Elev8 Chicago

Vision

Elev8 Chicago seeks to transform the educational achievement and life outcomes of disadvantaged middle school students in five of the city's public schools. Elev8 Chicago envisions these young people graduating from 8th grade ready to make the important choices of adolescence. They will possess a fire for learning, healthy bodies and minds and the support required to succeed in high school and beyond. Elev8 Chicago graduates will enjoy both the skills and the prospects needed for solid careers and fulfilling lives.

To make this vision a reality, Elev8 Chicago will establish networks of relationships among school and community partners to:

- extend the school day with afternoon, weekend and summer programs
- create an on-site, adolescent-focused health center in each school
- provide social supports, including public benefits screening for families, mentoring and help with high school placement
- mobilize parent and community leaders to accelerate change and promote advocacy
- advocate for policies that support similar comprehensive programs in other schools, locally and nationally

Partners and Strategy

The Atlantic Philanthropies and Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Chicago program office (LISC/Chicago) began working together in 2007 to develop Elev8 Chicago. With the Chicago Community Trust as fiscal agent, Atlantic will invest $18 million in the project, which is expected to leverage more than $15 million in additional support.

Atlantic was founded by Charles Feeney, the creator of Duty Free Shops, to change the lives of vulnerable people, especially youth. To hone its strategies and increase its impact, the $4 billion, limited-life foundation will spend down its endowment by 2020. Atlantic founded the Elev8 initiative on the principle that support for the whole child is more effective than approaches that target one need at the expense of others. Atlantic's model for Elev8 includes the following core components: extended-day learning, school-based health care, mentoring and helping families access income supports. Through Elev8, Atlantic plans to create models of comprehensive, school-based support for middle school students and their families, then use those models to advocate for expanding those comprehensive supports at the local, state and federal levels.

To select Elev8 demonstration sites, Atlantic initially reviewed more than 30 cities. Chicago was one of four sites selected for planning grants, and received implementation funding in 2008.

Chicago Planning Process

LISC began the Elev8 Chicago planning process by creating “The Elev8 Chicago Committee” to guide and support the work of local partners. The Committee is chaired by Julia Stasch of The MacArthur Foundation. Members include civic leaders from Chicago Public Schools, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Polk Bros. Foundation, Michael Reese Health Trust, the City of Chicago's
Departments of Health and of Children and Youth Services, the Federation for Community Schools, and The Chicago Community Trust.

To find suitable school-community partnerships, LISC searched within its New Communities Program, which operates in 16 Chicago neighborhoods. A lead agency in each neighborhood works with scores of partners on quality of life issues such as public safety, commercial development and opportunities for youth. Nine of the NCP lead agencies were invited to partner with a local middle school (or elementary school serving middle school students) and respond to an RFP seeking participants in Elev8-Chicago. After a careful review of the RFP responses and site visits to each school, five school/community partnerships were selected as sites for Elev8-Chicago.

Each partnership then undertook a rigorous planning process to determine how to create and strengthen the elements of Elev8 in their school and community. The teams held 25 meetings in the first 28 days of the process and over 400 people participated, representing every stakeholder group.

During the planning process, Chicago's local partners added an important new element to the core components of Atlantic's Elev8 model: Parental and Community Involvement. Each organization participating in the process knows it must engage parents and community members in the on-going implementation of Elev8 Chicago. Their participation builds and sustains the effort while ensuring accountability for implementation.

While reaching out to community stakeholders through the planning process, each NCP lead agency worked with its school to secure additional the partners necessary for the success of Elev8 Chicago: a health partner, the local Center for Working Families (CWF) and social service providers.

The following chart lists each lead agency, school, key health partner and other Elev8 partners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Agency</th>
<th>School</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Health Partner</th>
<th>Additional Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logan Square Neighborhood Association-LSNA</td>
<td>Ames</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>PrimeCare</td>
<td>Advocate Behavioral Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SouthWest Organizing Project-SWOP</td>
<td>Marquette</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>Metropolitan Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Resurrection Project-TRP</td>
<td>Orozco</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>Alivio</td>
<td>Pilsen Neighborhood Community Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation-GADC</td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>St. Sabina CWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad Communities Development Corporation-QCDC</td>
<td>Reavis</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Near North Health</td>
<td>The Cara Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,417</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected Outcomes and Progress to Date

Through the Elev8 Chicago planning process, key common outcome objectives were identified for each of the core components: learning, health, social supports and parental and community involvement. However, each school will achieve these outcomes in ways tailored to its unique community and circumstances.

By the end of 2009, each school was offering 15-30 extended programs to students, all five health centers were open and serving students and their families, the CWFs were seeing parents and providing access to benefits and financial coaching, parent engagement had increased dramatically at each school, and an advocacy campaign to support long-term sustainability was underway.

The common outcome objectives for Elev8 Chicago are listed below, with some examples of locally-tailored methods to achieve them.

Extended Day and Learning
The Extended Day and Learning outcome objectives for Elev8 Chicago are:

• Through extended time for learning and exposure to well-trained staff, students will demonstrate strong academic and social growth.
• Students will gain the organizational skills and habits needed to succeed in high school and the work place.

At Marquette, the school has expanded its International Baccalaureate program to all middle-school students (up from about 1/3) and extended the school day by one hour. At Reavis, the school focuses on departmentalizing the middle school students, improving teacher quality, and implementing a Saturday and Summer school program. Orozco focuses their extended day programming on students who are below grade level.

Health
The Health outcome objectives for Elev8 Chicago are:

• All students will have access to quality health services and will understand how exercise and nutrition contribute to good health.
• Educational programs and on-site services will span all aspects of physical and mental health, from hygiene and dental care to mental health and psycho-social development, with an emphasis on prevention.
• All graduates will know how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and have the ability to apply responsible decision-making skills with regard to their personal health.

In addition to the health centers, individual schools are creating their own strategies to enhance student health. At Orozco, Alivio Medical Center will run the health center while working with students to understand potential careers in the health care field. Perspectives has created healthier meals for students, while at Ames, the Chicago Women's Health Center provides comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education to all students. All the Elev8 schools receive a monthly visit from the Advocate dental van to provide high-quality dental services to students.

Social Supports
The Social Supports outcome objectives for Elev8 Chicago are:

• Parents will gain access to public benefits and learn financial skills that help them provide a stable home environment.
• Students will have access to educational and emotional support from parents, teachers, their peers and the community.

• A comprehensive support system will help students become respectful, civic-minded, caring and academically successful human beings.

At each school, the local CWFs are meeting with parents to provide financial services. At Marquette, Metropolitan Family Services and the school social workers combine efforts to see that the social and emotional needs of all children are met. At Perspectives, the schools “A Disciplined Life” curriculum is integrated into all elements of the program to build students’ character.

Parental and Community Involvement
The Parental and Community Involvement outcome objectives for Elev8 Chicago are:
• Parents will increase their involvement in the life of the school.
• Parents will build their capacity to advocate on behalf of their families by increasing their leadership skills and involvement in public life.
• Students and families will access community services that reduce student mobility and help students succeed in school.

LSNA and SWOP have expanded their Parent-Mentor programs to serve middle school students at Ames and Marquette. Orozco offers classes to over 150 parents each week on a variety of topics.

Advocacy
As envisioned by Atlantic and LISC/Chicago, Elev8 is not just an effort to improve five schools, but an effort to create models and use them to advocate for strong supports for middle-school youth and their families at the local, state, and federal level. The Chicago advocacy effort is led by the Federation for Community Schools with participation from all the Elev8 organizations and additional advocacy partners. The outcome objectives for advocacy are:
• Parents and communities will be more aware of the need for federal, state and local support for integrated schools that include extended-day programming, on-site health care and benefits support to families.
• School communities will work with others to develop sustainable funding sources for programs in the Elev8 Chicago demonstration schools and other schools with similar programming.

Financing and Support for Implementation
The Atlantic Philanthropies has committed to invest $18 million in Elev8 Chicago to support the transformation of five middle schools and an advocacy campaign that uses these schools as a model for comprehensive middle school reform. Atlantic and LISC expect this initial investment to leverage an additional $15.8 million in new or redirected support from local foundations, government agencies and the Chicago Public Schools.

Initial Elev8 Chicago implementation runs from January of 2008 until June of 2011. During this time, the local partners will implement their plans with support from LISC and leadership from the Elev8 Chicago Committee.