uses and bids was limited, increasing their chance of success.

The CAAC proposed a “Teacher’s Square,” inspired by the teacher’s village of Newark, NJ. The proposed village would contain areas for community use, retail, green space, parking, and 84-residential units (17 affordable, 25 middle-income, and 42 market-rate). The latter decision to include 42-market rate units encountered resistance within the community. However, CAAC argued that, though not ideal, this proposal was better than the alternative—a fate that would mirror Peabody. The inclusion of some market-rate housing was necessary to ensure the economic viability of the project.

The respectful, conversational engagement between CAAC and the community ensured that mutual understanding was formed and support for the project maintained. Though CAAC did not engage in a charrette, the mindset of community organizing is similar. By openly listening to and considering the concerns of the community, utilizing their political connections, and leveraging capital, the CAAC was able to develop a successful proposal that eventually garnered support from all stakeholders (García, 2018).

CASE STUDY 2: ACADEMY OF THE PALM BEACHES IN FLORIDA

In 2013, Michael Papa inherited a struggling school in West Palm Beach, Florida called the Academy of the Palm Beaches. Upon his appointment, the school was underfunded, lacking sustainable development programs, and suffering from a poorly articulated vision. Papa estimated that he had approximately three years before these issues became catastrophic. Most planning models require nine to 12 months and emphasize five-year goals for all aspects of an institution. Michael Papa's bemoaned, "We need action *now!*" To which a parent responded, "What about a charrette?"

Papa researched and adapted the charrette for the school setting. The focus was not on design or space, around which a traditional charrette would orient itself. Instead, Papa wanted to focus on four key areas: the academic model and the marketing, development, and financial strategies needed to sustain it. He secured experts in each of these four areas and then orchestrated a three-day charrette with the entire school community. The affair culminated in clarification of the school's mission, tangible steps to sustain it, and a strong economic foundation.

However, this was not the only accomplishment of the charrette. In what was a previously disengaged parental environment, two-thirds of the school's families actively participated in the charrette. Post-charrette, many of these families remained actively engaged; over 15% of the parent body joined task forces with teachers and administrators.

Not only did school families exhibit increased levels of engagement, there were also increased levels of understanding about the complexities of school funding. With a heightened appreciation of funding and its role, parents were accepting of a tuition

increase and fundraising exceeded its already ambitious goal. Enrollment and student retention both increased, ensuring additional stability and sustainability for the school.

Academy of the Palm Beaches illustrates the way in which a charrette can turn the critical and apathetic into engaged supporters. The social capital and public trust generated by the charrette will continue to propel the school's mission and solidify its sustainability (Papa & Willens, 2006)

CASE STUDY 3: REACTIVATING VACANT SCHOOLS IN PHILADELPHIA

In November 2014, Community Design Collaborative, the Office of Deputy Mayor for Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) hosted a three-day charrette to explore the potential reuse of two recently closed school buildings: the old Francis Willard School in Kensington and M. Hall Stanton School in North Philadelphia. The results were intended be models for future (re)development.

According to KieranTimberlake, a collaborating architecture firm based in Philadelphia, the charrette's overarching purpose was answering: *"How can we create feasible, community-oriented reuse proposals to encourage the redevelopment of buildings that currently have no interested buyers?"* Francis Willard and M. Hall Stanton typify the challenges facing shuttered schools nationwide—massive properties spanning a full city block; neglect and age that meant they did not meet modern building code; locations plagued with disinvestment, vacancy and crime; and low property values (Oxenhandler, 2015).

Participating in the charrette were 36 design professionals, 8 real estate developers, 22 public agency representatives, 14 academics, and 25 community members (Grid Staff, 2015). Four teams were established; each focused on a single

building and timeline for use (long-term/permanent v. short-term/temporary).

Neighborhood partner New Kensington Community Development Corporation worked with the Old Frances Willard teams and Community Ventures worked with the M. Hall Stanton teams (Oxenhandler, 2015). Each site articulated six community goals.

Community programming, communal outdoor space, a garden (one agricultural, the other for rain), and art/recreational areas were universally desired (Grid Staff, 2015).

However, intergenerational (grandfamily) housing became the central component of both sites (Oxenhandler, 2015).

The final proposal for Old Francis Willard's Permanent Scheme contained community space for seminars, meetings, fitness classes, and daycare. Outside, a rain garden and children's play space were added. A ramp would make the lobby more accessible. This proposal also included 27 units of grandfamily housing on the upper levels. Probable cost for development was estimated at \$6.8 million.

The final proposal for M. Hall Stanton's Permanent Scheme included an inviting plaza; spaces for community programming, including reuse of the existing auditorium and gymnasium; an urban farm and a produce market; a possible add-on daycare; and 26 units for grandfamily housing on the upper floors. Residents shared a roof deck and the entrance was reconfigured to resemble a porch. Probable cost for development was estimated at \$8.1 million (Grid Staff, 2015; Oxenhandler, 2015).

Unfortunately, this charrette was merely exploratory in nature and lacked the contractual undertone of other charrettes. Therefore, its implementation was not guaranteed but dependent upon investor interest and their fidelity to the proposal. In August 2015, the old Willard Frances School was sold for \$400,000 to Project HOME, "a non-profit dedicated to empowering individuals to break the cycle of poverty and

homelessness through affordable housing, employment, health care, and education” (Community Design Collaborative, 2015). M. Hall Stanton now houses KIPP North Philadelphia Academy which serves 200 students. Enrollment is application and lottery based for all of Philadelphia, which does not guarantee access for neighborhood residents (KIPP Philadelphia Schools, 2018).

POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS

Through examining these case studies, it is clear that the charrette is a powerful process that has the potential to transform spaces and communities simultaneously—if enacted properly. However, the charrette is a complex, rigorous process that must be facilitated with great care and consideration.

The charrette has clear benefits: a buildable product; the cultivation of public trust and support; exceptional, innovative design; and an accelerated, holistic approach that decreases the time and financial resources needed.

However, the charrette is not without its challenges. If not properly organized, participants can lack the information or interest to be valuable participants. Furthermore, confusion could result if responsibilities and roles are not clearly defined (Willis, 2018). The charrette is a tool that cannot be used impulsively.

Thus far, no charrette has been used to redesign an under-enrolled school. Typically, the process has been limited to new builds, reuse, or renovations that do not largely disrupt the current mission or structure of schooling. Redesigning an under-enrolled school to also serve community purposes would require a reevaluation of the purpose of schooling. Could these schools be redesigned to both educate children and

care for senior citizens? Better yet, could these schools be redesigned so seniors educate children, and children care for seniors? Such is the potential of a charrette.

However, schools are made complicated by a series of regulations. These regulations would have to be considered and addressed during the charrette. This might mean involving school district administrators and politicians with the power to influence education policy. Additionally, active use means the potential for disruption must be considered. If the building is actively educating, construction should not encumber this mission. Not only would the charrette have to address the end goal, but the process of constructing the end goal so as not to interrupt schooling as well.

There would be academic benefits to redesigning under-enrolled schools. Many buildings slated for closure were in poor condition. Poor facilities and environmental factors have been correlated with decreased academic performance (Earthman, 2004; Hygge, 2003), decreased self-efficacy among students (Fine et al., 2004; Hollingworth & Archer, 2010; Marcouyeux & Fleury-Bahi, 2011), and increased absenteeism (Berman et al., 2018; Branham, 2004; Chambers et al., 2009; Durán-Narucki, 2008; Maxwell & Schechtman, 2012). Smaller school size has been shown to correlate with increased academic performance and fewer incidents of crime or violence (Steven Bingle et al., 2002). Redeveloping and renovating these facilities could substantially improve student outcomes.

Can the charrette serve as a tool to mobilize and revitalize communities that are slated for school closure, or have already fallen victim to a school closure in their neighborhood? Yes. But there are some caveats. As seen in Case Studies 1 and 3, financial buy in and political clout are necessary to move a project toward implementation. For this, the selection of stakeholders is crucial because it is through

their involvement that support is generated. If enacted thoughtfully with the commitment of influential stakeholders, the charrette could be a powerful tool to reuse and redesign closed and under-enrolled schools.

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