Expanded Shared-Use in the Roosevelt School District: A Health Impact Assessment

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center's (SIRC) Office of Evaluation & Partner Contracts at Arizona State University (ASU) collaborated with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health in their assessment of the potential health impacts associated with expanding shared use (i.e., community access to district-owned properties) within the Roosevelt School District (RSD). Geographically, RSD includes approximately the area in Phoenix, Arizona between 35th Ave. and 40th St. from Lower Buckeye Rd. to the South Mountain Preserve. This study was part of a health impact assessment funded through a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust, with funding from the de Beaumont Foundation.

Specifically, this study examined the extent to which expanding shared use within RSD would affect health outcomes such as mental health, chronic disease, injury, and stress along five primary pathways of change:

1) Community enrichment/Civic pride
2) Health eating
3) Physical activity
4) Neighborhood/Public safety
5) Maintenance/Operations

Methodology & Samples

Data were collected through a multi-method approach consisting of archival data, focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews, and community mapping sessions.

Archival Data

Data were collected from the research literature regarding the expected community, health, and fiscal impacts associated with community use of school properties and facilities before and after normal school hours. Existing research studies, reports, and documentation from comparable school districts within Phoenix were collected and used to further elucidate the potential impacts of expanding shared use within RSD.

Focus Groups

One youth and two adult focus groups were conducted, one in English and one in Spanish. Participant characteristics were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth (n=10)</th>
<th>Community members (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 11-16 (average = 13 years)</td>
<td>Ages 22-49 (average = 43 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% Female</td>
<td>85% Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% Latino</td>
<td>85% Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% Black/African-American</td>
<td>15% Black/African-American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Surveys**

Paper questionnaires were administered in both English and Spanish to youth and adults living or working within RSD boundaries. Due to limited youth participation, results from youth surveys were excluded from this report.

The adult sample consisted of 225 participants with the following characteristics:

- Ages 19-92 (average = 42 years)
- 86% RSD residents
- 76% Female
- 73% Latino
- 15% Black/African-American
- 70% Parents (of children under age 18)

**Key Informant Interviews**

Nineteen key informants participated in face-to-face, telephone, or online interviews. These informants represented the positions/organizations listed below. All informants worked within the Roosevelt School District (RSD) or its geographic boundaries, except the individual representing Washington Elementary School District, a comparable school district in northwest Phoenix.

- City of Phoenix Fire Department
- City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation (2)
- City of Phoenix Police Department (2)
- Community Youth Development Program
- Health Improvement Partnership of Maricopa County
- Maricopa County Department of Public Health
- Orchard Community Learning Center
- Parent Education Resource Center
- Roosevelt School District
- School Principals (2)
- South Mountain WORKS! Coalition
- Southwest Behavioral Health Services (2)
- Teacher/Former student council sponsor
- Unlimited Potential
- Washington Elementary School District

**Community Mapping Sessions**

Community members (ages 18 or older) were recruited to participate in two community mapping sessions with a total of 39 individuals participating. Large scale maps of the Roosevelt School District were printed and displayed on three to six different tables per session. Community members sat around the maps and used tokens to mark their responses to a series of questions about their behavior, their families’ behavior, and their community on the maps. Each participant also completed a complementary questionnaire.
Summary of Findings

Residents within the Roosevelt School District care for their community and value expanded shared use, particularly for the opportunities it might open up to increased activity among youth. Additionally, residents noted a desire and commitment toward improving their community for current and future generations. However, residents, leaders, and district personnel emphatically emphasized that a number of barriers, concerns, and needs must be addressed before expanded shared use could be successfully implemented.

**Barriers, Concerns, and Needs Regarding Shared Use**

The primary barriers and concerns expressed by the RSD community regarding shared use included the following:

- Safety, Security, and Crime
- Lack of Proper Supervision, Staffing, and Volunteers
- School District Infrastructure and Maintenance
- Costs
- Leadership and Transparency
- Communication between the District, School, and Community

**Perceived Benefits of Shared Use in RSD**

RSD stakeholders also identified a number of benefits that shared use could provide to students, staff, and families in the RSD district, primarily in the areas of community enrichment/civic pride and physical activity. Notably, they emphasized that these benefits could only occur if all of the above concerns, barriers, and needs were addressed. Still, they expressed hope and demand for the success of shared use.

- **Community Enrichment through Collaboration and Partnership**
  Shared use likely can enrich the good work of both school and community leaders and partners in the RSD community. A direct outcome of shared use that was discovered is that shared use will increase access to community meeting and gathering spaces. Another outcome, if the above concerns are addressed, are more open communication channels between community organizations, the local schools and the school district. Overall, there was a strong interest expressed by community leaders to enter into greater collaboration and partnership with local schools through hosting programs, classes, and events outside of normal school hours. Such collaboration and partnership may help indirectly inspire a sense of ownership over the school spaces, which could lead to cleaner and safer schools during off hours.

- **Physical Activity Improvement**
  Shared use likely can improve physical activity in the RSD area by directly providing increased access to recreational spaces. This notion is especially more salient for youth rather than adults. Youth were seen to be more likely to take advantage of open schools, especially if they lived in neighborhoods where local
parks were not close. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for structured and planned physical activities for local youth so that improvement in physical activity could actually occur.

Recommendations

1) Address safety, security, and vandalism/graffiti issues within RSD in order to encourage residents to become more active and involved within their community and schools

2) Identify or hire a centralized staff person whose primary responsibilities include facility-use scheduling, outreach, and volunteer recruitment and coordination

3) Work with schools, the district, and community organizations to identify and schedule structured activities in support of community health and wellbeing prior to implementation of expanded shared use policies

4) Improve communication among schools, the district, community organizations and residents

5) Enhance efficiency and understanding of the facility rental process by providing easy, online access for community members and organizations

6) Identify additional funding sources and partners to alleviate the burden of potential increases in expenses associated with expanded shared use

7) Collaborate with City of Phoenix police to identify and target schools for expanded shared use that most closely align with CPTED guidelines and are in areas not already served by high quality parks

8) Join the Arizona Community Education Association (AzCEA) to network and receive support from other facility use coordinators statewide