Stages of Development

Community Schools Forward

National Center for **Community Schools**
Children's Aid

B | Center for **Universal Education**
at BROOKINGS

COALITION FOR **COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
Research. Action. Impact.

Stacey Campo
National Center for Community Schools
Children's Aid

January 2023

Community Schools Forward

There is a significant and growing interest in the community schools strategy among federal, state, and local governments seeking to advance educational and economic opportunitiesand address historic educational inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Building off this momentum and with support from Ballmer Group, four national partners—the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution (CUE), the Children's Aid National Center for Community Schools (NCCS), the Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) at IEL, and the Learning Policy Institute (LPI)—are collaborating with education practitioners, researchers, and leaders across the country to strengthen the community schools field in a joint project called Community Schools Forward.

Community Schools Forward (CSF) comprises three core strategies:

Align: Foster increased cohesion around core community school concepts and frameworks.

Scale: Identify investment structures that sustain community schools at scale and for the long term.

Build: Design infrastructure for technical assistance and professional learning that promotes high-quality implementation.

This Stages of Development tool is a resource being used to support the build strategy and was developed by a workgroup of the CSF task force.

Moving through the stages

The stages of development tool should be used by school communities who have committed to the community school strategy and met conditions of readiness (in development). The stages of community school development are not linear, a school may be "transforming" in some characteristics or processes and "emerging" in others. External factors, such as leadership changes or funding shifts may disrupt or derail this process (see visual below). Schools should not expect to move through a stage each year or in a predictable or scheduled way. This tool has been developed for individual community school transformation, additional resources exist and are being updated for system or district stages of development. which is also a necessary, simultaneous process.

Stage Definitions

Emerging: in this stage, community school advocates, school leaders and partners begin to organize people, data, and community resources, and identify needs and community assets such as, including champions of the strategy, such as local leaders and partners.

Maturing: in this stage families, youth, leaders, and partners co-construct and align initiatives with vision and goals, assess impact, and formalize structures for continuous improvement.

Transforming: in this stage the community school creates sustainable practices, relationships, and policies with the entire school community, and braiding and blending of funding supports growth and long-term planning for collective impact.

A community school (CS) moves from *emerging* where leaders are identified but impact is isolated and data and programming are siloed, through *maturing* where impact begins to accumulate as more data is shared and programs begin to align and ultimately towards *transforming*, as the school community works towards the same outcomes and utilizes continuous improvement strategies.

Emerging
(Isolated impact)

Maturing
(Cumulative impact)

Transforming
(Collective impact)
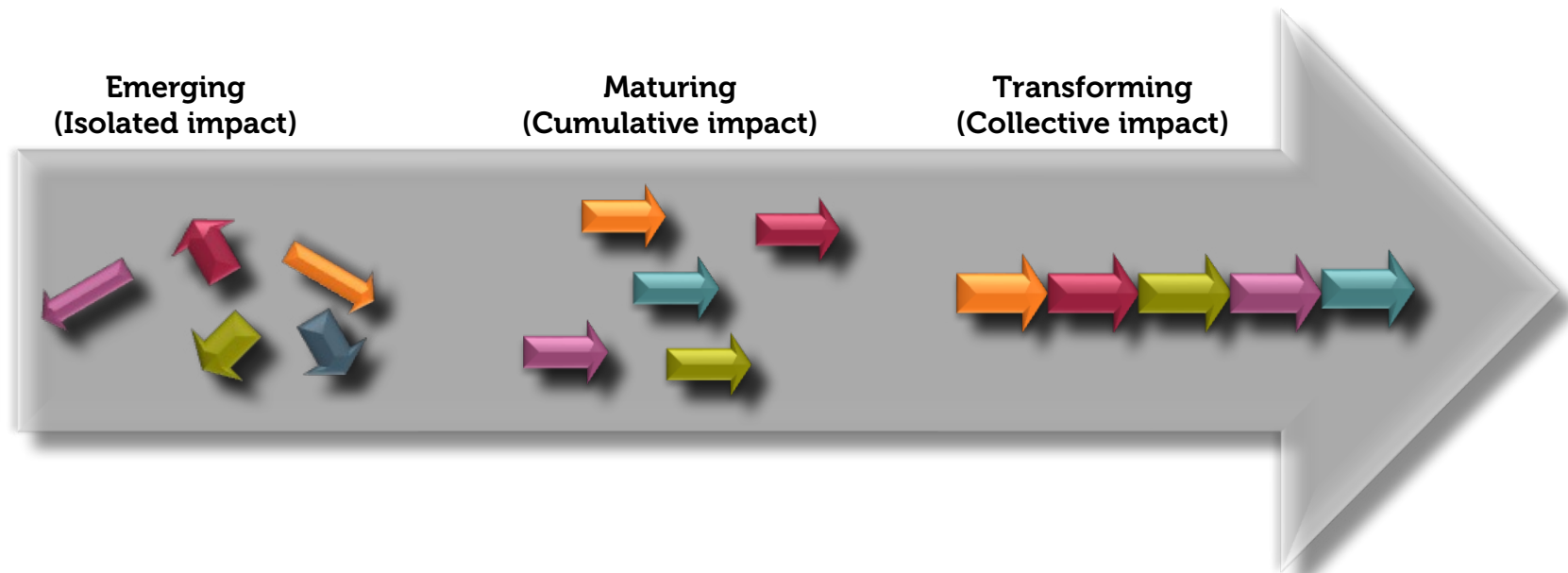
	Emerging	**Maturing**	**Transforming**
Characteristics *what you would see in a CS at this stage*	• Champions for community school call for the strategy and have developed an implementation team • School community members are oriented to the strategy • Setting priorities for implementation identified • Desire to use data collaboratively for whole school transformation • Data is shared with champions; new data interests and needs are identified • Common understanding of community assets and needs (A&N) • New systems and approaches to schooling are emerging (ie. whole school approach to restorative practices)	• New youth, family, and community members are identified as leaders in the school and structures to promote community voice, reflection, and partnerships are developed • Shared governance is visible • Shared vision and goals are set for the CS based on A&N • Data analysis begins and committees try practices such as "plan, do, study, act" • New systems and approaches to schooling are codified in this phase • Moving from outputs to outcomes • Gaps have been identified and resources are connected to opportunities • Community school has many feedback loops • Alignment between budget and CS priorities	• Community leadership structures formalized, co-led, and co-created; all community members, families, youth, and partners involved in processes • Policies support CS sustainability & community voice • All structures engage in continuous improvement • Community school guides other schools and systems to enact CS strategy • Affinity groups for youth and staff support equity work • Plans exist for transition and orientation of new community members
Processes/Structures/Tasks *what CS constituents would do at this stage*	**Develop or start with an existing group of families, youth, teachers, administrators, and community partners to enact the following implementation functions:** • Conduct an assets and needs assessment • Utilize power analysis to determine which constituents to engage as champions • School based data review • Orient all school community members to the strategy • Community asset mapping to identify potential partners **Additional tasks during this phase:** • Hire a Community School Coordinator • Develop or utilize an existing ISS team using data (such as chronic absence) to begin connecting students to supports • Develop youth and family leadership structures	**Group responsible for Implementation will:** • Support co-constructed initiatives based on Assets & Needs assessment • Formalize partnerships with a written agreement, such as a MOU or shared use agreement for space and data sharing and management. • Develop clear CS vision and goals and share with larger community **Additional tasks during this phase:** • Structures in place to align classroom instruction with community & extended opportunities • Build/identify designated room specifically for families/guardians • CSC and other CS staff members are sustained through diverse funding sources	**Group responsible for implementation will:** • Lead participatory budgeting process or practice budget transparency • Codify policies for sustainability with equity focus • Coordinate advocacy efforts **Additional tasks during this phase:** • Family and youth advocate for policy and address systemic inequities • Youth and community led initiatives, such as; conferences/town halls, YPAR projects occur annually • Piloted initiatives evolve into new "way of doing school" • All community members involved in community school continuous improvement
Measures/Benchmarks *what to measure at each stage*	• Chronic absence • Program attendance • Enrollment • Discipline • Service use • Student & Family engagement • Youth feedback/voice (ie. Hope Survey)	• School climate surveys • Student and staff retention • Staff turnover • Academic growth • Return on investment (ROI)	• Graduation rates • Post-secondary enrollment • Deeper learning & deep listening • Workforce development • Economic development • Micro credentials & Certificates for teachers/staff/partners

National Center for Community Schools
Children's Aid

B | **Center for Universal Education** at BROOKINGS

COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
Research. Action. Impact.

475 Riverside Drive
Suite 1220
New York, NY 10115
646.867.6660
nccs.org

🐦 @natcenterforcs
📘 @NationalCenterforCommunitySchools