INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Innovations in Community Development is a series of descriptions of effective community revitalization programs, many of which were developed by Enterprise in partnership with nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, local governments and corporations. Enterprise is a national nonprofit dedicated to improving affordable housing and life opportunities for low-income families and communities. You can find these and other resources to support local revitalization efforts online at www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources.

THE ENTERPRISE BALTIMORE EDUCATION INITIATIVE: INNOVATIVE SCHOOL REFORM Responds To Multiple Challenges

As part of a comprehensive neighborhood transformation effort, Enterprise Baltimore works to improve the quality of education at two inner-city public schools.

Summary

Research has shown that when schools have dedicated teachers and principals, high academic expectations, quality curriculum and programming, the support and involvement of parents and strong ties to the surrounding community, students perform better, stay in school longer and are more likely to move on to jobs and higher education. Parents, schools and neighborhoods benefit from school reform. Enterprise’s Baltimore Education Initiative was created to help create such opportunities for the Sandtown-Winchester community in west Baltimore. Launched in 1995, this initiative has raised the test scores and improved the quality of education for students at two of the city’s worst performing elementary schools.

Since 1998, working in partnership with the Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative, standardized test scores for George G. Kelson Elementary/Middle School and William H. Pinderhughes Elementary School have improved. Pinderhughes’ first grade students went from scoring well below the city average for reading to second among all Baltimore City Public Schools, with 92 percent of the children meeting national standards for first grade reading in 2001. That same year, 89 percent of the first graders at Pinderhughes met national standards for math as well. In 1997, only 15.4 percent of the fifth-grade students at Kelson scored satisfactory or excellent on the Maryland State Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) in language usage, but by 2002 (the last year MSPAP was administered), 53.5 percent scored that well – a 247 percent increase. Both Pinderhughes and Kelson met Annual Yearly Progress requirements in 2003 and 2004 on the newly administered Maryland State Assessment, and Pinderhughes met Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for 2005 as well.

The education reform effort in Baltimore’s Sandtown-Winchester community is a key component of the larger Neighborhood Transformation Initiative – a nationally recognized, comprehensive community revitalization effort
begun in 1990. Residents, local officials and Enterprise joined in a commitment to transform the neighborhood by simultaneously improving housing, jobs, health care, safety and education. Research demonstrates that having a decent place to call home enhances a child's chances of academic success, and that education reform can serve as a catalyst for neighborhood transformation. This education initiative is a partnership among Enterprise, residents, local elected officials, Baltimore City Public Schools and other nonprofit organizations.

Though public school reform efforts have been in existence since the 1960s and '70s, the importance of research-based curriculum and evaluation standards only gained prominence within the last decade. As a result, theories for boosting student achievement are emerging and re-emerging with vigor. Some focus directly on academic interventions, either supplementing or dramatically altering existing school curriculum. Others are more comprehensive, focusing simultaneously on issues in school and out of school. School leadership and management, technical assistance, teacher quality and professional development, resource allocation and the integration of family support services – in addition to academic curriculum interventions – are facets of comprehensive reform efforts.

The Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative has proven an innovative and successful comprehensive reform effort by working closely with the city school leadership as well as the families in the community and by combining a continuum of rigorous academic intervention and instruction with the community-based delivery of key family support services. This initiative is not only dramatically improving the education of children within its scope, it has also led the way for reform of other Baltimore City schools.

**Community Need**

Today throughout the city of Baltimore, 40 percent of children live in poverty. Nearly three out of four are not ready to learn when they enter school, and almost 50 percent do not complete high school. Studies show that children from distressed communities are at high risk of failure even before their first day of school.

When the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative began in 1990, the 10,000 residents living in a 72-square-block area that is Sandtown-Winchester were grappling with many of the issues plaguing inner-city neighborhoods across the nation:
- Half of all residents lived in poverty.
- Five of six children lived in single-parent, female-headed households.
- Nearly half of all eligible residents were unemployed and an equal number were on public assistance.
- Almost 75 percent of the housing was dilapidated, and more than 600 vacant units blighted the neighborhood.
- Drug and criminal activity challenged the well-being of the community and its residents.
- Neighborhood students consistently performed below state standards.

When Enterprise launched its education initiative in Sandtown-Winchester in 1995, efforts already were underway to address many of these issues. The time was right to open the books on academics.
Organization and Service Area

The Sandtown-Winchester community population is 98 percent African American. The number of single-parent households is more than 20 percent higher than the citywide average, and nearly half of all families have incomes below $12,000, with 81 percent of students qualifying for free/reduced meals. Crime statistics from 2001 show the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood still suffers from high rates of murder, rape and other violent crime and has the third highest rate of juvenile arrests in Baltimore City. Neighborhood crimes are often drug-related as the streets are home to several “open-air” drug markets. The community’s high rate of substance abuse and drug-related crime doubly impacts children’s academic success. Drug use in the home weakens family cohesiveness, promotes school truancy and lowers academic performance.

Area schools also suffer from a low parental involvement rate, with only 6 percent of parents with students at either Kelson or Pinderhughes Elementary actively involved in the school community. This rate may not, however, reflect a lack of interest. Some parents’ own educational experiences leave them feeling uncomfortable with school environments or unsure of their ability to make a valuable contribution. For many others, the demands of providing for their family’s everyday basic needs must take priority over their children’s learning and education. The schools also have a constant influx of new students, with an average mobility rate of the schools’ populations at 42 percent. Many of these children and their families are in need of information on local resources and often look to the school for support.

Sandtown-Winchester’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, which began in 1990, was influenced by all of these factors. It was designed with several core components, including a comprehensive vision for ending poverty; a strategy that simultaneously addressed social, economic and physical conditions; a partnership that linked the public and private sectors; a commitment to building capacity and ownership within individuals and the community; and efforts to leverage public investment and will on behalf of social change.

Each partner in the initiative — the mayor, the residents and Enterprise — was expected to invest in the initiative. The city would provide resources and support from its agencies. Enterprise would facilitate the process by bringing together stakeholders, raising funds, and providing management and technical support. Community members were expected to identify goals, bring internal resources to bear on key priorities and lead local change efforts.

The Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative, however, was to be run differently from the transformation of Sandtown-Winchester as a whole. Through the Education Initiative, Enterprise would work directly with the schools and engage local partners and consultants as needed. Three public elementary schools – Kelson, Pinderhughes and Gilmor – serving more than 1,100 children in Sandtown-Winchester were originally included in this initiative. However, in 1996, Gilmor was named reconstitution eligible, a probationary status for poorly performing schools. In
2000, it was placed under state reconstitution. The state chose a for-profit company to manage Gilmor, and Enterprise reluctantly ceased involvement in the reform of Gilmor Elementary School.

**Project Description and Implementation**

A recent study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University has shown what residents long have known: The quality of the neighborhood public schools significantly impacts the quality of the neighborhood. Yet, the complexity of public school reform – the myriad stakeholders and legislative constraints – makes it a strenuous process that requires long-term, sustained efforts from all parties involved. The Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative began with a commitment from the residents. In 1993, a nonprofit corporation called Community Building in Partnership was formed to represent the Sandtown-Winchester community as it worked to transform itself.

The agreement for school reform, called a compact, was a legal resolution between local residents, Baltimore City Public Schools, each of the elementary schools, Baltimore City government, Enterprise and Community Building in Partnership (CBP). The compact detailed the duties and responsibilities of each party to bring about transformation in the designated schools. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners adopted the resolution in 1994. The Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative is a series of interdependent components that address preschool learning, fundamental academic instruction, supplemental academic opportunities and critical human services support. Together, these components build a continuum of rigorous academic intervention, robust education and effective family support.

**Preschool learning**

Intervention begins at age three, with formalized, home instruction through the national Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program. HIPPY recognizes that parents are their children’s first teachers, and it supports them by providing developmentally-appropriate learning activities they can do with their children in the home. It helps improve parent-child communication, and it fosters parental involvement in school and the community.

HIPPY is community-based support: neighbors helping neighbors. This is key to its success. Neighborhood residents are hired and trained to make weekly visits to the homes of parents to teach the structured HIPPY curriculum. Each family receives weekly activity packets, storybooks, school supplies such as scissors, glue and crayons and a set of manipulative shapes. During the visits, HIPPY staff role-play activities with the parents, so that the parents can conduct daily, 20-minute educational activities with their children – all that is needed to make these children well prepared for kindergarten.

Because many participating families live in poverty and are faced with critical life situations brought on by financial hardships and neighborhood conditions, the Enterprise HIPPY program has established a comprehensive referral and follow-up system that allows families to access a network of service providers. These services include emergency food or housing, health care, substance-abuse treatment, job readiness skills training, job search assistance, literacy
assistance and family counseling. HIPPY currently issues an average of 25 written referrals each month. This unique feature of the Enterprise HIPPY program helps meet the immediate needs of HIPPY parents, clearing the way for them to devote time to the developmental needs of their children.

**Fundamental academic instruction**
Over the past decade, the Enterprise education team has developed and implemented supportive academic programming at George G. Kelson Elementary/Middle School and William H. Pinderhughes Elementary School in order to facilitate superior teaching and learning. Instruction is based on two nationally recognized, research-based teaching methods: Direct Instruction and Core Knowledge. Much of the improvements in school test scores are a direct result of the implementation of Direct Instruction, a highly structured, intensive teaching method designed to help children achieve 100-percent mastery of a subject. It is based on creator Siegfried Engelmann’s theory that children can learn at accelerated rates if educators deliver instructions in a clear, scripted manner.

Direct Instruction is offered in tandem with Core Knowledge, which asserts that there is a lasting body of knowledge shared by a literate society, and that this knowledge should form the core of elementary and middle school curriculum. The curriculum is demanding and sequenced, with specifically prescribed content taught at each grade level (PreK-8) in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts and fine arts. Core Knowledge is being implemented in more than 350 schools in 40 states. The Baltimore Education Initiative has provided teachers with training in both Direct Instruction and Core Knowledge.

**Supplemental academic opportunities**
Additional academic supports are available through library renovations, a computer lab, music enrichment programs and summer school programs.

Kelson Elementary/Middle School’s library was in total disrepair – it had no librarian, and there was no system for checking out the outdated books on its shelves. Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse (a Baltimore-based real estate development company) gutted and rebuilt the library, and Enterprise coordinated funding for a staff librarian. The Pinderhughes library needed new paint, carpeting and furnishings. The school administration was able to realign the budget to provide for a full-time librarian. A donation from Verizon Foundation enabled Enterprise to purchase several computers, printers, automation equipment and photocopiers for each school. Each library created a parent resource center to provide information on topics such as child development, parenting techniques and advocating for children’s learning. The centers also provide financial literacy materials, community resource binders, and adult literacy as well as information on obtaining a high school graduate equivalency diploma. Each library also created a professional development section to assist teachers with their instructional needs. In 2001, renovations were completed on the newly named media centers.
The James Rouse Computer Lab at Kelson Elementary/Middle School was established in 1997, in honor of the late Enterprise co-founder. The lab featured 15 computers, a server and printers. In 1998, the Patty Rouse Computer Lab was established at Pinderhughes, in honor of Enterprise Co-Founder Patricia Rouse, widow of James Rouse. The labs are open to all residents of the community. When the lab opened, parents took computer classes in the morning and late afternoon hours, and students used the lab during the school day. A parent from the community served as the lab’s manager. Continued support from the Verizon Foundation has allowed Enterprise to add additional computers and upgrade existing computers at both schools’ labs.

In 1999, the initiative’s music program began with a general music curriculum and individual instrument instruction at Kelson. Through this program, students can take general music classes or receive instruction for keyboard, string, brass and woodwind instruments. Beginning with the 2002-'03 school year, Baltimore City Public Schools funded a full-time instrumental music teacher at Kelson. Enterprise also supports a music program at Pinderhughes, where students can take general music classes or receive instruction in keyboard, string, and woodwind instruments. All of the music instructors at Pinderhughes are master’s candidates or graduates of Baltimore’s prestigious Peabody Conservatory of Music.

From 1997 to 2001, the Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative also provided summer programming for students, parents and teachers of the targeted elementary schools.

**Human services support**

Other services, such as health and mental health clinics within the schools, a mentoring program for young girls and the planned creation of Community Resource Centers provide additional support to help the students succeed.

A novel component of the education initiative is the health and mental health clinics for students on-site at the targeted schools. The clinics cover basic medical needs including cuts, stomach aches and medication. Referrals to outside providers are given when needed. Students receive one-on-one counseling at the schools through mental health professionals from the University of Maryland. They and their families can also receive referrals for additional counseling if necessary through the University of Maryland Medical System. General dental screening and intervention is available, as is a cavity-preventing dental sealant program. Since the 1997-’98 school year, a nurse has been on staff part-time at each school to provide preventive and primary health care services and a nurse practitioner is available once each week for more intensive treatment. Since 2002, the Baltimore City Health Department has been staffing the physical health portions of the program.

During the 2001-'02 school year, the Enterprise Women’s Network began a mentoring program to provide personal support and cultural enrichment to a group of 8- to 13-year-old girls attending Kelson and Pinderhughes. The program provides one-on-one supportive relationships for the girls with their mentors. They meet twice monthly as a group to discuss topics such as physical health and hygiene, self-esteem and self-respect, social etiquette, personal
interests and hobbies, study skills and personal finance. The students participate in field trips to broaden their horizons, visiting such places as the Baltimore Museum of Art and participating in activities run by the Living Classrooms Foundation and Outward Bound. The young girls learn new skills, find new hobbies, and through the process, improve their self-esteem, learn effective study habits, increase their confidence with their physical appearance and expand their social etiquette skills.

A Community Resource Center is scheduled for implementation in the 2005-'06 school year at Kelson Elementary/Middle. This center will serve as the hub of the school’s supplementary and enhancement activities and be the coordinating umbrella for supportive services for students and their families. Plans are also underway to open a similar center at Pinderhughes during the following school year. (See Future Plans for more information on the Community Resource Centers.)

**Keeping opportunity alive**

The results of this comprehensive effort were inspiring, and the partners of the Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative wanted to assure the students graduating from Kelson and Pinderhughes had an opportunity to continue their success as they headed to middle school. So during the 2001-'02 school year, Direct Instruction was implemented at Harlem Park Middle School. However, issues within the middle school made academic reform impossible. The school was placed under local reconstitution in January 2002, and Enterprise agreed to temporarily halt all reform efforts.

In order to preserve the graduating elementary school students’ academic gains, staff from the Enterprise Baltimore Education Initiative, together with the schools’ principals, the Enterprise Women’s Network and Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse, petitioned the Board of School Commissioners to expand Kelson to eighth grade. The petition was granted in June 2003, and one new grade level has been added each school year, with elementary school students from both Kelson and Pinderhughes filling the new grade levels. The final grade, eighth, will open at Kelson in the fall of 2005. To accommodate the additional students, a number of improvements worth in excess of $500,000 were made, including construction of new classrooms and a new art room and science lab for Kelson. Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse donated all of the physical renovations related to this project.

Since the program’s inception, local companies such as Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse have joined with community members and national organizations to help ensure the Baltimore Education Initiative’s continued success in creating new educational opportunities for Sandtown-Winchester’s children and families.

**Partners**

The Baltimore Education Initiative has been made possible through the continuing support of its partners:

- The Baltimore City Public School System, including the principals, teachers and administrators of Kelson Elementary/Middle and Pinderhughes Elementary
Financing

Since its inception, the Baltimore Education Initiative has had financial and in-kind support from a wealth of partners:

- Annenberg Foundation
- Kellogg Foundation
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- The Enterprise Women’s Network
- Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse
- Verizon Foundation
- Wieler Family Foundation
- Kelson Friends
- Bank of America
- M&T Bank (formerly Allfirst Bank)
- Clayton Fund
- Baltimore Community Fund
- Constellation Energy
- Baltimore City Mayor’s Office
- Piper Rudnick
- Lockhart Vaughn
- Macht Foundation
- W. Alton Jones
- Chesapeake Bay Trust
- Outward Bound
- Fannie Mae Foundation

The HIPPY program:

- Annenberg Foundation
- Bank of America
- M&T Bank (formerly known as Allfirst Bank)
- Enterprise Women’s Network
- Clayton Fund
- Kellogg Foundation
- Baltimore Community Fund
- Constellation Energy
- T. Rowe Price
- Piper Rudnick
- Lockhart Vaughn
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Baltimore City Healthy Start/Success By Six Collaborative

Library renovations and the creation of media centers:
- Wieler Family Foundation
- Verizon Foundation
- Enterprise Women’s Network
- Kellogg Foundation
- Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse
- Gilman Lower School

Computer labs:
- Annenberg Foundation
- Fannie Mae Foundation
- Verizon Foundation

Music programs:
- Kelson Friends
- Annenberg Foundation
- Enterprise Women’s Network
- Macht Foundation

Health clinics:
- Annenberg Foundation
- Kellogg Foundation

Mentoring program:
- Enterprise Women’s Network
- Mary Wollford Foundation
Community resource center:
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Enterprise Women’s Network
- Legg Mason
- Constellation Energy
- France Merrick
- Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Section 4
- Wieler Family Foundation

**Sustainability Features**

The partnerships built by the Baltimore Education Initiative have been and continue to be crucial to the sustainability of the program. The success of the initiative’s academic interventions has also contributed to its sustainability. In fact, 17 public schools in Baltimore City have adopted the same academic interventions used under the Baltimore Education Initiative. The implementation of Direct Instruction at all Baltimore City schools using the curriculum program is funded by the Baltimore City Public School System. In addition, the city’s school system created a Direct Instruction administrative district to oversee implementation of the program.

The system recently evaluated its Direct Instruction program and recommended continuation of the reading component, more dialogue about the mathematics and a second evaluation conducted in 2005-'06 along with an evaluation of the Core Knowledge curriculum. Enterprise is also participating on the Baltimore Leadership in Action team for the city to improve school-readiness for children citywide. Other partners in this effort include The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Family League, Head Start and the Maryland Committee for Children.

The Baltimore City Health Department now staffs the in-school clinics at both Kelson and Pinderhughes, and the University of Maryland staffs the mental health clinics. The librarians’ salaries have become part of the schools’ budgets and the neighborhood residents staff the HIPPY program. Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse, a local real estate developer, has provided more than $500,000 towards the physical renovation of both the schools and their libraries. These local investments ensure a longer life for the improvements. Hiring a full-time music teacher at Kelson whose salary is covered by Baltimore City Public Schools enabled the education initiative to offer music programming at Pinderhughes as well.

The Community Resource Center that is scheduled to open at Kelson during the 2005-'06 school year will more directly connect the surrounding community to the school, therefore maintaining and expanding current partnerships.
Program Status and Accomplishments

Direct Instruction/ Core Knowledge
Under the Direct Instruction and Core Curriculum programs, students at Kelson and Pinderhughes have made significant improvements in academic performance, as measured by standardized test scores. Within the first few years, at both schools, the percentage of students scoring at a satisfactory level increased on 11 of the 12 subject areas tested on Maryland’s standardized Maryland State Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). Furthermore, the percentage increased by more than 10 points on five or more tests at each school.

The MSPAP scores at Pinderhughes improved so greatly through the Baltimore Education Initiative’s efforts that, in 2000, the school received an award from the State of Maryland for four years of continual growth in students’ scores. In 1997, only 2.4 percent of Pinderhughes fifth graders scored satisfactory or excellent on the MSPAP in math. By 2001, this number had jumped to 42.8 percent.

Kelson students met with similar success. In 1997, only 15.4 percent of the fifth-grade students at Kelson scored satisfactory or excellent on the MSPAP in language usage, but by 2002 (the last year MSPAP was administered), 53.5 percent scored that well – a 247 percent increase. In the 2001-'02 school year, Kelson was ranked among the 10 most improved schools in grade 5 reading. The school was under local reconstitution status beginning in 1997, but it has demonstrated such significant and consistent progress that the status was recently lifted and Kelson is no longer under reconstitution.

In 2003, Maryland replaced the MSPAP with the Maryland State Assessment (MSA). The MSA tests the reading, writing and math skills of third through eighth grade students. Pinderhughes students have consistently performed quite well on the MSA, meeting adequate yearly progress for all three years that the test has been used. In 2005, 58.1 percent of fifth graders at Pinderhughes scored advanced or proficient in reading on the MSA, an increase from 35 percent in 2004 and slightly higher than the Baltimore City Public Schools 2005 average of 57.6 percent passing.

While Kelson’s scores on the Maryland State Assessment slipped during the 2004-'05 school year from the year before, the school had seen consistent improvement in its test scores since interventions began in 1998. Enterprise and our partners are developing interventions to raise the scores back to their previously improved level. These interventions will include additional professional development for school administrators, after-school programs for students and additional curriculum support for teachers.

By 2001, scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) showed that first grade students at Pinderhughes ranked second among all Baltimore City Public School first graders for reading (92 percent meeting national standards), and they did exceptionally well with their math scores (89 percent meeting national standards). First
graders at Pinderhughes have soared from a median national percentile score of 35 on the CTBS in 1999 to a score of 78 in 2003 – an increase of 123 percent.

From 1998 through 2004 the composite school index scores for Kelson and Pinderhughes on the MSPAP and CTBS standardized tests have increased consistently.

**The HIPPY program**
HIPPY children entering kindergarten and first grade are performing at or above grade level, and their parents are actively involved in their education. To date, the Enterprise Baltimore HIPPY program has helped more than 500 families in Sandtown-Winchester.

**Library renovations**
Media centers at three schools, Kelson, Pinderhughes and Harlem Park, were refurbished with new walls, paint, carpet, light fixtures, furniture (including circulation desks) and shelving. Library equipment now includes computers, printers and photocopiers. Full-time librarians staff each library; and are now permanent positions in the schools’ budgets.

**Computer Labs**
Hundreds of students and neighborhood residents use the computer labs at Kelson and Pinderhughes.

**Music Programs**
All students now have the opportunity for individual music instruction, and 35-40 students at each school receive individual music instruction yearly.

**Health clinics**
At the start of the 1995-’96 school year, 38 percent of the students were delayed admission because of incomplete immunization records. With the creation of the on-site health clinics, 100 percent of the students at Kelson and Pinderhughes were up-to-date on the immunizations from 1997 through 2003.

**Mentoring**
There is one mentor for each of the 35 girls in the Enterprise Women Network’s mentoring program. Each school year, the girls go on three field trips and attend 16 workshops with their mentors.

**Key Lessons**
Over the past nine years, the Baltimore Education Initiative has met with incredible success. Along the way, the Foundation and its partners have learned the following valuable lessons, which can help your organization plan a similar renovation of neighborhood schools.
Establish formal partnerships with a variety of community stakeholders to ensure long-term sustainability.

School reform cannot succeed in isolation. There are a variety of issues outside the classroom that affect student academic performance. Therefore, it is important to first engage all community stakeholders in the process. Creating a formal resolution or “compact” can be symbolic of this. But beyond that, it is important to create formal partnerships with these stakeholders. Often, they can provide valuable services to students, their families, teachers and administrators that will have the ultimate effect of improving the child’s well-being and readiness to learn. Examples from this initiative include the school-based health care services provided by the Baltimore City Health Department; the Community Resource Centers which, when implemented, will provide referrals to students’ families for such services as home-buyer education and counseling and workforce development and training; and the library renovations made by Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse, which provided invaluable benefits to the students.

Select a lead agency.

After amassing a variety of partners, select one to serve as the primary point of contact with the schools and school system and other partners to coordinate major steps toward the end goal. Enterprise Baltimore served as the lead agency for this effort.

Ensure your organization is solidly behind the effort.

A substantial amount of structural and financial support will be needed for any school reform effort. Ensure that these supports are in place – and that they will remain so – for the duration of the intervention period.

Select a valid school reform model that is research-based and tested.

This ensures credibility among other potential supporters, and provides assurance that your efforts to improve academic performance can be successful. Organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers can provide guidance.

Intervene with the youngest ages possible.

Because standardized testing usually begins in the very early years of formal public education (testing begins in first grade in Maryland), it is important to equip students with the skills, tools, attitudes and behaviors that will make them successful at learning before they arrive in first grade. Consequently, full-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs become even more important. The Baltimore HIPPY program is an example of a very effective tool to ensure school readiness.

Recognize the interrelatedness of elementary, middle and high school attitudes and behaviors.

Children’s attitudes toward school, and their behaviors exhibited within, are established during the elementary school years. Therefore, it is important to provide a challenging academic as well as a nurturing and caring environment where children are recognized and rewarded for their academic efforts and achievements. The dramatic difference the
reform effort had created became clear as the students from Kelson and Pinderhughes moved on to the nearby middle school, where they struggled when they did not find the same clean, caring and demanding academic environment. Therefore, it is best to create a strong continuum of learning by starting with an elementary school and working up to the middle and high school levels as the children grow.

**Be patient.**
Transforming schools takes time. You may not see results right away. This is one of the major problems that Enterprise experienced in the beginning. Plan for a realistic timeframe in which to see concrete results. Changes come along with time.

**Be comprehensive.**
Poor academic performance is the manifestation of large and far-reaching issues, such as poor teacher training, unchallenging academic curriculum, disciplinary problems, lack of effective school administrative leadership and support and lack of funding. Coupled with these school-related issues may be family issues at home, including unemployment, single-parent stresses, divorce, substance abuse, physical abuse, child neglect, lack of after-school care or proper supervision during after-school hours, poor or neglected health care and lack of proper nourishment. These issues must be addressed along with academic interventions in order to provide children with the optimal conditions for learning.

**Put an evaluation tool in place.**
As you begin the reform effort, you will need to chronicle tangible results along the way. Evaluate school and student performances as you begin, creating a baseline, so that progress can be measured at specific intervals along the way.

**Look for “climate” change along the way.**
Once the reform effort is underway, one key way to evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts is to look for qualitative (rather than quantitative) signs of change. This may include things as simple as a more professional tone and disposition among staff, and the more caring and supportive atmosphere they create for the children. Perhaps students and staff are more engaged with their work and exhibit less negative behavior. Perhaps the school appears visibly cleaner and more orderly. Climate change may also be reflected in the involvement of parents in school affairs and the way they may feel more supported in their efforts to help their children succeed. And perhaps school principals may feel more empowered by their school system to implement specific changes in order to generate improved academic results.

**Future Plans**
The Baltimore Education Initiative is expanding. A Community Resource Center is slated to open at Kelson during the 2005-'06 school year, and plans are underway to open a similar center at Pinderhughes the following year. The Kelson resource center will help community residents: meet basic family needs (such as child care, food and
clothing); receive education and parenting support (through GED and adult literacy classes); access information (through lending libraries); and connect to early childhood services and support students (through mentoring, after-school programs and other supplemental activities). A resource person staffed at the school will coordinate and oversee the delivery of the array of supportive services provided to students, their families and the school.

The HIPPY program will continue its service to preschool-aged children. Over the next three years, however, Enterprise would like to expand the HIPPY program to reach its full capacity of serving 120 families annually through the hiring of additional early childhood advocates. Kelson and Pinderhughes will continue to implement Direct Instruction and Core Knowledge curricula as a tangible means of bolstering academic achievement and provide extra-curricular and community support programs to students and their families.

Kelson Elementary/Middle is in its last phase of growth. The school added one grade each year until the full middle school was complete. In the fall of 2005, Kelson’s first eighth grade class will be joining the school.

Enterprise has partnered with Replications, Inc. in the development of Renaissance Academy, a new high school initiative of the Baltimore City Public School System. To date, Enterprise has provided advocacy and community outreach support for the development of the academy. As a result of special negotiations, Enterprise received a guarantee that students from Sandtown-Winchester will have first choice to attend this high school, which is geared toward college preparation and workforce training. The Renaissance Academy is modeled after Nobel Street Academy, a highly successful charter school in Chicago.

The academy will include: an extended school day that provides students with extra time to reinforce the skills they learned during the regular school day; a comprehensive community service program that connects students with local organizations and a whole life management program that requires students to participate in nutrition and health classes as well as a comprehensive physical fitness program. Students who attend Renaissance Academy will be prepared to go on to higher education.

Together, the various components of this innovative education reform effort are expected to equip the children, parents, teachers and administrators of Sandtown-Winchester with the tools they need to succeed. The Baltimore Education Initiative compliments the highly successful and continuing transformation of Sandtown-Winchester, where homeownership rates more than doubled in the 1990s to 24 percent. Property values rose by nearly 50 percent, median incomes increased from $11,000 to $19,000 and vacancy rates dropped by 10 percent. Unemployment and crime have fallen sharply, and the two adopted public elementary schools have achieved dramatically higher reading and math scores. Transformation is indeed underway.
Enterprise Baltimore

Since 1986, Enterprise has invested more than $462 million to transform communities and lives throughout Baltimore. By strengthening community-based organizations and working with a network of partners, Enterprise helped produce more than 10,000 affordable homes.

In 1991, Enterprise brought together residents, elected officials, church leaders and nonprofit partners to begin transforming the 72-square block west Baltimore neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester. Understanding that stable neighborhoods and strong families are anchored by more than fit and affordable housing, Enterprise and our partners also set out to improve access to viable jobs and quality health care. We focused on fighting crime and improving the under-performing public elementary schools that serve the community. Today, Sandtown-Winchester registers improvement on every indicator of community health.

Enterprise Baltimore’s commitment to the entire city’s revitalization is growing. Enterprise Baltimore plans to:

• Preserve or create 2,100 affordable homes
• Commit $7.6 million to strengthen local community organizations
• Promote academic and social skills for children ages 3 to 13
• Give 300 more men returning from prison to their communities the training to become responsible community members through the Maryland Re-entry Partnership
• Raise $20 million in financing for the East Baltimore Redevelopment Project in collaboration with the city, the Johns Hopkins Medical Systems and the Annie E. Casey Foundation
• Supply $15 million in tax credits to encourage investment in East Baltimore

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