

Community Schools - The Case for Joint Use

Yasmin Bowers, MSPH

New Partners for Smart Growth

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Projector Director, Healthy School Environments

American Association of School Administrators



Objectives

- Background on AASA and Healthy School Environments
- Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)
 - Healthy School Environments
 - Neighborhood Schools Initiative
- MPS's Mary McLeod Bethune Academy and Smart Growth
- Results and Community Impact

AASA and Healthy School Environments

- AASA is a national membership organization for K-12 school administrators
- Funded through an EPA cooperative agreement for 10 years
- Promote the EPA's model of Health School Environments and Indoor Air Quality—Tools for Schools
- School Siting with EPA, SRTS, Coalition of Green Schools

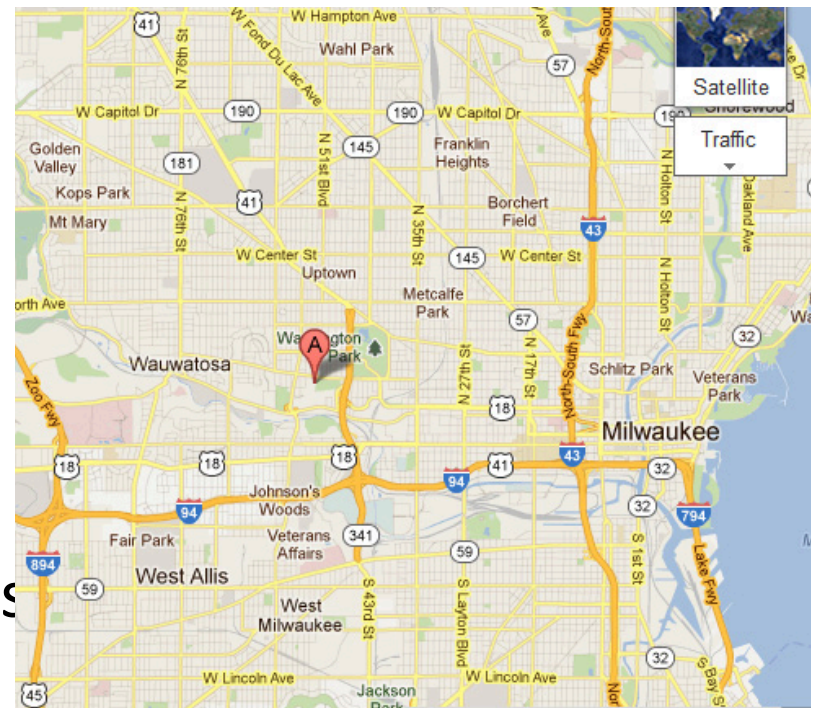
AASA's Urban and Rural Healthy School Coalition



Milwaukee Public Schools

Demographics: 89,912 students (2007) ; 11,100 full-time and substitute teachers; 323 schools (2006)

- 56.6% African American
- 22.6% Hispanic
- 11.9% White
- 4.8% Asian
- .8% Native American and
- 3.2% Other
- 19.2% Special Education
- 9.5% English Language Learners
- 80.9% Low Income



Milwaukee Public Schools and Healthy School Environments

- The MPS Board and superintendents have supported IAQ and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) since 1995
- IAQ and IPM once was the responsibility of the division of Facilities and Maintenance, but now includes several departments and divisions within MPS
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Science and Art
 - Career and technical Education
 - Benefits and Insurance
- MPS's implementation of TfS

What is a Smart Growth School?

- Encourages community involvement
- Allows students to walk or bike to school
- Acts as a neighborhood anchor, supports community use of school facilities
- Fits in well with neighborhood
- Makes good use of existing resources, such as historic school buildings
- Small in size

What are the benefits of Smart Growth Schools?

- Improve Educational Outcomes
- Save Money
- Promote Greater Community Involvement
- Improve Student Health and Environmental Quality

Milwaukee Public Schools-Neighborhood Schools Initiative

- Established in 1999 to offer incentives for MPS to increase the use of its neighborhood schools
- \$98 million in state funds
- Reduce transportation costs—currently spend \$50 million/yr
- Mary McLeod Bethune Academy was first initiative, replacing 37th Street School

Milwaukee Public Schools Bethune Academy

- Design goals from the Charrette
 - breakout areas
 - flexible layouts to support direct instruction with very small groups
 - a community center for students and residents of all ages
 - green space
 - ensuring safety



37th Street School

Milwaukee Public Schools- Neighborhood Schools Initiative

- MPS parents had the following requests:
 - Before- and after-school programs
 - Lower student-to-teacher ratios
 - Improved neighborhood safety
 - Full-day four- and five-year-old kindergarten programs
 - Greater availability of bilingual teachers
 - Involvement and support of neighborhood organizations

MPS Bethune Academy—Housing

- To obtain the 5.5 acres of land for Bethune Academy, the City of Milwaukee asked MPS to replace each demolished house on a 2:1 basis-- two new houses for every one house demolished
- Other organizations participated in this effort-- Habitat for Humanity and the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority

Bethune Academy School Features

- 70,000-square-foot, two-story school that encompasses an entire city block
- The gymnasium, cafeteria, art and music rooms, and parent center are open to the community
- Cafeteria and gymnasium on the north side of the building connect by an operable wall that can be opened for larger events/meetings
- The parent center is located next to the 35th St entrance and is arranged as a community center with pool tables, exercise equipment, and pub-style seating
- The school can host outdoor recreational and community functions, such as a Farmers' Market, providing amenities to strengthen the school's community

Bethune Academy--Results

- Increased home ownership and enhanced the cohesiveness of the surrounding community
- \$15 million into the local housing market
- 57 new housing units within the school's attendance area; another 34 units within a four-block radius (total 91 homes built)
- Community center has increased parents' and citizens' understanding and interest in the learning process

Bethune Academy--Results

- K-5th grade in 2005; each year add the next grade; first 8th grade class graduated in 2007
- The school started the 2005 year with 290 students, and currently have over 490 students
- Early anecdotal discussion with the principal showed increased attendance and student achievement the year after moving into the new facility

Bethune Academy Challenges

- Harmonizing the neighborhood's and school district's requests with the City of Milwaukee planning guidelines
- Increasing enrollment
- Decreasing transportation costs

Bethune Academy-- Smart Growth

- MPS's approach and goals just happened to align and incorporate smart growth concepts-- didn't actually focus on "smart growth principles"
- Smart growth principles include part of the fundamental ideas that the NSI program tried to achieve

Bethune Academy—Smart Growth

- In terms of equity, MPS reviewed the poor condition of the old building, the small inadequate site and planned a school that would improve the community as a whole--housing, green space, and improved traffic patterns
- “The ultimate goals of the NSI Plan are to create desirable schools in every neighborhood, increase the number of neighborhood seats, improve parents’ choices of neighborhood schools and improve our children’s education.”

Conclusion

- There are overlapping goals within AASA's Healthy School Environments and Smart Growth
- Some cities, such as Milwaukee, are successfully redeveloping communities by integrating new schools into their overall plans
- MMBA exemplifies the impact that a school can have on a community: continued education, home ownership, and resources of a community center

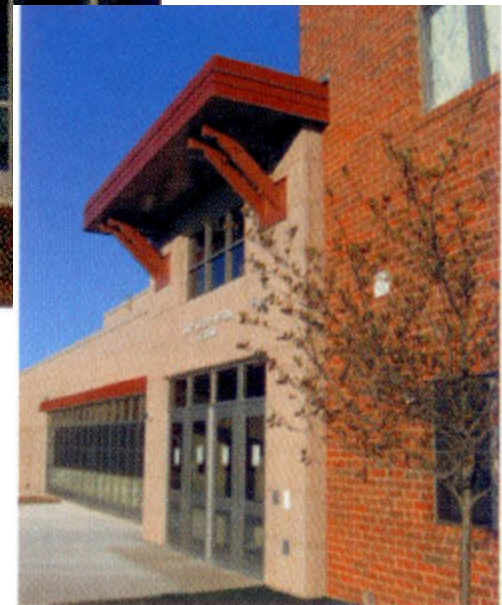
“Maybe when more **school** districts find it necessary to reduce transportation costs by returning to neighborhood schools, maybe when the emerging trend toward smaller, more manageable **school** catches on, maybe those goals will combine with community redevelopment goals and finally bring schools into the **planning** mix.” —Michael Fickes SP&M 2007

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"Not For Myself, But For Others."—Mary Mcleod Bethune



Acknowledgements

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Michelle Lenski, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Michael Gutierrez, Milwaukee Public Schools

References

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