PROJECT NARRATIVE for the PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM

Westminster Foundation
applicant

Implementation Grant Priorities
1 and 4

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Buffalo Promise
NEIGHBORHOOD

CONTENTS

Introduction 2
Need for the Project 5
Project Design 9
Project Services 33
Management Plan 41

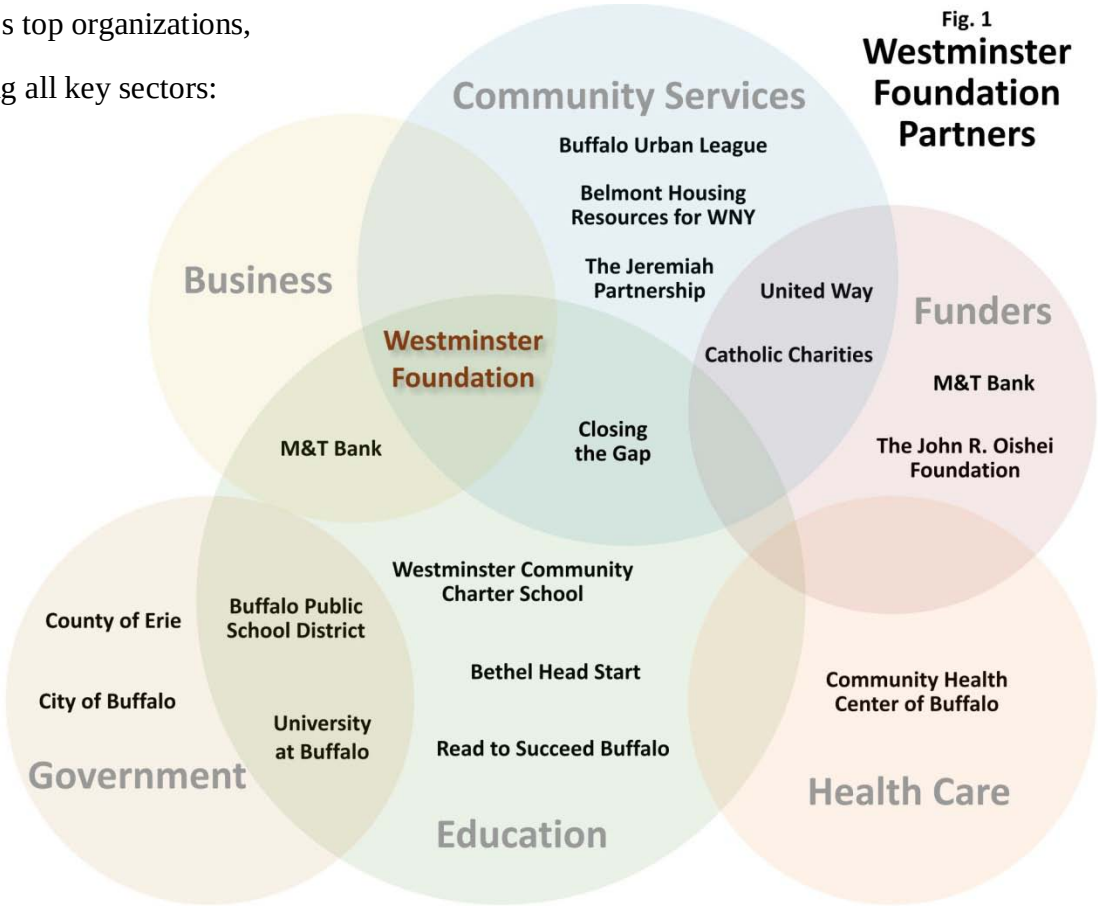
Competitive Preference
Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network 18

Glossary & References
are at the beginning of Appendix F

Introduction

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN) is built on the rare public/private partnership of educational and social service organizations with a major bank - a bank that understands and actively commits managerial and financial resources to public education. M&T Bank adopted Buffalo's lowest-performing K-8 school in 1993 and, 18 years later, it remains directly involved in managing Westminster Community Charter School, a full-service community school that became one of the city's highest performers. Determined to expand the success of Westminster Community Charter, M&T began discussions with the Buffalo Public School District (BPS) and other long-standing community allies to create a continuum of solutions to support the academic achievement of all Neighborhood students from 'before birth' through school to college- and career-readiness. In 2010, eleven of these organizations joined forces to participate in a successful Promise Neighborhood planning grant application. Since then, another five major partners and dozens of other organizations signed on. The leading partners today include many of Buffalo's top organizations, representing all key sectors:

Fig. 1
Westminster Foundation Partners



Early Accomplishments

Since winning our planning grant, the BPN partners have already made major headway with three core activities vital to establishing a successful Promise Neighborhood: assessing need, building capacity, and developing and implementing strategy. Highlights of these early accomplishments include:

Assessing Need:

- Engaged neighborhood leaders and residents, the Buffalo Urban League, and the Regional Institute at the University at Buffalo (UBRI) ***in an extensive six-phase needs assessment and community engagement process***.

Building Capacity:

- ***Engaged i3 award-winning Talent Development*** from Johns Hopkins University, one of the nation's most experienced and well-respected turnaround organizations, to help implement an evidence-based dropout prevention approach with early warning systems and tiered academic and student/family supports at all three schools in the BPN: Westminster Community Charter School, Highgate Heights, and Bennett High School.
- ***Elevated Dr. Yvonne Minor-Ragan, principal of Westminster Community Charter School, to President of BPN*** in order to expand her reach, and recruited an experienced instructional leader, Mark Bower, to continue her legacy at Westminster Community Charter and provide academic oversight of the transfer of its model to Highgate Heights.
- ***Recruited and hired the City of Buffalo Commissioner of Community Services,*** **Tanya Perrin-Johnson,** to champion community engagement initiatives with the residents of BPN and cultivate stronger partnerships with the City of Buffalo and County of Erie.
- ***Forged a vital partnership with the Community Health Center of Buffalo (CHCB)*** to infuse every part of the BPN continuum with expert health services and education. CHCB, one of only two Federally Qualified Health Centers in the city, has just relocated to the Neighborhood, and provides culturally competent primary and preventive medical and dental care for all residents, including the underinsured and uninsured.

- ***Forged a second vital partnership with Belmont Housing Resources for Western New York (WNY)***, a leading advocate for quality affordable housing, to purchase/rehab/resell homes and provide homeownership opportunities and housing assistance.
- ***Formed a BPN Services Network*** of over 70 organizations to support Student Success Centers and align services through ten proactive Improvement Teams (to be discussed later).

Implementing Strategy:

- Contracted with the Buffalo Public School District to assume ***shared management of Bennett High School and Highgate Heights School*** (persistently lowest-achieving and low-performing, respectively) and lead their transformation. (See BPS MOU in Appendix I.)
- Developed a ***Service Delivery Model to integrate BPN services through Student Success Centers*** at each school, with one-to-one student counseling, case management, and coordination of service providers by Closing the Gap, a 10-year, full service community school collaboration between the District and two dozen local health and social service agencies, led by BPN partners Catholic Charities and United Way.
- Designed a ***Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network*** **(Competitive Preference Priority)** ***called Early Foundations,*** that leverages the capabilities of six BPN collaborators in a system-wide initiative to foster healthy development from birth to 3rd grade.
- Designed a ***second system-wide initiative called College/Career Connections*** to provide every BPN student from the middle grades to high school and beyond with a meaningful progression of pre-college and pre-career experiences.
- ***Contracted with the Council for Unity*** (CFU) to establish a CFU chapter in BPN to address violence and gang prevention, building on their 35 years of success in over 60 locations.
- Purchased property and earmarked $1.5 million of Westminster Foundation resources to ***build an Early Learning Childhood & Parenting Education Center within the BPN.***

Glossary and References for this Project Narrative are located at the beginning of Appendix F.

Section A: Need for the Project

A.1) What is the magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators?

Buffalo is the third poorest large city in the nation (US Census, 2009) and the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (Phase I) is among the city's poorest and most needy:

Table A: Indicators of Need for the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood	
Academic indicators	Statistics for Bennett High School: 8th year on NYS list of persistently lowest achieving schools ■ 46% graduation rate (NYS average=74%) ■ 81% attendance (NYS=93%) ■ 24% suspensions (NYS=5%)
Community health indicators	■ Requires 5.5 times the average rate of county health services ■ Zip Code has 2nd highest # of developmental delays of 60 zip codes in Erie County (based on # of Early Intervention children) ■ Cocaine discharges & socially transmitted diseases 2.1 & 5.7 times NYS rates
Crime & violence indicators	■ Buffalo violent crime (as % of pop.) = 1.47% compared to 0.99% Rochester, 0.98% Syracuse, 0.55% NYC ■ 2 major & 3 minor gangs
Family stress indicators	■ 67% of BPN children under 18 live in single-parent families (NYS=36%) ■ Teen mothers account for 25% of new births ■ 15.3% of girls ages 15-19 in Zip Code become pregnant (NYS=6%) ■ Only 38% of BPN students in grades 5-12 reported having caring teachers and family members who would listen to them, engage them about school, and assist when needed.
Poverty & unemployment indicators	■ BPN students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch: 88% (NYS=48%) ■ BPN children living in poverty: 38% (NYS=20%) ■ Zip Code (14215) ranks 1 or 2 of 60 zip code areas in Erie County in temporary assistance to needy families, Food Stamp recipients & Medicaid recipients ■ One youth in eight is neither employed nor in school – double the NYS rate.

Sources: BPN Needs Assessment Study, 2011; U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2005-09; Erie County Department of Health; NYS Dept. of Health, 2006-2008

An extensive Needs Assessment Study (Appendix G) conducted by the Regional Institute at the University at Buffalo revealed key problems affecting children's well-being, which we then used as design parameters in developing the BPN continuum. Using data from the Buffalo Public Schools, student surveys, community forums, the U.S. Census, and BPN partner organizations, the Institute profiled the Neighborhood on each of our 14 project indicators and the six transition phases along the Continuum. Five key factors emerged:

1. **Student dispersion**: BPN is home to 1,650 public school children and three participating public schools. However, enabled by school choice policies, fewer than one in four Neighborhood children attends a BPN school. Another 1,200 young BPN residents disperse daily to 55 different schools, while 1,600 students from across the city enter each day to attend the three BPN schools. ***Design implication****: change policies and incentives to encourage enrollment in BPN (underway).*

2. **Young, poor families headed by a single parent**: Fully 86% of new families—those whose only children are 5 years old or younger—are headed by a single parent, typically a mother. A quarter of newborns have a teenage mother, a rate 2.5 times that for children nationally. (Over 15% of BPN girls ages 15-19 become pregnant.) Upon entering school, 88% of BPN children are eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch. And their readiness for kindergarten is incomplete: over a third of pre-kindergarteners exhibit gaps or delays in age-appropriate functioning, fewer than half under five have a medical home, and 40% do not attend early learning programs. ***Design implication****: interrupt the cycle; raise readiness for kindergarten; include parent needs, including employment; reduce teen pregnancy.*

3. **Chronic absenteeism is widespread**: National research now points to chronic absenteeism as an early indicator of dropping out and also an effective target for dropout prevention (GradNation, 2009; Meyer et al., 2010). Among BPN students, one in ten is missing a month of school at the elementary level. That rate doubles by eighth grade and spikes to well over 50% in high school. ***Design implication****: implement an aggressive early intervention program based on the GradNation national dropout prevention model; improve relevance and post-school prospects for students in grades 7 to 12.*

4. Student readiness declines through the continuum: The level of academic proficiency among BPN youth is very low. BPN students lose ground at every step they advance past kindergarten. Only 18% of fifth graders score proficient or above on all standardized tests and only 46% of ninth graders at Bennett High School graduate four years later. Based on Regents criteria, only six percent of BPN seniors are fully ready for college. ***Design implication**: ambitious, rigorous, comprehensive reform at all age levels to repair the porous education pipeline in this Neighborhood.*

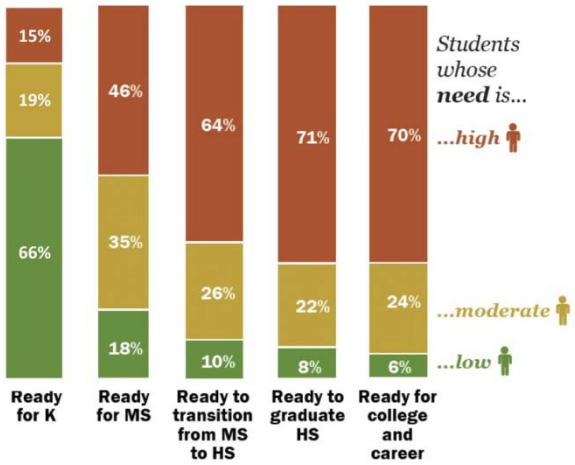
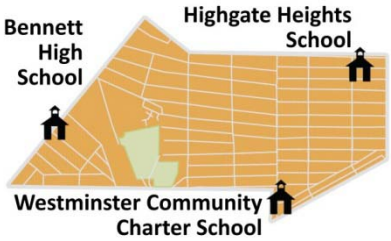


Fig. 2 Student readiness at key transitions
Source: BPN Needs Assessment Study, 2011

***5.* Neighborhood challenges, led by gang and other safety issues and uncertain employment prospects.** Residents themselves are acutely aware of the disorder in their midst. Our community forums registered alarm about drug dealing and gangs as well as vacant lots and houses, unkempt rental properties, and high unemployment. ***Design implication**: implement an evidence-based violence and gang prevention program, as well as coordinated approaches to improving housing, economic revitalization, workforce development, and financial services.*

Other key factors include: high student mobility, low numbers of students reporting a caring adult both at home and at school, health and nutrition problems, and inadequate Internet access. For more on the use of the needs and segmentation analysis for program design, see C.1.

A.2) What is the description of the geographically-defined area?



<u>Children at risk, a neighborhood on the edge</u>: Buffalo's Phase I Promise Neighborhood, a predominantly African-American community of 12,000 residents in the northeastern corner of Buffalo, is a neighborhood on the edge, and one which could rise or fall depending on what action is taken now. There are more than 3,000 children living in the neighborhood, most growing up poor in single parent families, often

without caring adults to turn to, worried about safety, lacking regular access to quality health care, healthy foods and exercise, and prone to teen pregnancy. The physical fabric of the neighborhood appears intact, but families pay too big a share of their monthly income for rent and mortgage, one home in eight is vacant and the neighborhood commercial street needs revitalization. Not surprisingly, neighborhood children tend to do poorly in school, treading a perilous path from cradle to career, failing in core academic subjects, not showing up for school, losing hope and dropping out. The neighborhood is not without physical and social assets—most notably the children themselves—but people who know Buffalo recognize that this is a neighborhood that could go either way.

A brief introduction to the BPN schools: the Phase I area contains the Westminster Community Charter School, a high-performing, high-poverty K-8 success story (560 students) described in the Introduction above. The Westminster team and community school model are crucial to our strategy for dramatic reform at other schools. The Neighborhood contains two other schools needing dramatic reform: the low-performing PreK-8 Highgate Heights School (590 students) and the persistently lowest-achieving Bennett High School (910 students), a particular sore spot within a school system in critical need of a new high school model. (See B.1 for more.)

Table B. BPN Schools

Westminster Community Charter School	Highgate Heights School	Bennett High School
• 560 students in K-8 • Effective, highly ranked • Free & reduced lunch: 83%	• 590 students in PreK-8 • Low performing • Free & reduced lunch: 91%	• 910 students in 9-12 • Persistently lowest-achieving • Free & reduced lunch: 78% • Graduation rate: 46%

The Phase II and III Neighborhoods: Just outside our five year time horizon for this grant, our plans are to double the scope of the Neighborhood to approximately 25,000 residents (and eight schools) by adding contiguous and similar low-income neighborhoods to the south (Phase II). Phase III will launch a new zone in a similarly needy neighborhood in Buffalo. For more on the creation of infrastructure, processes, and capacity for scale up see section B.4.

A Buffalo economy dependent on an education turnaround: The second largest city in New York (NYS), Buffalo has endured a 44% population decline since 1970. Median household

income in 2000 was $24,536, or **$20,000 less** than both Erie County and NYS. Most importantly for our future, jobs in construction, manufacturing, and transportation have evaporated to less than 20% of total employment, and the service industry jobs of the 21st century require radical changes in education. Accordingly, leaders here see BPN as a vital investment in our future.

Section B: Project Design

B.1) To what extent is the continuum aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improving the three BPN schools?

Following a year of intensive work, as the introduction highlights, we have vetted programs and services from over 70 organizations, and continue to attract the attention of organizations looking for better ways to serve the Neighborhood. While individual programs and services are important, successfully meeting student and family needs requires that a continuum of solutions includes 1) **a framework for transforming programs** into integrated, well-coordinated initiatives built on a sound theory of change; 2) **a service delivery system** that operates as closely and harmoniously to students and classrooms as possible, and 3) **a set of management systems** that organize a broad-based coalition into a high-performance operation. Above all, the overall "system" must deliver what students require most: steady, nurturing relationships throughout their academic journey.

Westminster Foundation's design of these elements is the subject of this section. Our perspective is informed first by lessons learned at the Westminster Community Charter School. M&T Bank's success at the school is the product of being there every day, partnering with the staff, studying data, and innovating supports and continuous improvements. The value of this proximity is also evident in Buffalo's Closing the Gap, a full-service community school program, that integrates two dozen service providers into the day-to-day operations of its eight schools, fine-tuning constantly through frequent meetings with principals and staff. Nationally, there is strong confirmation that the integration of academic and community programs is crucial (Coalition of Community Schools, 2010).

In addition, the entire partner team was deeply impressed, during two study trips to the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), with the way HCZ coordinators and AmeriCorps workers ensure alignment in their district schools between the classroom and after school and summer programs. These delivery models, and the many others we studied, stress **the importance of bringing academic and student/family supports as close as possible to the daily experience of each student**, while minimizing one-off, uncoordinated service interventions.

An Overview of the Continuum Design & Management: Figure 3 (next page) depicts the major elements of the BPN system described in this Narrative. The top of the graphic illustrates the **objectives of our project** – increasing the readiness of students in BPN to effectively transition through critical stages of development to achievement and life success. The **Provider** examples at the bottom of the graphic represent the universe of service partners and providers that exist in BPN and the city. The center of the graphic represents our **Service Delivery System** manned by Student/Family Advocates at each of four initial **Student Success Centers**.

In the lower left are our four major **BPN Continuum Initiatives**, designed to provide services that most strongly impact issues contributing to student readiness at each stage. These Initiatives—reflecting neighborhood needs and assets, major partner expertise, and extensive study of national models—cover the complete continuum, with **Early Foundations** ranging from pregnancy and birth up to third grade, **School Transformation** covering from kindergarten through high school graduation, **College/Career Connections** (**College/Career**) focusing from middle grades up through college to career, and **Family and Community Services Network** (**Family/Community**) covering the whole cradle-to-career and community.

In the lower right are six key **Management Systems** supporting the Service Delivery System and the Continuum Initiatives, designed for overall system performance, continuous improvement, and long-term sustainability.

This section, B.1, continues with a description of the Service Delivery System. We then move on to the Continuum Initiatives, lifting School Transformation out of the age sequence to place it front and center, as the heart of BPN, and provide a foundation for understanding how

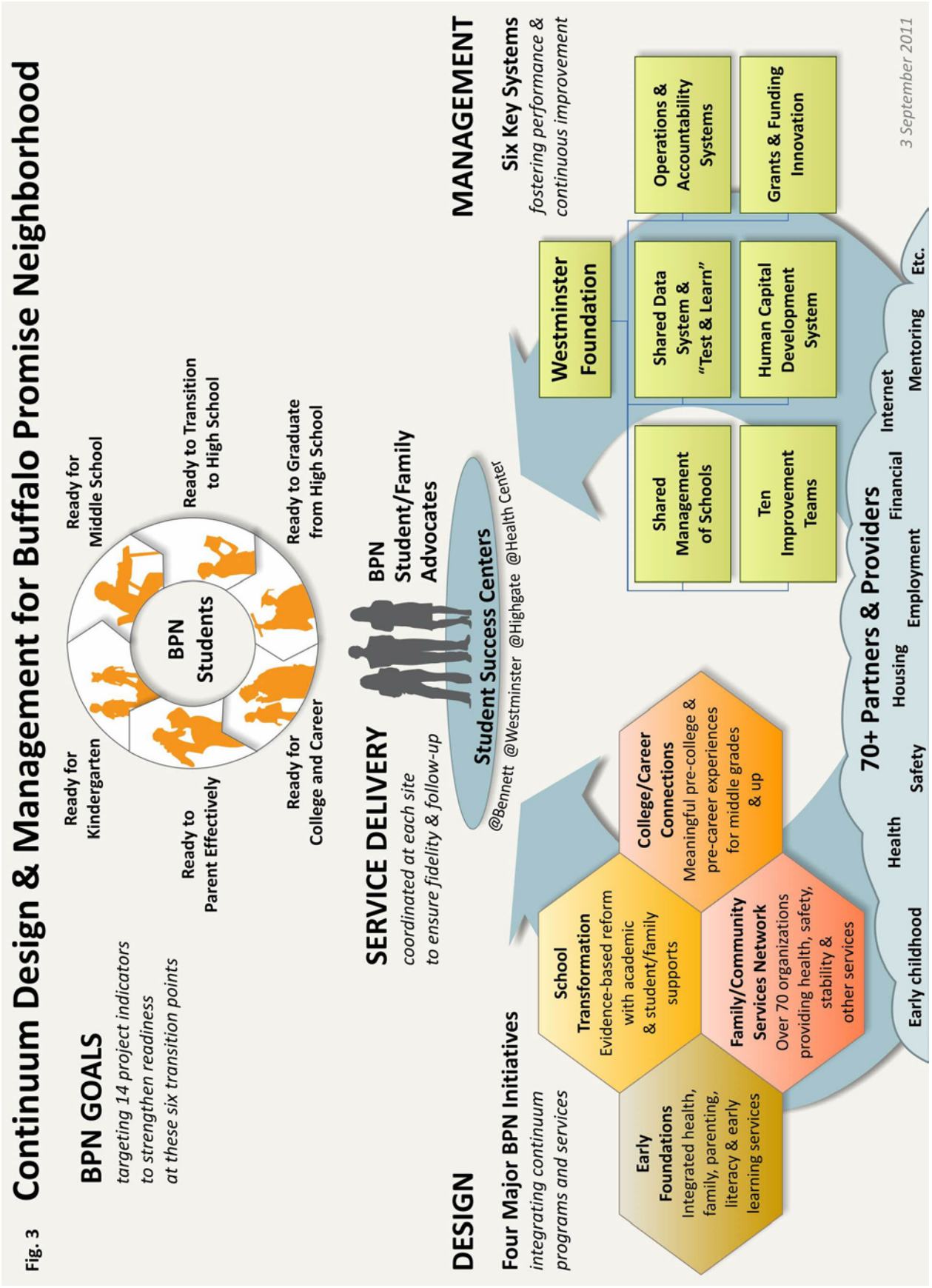


Fig. 3
Continuum Design & Management for Buffalo Promise Neighborhood
BPN GOALS
targeting 14 project indicators
to strengthen readiness
at these six transition points
Ready for Kindergarten
Ready for Middle School
Ready to Transition to High School
Ready to Graduate from High School
Ready for College and Career
Ready to Parent Effectively
BPN Students
SERVICE DELIVERY
coordinated at each site
to ensure fidelity & follow-up
BPN Student/Family Advocates
Student Success Centers
@Bennett @Westminster @Highgate @Health Center
DESIGN
Four Major BPN Initiatives
integrating continuum
programs and services
Early Foundations
Integrated health, family, parenting, literacy & early learning services
School Transformation
Evidence-based reform with academic & student/family supports
College/Career Connections
Meaningful pre-college & pre-career experiences for middle grades & up
Family/Community Services Network
Over 70 organizations providing health, safety, stability & other services
70+ Partners & Providers
Early childhood
Health
Safety
Housing
Employment
Financial
Internet
Mentoring
Etc.
MANAGEMENT
Six Key Systems
fostering performance &
continuous improvement
Westminster Foundation
Shared Management of Schools
Ten Improvement Teams
Shared Data System & "Test & Learn"
Human Capital Development System
Operations & Accountability Systems
Grants & Funding Innovation
3 September 2011

the surrounding Continuum Initiatives align with our strategy to transform the three BPN schools. Section B.2 covers the remaining Continuum Initiatives. Later, in sections B.4 and D, we will take up the critical role of Management Systems in more detail.

The Pivotal Role of Service Delivery

Before proceeding to the rest of the Continuum Design Initiatives and Management Systems, a description of the Delivery System is important, as it plays a critical role in aligning academic transformation and the continuum of supports provided to students and families. BPN's primary delivery function will operate at four new Student Success Centers, one at each of the Neighborhood's three schools and a fourth at the Community Health Center, which will serve, among others, younger families and those students who currently attend school outside BPN. The ***Student Success Center***, which sits at the intersection of the school and the community, will act as home base for teams of BPN Student/Family Advocates to reach out to students and families; it will provide a central, welcoming space for service providers to meet with students and families; and it will act as a physical embodiment of the school's and Neighborhood's joint commitment to each child's success. The ***Student/Family Advocates*** (coordinated by Closing the Gap) will 1) provide the central "relationship" of BPN with youth and families, getting to know their needs, matching needs with services (a case management role), and helping them access and navigate resources, 2) collaborate with the students' teachers and other school staff to ensure alignment of community services and programs with academic need and developmental transitions, 3) work in cross-Initiative teams to access and analyze data to inform solutions, and 4) provide on-site coordination for service providers.

It is important to note that the Advocates and all on-site BPN staff and providers will be working within a comprehensive school transformation model that is itself designed to integrate with student/family supports (using early warning systems, assessments for tiered intervention, and a young adult workforce). It is to that School Transformation initiative that we turn next.

<u>BPN's ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for reform of its schools</u>: Mindful of the National Bureau of Economic Research study on Harlem Children's Zone (Dobbie and Fryer, 2009) that concluded "high-quality schools or community investments coupled with high-quality schools drive [academic improvement], but community investments alone cannot," BPN put dramatic reform of the Neighborhood's persistently low-achieving Bennett High School and low-performing Highgate Heights PreK-8 School "at the center" from day one**.** Our ***School Transformation*** initiative is a highly intentional, integrated, and coherent effort that draws on ten key elements:

1. **Shared management of schools**. Westminster Foundation will share the management of Bennett High School and Highgate Heights School with the Buffalo Public School District. (Westminster Community Charter School is already associated with Westminster Foundation.) To ensure the flexibility over programs and resources required for an effective reform (The Turnaround Challenge, 2007) and to fully integrate additional academic and student/family supports, the Foundation and the District have collaborated on an effective strategy and management plan for the schools that empowers Westminster Foundation as School Turnaround Partner. (See BPS MOU in Appendix I)

2. **Creation of a Feeder School Cluster.** To meet the student dispersion challenge cited above and integrate family and community supports directly into schools where they will be most effective, we are moving without delay, and with the full cooperation of the District, to make the policy changes and build the incentives to create a neighborhood feeder cluster that will enable and attract parents in the BPN to enroll their children in the BPN schools and keep them there.

3. **Creation of Student Success Centers at each school.** Each Center, as described in the previous section, will provide an active hub for BPN partners to reach out to students and families. Managed by a Westminster Foundation site director, and staffed by Student/Family

Advocates (see # 6 below), the centers will be accessible, designed in a welcoming way, and equipped with a range of staff and resources to assist students and parents.

4. Adoption of an evidence-based Dropout Prevention approach. Given the nature and severity of the academic challenges among the large majority of BPN students, we were drawn to the compelling consensus in research around dropout prevention that focuses on early warning and tiered intervention addressing the ABCs (Attendance, Behavior and Course performance) (GradNation, 2009). This led us to Diplomas Now, an i3 grant-winning model built on this research, which integrates the work of three partners to simultaneously address: a) whole school improvement of instruction (Talent Development); b) targeted supports for moderate needs using young adult corps members; and c) intensive social and emotional supports to the highest need students. ***BPN will be implementing a strategy that mirrors and enhances the three legs of the Diplomas Now approach***, engaging Talent Development directly for school transformation, creating our own young adult corps, and leveraging successful local asset Closing the Gap to address student socio-emotional needs. All three elements will be significantly expanded and localized with additional BPN initiatives.

5. Engagement of Talent Development from Johns Hopkins University, one of the nation's most well-respected school reform organizations, as our in-school transformation partner. Recognizing the challenge in reclaiming a persistently lowest-achieving high school, as well as concerns about how to elevate middle grade achievement at Highgate Heights and even Westminster, BPN chose to partner with a national transformation model with a strong evidence base, an acceleration curriculum, team-based small learning communities, and middle grades and ninth grade Academy programs, to address the academic transformations required.

6. Student/Family Advocates to provide counseling, case management, and coordination of student/family services. The Advocates, as described in the previous section, will be provided by the Closing the Gap Consortium, which will also help coordinate intensive supports through the expanded BPN Family/Community Services Network, described in section B.2 below. Through the Advocates and Student Success Centers we are implementing a full

service community school model at each school in harmony with extensive national evidence and practice (Coalition of Community Schools, 2009).

7. BPN Corps to address Student Support and College/Career Connections. BPN will be leveraging teams of young adult service workers in the three BPN schools to implement its comprehensive support model. These "BPN Corps" members, as we call them, will be actively recruited and trained to assist the large number of students who need daily, moderate-intensity supports, to act as near-peer mentors and tutors, and to provide the same link we saw to be so vital in Harlem Children's Zone between school-day and after-school learning programs – ensuring that remedial and enrichment learning is tied into classroom needs, and maximizing the potential for relationship building. In BPN's model, this workforce will have an additional role in helping to staff and act as role models for our College/Career Initiative, another of the four signature elements of the BPN Continuum. For more on College/Career, see B.2.

8. Replication of successes from high-performing Westminster Community Charter K-8 to low-performing Highgate Heights Pre-K-8. Westminster Community Charter's full-service community school approach, including an on-site health clinic, a teacher collaboration model based on Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), successful engagement of parents, emphasis on professional development, and extended school day and year, will be brought to its new sister site.

9. Strengthening of Bennett's Career Academies. We will further enhance two Career Academies already in place at Bennett, in Business and Law, drawing on the methodologies of National Academy Foundation and other Career Academies (MDRC, 2008; AYPF, 2009a), to develop strategies in conjunction with our College/Career Initiative to increase student motivation and future orientation.

10. Expansion of cutting-edge Nutrition program to all three schools. Two years ago Westminster Community Charter became one of the first public schools in the country to eliminate all processed foods from its school meals program. The school did a national search for an executive chef and worked with State officials on certification. The program, which includes

nutrition education for students and teachers as well as information for parents, will be expanded to Highgate Heights in 2013 and Bennett in 2014.

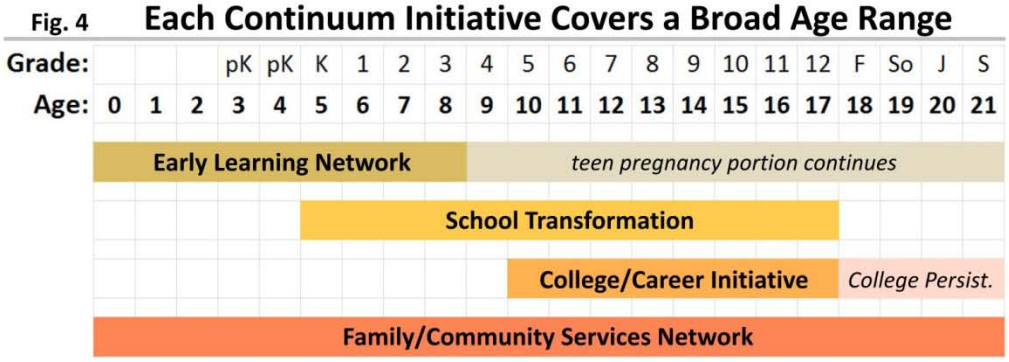
B.2) How will BPN implement a complete continuum of solutions, without time and resource gaps, to prepare all children to successfully transition to college and career? How will that continuum significantly increase the proportion of students served over time?

The School Transformation Initiative covered in the previous section will be launched in all three BPN schools in year one. The combined enrollment is approximately 2,000 students and our initial emphasis will be on the 460 children in Pre-K to 3rd grade who are in their formative years (for younger children, see below), and the 600 students in the transitional grades 6-9 where student achievement is particularly precarious. As we add a grade cohort each year, our Service Delivery System will already be on-site and fully capable of increasing the range of programs to a growing proportion of students (to the full 2,000 students), as projected in Appendix F.

The same holds true for our other three Initiatives (Early Foundations, College/Career, and Family/Community): each utilizes the same shared Service Delivery System with Student/Family Advocates stationed in Student Success Centers, allowing for more programs to serve more children as resources and program priorities dictate. Importantly, the Advocates and Centers will give students and parents a familiar interface to BPN services and help maintain the steady relationships over time that are vital to success.

Each Initiative is a continuum in its own right, comprised of programs that are "linked and integrated seamlessly." Each serves a broad range of ages as noted here:

Fig. 4 Each Continuum Initiative Covers a Broad Age Range



For **Early Foundations**, we seek initially to 1) enroll all newborns into our programs, providing a balance of health, parenting, and early learning programs for infants and toddlers (adding 160 newborns annually to reach the full 800 children age 0-4) while 2) increasing the number and quality of early learning options across all settings. For **College/Career Connections,** our phasing strategy acknowledges the low graduation rate and college success rate; accordingly, we are installing our Advisory Services for all students, with a first-year focus on pre-college and pre-career experiences for 600 students in grades 6-9. We will intensify the college/career preparations for these students as they progress year to year, adding new cohorts each year until serving all 1,500 students in grades 6-12 by year five. The **Family/Community Services Network's** range of services and numbers served will grow as BPN matures, student/family needs become better understood, and partnerships become more efficient (see Appendix F for projections).

Impacting multiple project indicators with each Initiative: These impacts are shown in Table C with key programs in each Initiative. Program details are provided in Appendix F.

Indicators Served by BPN Continuum Initiatives

Table C.

MAJOR BPN INITIATIVES THAT INTEGRATE PROGRAMS	Academic Indicators							Family/Community Indicators						
	Medical Home	Age-Appropriate Functioning	Participation in Early Learning	Proficiency in Core Subjects	Attendance Rate in Grades 6-9	Graduation Rate	Ready for College*	Daily Exercise & Healthy Diet	Students Feel Safe	Student Mobility Rate	Caring Adult at Home & School	Access to Internet & Computer	Fewer Teen Pregnancies	Lower Youth Unemployment
Early Foundations Key Programs: New Parents Outreach; Medical Home; Student Success Center; Child Screening Campaign; Literacy Advocacy; New Early Learning Center; Adoption of NYS's QualityStars Program; Tackling Teen Pregnancy; EL Improvement Team	★	★	★	★				★		★	★	★	★	
School Transformation Key Programs: Shared Mgt of Schools; Feeder School Cluster; Student Success Centers; Replication of WCCS at HH; Dropout Prevention; Academic Acceleration through Talent Development; Moderate Supports via BPN Corps; Intensive Supports via Closing the Gap & Family/Community Services Network; Career Academies ReDo	★			★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
College/Career Connections (C3) Key Programs: Middle Grades C3 AfterSchool/Summer Prog.; Bennett HS C3 Advisory +College Search Services+Career, Internship & Community Service Program; College Persistence Initiative; Re-engagement Program for Youth Not in School/Not Working				★	★	★	★			★	★	★	★	★
Family/Community Services Network KeyPrograms: Health (CHCB, Nutrition Program); Safety (Council for Unity, Safety Network); Affordable Housing ; Financial programs (M&T lead, CASH); 21century: (OneEconomy + Computers for Children); Family/Community Improvement Team	★	★	★					★	★	★	★	★	★	

Progressing through the continuum, we will now turn to the strategy and design of the Early Foundations, College and Career, and Family/Community Services Network Initiatives.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 4—BPN'S PROPOSAL

Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network

In the BPN, we have 800 children under the age of five. **Our approach is to recognize them as though they are a fourth BPN school**—or more precisely, a fourth student population requiring reliable processes for screening, diagnosis, learning, literacy, and family/community supports. Our five key factors (A.1) apply to this young population as well: 86% of these children under 5 live in single parent households suggesting that the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "two generation strategy"—focusing on the education and financial needs of very young parents as well as the healthy development of the child — is relevant here (CSSP, 2011). To counter the readiness decline that occurs through the continuum, we need to focus on Readiness for Kindergarten and proficiency by 3rd grade. To reverse student dispersion, we must build strong relationships with parents and children and offer solid reasons to enroll in centers and schools in the BPN. Finally, even chronic absenteeism can be attacked through early learning, as research shows that the roots of excessive absences are often evident and addressable in K-3 (Romero and Lee, 2007).

The core of our Early Learning (EL) Network team is Bethel Head Start, Read to Succeed Buffalo, Closing the Gap, Community Health Center of Buffalo (CHCB), Buffalo Public Schools, and of course, the Westminster Community Charter School and its affiliation with Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Program. ***Early Foundations***, the name we've given to the EL Network, is one of the four major BPN Continuum Initiatives, and as such will receive the full benefit of Westminster Foundation's governance, staffing and

resource support. Overseeing and coordinating the effort will be Dr. Yvonne Minor-Ragan, President of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, and an educator deeply respected in the community. (See Appendix B for resume.)

Nine key components comprise the Early Foundations initiative:

1. **Outreach and new parent classes** will be conducted by Every Person Influences Children (EPIC). Headquartered in Buffalo, EPIC is a national not-for-profit dedicated to helping families, schools, and communities raise children effectively. Their programs have been replicated throughout NYS and 16 other states. EPIC has an excellent relationship with and ongoing programs for new parents at the three birthing hospitals serving the BPN. EPIC will reach out to virtually every parent of a newborn (160 per year), offer coaching and parenting resources, and funnel those newborns and their parents into the BPN system through CHCB and Closing the Gap. Their workshop services extend through the infant and toddler stage.

2. **A high quality medical home for every young family** will be provided through CHCB. The Health Center has mastered the intricacies of health care financing, is a strong advocate for its patients, and thus enjoys a strong bond of trust with the community. Part of our theory of action is that a strong partnership promoting child health between new parents and health center staff can transfer to a strong partnership promoting early learning between new parents, early learning sites, and our schools.

3. **A Student Success Center and BPN Advocates located at the health center.** There are 40,000 patient visits to the health center each year. By adding a BPN presence at the health center, we are bringing BPN services right to new parents (and the rest of the BPN community) as well as fostering collaboration with CHCB. Closing the Gap will ensure that we are meeting the needs of all children, including those with disabilities. In addition, the availability of Closing the Gap services in this center provides the first step in our two-generation strategy: connecting young parents to resources and opportunities to advance their own education and career needs through the Family/Community Services Network (See Initiative #4 below).

4. Establishing a collective campaign for child screenings. The current system is fragmented and hit-or-miss—mostly miss. In its place, we are building a unified, shared screening process (health and cognitive/development) that will be simple and useful for parents as well as service providers. We will use industry standard assessments for age-appropriate functioning, including ***Ages & Stages*** which is used by a number of our partners. In addition to making screenings routine, we will utilize the longitudinal data system to build the rapid intervention response that is characteristic of successful programs like ***Help Me Grow*** (http://1.usa.gov/qfDOZk) and our own ***Read to Succeed*** (See #5).

5. Elevating professional practice through a literacy advocate. We are fortunate to have on our team a service provider that has taken the lead in creating a literacy zone within the city of Buffalo—Read to Succeed works with child care providers, parents, schools, and community organizations to improve early learning and literacy across all the multiple settings that care for children. Their programs demonstrate a proven approach to reducing the achievement gap in the early years, even working with the small home care providers common in the area (there are about 50 in the BPN). Read to Succeed is a strong proponent of the use of data and highly focused micro-interventions to overcome developmental delays before they fester into confidence issues.

6. A new Early Childhood Center for the Neighborhood. A cornerstone of our Early Learning Network is the construction of a new facility for 150 children. Westminster Foundation has completed the purchase of two properties across the street from Westminster Community Charter and plans to open an 11,000 square foot facility in September 2012. Located on a prominent artery, the Center will be the flagship of our Early Learning initiative and a nexus for convening the community around the goal of preparing every young BPN child to be successful in school and in life. It will be operated by Westminster Foundation in partnership with Bethel Head Start.

7. An early adopter of NYS's QualityStars program. The Notice stipulates that Early Learning Networks "must address or incorporate ongoing State-level efforts regarding the major

components of high-quality early learning programs…[and] align with the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)." Bethel and Read to Succeed are already in alignment with New York's early learning standards and, as part of NYS's second year of pilot implementation of its QRIS system (QualityStars), Bethel and Read to Succeed are helping pilot the new system in two locations (one in the BPN). In addition, the Environmental Rating Scales (developed by the FPG Child Development Institute) that are incorporated into QualityStars have long been used by Bethel and Read to Succeed. As a result, we are confident that our Early Learning Network will be a leader in NYS's QualityStars initiative and a catalyst to extending it through the rest of Buffalo (NYS's second largest city) and Western New York.

8. Tackling the teen pregnancy epidemic through Early Foundations. The organizations needed to address teen pregnancy—health, health education, counseling, parenting, and family/community services— are assembled in our Early Learning Network so we have defined Early Foundations to encompass the full cycle of reproduction and early child raising. We are following the national framework from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (Kirby, 2007) and we have identified successful programs, including a seven-year program at Washington Irving High School in NYC that NYS is also tracking.

9. Continuous improvement through an Early Learning Improvement Team. We are establishing ten Improvement Teams, convening all the participating organizations in a particular service area to work on improving systems and leveraging resources. The Early Learning Improvement Team will include the partners mentioned above, and other organizations pertaining to early childhood learning and services. Improvement Teams are discussed in the Family/Community Services Network Initiative later in this section, and in B.4.

For additional information, see the Early Learning section of Appendix F.

[End of COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 4—BPN'S PROPOSAL]

College/Career Connections

CONTINUUM INITIATIVE 3

College/Career Connections
Meaningful pre-college & pre-career experiences for middle grades & up

The College/Career Connections (College/Career) Initiative plays a critical role in the BPN continuum because these goals contribute to student motivation and performance in the present, and to improved work and life outcomes in the future. (We have also expanded our college and career initiative to include community service as a meaningful outcome -- driven by both employment projections and our plans to encourage BPN youth to work and volunteer within the BPN structure as it grows.)

The Need and Challenge. Obtaining a high school diploma is no longer sufficient for youth who hope to participate in the 21st century economy. However, there is a sharp disparity between college aspirations and college preparedness in BPN, with only six percent of Bennett high school students ready for college, yet 83% of graduating seniors saying they plan to attend. In addition, students are unconnected to potential careers and community service opportunities, contributing to a marked lack of engagement with learning. As we have seen, average attendance is low, and chronic absenteeism is even more critical. This is perhaps not surprising in an environment where the common pact – work hard at school and you will have access to jobs and opportunities visible within your own community – simply doesn't hold for many.

Our Theory of Action. Our theory of action, informed by David Conley's back-mapping of college-ready skills and the American Youth Policy Forum's logic model for college and career success, is that, beyond rigorous academic instruction, high-poverty students need a number of explicit inputs, much earlier than currently provided, including: a) knowledge about college and careers, b) on-going support to act on that knowledge; c) significant relationships with adults and near-peer mentors to act as role models, and d) increased relevance of school work to college, career, and civic opportunities in part by incorporating problem-solving and other 21st century skills (Conley, 2010; AYPY, 2009b).

Four Core Delivery Strategies. This theory of action suggests four core delivery strategies:

- ***Start early – at least in the middle grades - and extend support through college into career.*** Make this transparent by implementing the "BPN College and Career Passport," a living electronic plan that tracks essential steps toward college, career, and civic engagement.
- ***Create a College/Career advisory function at each school/center*** that a) oversees programs addressing whole school needs and opportunities relevant to many and b) matches individual students to a multitude of programs through the BPN Services Network.
- ***Ensure school-wide buy-in to a college- and career-ready culture,*** defining "college" to include "any high quality postsecondary education or vocational training," and "ready" to include "developing personal aspirations and skills, as well as academic skills and knowledge of the college and career search process."
- ***Incorporate connections to the broader neighborhood and community*** to increase motivation and real world engagement and because we need role models, community teachers, mentors and intern-employers to make this system work cost-effectively.

Four Core Programs. BPN's College/Career Initiative will be delivered through the following programs:

1. A Middle Grades College/Career Passport Program. The Westminster Foundation will implement an enhanced middle grades after school/summer school program designed to more effectively weave college, career and community connections with the traditional academic and extracurricular components. The program will be delivered across the Neighborhood's two K-8 schools, employing the same BPN Corps members working with the students during the school day. The design of this program will draw on Citizen Schools (http://www.citizenschools.org/about/model/), a nationally-recognized model for incorporation of college-to-career connections and community exploration, and will also incorporate Computers For Children, and an Arts and Humanities Enrichment program, included in Appendix F.

2. A Bennett College/Career Service. Bennett's Student Success Center will feature a College/Career Service, custom-designed for the school by the UB Graduate School of

Education, housing everything Bennett students need to explore college, career and community service. Students and parents will be able to work one-on-one with UB graduate student interns and specially-trained BPN Corps workers to explore options for their future and track progress in their individual BPN College and Career E-Passports.

On the college side, the Service will integrate College Summit's nationally-recognized college enrollment model, including curriculum, a program to train "Student Influencers" to help promote a college-going culture, and CSNav, a robust college search web portal that also tracks completion of steps for students' E-Passports. On the career side, the Service will oversee the Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, an intensive engagement-through-career-connection model, alongside internship, summer job, and vocational exploration programs from the Mayor's Office, the Buffalo Employment and Training Center, and Buffalo Urban League, enabling a significant and growing number of Bennett students to experience motivating connections to the world of work.

3. A College Persistence Program. The number of BPN students currently enrolled in college is small, so this effort will start by leveraging existing assets. College Summit will provide a college persistence verification service; BPN Corps College/Career staff will pilot the Success Boston "transition coach" role in local colleges (Boston Globe, 2011); and the active Bennett High School Alumni Association will partner in establishing a college-going alumni mentoring program. The program will be extended as college-going increases.

4. A Re-Engagement Program for Youth Not in School/Not Working. The BPN Success Center located in the health center will service youth not in school/not working, with a focus on job placement and workforce development tied to opportunities for GED, alternative high school programs, and/or vocational certification. BPN Network Services in this area include the Educational Opportunity Center, Buffalo Employment and Training Center, and other city/county workforce development services. For more on these, see Appendix F.

Family/Community Services Network INITIATIVE 4

The Need and Challenge. Over the years, schools and community organizations have had an inconsistent relationship. Often schools don't have the resources to manage all the well-meaning programs and organizations approaching them with offers of help. On the other hand, community organizations and service providers often lack the breadth and experience to deal with the "whole child" or to collaborate effectively with other providers. In the end, it is students who suffer when a system is broken, but the challenges faced by broad-based coalitions working in urban neighborhoods are well documented. As Quane and Wilson note in a recent Stanford journal, "case studies indicate that the adaptation, implementation, and diffusion of innovative policies are not for the faint of heart… Lead entities will need to diligently cultivate and maintain a disparate group of network partners. Much of this work is extraordinarily time-consuming as constituents work to build trusting relationships with one another" (Quane and Wilson, 2011).

Our Theory of Action. Our theory of action on the creation of a well-functioning network focuses on the creation of an open yet managed infrastructure and access through schools. Fortunately we are able to leverage, among other assets, Closing the Gap's considerable experience and expertise in both of these areas. We hear the voice of experience when the former head of CTG, now working with BPN on behalf of United Way, shares the importance of "an ability (nuanced and blatant) to bring people around to the common goal, especially when resources are limited. We joke about getting people to do what they don't want to do and then thanking us for it!"

BPN Implementation. There are a number of successful "open system" models including Cincinnati, Providence, and Communities in Schools that offer guidance (Cincinnati CLCs, 2011; Providence After School Alliance, 2011; CIS, 2011). After reviewing a range of approaches, we concluded that BPN needed a model that combined the kind of reliable on-site coordination we designed into the Service Delivery model discussed earlier, with the services

network care and feeding, quality standards, and accountability that will be addressed as part of our Improvement Teams and other Management Systems to be described in B.4.

BPN is developing the Family/Community Services Network both as a set of standalone services and as the underpinning of the Early Foundations, School Transformation, and College/Career Initiatives described earlier. Student/Family Advocates at the Health Center, for instance, will access GED or vocational training programs for a young, single parent at the same time that they access Early Foundations health protocols for that parent's child (a "two generation strategy"). Since last fall, we have canvassed the Neighborhood, Buffalo, and Western New York, holding discussions with potential partners. At present, 70 organizations have been vetted and recruited to the Services Network. Indeed, as the Delivery System has a chance to prove itself, and the benefits of collaboration within our infrastructure become clear, we see the Network as a destination of choice for self-funding services looking for professional, disciplined delivery options.

The following are a sample of our Service Network programs. Further information on these and other programs is provided in Appendix F.

Health Services: • Medical Home Recruitment • Screenings & Health Protocols within Early Foundations • CHCB Health Protocols by age segment • Nutrition & Exercise Program in schools • Teen Pregnancy initiative within Early Foundations • Community awareness campaigns

Neighborhood Safety: • Council for Unity violence & gang prevention • BPN Neighborhood Safety Network • Stop the Violence Coalition • Buffalo United Front • Community Resource Officers • Curfew Ordinance and Program • Anti-Crime initiative

Stability: • Affordable housing purchase/rehab/resell • Affordable housing assistance • Five partners joined to provide adult education/employment/training • Multi-faceted programs for Family Economic Success

Engagement: Community action initiative underway to rejoin community (and parents) to the schools • Better coordination and information about available services through BPN Services Network, Advocates, and improved partner intake and referral

<u>21st Century Tools</u>: • Partnership with OneEconomy to bring low-cost 4G broadband service to BPN • OneEconomy's Digital Connector program for immersing talented young people in tech projects • Computers for Children equipment donations and computer training

B.3) How has BPN identified and utilized existing neighborhood assets and programs in creating its continuum?

Work on the design of our continuum and the cultivation of the 70 local organizations in the Services Network was pursued in concert with our needs assessment and community engagement process. That effort had six components, which overlapped and informed each other (see box).

These processes helped ensure we had a comprehensive view of neighborhood assets and programs. It was a revelation to learn of so many pertinent local assets; nevertheless, finding a myriad of programs side-by-side with failing schools carried the warning that programs that are not "linked and integrated seamlessly" with each other and with schools often fail to produce their intended impact. That said, Figure 5 (below) summarizes the key building blocks that shaped the BPN continuum and approach.

Collecting Neighborhood Assets, Programs and Input

Quantitative Needs Assessment Study
Conducted by the Regional Institute of the University at Buffalo in collaboration with representatives from BPN partner organizations. (Appendix G)

School and District leadership meetings
Regular strategy meetings to probe needs and assets at Bennett and Highgate Heights.

Independent needs assessment of all three schools
Conducted by The Children's Aid Society for Closing the Gap.

Neighborhood inventory of physical, social & commercial assets
Conducted by Buffalo consultants, eco_logic STUDIO, in conjunction with the Buffalo Urban League. (Appendix H)

Extensive outreach to community leaders and residents
Led by the Buffalo Urban League and Westminster Foundation's Director of Community Affairs, resulting in strong ongoing support and creation of the Community Steering Committee.

Community wide meetings
Convened a series of well-attended events—complete with breakout sessions to brainstorm neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

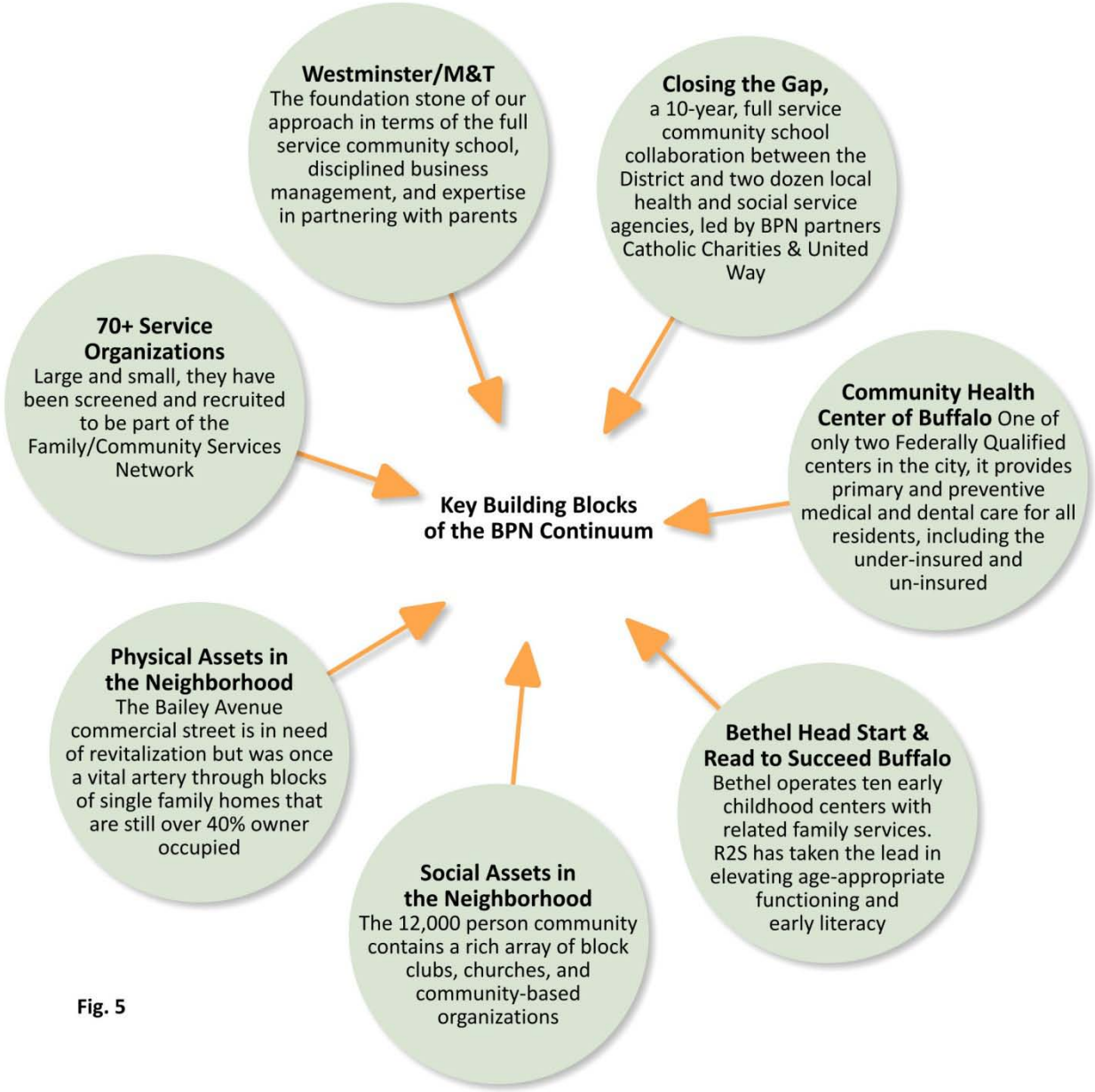


Fig. 5

In addition, **M&T Bank** is providing significant financial backing along with its community leadership role. We have also begun mapping the funding sources channeled by these key partners and the many others in our Services Network, flagging in particular those who come "self-funded" through the application of funding streams in education, social and family services, health and workforce development. For more on our work analyzing future sustainable models, see D.4.

B.4) What is BPN's implementation plan including clear, annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources?

Six Key Management Systems

The third crucial leg of the BPN stool, in addition to the Service Delivery System and the Continuum Initiatives described in B.1 and B.2, is a set of six management systems (Fig. 6) to harness the 70+ programs and organizations screened and recruited to BPN, and make the system improvements and resource innovations required for individualized service, sustainability, and scalability. This section introduces these systems, first presented in the overview graphic (Fig. 3 on page 11). The section continues with additional observations on system improvement and a table of annual goals.

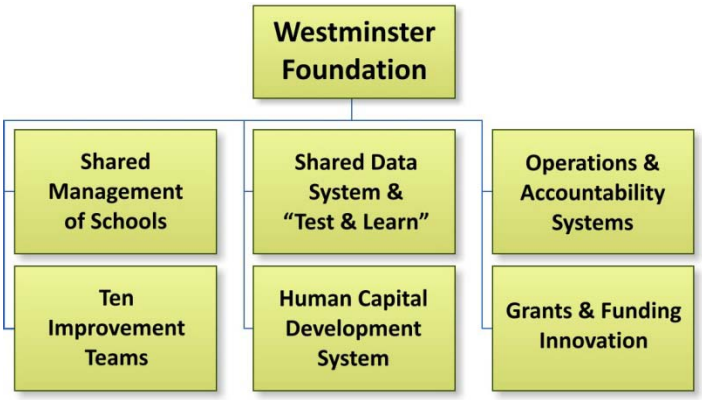


Fig. 6 Six Key Management Systems
fostering performance and continuous improvement

The six systems will be managed by BPN central staff with three goals in mind: 1) freeing our Student/Family Advocates and BPN Corps members at the schools and health center to concentrate on the needs of students, 2) achieving a high degree of coordination and performance from our partners and service providers, and 3) continuous improvement, driven by data. Here is a brief description of each system and its role in continuous improvement:

1. Shared Management of Schools – Contractual shared management of Bennett High School and Highgate Heights provides BPN with considerable flexibility in instruction, scheduling, staffing, and resources, as is already true for Westminster Community Charter - where innovations in instruction, added learning time, student supports, and nutrition, were made possible by shared management prior to charter conversion. In a Promise Neighborhood context, shared management opens the door to innovation and a more optimal integration with student/ family supports. System changes that are holistic and cross-boundary become possible; for

example, afterschool and summer school programs will be used as R&D labs for testing and perfecting new learning and teaching methods that can be integrated into the school day.

2. Shared Data System & "Test & Learn" – The longitudinal data system described in D.2 below serves many functions, including case management, data sharing, program evaluation, and continuous improvement. We have selected [redacted] software as the heart of our system. In addition, a robust ***Test & Learn*** data capability is under development to enable testing the effectiveness of alternative strategies for reaching and helping students and families. Test & Learn is modeled after a very successful program utilized by M&T.

3. Operations & Accountability Systems – Westminster operates with the same exacting business practices as M&T: hiring the best people and providers; negotiating exacting terms; holding all parties accountable; using data for decision making; and moving resources from under-performing areas to more promising ones. BPN's Project Director, John Carmichael, developed the business systems at Westminster Community Charter and will now do the same for BPN. His focus on return on investment spurs improvement and frees up funds for new initiatives.

4. Ten Improvement Teams – We have grouped our 70+ partners and service providers into ten teams dedicated to coordinating, streamlining, and improving services in their area. Modeled after Cincinnati's highly successful practice networks, each team interacts with Advocates and coordinators at the school Support Centers as well as program directors at Westminster Foundation to identify problems and opportunities for improvement. During our needs assessment, we learned that data sharing and communication between service providers is not as effective as it should be, so our Data Analyst will be working closely with the Improvement Teams to elevate practice and innovate new solutions.

Ten Improvement Teams

- Safety
- Health
- Housing
- Early Learning
- Financial Services
- Access to Services
- Academic Development
- Student/Family Services
- College/Career/Community
- Adult Ed/Employment/Training

5. Human Capital Development System – We are installing human capital practices from M&T to foster individual growth on both the student and adult side of BPN. Known throughout the banking industry for its highly-skilled and well-aligned workforce, M&T's

commitment to developing its employees is a core value reflected also in its unusual involvement in public education. On the student side of BPN, our challenge is to turn student data into effective, individualized solutions, bearing in mind that we are nurturing, teaching, and positively influencing young minds and attitudes. On the adult side, our challenge is to train and coordinate a broad, diverse BPN workforce from many organizations. In both arenas, M&T's human capital practices bring two key benefits: 1) the ability to productively engage and partner with individuals—students or adults—on a roadmap for their advancement, and 2) the capacity to transform volumes of individual data (including indicator data) into meaningful human capital strategies. Among several immediate applications for these practices are teacher development, training of near-peer workers, professional development for partners and service providers, and on the student side: the design and implementation of the College/Career Connections Initiative.

6. Grants & Funding Innovation – As we discuss in D.4, we believe that our long-term sustainability depends on the ability to integrate funding streams and work with agencies and providers on innovative, alternative funding mechanisms. We are well equipped for this work given the sophisticated, multi-source funding capacities of core partners: Westminster Community Charter (education streams), Community Health Center of Buffalo (health streams), Closing the Gap (student/family services streams), and M&T Bank (broad financing and legal expertise). Our strategy for funding innovation has three parts: engaging all major funding agencies in BPN planning, working together to better align and integrate funding streams (continuous improvement), and developing new funding tools (system redesign) – see Table D.

Together the six mutually-supporting management systems are a platform for fostering systems improvements, including solutions from Talent Development's national Diplomas Now initiative, the anticipated national Promise Neighborhood community of practice, the work of the national evaluator, and local community initiatives. Our annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources are summarized here:

Table D. Annual Goals for Installing and Improving BPN Systems			
	Infrastructure Creation	**Systems Improvements**	**Leveraging Resources**
2012	• Success Centers installed; • Staff hired & trained; • Shared mgt of schools; • Data system fully functional; users trained; • Operations/accountability systems in place; • Initial human capital dev. system for staff & students in place.	• "Test & learn" piloted; • Improvement teams up and running; consensus on BPN standards/goals; draft of system barriers & oppts. • New data shared & reviewed with key stakeholder.	• City, County & State funders engaged in BPN; • Barriers & oppts. for funding integration identified; • Private sector network started to support internships & mentoring; • Self-funded partners added where appropriate.
2013	• All aspects of 2012 activities/systems evaluated & refined; • New partners added to system; • Human capital dev't system expanded.	• Use data to identify system needs & opportunities; • Performance of service providers measured • Service delivery to students/families refined; • "Test & learn" expanded; • Each improvement team has implemented at least one process improvement.	• Self-funded partners added where appropriate; • Better alignment & integration of major funding streams begun; • Private sector support of internships increased.
2014	• New features & partners added to system.	• "Test & learn" continued; • Each improvement team has implemented at least one process improvement; • Refine measurement & accountability system after full year of operation.	• Better alignment & integration of major funding streams expanded; • Private sector support of internships increased.
2015		• Undergo full 3-year program review; replace under-performing programs; • "Test & learn" continued; • Each improvement team has implemented at least one process improvement.	• Better alignment & integration of major funding streams expanded; • Private sector support of internships increased; • New funding tools (i.e. pooling agreements, social impact bonds) in use.
2016		• "Test & learn" continued; • Each improvement team has implemented at least one process improvement • Plan completed for replication to Ph. II in Yr 6.	• New funding tools (i.e. pooling agreements, social impact bonds) expanded.

Section C: Project Services

In the following **Project Services** section, we comment on: how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis informed the solutions within the continuum; the extent to which the proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence; and the annual goals for improvement on indicators.

C.1) How was the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, used to determine each solution within the continuum?

Table E below summarizes the segmentation priorities that emerged from our needs assessment (B.3) to shape the design of our four Continuum Initiatives (B.1 & B.2). This summary follows the six "Readiness" transitions presented in the Needs Assessment Study (Appendix G). In that study, each transition section analyzes the indicator and demographic data on that student group; defines High-, Moderate-, and Low-Need segments and their characteristics; and discusses key facts and priorities for improvement.

The right-hand column of Table E is a distillation of the most salient points that were used to determine our selection of particular programs, their integration into four Initiatives, and the appropriate Service Delivery System to bring transformation and improve indicators.

Addressing the needs of students with disabilities and other special conditions: Two features of our continuum "architecture" are a common intake/delivery system and a tiered intervention approach based on individual needs. Accordingly, we are well-positioned to address a wide range of disabilities; in fact, using the same approach, Closing the Gap has met the needs of diverse populations over their 10 years coordinating services within the Buffalo schools.

Project Indicators: BPN's needs assessment and segmentation analysis used 14 project indicators: twelve PN-mandated project indicators as well as two additional project Family/ Community Support Indicators: ● **Fewer Teenage Pregnancies** (Indicator: # and % of teen pregnancies in the Neighborhood), and ● **Youth Employment** (Indicator: # and % of youth neither in school nor employed). Both indicators for BPN are chronic problems that are twice the NYS average (A.1).

Table E BPN SEGMENTATION SUMMARY

Ready for Kindergarten

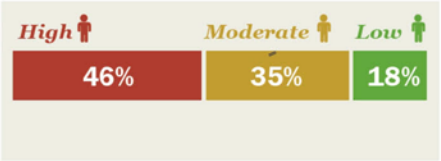
Total group: 800 children under 5

The numbers: 34% of 3 and 4s are not at *Age-appropriate Functioning* according to BPS data. Practitioners and other screening data suggest an even larger gap. Single parent and poverty are in the high 80% range; 56% lack a *Medical Home*; 40% not in early learning and rate is dropping.

Segmentation decisions: Focus on full 800 children in three sets: recruit and serve newborns/infants; more EL for 3/4s; and stronger K-3 support; adopt Two Generation Strategy.

Ready for Middle School

Total group: 469 students in Grades 4-5

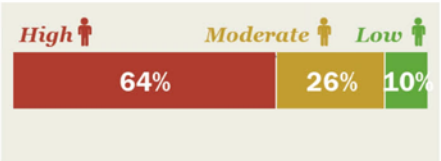


The numbers: Eight of 10 children in Moderate to High Need as they transition from elementary to middle school. 94% of these are low-income. Roughly half do not feel *Safe* at school. Higher need students have less *Internet Access*.

Segmentation decisions: Focus on students at Westminster and Highgate Heights with broad School Transformation. Strengthen tiered supports. Emphasize relevance and relationships. Increase Internet access and skills.

Ready to Transition MS to HS

Total group: 989 students in Grades 6-9

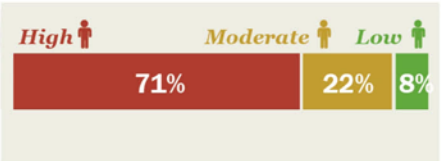


The numbers: Nine in 10 children in Moderate to High Need based on *Attendance* and *Academic Proficiency* on all tests. Students missing more than 30 days of school jumps from 11% in 6th, to 20% in 8th, to 48% in 9th. *Caring adults* and *Mobility* also significant for high need students.

Segmentation decisions: Create a feeder pattern for all three schools. Reduce chronic absenteeism with national dropout prevention model. Increase relevance with College/Career Passport. Internet.

Ready to Graduate High School

Total group: 1,236 students in Grades 9-12

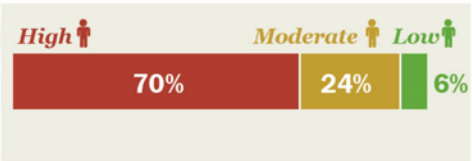


The numbers: Same conditions as previous transition but with greater Moderate and High Need. Dropout culture. *Mobility* and *Caring Adult* issues. Teen pregnancy is 2.5 times NYS. 12% of *Youth Neither in School nor Employed*.

Segmentation decisions: Focus on broad School Transformation phased in with 9th grade first. Reduce chronic absenteeism with national dropout prevention model and College/Career. Emphasize relevance and relationships. Internet.

Ready for College and Career

Total group: 246 students in Grade 12

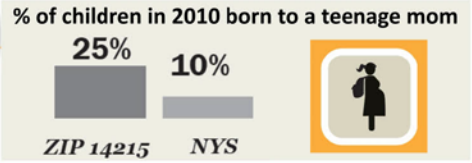


The numbers: Only 15 of 246 seniors are ready for college (NYS Regents). Need is heavily stratified by family income. Dim prospects in the workplace or in postsecondary due to low *Proficiency*.

Segmentation decisions: Develop a strong College/Career Connections program for all students starting in grades 6-9 and intensifying in HS. Align School Transformation to college and postsecondary requirements. Internet.

Ready to Parent Effectively

Total group: 2,000 students in Grades 6-12



The numbers: 25% of newborns have a teenage mom. 86% of children under 5 live with a single parent, usually a mother. Obvious correlation with family poverty.

Segmentation decisions: Focus on reducing *Teen Pregnancy* with an integrated program of health services and education starting in middle grades. Offer alternative future pathways with Career Academies and College/Career Connections.

C.2) To what extent are proposed solutions based on the best available evidence?

During its planning year BPN went to great lengths to develop solutions based on the best available evidence. The design of every one of the four key Continuum Initiatives rests, to a significant extent, on moderate or strong evidence from key programs actually being implemented in the BPN, or national models around which our initiatives were closely designed. We also consulted effective-practice research, meta-analyses, logic models, and other compelling work by acknowledged leaders in specific fields.

We also gave strong consideration to the **fit of potential program approaches** to the demonstrated Neighborhood needs (for example, we targeted a two-generation approach to our early childhood services in order to serve the needs of our unusually large number of young single parents), and to the **fidelity with which we would be able to implement** a solution, given resources and community dynamics (we sought out Talent Development partly for its evidence base and role in Diplomas Now dropout prevention work, but also because we knew that BPN shared school management and the skills of our school leaders matched their requirements for ”implementing with fidelity” – which became a mantra in our Talent Development meetings).

Studies cited in this Evidence section (C.2) can be found on a special Evidence Endnotes page at the beginning of Appendix F. Individual continuum programs and their evidence are described further within relevant chapters of that appendix. Here we highlight the nature and strength of the evidence base behind principal planks of our four major Continuum Initiatives.

SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION INTIATIVE Evidence

Our evidence base for School Transformation is particularly strong, featuring direct implementation of two evidence-rich models and local implementation based on two others:

Full Service Community Schools (FSCS). ***BPN Implementation:*** Longstanding FSCS programs at Westminster Community Charter School and through Closing the Gap to be enhanced. ***Evidence:*** Moderate. Programs show demonstrated impact and ability to replicate. See under the Family/Community Services Network, below.

Dropout Prevention model: Diplomas Now. ***BPN Implementation***: Implementation/ replication of Johns Hopkins' three-strand Diplomas Now**:** Talent Development to directly implement academic program in BPN; tight modeling of BPN Corps on City Year (see next) and of BPN Closing the Gap on Communities in Schools (see below in Family & Community Services). ***Evidence***: Moderate. Five-year, quasi-experimental study by MDRC, a non-partisan research group; What Works Clearinghouse rated as effective for dropout prevention; awarded a $30 million federal Investing in Innovation validation grant.

City Year Corps. ***BPN Implementation:*** BPN designing young adult worker program tightly around critical City Year design parameters agreed with Talent Development. ***Evidence:*** Promising Findings. Multiple studies, some across 19 City Year schools, conducted by third-party evaluators RMC Research and Research For Action, demonstrate positive outcomes on student achievement.

Career Academies. ***BPN Implementation:*** BPN and school leadership will enhance Bennett Career Academies; are currently evaluating National Academy Foundation**,** Linked Learning and other manifestations of the model. ***Evidence:*** Strong. Randomized, controlled, longitudinal (8 years post high school) evaluation by MDRC, which found strong positive results.

EARLY FOUNDATIONS INITIATIVE Evidence

Parent Outreach and Parenting Education. ***BPN Implementation:*** Direct implementation by Every Person Influences Education (EPIC) of its nationally-recognized *Ready, Set, Parent* program. ***Evidence:*** Moderate. *Ready, Set, Parent* has been replicated in 17 states and shows moderate evidence (against comparison groups) that participant children were positively affected in five developmental areas. EPIC, which is headquartered in Buffalo, has ongoing programs at the three birthing hospitals that serve the BPN, so fit and fidelity are well covered.

Early Literacy Advocacy & System Improvement. ***BPN Implementation:*** As one central plank, BPN will strengthen and expand the work of Read to Succeed, focusing on a) the literacy-related skills of child care providers and workers, and b) parent involvement. These include Early Reading First (ERF) programs delivered in Bethel Head Start Centers under a

highly-competitive three-year US ED grant of $4.1 million (one of two awarded in New York and one of 32 nationally). ***Evidence***: Moderate national, promising local. Read to Succeed's programs show positive results in reducing or eliminating developmental delays (ERF & home-based care initiative) and increasing parental involvement (home-based care initiative). Buffalo Public Schools data 2010 confirmed that ERF children entering the District outperform their peers. Federal ERF program evaluation by IES contributes strong evidence that the program had positive, statistically significant impacts on some, though not all, outcomes, and a RAND analysis of 20 early childhood intervention programs with experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation designs, demonstrated the importance of a well-trained childcare and early learning workforce.

Two Generation Strategy. ***BPN Implementation:*** BPN is creating an intentional two generation strategy, or "Family Economic Success" approach. Student/Family Advocates will proactively integrate tailored education/work solutions for all parents who interact with the BPN Early Foundations Initiative. ***Evidence***: Meta-analysis of moderate evidence. BPN is building this initiative from scratch, embedded within the service delivery and network. We did not find a direct model for this, but our design is strongly informed by Annie E. Casey's Making Connections work, showing moderate evidence from cross-site comparisons for 10 cities over 10 years.

COLLEGE/CAREER CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE Evidence

Evidence for college, career, and community connection programs comes from a range of rigorous program evaluations and research-based approaches**:**

College/Career Service. ***BPN Implementation:*** A UB college access expert will be designing the College/Career Service, staffed by UB graduate student interns and specially-trained BPN Corps workers. On the college side, the Service will integrate College Summit's nationally-recognized college enrollment model. For career-readiness programs, see next. ***Evidence***: Meta-analysis of strong/moderate evidence; logic models; promising evidence. Design of the Service is informed by the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)'s Logic Model for College- and Career-Readiness and Success and David Conley's College Readiness research. AYPF's logic model is based on analysis of 23 effective programs featuring strong to moderate

evidence. Seven used a strong experimental, random assignment, 16 were quasi-experimental with comparison groups, and some had longitudinal evaluations. Conley's research project identifying the knowledge and skills necessary for college readiness is considered seminal in the field. **College Summit** has been working in college readiness since 1993 and now operates in 12 states. Its programs show promising evidence of effectiveness through carefully designed pre- and post-program studies and comparison of participant and non-participant student populations. It was a named sub-grantee in New Profit Social Innovation Fund's successful 2010 $5 million grant application to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Bennett Career Readiness and Internship Program. ***BPN Implementation***: BPN will directly implement the Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HW-SC), an intensive engagement-through-career-connection model, alongside internship, summer job, and vocational exploration programs from three city- and federally-funded programs. ***Evidence:*** Moderate. Four longitudinal, quasi-experimental studies by the Center for Governmental Research found that HW-SC results in significantly higher graduation rates than among at-risk comparison students. Seventy-four percent of students who participated in the employment elements of the program, graduated, and 92% of 2006 participant graduates remained in college after two years.

Middle Grades College/Career Passport Program. ***BPN Implementation***: BPN Middle Grades College/Career Passport after school will offer a program mix similar to Citizen Schools (CS), and, like CS, use BPN Corps shared across in- and after-school. Incorporation of citizen teachers is being evaluated for year two. ***Evidence***: Moderate. Quasi-experimental longitudinal study, tracking five CS cohorts and a comparison group from the same schools, showed improved outcomes in attendance, on-time promotion and academic achievement.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY SERVICES NETWORK Evidence

This section addresses our implementation of both the delivery of services through the Full Service Community Schools model (Student Success Centers and Advocates) and the organization of a network of family/community services of a more general neighborhood nature.

Full Service Community Schools (FSCS). ***BPN Implementation***: Through Closing the Gap, BPN will be directly implementing this evidence-based program with an organization that has already been delivering it in the local context for ten years, addressing fit and fidelity. ***Evidence:*** Moderate. Blank et al. present evidence from moderate to strong evaluations of FSCS across the U.S (demonstrated ability to replicate), that this model improves academic performance, increases attendance, decreases dropout rates, and improves behavior. Closing the Gap has its own pre- and post-test evidence showing substantial improvement in student indicators over a three-year period in Buffalo. In 2008, CTG was one of ten community school initiatives awarded a US ED five-year, $2.5 million federal grant to expand its program.

Open System Models for Service Provider Participation. ***BPN Implementation***: Westminster Foundation Central Office will screen and recruit partners, oversee their Improvement Teams, build data and other systems, and ensure accountability for the Service Provider Network to support on-site Student/Family Advocates. ***Evidence***: Moderate. ICF International quasi-experimental, longitudinal study showed Communities in Schools students to have higher attendance and graduation, and lower dropout rates. Notable finding: value of a full time site coordinator and attention to network organization. We are also learning from successful "open system" service network models in Cincinnati and Providence.

C.3) What are the annual goals for improvement on indicators?

Projecting Improvement: Projecting the arc of improvement on an indicator-by-indicator basis over the five years of this grant required multiple perspectives on the data. We took a host of factors into account, and they varied by indicator, including: • increasing proportion of students served due to cohorts entering the continuum (e.g. newborns); • any phasing of implementation, whereby select programs and services are to introduce additional age/grade levels or additional programs over a period of several years; • increasing effectiveness in programs and service delivery, based on our "test and learn" management (see

B.4); • projected "critical mass" effects, where reaching a particular tipping point might spark more rapid uptake or improvement in a single or group of related indicators; • a difference in the pace of improvement between indicators we might have more control over (daily fruit and vegetables since students are at our schools for extended days and years) versus those where our efforts were further removed from the behavior measured by the indicator (e.g. teen pregnancy).

Our strategies for improving the life trajectories of the children and youth in the BPN are addressed in the Continuum described in B.2. Our projections for this improvement, taking the above factors into account, are presented in this table.

Table F. Annual Goals on 14 Project Indicators

BPN Project Indicators	Current	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Medical Home (ages 0-5)	44%	45%	51%	56%	61%	67%
Age-Appropriate Functioning	66%	66%	68%	70%	72%	75%
Early Learning Enrollment	60%	61%	63%	65%	67%	70%
Academic Proficiency: Grades 3-4	18%	19%	21%	29%	44%	64%
Academic Proficiency: Grades 5-8	12%	13%	15%	23%	38%	58%
Academic Proficiency: High School	6%	7%	9%	17%	32%	52%
Attendance Rate Grades 6-9	87%	88%	89%	91%	93%	95%
Graduation Rate*	46%	46%	48%	50%	61%	66%
HS Grads Ready for College**	6%	6%	8%	12%	24%	41%
Physical Activity & Diet	28%	30%	35%	40%	45%	55%
Safety at School & Traveling	42%	45%	49%	56%	63%	70%
Student Mobility Rate	16%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%
Caring Adult at Home & School	38%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%
Internet Access: Home & School	43%	45%	50%	60%	70%	80%
Teen Pregnancy	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	9%
Youth Not in School or Employed	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	7%

* at Bennett High School. **HS Grads Ready for College as defined by NYS Regents is substituted for Postsecondary Achievement as the latter data was unavailable.

Section D: Management Plan

D.1) What is the management capacity of the Westminster Foundation and what are its practices and systems for working with BPN residents, the schools and LEA, service providers, and Federal, State, and local government leaders?

Table G. Fast Facts on Westminster Foundation's Organizational Capacity

	Criteria	Westminster Foundation
✔	Working with residents and the neighborhood	Former City Commissioner of Community Services recruited to head BPN Community Engagement. Key personnel from Westminster Community Charter School, an established center of community life, bring over 50 years of direct Neighborhood involvement.
✔	Working with schools & LEA	District staff closely involved in yearlong BPN school reform planning, leveraging M&T Bank's* 18-year partnership with the LEA. M&T adopted Buffalo's lowest performing K-8 school in 1993, managing its transformation and, in 2004, conversion to a charter.
✔	Working with service providers	Westminster and Closing the Gap are both successful full service community school models integrating many service providers. Closing the Gap brings its own significant existing provider network. Strong management capability supported by M&T Bank.
✔	Working with Federal, State & local gov't leaders	BPN's lead partners are many of Buffalo's top organizations, working regularly with government leaders at all levels. City and County are BPN partners. Westminster has the full support of U.S. Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and U.S. Representatives Higgins, Hochul, and Slaughter. (See letters of support in Appendix J)

*M&T Bank led the effort in 1993; Westminster Foundation formed in 2004 with the charter conversion and offers continuum solutions including free early learning, after school, and summer school (Applicant Eligibility Req't).

Many of the practices and systems developed for working with the constituencies mentioned are incorporated in the **six key management systems** detailed in B.4 – please refer to those. These practices balance the collaborative aspects of an open system with the management discipline required to achieve long-term goals. Here, we focus on Westminster Foundation (our main management asset), the significance going forward of the partnership with M&T Bank, and our community outreach to rejoin schools and neighborhood through community action.

Key Personnel Bring Over 50 Years of Direct Neighborhood Involvement

Mr. Mark J. Czarnecki, Chairman of Westminster Foundation, is President of M&T Bank, headquartered in Buffalo. He is responsible for over 15,000 employees and operations in 23 states and Canada. M&T Bank has assets of over $68 billion and is ranked among the top 20 banks in the country. He is Chairman of the Westminster Community Charter School and has played an active role since 1997 in the school's leadership functions and programmatic design.

Mr. David Chamberlain, Vice Chairman of Westminster Foundation, CEO of BPN, plays a lead role in strategy, coalition building, and funding. During his 15-year tenure as Senior VP of M&T Bank's Human Resources Division, he served as a catalyst for heightening M&T's focus on growing talent from within and developing the capacity of leaders to manage the turbulence associated with change. Recognized as a change agent, he is a key force behind BPN.

Dr. Yvonne Minor-Ragan, BPN President, Officer of Westminster Foundation, is a highly respected academic and community leader. As Principal from 1994 to 2011, she led the transformation of Buffalo's lowest-performing K-8 school and its later conversion in 2004 into the Westminster Community Charter School. In addition to pioneering many of the academic and family/community supports now championed by Promise Neighborhoods, Dr. Ragan and Westminster have become a strong center of stability in a very troubled neighborhood. Among her BPN duties, Dr. Ragan will direct the **Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network**.

Mr. John Carmichael, BPN Project Director, COO of Westminster Foundation, will head business operations. He helped develop M&T's partnership with the School District, beginning with Westminster's predecessor, School #68, in 1993 and later, its conversion to Westminster Community Charter School. Mr. Carmichael is a VP of M&T Bank. For BPN, he will oversee finance/accounting, grants, human resources, data systems, and compliance.

Ms. Tanya Perrin-Johnson, BPN Director of Community Affairs, joined BPN earlier this year from the Mayor's Office where she was Commissioner of Community Services. With 20 years of organizational leadership experience, she will oversee community development, neighborhood safety, health and wellness, and adult education/employment/training.

The significance going forward of the M&T partnership: The Westminster Foundation combines access to the executive, managerial, technical, and financial capacities of a major bank with a broad coalition of education and community experts in the fight to improve education and end poverty. M&T's successful partnership with teachers and the community at Westminster Community Charter School, transforming it into what the *Buffalo News* called "a rallying point for the community and a center of its life," is now helping generate enthusiasm and confidence for the success of BPN—already sparking a number of community self-help efforts! Understanding BPN's importance to the neighborhood, but also to all of Buffalo, M&T is committing its resources, relationships, and reputation to making BPN a success and a far greater rallying point.

The Westminster/M&T Method

A proven approach based on close collaboration between educators and business leaders.

Educators have embraced:

- a collaborative model of teaching and learning
- deep parent engagement
- an array of academic, family, and community supports

Business leaders have brought:

- effective business practices and use of data
- a fierce commitment to leadership and human capital
- the discipline of continuous improvement

Resources: Annually, approximately 100 M&T bankers are affiliated with the Westminster Foundation and Westminster Community Charter School. The bank dedicates the time of six full-time positions to the school's business operations. Bank executives regularly attend Westminster planning sessions and board meetings.

During bank time, many other M&T Bank employees are also involved with the school on a regular basis or as needed. Employees who work regularly with the school include those in Technology, Facilities Management & Construction, Human Resources, Event Planning, Communications, Legal, and Travel. Employees who participate on an as needed basis include employees from departments such as: Finance, Accounting, Tax, Purchasing, Commercial Real Estate, Business Banking, Compliance, and Insurance. Off bank time, dozens of employees volunteer to serve as mentors and role models in a "big brother, big sister" type program to Westminster students sponsored by the Bank, featuring popular monthly events. Last month, some 300 M&T volunteers participated in a Day of Caring, working with residents to renovate a

community garden, clear vacant lots, and beautify the Neighborhood.

Westminster is the single largest charitable activity for the bank, and the most visible within the company. Since 1993, M&T has contributed over $13.5 million to the Westminster partnership. M&T Bank is now making a major donation towards the match for this project, and also towards the creation of the Early Childhood Center and other project elements.

Relationships and reputation: Along with the substantial financial and organizational resources that M&T is contributing to BPN, M&T's community leadership role is also crucial. The collective potential of BPN's network of partners, service providers, and community groups is impressive, but cannot be realized without creating and managing an open, collaborative system able to harness and catalyze the efforts of all parties. Writing earlier this year about this leadership/management challenge within Promise Neighborhoods, Harvard's James M. Quane and William Julius Wilson underscored the stumbling blocks inherent in comprehensive community initiatives of this kind, concluding that the work is "not for the faint of heart." They further state that "a central administrative body with binding authority that can make timely decisions for the entire network is essential to minimize conflict, overcome inefficiency, and maintain collaboration among members of the partnership" (Quane and Wilson, 2011). Lending M&T's relationships and reputation to the Westminster Foundation's effectiveness in meeting these challenges is therefore of special significance.

How the staffing capacity of Westminster Foundation will look: Figure 7 shows anticipated central functions and staffing.

Rejoining the schools to the neighborhood through community action: BPN is keenly aware that neighborhood revitalization can only be achieved when the members of the community—residents, block clubs, parent leaders, community-based organizations, churches, businesses, public officials, and educators—are fully involved in the planning process, as well as the major Initiatives growing out of the plan.

We believe student/family success takes broad, energetic community re-development and revitalization that reconnects—through common purpose – schools and communities. Therefore, earlier this year Westminster Foundation recruited Tanya Perrin-Johnson as its Director of Community Affairs. Formerly the Commissioner of Community Services for the City of Buffalo, Ms. Perrin-Johnson brings over 20 years of organizational leadership experience and a unique blend of health and human service, education, business, government, and development expertise.

In addition, for most of the last year, we have been on an extensive listening tour—spreading the Promise Neighborhood story, yes, but more importantly, listening to ideas and concerns from every corner of the community. A broad BPN Steering Committee of community leaders is now meeting and planning regularly with Westminster staff on a host of community initiatives. We are fully aware that progress comes neighbor by neighbor, and that people are essential to success. We are, therefore, partnering with the Buffalo chapter of **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** (LISC) on designing and implementing a community development plan based on LISC's highly successful Developing Sustainable Communities framework (LISC, 2011). LISC will fund a consultant for six months to assist in this effort and is contributing a staff position to assist in implementation. A component of that plan will be special measures to reach individuals with disabilities, language barriers, or other needs.

LISC's community development framework encompasses 8 areas:

- Resident-led planning
- Community engagement
- Designated lead agency
- Wide array of development activities
- Brokering and negotiating
- Broad civic partnership
- Accountability
- Communication

Our plan forward under the direction of Ms. Perrin-Johnson is to: 1) formalize the Steering Committee, a group comprised of block club leaders, neighborhood residents, business leaders and elected officials that are influential enough to drive significant change; 2) engage the team in developing a sustainable community strategy; 3) communicate for buy-in; 4) empower the team and others for action; 5) celebrate short term wins; and 6) build on the momentum to drive additional change in the community. (We have adopted the framework of John Kotter, Harvard Business School, in his classic *Leading Change*.)

Based on priorities set by the community, we have established five community action initiatives:

1. Community engagement: Complete recruitment of Steering Committee (clergy, block club leaders, elected officials, residents, businesses) • Coordinate community-wide meetings and visioning sessions • Develop intergenerational service projects and student community service • Promote early action projects.

2. Neighborhood safety: Mobilize residents and community groups into a Neighborhood Safety Network for a concerted effort to reduce violence and gang activity • Incorporate anti-crime initiatives: Take Back the Neighborhood Rallies, youth and family summits, safety education, police collaboration, and referral services.

3. Adult education and literacy: Organize five organizations to provide comprehensive adult education programs for ages 17+, with emphasis on family economic success, including financial programs, GED, work readiness credentials, and workforce development.

4. Health and wellness: Launch a major Medical Home Recruitment and preventive care campaign with the Community Health Center of Buffalo • Facilitate nutritional cooking classes and physical education activities for children/families with Good for the Neighborhood.

5. Community development: Organize affordable housing resources and counseling • Revive the Bailey Business Association • Revitalize dormant block clubs • Facilitate training and guidance to block club leadership • Establish a Youth Council.

With these initiatives and others, BPN is generating a high level of support from many quarters, and is indeed already becoming a catalyst and champion for additional revitalization and community initiatives. The result in the end? Elected officials who hear conclusively what is important to their constituents. Business leaders who see how their contributions help communities prosper. Community service providers who visualize how their work meshes with that of other groups. Local government staff who are better able to act across traditional departmental barriers. In short, a community of people with direction and support, who feel their voices are heard and they have the power to contribute to the prosperity of their community.

D.2) How will data be collected, analyzed, and used for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including BPN's preparations for a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources while abiding by privacy regulations?

Overview: BPN has [redacted] and made it the hub of a comprehensive shared data system underpinning our four major Continuum Initiatives, our on-site Student/Family Advocates, and the key management systems described in B.4. The system architecture includes direct data links with a recently completed Buffalo Public Schools data warehouse and an existing Closing the Gap case management system. Direct and indirect data sharing will also be established with other partners and providers. The goal is to combine student and family data, indicator data, and cost of services data into a shared P-20[1] longitudinal case management, accountability, and analytics tool supporting all stakeholders including students and parents. System development and monitoring is being supported by the IT department of M&T Bank and IQR Consulting Inc. (IQR), an M&T vendor specializing in system integration and data analytics. Managed by Westminster Foundation, the system will be operational when configuration is completed in December 2011.

[1] Pre-kindergarten through 20 years old. We will build our own system dovetailing with NYS's initiative (next page).

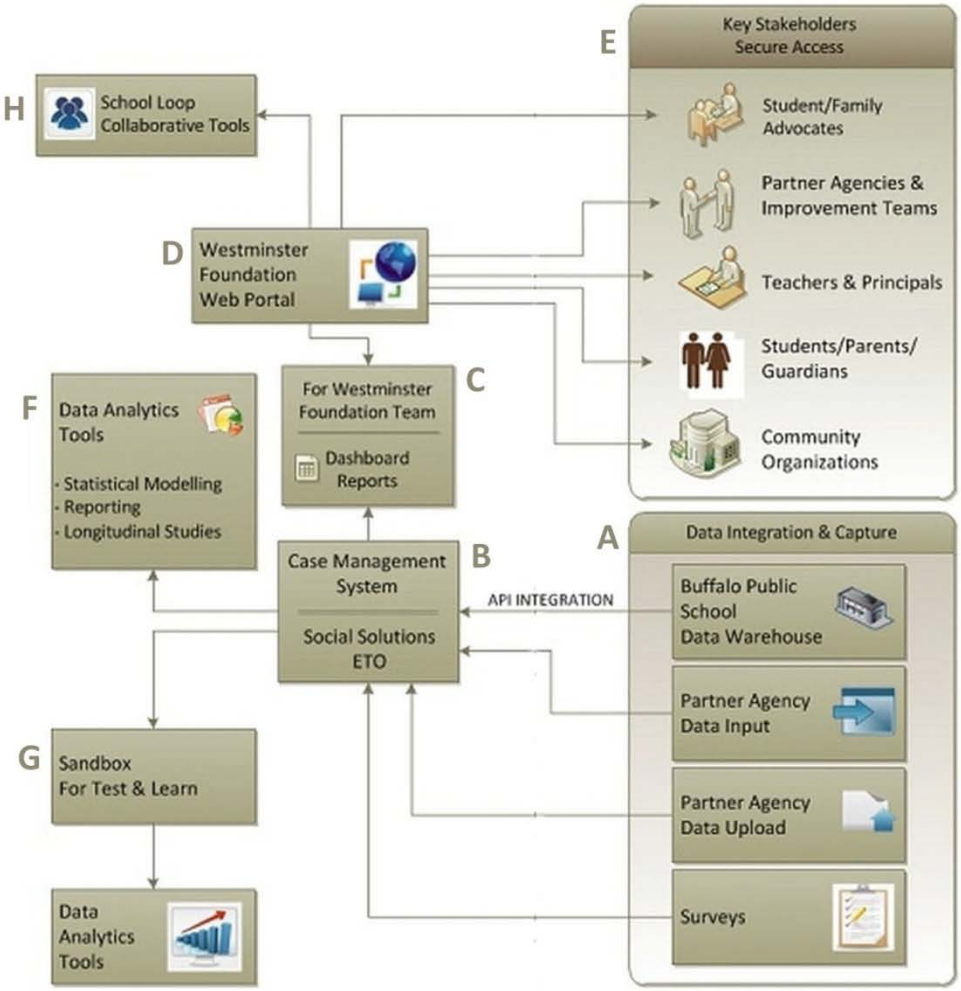
About [redacted]: With over 2,300 clients including the Harlem Children's Zone, [redacted] is the leading provider of case management software for the human services sector. The [redacted] system is a Web-based, hosted solution providing daily activity coordination, participant analysis, data sharing, progress alerts, performance management, and HIPAA compliant de-identified reporting, with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for data communication between systems. Data can be submitted into [redacted] through form submission (assessments, demographic intake, etc.), swipe cards, batch upload, data import, and via Web services. In addition, customers can upload demographic information, as well as assessments, referrals, attendance, case notes, and client history. [redacted] is expandable and scalable—key criteria in our planning, and it meets current HUD DV, HMIS, Social Security Administration (SSA) and HIPAA data management and security protocols. It also provides an easy-to-use "sandbox" for experimentation which we discuss below.

Building a shared BPN data system—Part 1: System Design & Management:

The system will be managed by Westminster Foundation's Chief Operating Officer and its Data Director. A Data Workgroup will be formed of systems people from major partner organizations. IQR Consulting Inc. will provide system design and integration assistance and expertise in data analysis and strategic decision making. We will also work with other Promise Neighborhood groups and the National Evaluator to share solutions and results, and to develop common standards where appropriate.

In addition, NYSED is currently developing a statewide P-20 longitudinal data system and the NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council is working with NYS agencies serving young children to develop the data linkages required for an integrated early childhood data system that addresses the recommendations of the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative (Kreader and Schneider, 2011). These initiatives complement BPN's efforts and we seek to collaborate and exchange data with these systems, subject to privacy standards.

Fig. 8 Shared Data System with Operational and Longitudinal Capability



A system schematic is shown in Figure 8. [redacted] sits at the center. Data integration and capture (A) will upload data from BPN organizations to [redacted] servers using methods that fit the needs of each organization. The BPN system will not require partners to abandon their existing systems. Once data is collected, [redacted] (B) supports case management and a wide range of reporting and dissemination needs. Crystal Reports comes packaged with [redacted] enabling easy design and configuration of dashboards and reports (C). In addition, BPN will build a Web portal layer (D) over [redacted] enabling customized Web pages and data access to key stakeholders via secure access. A very wide range of stakeholders (E) can be served cost-effectively, including Student/Family Advocates and partner/provider agencies, teachers and

principals, and students and parents. One use, for example, is the electronic Passport for middle- and high-schoolers described in the College/Career Connections Initiative (B.2).

Another benefit of the BPN system is a robust suite of Data Analytics Tools (F). We believe the full potential of a Promise Neighborhood can be unlocked with a "high-tech, high-touch" approach—using data to help teachers, Advocates, BPN Corps members, and others working with children to step in and help before problems become large. Accordingly, we are building high-quality analytics into our system in every way: software tools (like SAP, SAS), consulting horsepower (IQR), and our decision making processes. For the first time, we will have true longitudinal data on every child in both the academic and social/emotional/economic realm.

To discover what works best, data analytics will play an important part in our continuous improvement program as well. IQR is building a "Test & Learn" sandbox (G) for controlled experimentation to test alternative strategies. The program is modeled after work IQR is doing for M&T Bank on product and marketing effectiveness. For example, what is the best way for BPN to encourage parents to read to young children? Or to promote medical home enrollment or reduce chronic absenteeism? The Test & Learn sandbox will allow BPN staff and Improvement Teams to test hypotheses on a small scale, comparing alternatives empirically.

The final piece of the BPN shared data system is an ingenious collaborative tool called School Loop (H). Brought to us by Talent Development, who are currently piloting the system, School Loop provides a secure, Facebook-like environment for student support teams to review dashboards on individual students or groups, and coordinate efforts with one another. The following 5-minute demonstration may be of interest: http://screencast.com/t/G0WxECdcdz6

Building a shared BPN data system—Part 2: Testing Theories of Change: Good data refocuses planning, as was powerfully demonstrated by our needs assessment. No one was expecting that only 8% of Bennett High School students live in the BPN. Or that 58% of Bennett 9th graders were missing over 30 days of school. Or that 86% of children under 5 live with a single parent. Or that fewer than 20% of BPN students are academically proficient in both math and English. These data discoveries significantly reshaped our continuum strategy.

The process of combining, organizing, and studying heretofore unexamined data sets as part of our needs assessment was a bonding and galvanizing experience for the many partner representatives who participated. Our theories of change and action became more systems-based yet, in many respects, more student-based at the same time. For example, since 58% of 9th graders are missing over a month of school per year, let's attack that problem and give teachers better odds at instruction. The BPN Needs Assessment Study also built a statistical model of student readiness at six transition points along the continuum using the data on our 14 project indicators (C.1). The lessons learned from this process are now reflected in the data architecture for the data system (see box).

BPN Data Parameters

- Establish the 14 indicator goals as the overall navigation system for BPN
- Develop actionable sub-indicators that mirror theory of change
- Organize and present data by cohort (22 cohorts in all from newborns to age 21)
- Understand cohort additions and withdrawals over time
- Develop simple-to-understand segmentation within each cohort
- Incorporate cost of service data to support cost/benefit analysis
- Focus continuous improvement on improving effectiveness at each step on the continuum
- Use data to support Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles
- Use data to positively support the needs of each student, family, and BPN worker
- Protect participant confidentiality and privacy rights at all time[1]

[1]We have studied the HIPAA and FERPA regulations carefully with our partners (especially Buffalo Public Schools and Closing the Gap) and vendors (Social Solutions and IQR) and our systems are compliant.

We are currently mapping the data elements and sources for each of these parameters and developing the system configuration to support them. Once built into the data system, we will begin testing with Closing the Gap and other lead partners. We will also begin reporting to management, partners, funders, and the community using the dashboards designed to show progress on indicator-based goals—the 14 mandatory ones and other early/leading indicators that enable us to manage programs and services on a rapid cycle basis, and make course corrections as required. As this "system feedback" increases, our understanding and theories of change will evolve, leading to better strategic and program decision making.

Working with the National Evaluator: The ideal working relationship with the National Evaluator, we believe, would be a set of short-, medium-, and long-term tasks and evaluations that would facilitate consensus among grantees on indicator and data standards, funnel comparative information into a community of practice for grantees, and produce a series of periodic evaluations that might suggest productive course corrections. Of course, many program evaluations take place late in a program's life cycle; however, because Promise Neighborhoods are both new and complex, an Evaluator directly engaged with grantees and fostering the transfer of knowledge seems like a ripe opportunity. There are three areas that deserve particular attention:

1. Developing a common set of indicator data standards – Before data elements are hardened into data system configurations, there should be a process for convening the grantees to agree on data definitions. We've learned that each indicator unpacks into multiple components, each requiring interpretation. Program evaluation will be improved by common definitions.

2. Comparing data system strategies – Helping grantees learn from each other how best to manage and harness the complex data in a longitudinal system of this kind will boost grantee capabilities while building a foundation for more fruitful program evaluation.

3. Learning from other grantee programs – A taxonomy of programs would help grantees and the Evaluator quickly find and study programs of other grantees working on similar issues.

Westminster Foundation looks forward to being a leader in collaborating with other grantees and the Evaluator. In support of this effort, we a) have ensured through our Memorandum of Understanding that the Evaluator will have access to all relevant program and project data sources from all Partners, b) will design programs and data collection systems consistent with the national evaluation strategy, and c) will, with the Evaluator, develop an evaluation strategy that includes a credible comparison group, and the collection of reliable and valid baseline data for both program participants and this comparison group.

With respect to BPN comparison groups, with our data system and access to the BPS data warehouse, we will be able to track matched sets of non-participants for each age segment.

D.3) Who are the partners and what is their collective capacity to manage the project and forge additional formal and informal partnerships? Is there close alignment of visions and theories of change/action? How will partners be held accountable for performance?

Westminster Foundation is built on a healthy balance of well-established partnerships and complementary expertise. This section summarizes the layers in our partner network, our shared vision and theory of change/action, and our system of accountability including governance.

Strong Partners to Build Alliances in All Critical Areas

We are fortunate to have strong main partners (MOU signatories) that we can build around virtually every critical area: **Already described**: • **Westminster Foundation** • **Westminster Community Charter School** • **M&T Bank** (all in D.1): • **Community Health Center of Buffalo** (CHCB) (B.2) • Early Learning team of **Bethel Head Start** and **Read to Succeed Buffalo** (B.3); and • **Belmont Housing Resources for WNY**(B.2). **Also:**

The John R. Oishei Foundation is a major philanthropic partner in healthcare and education in Buffalo, and longtime funder of several BPN partners. Consistent with its 2007 strategic shift to "issue-based" funding, they provide both executive leadership and funding to BPN.

The City of Buffalo, led by Mayor Byron Brown, is focused on economic development, City government accountability, and quality of life. It adopted a new comprehensive plan in 2004 that included restructuring and renovation of its schools. The plan is well-aligned with BPN.

Buffalo Public School District serves 37,000 students in 65 facilities in the nation's third poorest large city. The District has played a crucial role in BPN, committing top members of its management team in a close partnership on key aspects of the School Transformation plan.

United Way and **Catholic Charities** are the leading community service organizations in Buffalo, active in a broad array of academic and family and community supports. Effective collaborators, they were instrumental in establishing the Closing the Gap Consortium.

Buffalo Urban League (BUL) provides services in family preservation, education, employment, housing, and community development. In addition, BUL plays a key role in youth

development and civic engagement.

County of Erie provides adult and child protective services, child care subsidy assistance, youth engagement services, domestic violence, food stamps, temporary assistance, employment assistance, juvenile delinquency services, and Medicaid services.

University at Buffalo sits at the edge of the BPN, and serves nearly 30,000 students. Through its UB-Buffalo Public School Partnership, it is deeply involved with the District. UB has committed its diverse resources to BPN, including expertise in College/Career success.

Although not part of the formal governance of Westminster Foundation, we also count as significant our partnerships with national school transformation experts **Talent Development**, full service community school coordinator **Closing the Gap**, parent educators **EPIC** and college readiness provider **College Summit**.

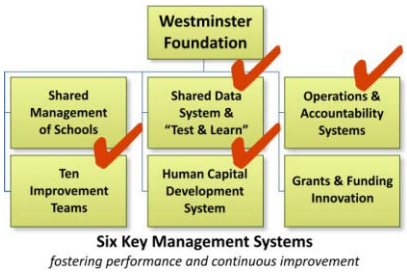
In addition, our **BPN Family/Community Services Network** is comprised of over 70 organizations as follows: 16 are lead partners listed above, 33 are service providers with well-established working partnerships with more or more of BPN partners, and the remaining 20+ are service providers who align with our plans and have been screened and recruited by BPN.

Seeing BPN as a singular opportunity—the vision and theories of BPN partners: The poor condition of schools and neighborhoods in Buffalo concerns the entire community, especially because there has yet to emerge a strategy to arrest and reverse the decline. Sharing a great civic concern beyond their individual missions and visions, the BPN partners are drawn together by a deep vision and conviction that BPN is an opportunity to do their finest work and, in doing so, to forge a collaborative model that can replicated, expanded, and perfected throughout the city.

Together, the partners share a theory of change centered on the need for "a culture of learning and nurturing which emphasizes the continuous development of the whole child" (Westminster Community Charter), the awareness that "children and families excel when community and schools work together as equal partners" (Read to Succeed), and the reality that "building strong and stable families" is inseparable from student success (Buffalo Urban

League). Their theory of action is pragmatic: tackle the whole system, work collaboratively, rejoin schools and communities, and inject steady relationships into the delivery of services.

On partner accountability and BPN governance: All services performed through BPN will be done under service agreements, even those by BPN partners. Agreements will spell out performance standards and all services will be monitored; in the case of school-based services, providers will be monitored and evaluated by the Closing the Gap site coordinator, the Westminster site director, the Westminster program director, and the business office. Please note that four of our six key management systems (B.4) support performance and accountability.



In addition, the mandatory 14 project indicators provide a central compass. Westminster Community Charter publishes in its annual reports performance on its indicators, going back at least 10 years. We anticipate BPN will report to the community similarly. Our objective, in fact, is to make the indicator goals a catalyst for community-wide support and action.

Finally, accountability must also underpin and strengthen governance. The Westminster Foundation includes a Governing Board, Advisory Board, and Management Team (next page). The Advisory Board serves as the entity primarily representative of the Neighborhood. One half of Advisory Board is comprised of a combination of residents of the Neighborhood, residents of the city who are low-income, or public officials serving the Neighborhood (public officials represent 25%) – as noted with an asterisk in the Advisory Board chart below. The Advisory Board will have the power to inform and advise the Governing Board on all matters and programs serving the Neighborhood and the effectiveness of services and programs. Both boards are "working boards" with members bringing their considerable talents to the work of Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. In addition, we have formed a community steering committee with participation from a diverse group of over 20 community leaders. As noted in D.1, the community's aspirations and expectations for BPN are at a high level.

Westminster Foundation Governing Board			
1	Director (as of 9/16/11)	Amber Dixon	Interim Sup't, Buffalo Public School District
2	Director	Rev. Richard Stenhouse	President, Jeremiah Partnership
3	Director	Robert Gioia	President, The John R. Oishei Foundation
4	Chairman	Mark Czarnecki	President, M&T Bank
5	Vice Chairman	David Chamberlain	Senior VP, M&T Bank
6	Director	John Carmichael	COO, Westminster Foundation
7	Director	Dr. Yvonne Ragan	President, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood

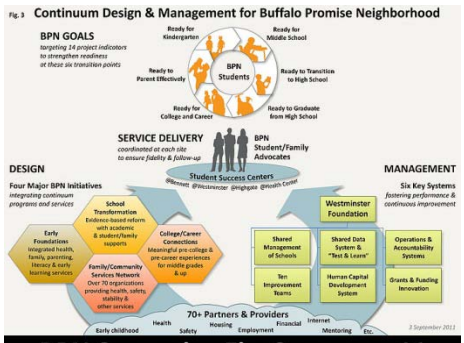
Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Advisory Board			
1	Belmont Housing Resources for WNY	Elizabeth Huckabone	President
2	Bennett High School	David Mauricio*	Principal
3	Buffalo Public Schools	Will Keresztes*	Assoc. Superintendent for Education
4	BPN Steering Committee	Thelma Roberts*	President of the Block Club Coalition; Resident
5	Buffalo Urban League	Brenda McDuffie*	President & CEO; Resident
6	Catholic Charities of Buffalo	Dennis Walczyk	CEO
7	City of Buffalo	Byron Brown*	Mayor
8	Erie County	David Rust	Deputy Commissioner Youth Svcs.
9	Highgate Heights P.S. 80	Gayle Irving-White*	Principal
10	M&T Bank	David Chamberlain	Senior Vice President
11	State Univ. of Buffalo	Mara Huber	Spec. Asst. to the President
12	United Way of Buffalo/Erie	Michael Weiner	President
13	University District	Bonnie Russell*	Councilmember/Resident
14	Westminster Community CS	Carlos Gordon*	Parent/Resident
15	Westminster Community CS	Mark Bower	Principal
16	Westminster Foundation	Tanya Perrin-Johnson*	Dir. Community Affairs/Resident

* Residents of the Neighborhood or Public Officials

Officers (Management Team)			
1	Chairman	Mark Czarnecki	President, M&T Bank
2	Vice Chairman	David Chamberlain	Senior VP, M&T Bank
3	COO	John Carmichael	COO, Westminster Foundation
4	President	Dr. Yvonne Ragan	President, BPN
5	Dir.of Community Affairs	Tanya Perrin-Johnson	Director of Community Affairs
6	Treasurer	Patrick Mansfield	Assistant Vice President, M&T Bank

Short bios of these Governing Board and Advisory Board members can be found in Appendix B.

D.4) What is the capacity of the management team to integrate funding streams from multiple public and private sources and what is its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs into the continuum of solutions?



BPN Synopsis - Fig. 3 on page 11

The BPN plan described in this Narrative leverages our $6 million grant request with over $32 million in additional funding for a total project expenditure of $38.2 million over five years. This total expenditure has the following parts:

- $6.0 million Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant;
- $6.0 million direct cash match from M&T Bank;
- $8.6 million from foundations and the private sector guaranteed by M&T Bank;
- $6.3 million in commitments from partners and service providers;
- $11.3 million reallocated to BPN from local, county, state, and federal agencies.

The uses of these funds support all four Continuum Initiatives as follows:

Table H. Uses of Funds for Buffalo Promise Neighborhood

(in $ millions) CONTINUUM INITIATIVES	Total	$12M Grant & Match	$8.6M Private Sector	$17.6M Providers & Agencies
Early Foundations	15.0	2.7	3.2	9.1
School Transformation	12.8	7.4	2.9	2.5
College/Career Connections	4.9	1.5	1.2	2.2
Family/Community Services Network	5.5	0.4	1.3	3.8
Cumulative 5-Year Total	**38.2**	**12.0**	**8.6**	**17.6**

The key to this project is the $6 million Implementation Grant which, together with M&T's contribution, unlocks the capacity building and management required to attract another $26.2 million "linked and integrated seamlessly" into a full continuum of solutions. For a complete description of BPN funding and expenditures, please see the Budget and Budget Narrative.

OUR ONGOING CAPACITY TO INTEGRATE FUNDING STREAMS

Beyond this initial five-year financial plan, we recognize that financial capacity and adaptability are essential to every Promise Neighborhood's success and sustainability. The skill to integrate funding streams has two parts: the dexterity and discipline to secure and manage multiple streams on the one hand, and the ingenuity and expertise to design and negotiate new financial partnerships and combinations on the other. We will describe our capacity in both areas.

Balancing and managing multiple streams: In addition to charter school funding, Westminster Community Charter School and Westminster Foundation have successfully applied for and managed 43 grants since 2004-05 totaling $7 million. These grants include funding from No Child Left Behind, Charter School Stimulus Fund, NYSED Extended School Day / School Violence Prevention Program, NYSED Dissemination Grant funds, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, and the Tower Foundation, among others. Management of these grant funds has been reviewed as part of the following audits: audits by an independent accounting firm in accordance with GAAP standards; No Child Left Behind and Charter School audits by NYSED; an audit by the New York State Comptroller's Office; and oversight audits by the Buffalo Board of Education. Each audit found the funds were properly managed.

In addition, the Westminster Foundation can partner with M&T Bank on major grant and financing programs running the full gamut of State, Federal, nonprofit, and private sources. M&T Bank's Community Reinvestment office is very active in Buffalo and has identified a variety of potential opportunities consistent with the Promise Neighborhood Program. Through its relationship with M&T Bank and its public and community partners, together with its own fund raising capabilities, Westminster Foundation is in a strong position from which to sustain and scale BPN beyond the expiration of federal Promise Neighborhood funds.

Numerous partners are also expert in multi-source funding. For 10 years, Closing the Gap has juggled and balanced a shifting set of public and private funding sources (including Full Service Community Schools federal funding). Community Health Center of Buffalo adroitly blends funding from Medicaid, Medicare, HRSA 330 (federally qualified health center), and

other sources to provide seamless service to the under- and un-insured.

As a team, BPN partners are already integrating funding from at least four big streams: education, health, social services, and workforce development. Comprised of major Buffalo institutions backed by a wide variety of public and private funding sources, we have the local relationships to secure local contributions and the national reach to pursue state, federal, and foundation support. In short, we are resilient—able to connect to a wide range of funding sources.

Ingenuity and expertise to design and negotiate new funding configurations: In this era of slow economic growth and budget shortfalls at all levels, we believe funding challenges will be a constant for Promise Neighborhoods. Accordingly, we see funding innovation as crucial to success during the initial five-year grant period and essential for sustainability and scalability in the out years. Accordingly, one key is combining cost information with our longitudinal data system so we can identify and reinforce the most cost-effective services and interventions (D.2).

Shared management of the schools and the spending flexibility it affords is a key opportunity. So are strategies that reduce student mobility or address child development delays early before the need becomes severe. To that end, we will work closely with CHCB as so many developmental delays are health related. Through our Improvement Teams, we will proactively pursue opportunities to be more cost-effective. Nationally, we will continue to study innovative models like Wraparound Milwaukee's funding pool to better serve high-need youth (Wraparound Milwaukee, 2011), or the emerging social impact bonds that create a market based on results.

The good news is that the climate for funding innovation is improving every day—a direct consequence of budget cuts. In January, for example, *Education Week* (2011) found that 46 states have cut public services since 2008; to soften the blow, 29 of those states also granted school districts greater flexibility in their use of funds. We expect this trend to grow in education and other community service sectors, and we believe, with the help of excellent partners and the financial abilities of M&T, we will be at the forefront of innovation in this area.

For COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 4—please see pages 18-21

Comprehensive Local Early Learning Network