



Proceedings from the  
Community Assets For Everyone  
School House Symposium  
May 2014

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## Overview

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On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, over 100 people/organizations with diverse mandates gathered in Toronto to discuss the opportunities and challenges around schools as community spaces and the growing pressures for integrated service delivery. The purpose of the day-long workshop was to develop strategies to move from talk to action. The challenge put to participants was, *“If everyone thinks school-community hubs are a good idea, how do we do it?”*

Participants included representatives from the Province (five Provincial Ministries, Premier's and Cabinet Office), 18 Municipalities (Mayors, Department of Housing, Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Cultural and Children's Services), 12 School Boards (Trustees, Superintendents, Directors and Principals) and a variety of leaders from community and provincial organizations (sports councils, foundations funders, and community agencies). (See appendix for complete list of invitees).

The day's agenda included panel discussions to highlight key themes and breakout sessions to brainstorm solutions. Notes from the breakout sessions were recorded by several volunteers from the Diversity Fellows program at the Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance.

## Key Recommendations

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- ✓ A citizen-focused vision of service delivery
- ✓ Provincial leadership and collaboration from the various government partners
- ✓ A cohesive legislative framework and mandate to foster co-location and coordination
- ✓ Appropriate structures, policies, incentives and resources to sustain the approach and people who will make this work
- ✓ Flexibility to support and enable community driven solutions
- ✓ Start with co-location and build towards integration

## Next Steps

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- ✓ Develop clear vision and messaging
- ✓ Compile tangible evidence to support case
- ✓ Seek leadership from the Province to champion moving forward
- ✓ Continue communication to build engagement and support

## **Background**

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### *School Community Hubs*

The need to develop schools as "Community Hubs" and more effectively utilize existing spaces to create coordinated models for the delivery of education, social services and health services have been recommended for decades. Sadly, the number of reports<sup>1</sup> far outnumber successful working models. With little or no coordination of public policy, funding or infrastructure supports, most success stories are largely due to the work of "local heroes"; heroes that manage to overcome the barriers of jurisdictional, sectoral and political silos, and create school-community hubs where service providers work collaboratively to effectively meet the needs of their community.

As governments face pressing population challenges (complex-needs children and youth, an aging population, growing income disparity, etc.), and shrinking and more restricted budgets, the need for more coordinated models of service delivery is growing. There is a recognition that cross-sectoral collaboration, re-purposing of public school spaces and more coordinated funding can serve to improve the health and well-being of children, youth, families and communities across Ontario. It also is an efficient and cost-effective way to preserve and utilize existing assets.

### *Community Assets For Everyone (CAFE)*

Community Assets For Everyone (CAFE) formed in spring 2013 with a vision of creating the appropriate legislative, political and infrastructure environments to establish Ontario's schools as hubs to support and strengthen the health of Ontario communities.

With examples of greater cooperation between provincial ministries on issues such as mental health and poverty reduction, and important work at municipal and school board levels in establishing more efficient models, CAFE believes the Province has an unprecedented opportunity to establish a process that creates the policy framework to support the individual mandates of government ministries in an integrated and seamless way.

With the help of a Spark Grant from the Heart & Stroke Foundation, CAFE members worked with representatives from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the City of Toronto, the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA), and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to plan a one-day symposium to bring diverse voices to the table for discussion, information-sharing and brainstorming.

Participants noted that Premier Kathleen Wynne's April 7, 2014 [speech](#) included: "*Encouraging schools and their local partners to make schools hubs where residents can meet to participate in a range of activities and access services to support their health and well-being*", demonstrating that the Province also sees the value of this approach.

## Symposium Summary

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Former Toronto mayor David Crombie welcomed participants to the day and thanked them in advance for their contributions and commitment to this important issue facing Ontario. Crombie stated that the next two decades will be a struggle over how we deal with public lands and space. Crombie reminded the audience that the first public school was a private/public partnership in the 1800s - paid for by a brewer. The Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, in which the symposium was held, has changed its purpose, evolving through the past century and half to meet local needs.

To frame the issues and the day's discussions, the symposium opened with the **first panel discussion** on "*What is Integrated Service Delivery and Why is it the Next Step in the Hub Journey?*". The interview was hosted by Jennifer Keesmat, Chief Planner, City of Toronto with Elizabeth McIsaac, Executive Lead, Mowat NFP and Tom Simms, Executive Director, Community Education Development Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The discussion addressed the value and vision of an integrated approach, identified tangible models of cross-sectoral collaboration from different jurisdictions, as well as key conditions for success. The complexity of the challenge was also acknowledged.

- The central starting points are valuing schools as public assets and focusing on how we serve citizens. Schools hubs create walkable communities. School closures are a loss to the urban environment re: services and green space.
- The vision is of "no wrong door for servicing citizens." It is a shift from a client to a citizen-focused model that coordinates human social services more efficiently, effectively and with better outcomes for the community. The more local services are coordinated, the better they serve communities.
- It is critical to establish a shared vision of the school that identifies broad shared interests beyond individual mandates or jurisdictions, that balances public interests between community, school and municipal planned needs.
- Saskatchewan's [Schools Plus](#), [Manitoba's Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet](#) and Welcome Houses in York Region, Ontario were cited as examples of integrated approaches to build upon.
- People and relationships are foundational to create and sustain impact. The appropriate structures, policies and incentives need to be created to sustain the approach and the people who will make this work. Sometimes, governments have to get out of the way.
- Building and fostering relationships is a key foundation for sustaining success. It is critical to invest in the infrastructures to support collaborative efforts. The [Collective Impact](#) approach was cited as a useful framework to consider. Data sharing is a central challenge.
- This is a complex issue and not a simple, nor linear process to create solutions. It is iterative, it takes time and the path may not always be clear.
- **Co-location is a good first step to build on towards integration.**

The **second panel discussion**, facilitated by journalist John Lorinc, with Denise Campbell, City of Toronto, Tyler Campbell, City of Greater Sudbury and Rainbow DSB Trustee and Ian Gibb, City of London, discussed "Local Solutions – what works/what doesn't and why?". Acknowledging that this is not a new issue, John opened the session by displaying a 100 year-old Globe and Mail article about the use of schools as "community hubs". During the discussion, the panel highlighted both the accomplishments and challenges they faced in their communities while working with:

- [Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Policy](#).
- [London Child & Youth Network](#) and its family centre "neighbourhood access points" which provide one stop access to a spectrum of services and programs in schools.
- [Sudbury Best Start hub](#) which has 15 centres that bring together different service providers with funding from different ministries, agencies and levels of government.

Some of the challenges they faced in building and implementing these projects were:

- **The lack of a cohesive legislative framework and mandate to foster integration;** this "policy vacuum" was seen as a foundational barrier that leads to operational and logistical challenges, programmatic challenges, as well as policy challenges such as "safe schools" vs. open school, the role and responsibility of principals, and other issues.
- **The lack of a "systems manager" to coordinate and facilitate co-location and integration of services in public spaces.** No level of government sees school-community hubs as central to its work. Without that recognition, no systems management support exists to support the work.
- Divergent views on who "owns" the school and the role of the school in the community.

Panel members felt that despite the challenges they faced, the successes in this holistic approach to child development make it worthwhile. Therefore, the following suggestions were seen as critical to move forward.

- Different levels of government need to be at the table with clear intentions. An **overarching regulatory framework is needed**, but also collaboration at the municipal level and engagement with service providers and families.
- While funding is required, **leadership is needed to drive this approach**. There needs to be a shift towards a citizen-focused value system where savings to residents in money, time and reduced barriers to access, supersedes costs to institutions.
- There is no one-size fits all solution. The **model needs to be flexible** to meet and adapt to local context, e.g. one physical hub would not meet rural needs.
- There are opportunities to engage private partners but clear guidelines will be needed to address ethical considerations.

## ***Highlights From Break Out Sessions***

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Building on the plenary sessions, during the **first breakout session**, smaller groups were asked to discuss existing types of cross-sectoral collaboration, identify what could support and enhance these initiatives, and identify policy, funding and process barriers to sustained collaboration in schools and other public spaces. At the table discussions, several common themes emerged that built upon and reinforced the comments, challenges and ideas of the plenary sessions.

### ***Working Examples of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration***

- Several grassroots collaborative models are happening across the province. Most are working "off the official books" with no formalized relationships or documentation of their approaches. The challenges begin when they try to establish more formal working relationships.
- The broad health promotion mandate of public health and the linkages between mental and physical health supports with student success were seen as natural strategies to build upon.
- Waterloo Region Children Services is working with the municipality and school boards to develop a coordinated approach to childcare and recreation.
- Hamilton's System of Care framework for integrated services for children and families at the neighbourhood level is being developed through the Best Start Network of about 50 agencies

### ***Barriers***

- *Siloes*: Silo mentality at the provincial, municipal and school board levels - across ministries and departments, as well as between jurisdictions and different levels of government.
- *Funding*: Poor understanding of the relationship between municipal and provincial funding and how they could work together.
- *Ownership of buildings*:
  - Surplus schools and the restriction of Ontario Regulation 444 fair "market value" approach. The focus should be on maximum value not maximum revenue. Education funding formulas are enveloped and too rigid. They force boards to sell schools rather than seek outside tenants.
  - School boards/schools should be tenants of provincially owned buildings. Lease agreements should be changed towards a service partnerships model that encourages informal space sharing.
- *Building Tenancy*:
  - Lack of clarity and connections of the roles, mandates, responsibilities and inter-relationships of the multiple service providers in one physical environment - e.g. principals, teachers, public health, and other service providers.
  - Use of space during non-school hours - liability issues as well as the lack of collective agreements.

The **afternoon break out session** focused on developing a common vision, changes needed, recommendations on next steps, and a name for this project moving forward. The groups' discussions were again quite consistent. There is a need for a citizen-focused vision of service, leadership and collaboration from the various government partners, and appropriate policy, program, and resource supports, with sufficient local flexibility, to facilitate greater local collaboration and integration of service delivery.

### Vision

1. A citizen-focused model that coordinates human social services more efficiently, effectively, and with better outcomes for the community.
2. A value system where successful service is measured by savings to residents in money, time and reduced barriers to access rather than costs to individual institutions.

## ***Moving Forward: Key Recommendations***

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In sum, participants identified the following key themes:

1. Leadership to drive this.
2. Framework to facilitate collaboration and coordination
  - A primary provincial mandate that focuses on broad holistic outcomes for children, families and communities, followed by individual ministries determining how their mandate can best contribute to the shared mandate and its outcomes.
  - Different levels of government collaborating with clear intention.
  - Collaboration and engagement with service providers and families.
3. Structures & Policies
  - Appropriate structures, policies and incentives to sustain the approach and people who will make this work.
  - Changes in leadership structures of decision makers and the physical location of service deliveries (carrot and stick approach to working together).
  - Parameters/guidelines for the scope of services and use of space should be developed, and clearly defined roles, responsibilities and inter-relationships with multiple service providers established - e.g. teachers, public health, other service providers, etc.
4. Resources
  - Resources will be necessary to support the ongoing collaborative efforts to change the legislative and policy framework and drive the changes required.
5. Flexibility
  - Flexibility in the model (policies, structures, funding, location, etc.) to support community-driven local, place-based and people-based solutions.
  - Local communities need to conduct assessments of all local resources, policies, programs and partners to identify gaps, duplication and areas of coordination before planning.

## ***Next Steps***

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The group identified some key tasks to continue to move this issue forward: a clear vision, evidence to support and guide future planning and action, leadership to affect legislative and process changes, and communications to raise awareness and facilitate ongoing engagement of partners and stakeholders.

### ***A clear vision and messaging***

- Establish a description of this initiative and common messaging that paints a picture of a school community hub, with clear short, and long-term, goals.

### ***Evidence***

- Compile evidence that tangibly demonstrates that integrated service delivery is more efficient and effective - case studies, stories, cost-benefit analysis.
- Create inventory of best practices from around Canada and abroad.

### ***Leadership from the Province***

- Champion and facilitate the process moving forward.
- Establish an integrated Ministry Table that brings together different ministries, organizations, and agencies that are competing for resources, even though they are working towards similar goals; begin to identify legislative and financial coordination based on shared vision and goals.
- An individual or organization to coordinate the plan to move forward.

### ***Communication***

- Regular communication in the form of sharing of best practices, short and long-term goals, project status and opportunities to contribute.
- Reach out to other stakeholders.
- Hold another symposium with the public, end users, parents, and grassroots organizations to share work of project and opportunities for refinement and contribution.
- Get the issue on party platforms. Educate candidates and existing politicians with mandates involving child care, children's health, and student health.

### ***Suggested Names***

Community Commons - where people in the community get together; Common Grounds, and Shared Community Services.

## ***Closing***

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Participants were thanked for their contributions - their honesty, passion and commitment to creating school-community hub model(s) that more effectively deliver education, social services and health services in communities across Ontario. Their input and ongoing support is crucial to inform, shape and execute future actions and plans.

## School House Symposium: Invitee List

Association/Organization	Name	Job Title
<b>Provincial Government</b>		
Premier's Office	Tatum Wilson	
Cabinet Office	Shamira Madhany	
Ministry of Education	Rob Sheldon	Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Education
Ministry of Children and Youth Services	Aryeh Gitterman	ADM, Ministry of Children and Youth
Ministry of Children and Youth Services	Jessica Hayden	Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of CYS
Ministry of Education	Lolita Singh	Director
Ministry of Health & Long Term Care	Daina Mueller	Manager, Health Implementation Branch, Health Promotion
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Elizabeth Harding	ADM, Municipal Services Division
Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities	Janet-Pond White	Senior Program Analyst
Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities	Shalini Bhardwaj	Senior Program Design & Development Analyst
<b>Ontario Public School Board Association</b>		
Algoma DSB	Jennifer Sarlo	Chair
Algoma DSB	Lucia Reece	Director
Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario ACÉPO	Louise Pinet	Directrice générale
Durham DSB	Donna Edwards	Trustee
Durham DSB	Anne Marie Laginski	Superintendent of Brock/Uxbridge/Scugog Schools, Durham Alternative & Continuing Education
Halton District School Board	Don Vrooman	Trustee - Oakville Wards 1&2
Halton District School Board	Donna Danielli	Trustee, Milton Wards 2,3,4,5
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	Judith Bishop	Trustee Ward 1 and 2
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	Manny Figueiredo	Executive Superintendent
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	Thelma Goodfellow	Trustee
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	Sandy Smith	Community Engagement Officer
Lambton Kent	Carmen McGregor	Trustee
Limestone District School Board	Laurie French	Chair, Trustee for Greater Napanee
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	Pam Fitzgerald	Trustee, Budget Chair, SEAC, etc.
Toronto District School Board	Shelley Laskin	Trustee

<b>Association/Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Toronto District School Board	Pamela Gough	Trustee
Toronto District School Board	Andreas Ghabrial	Principal, Ogden Jr. P.S.
Upper Canada District School Board	Caroll Carkner	Trustee, and Member of Education Program Work Team
Upper Grand District School Board	Andrew Seagram	Community Use of Schools Coordinator
York Region DSB	Carol Chan	Trustee, Member of SPACE Coalition
OPSBA	Jeff Sprang	
OPSBA	Jennifer McIntyre	
<b>Association of Municipalities of Ontario</b>		
Association of Municipalities of Ontario	Mike Jacek	Senior Advisor
City of Hamilton	Colin McMullan	Manager of Performance, Planning & Evaluation
City of London	Ian Gibb	Children's Services
City of London	Art Zuidema	City Manager
City of London	Sandra Datars-Bere	Managing Director Housing, Social Services & Dearness Home
City of Mississauga	Howie Dayton	Director of Recreation
City of Pickering		Director, City Development with the City of Pickering
City of Pickering	Marisa Carpino	Director, Culture & Recreation
City of Vaughan	Tim Simmonds	Executive Director, Office of City Manager
Cochrane District Local Housing Corp	Brian Marks	Director, Housing Services
County Of Lambton	Doug Ball	Manager, Social Planning & Children's Services
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	Bob Crawford	General Manager, Community Development
Municipality of North Middlesex	Chuck Hall	Deputy Mayor
Municipality of Southwest Middlesex	Doug Reycraft	Mayor and CEO
Municipality of Trent Lakes	Janet Clarkson	Mayor
Northumberland County	Mark Darroch	Director, Community & Social Services
Town of Ajax	Tracey Vaughan-Barrett	Director of Recreation and Culture
Town of Ajax	Linda Kearn	Manager of Administration, Recreation & Culture
Town of Cobourg	Wendy Gibson	Economic Development Officer
Town of Georgina	Phil Rose-Donahoe	Manager of Cultural Services
Town of Milton	Jennifer Reynolds	Director, Community Services
Town of Penetanguishene	Rob Arkell	Sustainability Specialist
Township of East Zorra-Tavistock	Don McKay	Mayor, & Warden County of Oxford
Township of Guelph/Eramosa	Robin Milne	Director of Parks and Recreation

<b>Association/Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
<b>Others</b>		
CARP	Michael Nicin	Director of Policy
CivicAction	Sevaun Palvetzian	Executive Director
East York Soccer Association	Karen Somerville	Volunteer Director of Sponsorship
ETFO	Mark Hachmer	Executive Staff
Children & Family Services for Guelph Wellington	Daniel Moore	Executive Director
Heart and Stroke	Colleen Hill	Manager, Children & Youth Ontario
Independent	Shirley Hoy	
Learning Partnership	Pamela Richardson	Program Manager
Maytree Foundation/Avana	Alan Broadbent	President
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies	Nancy Friedman	Manager of Agency-Based Learning & Development
Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association	Shannon Hogan	Counselling & Member Services
Ontario Nonprofit Network	Cathy Taylor	Executive Director
OSSTF/FEESO	Rosemary Judd-Archer	Executive Assistant, Educational Services
People for Education	Annie Kidder	Executive Director
People for Education	Jacqui Strachan	
Social Planning Toronto	Lesley Johnston	Researcher and Policy Analyst
South East Community Care Access Centre	Laurie French	Senior Manager, Access & ER/ALC
SPACE Coalition	Jennifer Chan	Architect
SPACE Coalition	Susan Fletcher	
Town of Georgina, SPACE Coalition	Tamika Royes	Project Coordinator
United Way Toronto	Pedro Barata	Vice President, Communications and Government Relations
United Way Toronto	Nation Cheong	Director, Youth Initiatives
United Way Toronto	Lorraine Duff	Director
<b>Volunteers</b>		
	Amy Taylor	University of Waterloo, Masters student, Planning
	Charles Mancini	Frontline Partners with Youth Network
	Chris Penrose	E.D. Success beyond Limits
	Colin Lacey	CivicAction
	Jacqueline Ward	CivicAction
	Lori Lucier	CivicAction
	Neil Price	CivicAction

<b>Association/Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
	Rob Rappolt	CivicAction
<b>Speakers</b>		
	David Crombie	
Gov't of Manitoba	Tom Simms	
Mowat Centre	Elizabeth McIsaac	
City of Toronto	Jennifer Keesmat	
Journalist	John Lorinc	
City of Toronto	Denise Campbell	
Rainbow DSB (Sudbury)	Tyler Campbell	
City of London	Ian Gibb	
<b>Planning Group</b>		
	Cathy Dandy	CAFE
	Diane Dyson	CAFE
	Karen Pitre	CAFE
	Cassie Bell	CAFE
	T.J. Goertz	OPSBA
	Iram Ashfaq	OPBSA intern
	Mun Shu Wong	TDSB, Tech.
	Manon Gardner	Chief Academic Officer, TDSB
	Carla Kisko	Associate Director, TDSB
	Dani Carnevale	Assistant to the Director, TDSB
	Donna Quan	Director, TDSB

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<sup>1</sup> [For the Love of Learning: Report of the Royal Commission on Learning](#)  
[No Time to Wait: Healthy Kids Strategy; Healthy Kids Panel Report](#)  
[Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizen's Guide For Planning and Design](#)  
[Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium of School Health - Governments working across the health and education sectors](#)  
[Coalition for Community Schools](#)  
[Community Hubs: A scan of Toronto](#)  
[Joint Use of Public Schools: A Framework for a New Social Contract, Centre for Cities and Schools, Berkeley California](#)  
[Health Promoting Schools - PHE Canada](#)  
[Every Child Matters, United Kingdom](#)  
[New Life for Old Schools Final Report 2013, Pennsylvania](#)  
[http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable\\_files/Occ\\_Paper\\_12.pdf](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable_files/Occ_Paper_12.pdf)  
<http://www.hfrp.org/hfrp-news/news-announcements/help-us-learn-more-about-complementary-learning%21>