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Date:
2023

Citation:
Cleveland, B. (2023). A Framework for Building Schools as Community Hubs: If It Were Simpler Would It Happen Everywhere?. Cleveland, B (Ed.). Backhouse, S (Ed.). Chandler, P (Ed.). McShane, I (Ed.). Clinton, JM (Ed.). Newton, C (Ed.). Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit, (1), pp.11-28. Springer.

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A Framework for Building Schools as Community Hubs: If It Were Simpler Would It Happen Everywhere?



Benjamin Cleveland

Abstract Developing, implementing, and sustaining schools as community hubs is not necessarily easy. Nevertheless, the potential gains for students, parents, carers, and members of the wider community may be significant, as has been documented internationally. Drawing on information from a range of research activities, this chapter outlines the process undertaken by a multi-disciplinary research team to create a framework for planning, designing, governing, and managing schools as community hubs. The 'How to Hub Australia' framework offers evidence-based advice on school infrastructure provision and management linked to the activities, programs and services that may be offered from school sites in addition to schooling. Commonly, these include early years and adult education, organised sports, recreation, library and information services, visual and performing arts activities, and health and wellbeing services. The framework is intended to help policymakers, school leaders, and designers overcome the uncertainties and perceived obstacles that tend to limit the provision and use of school facilities for broader community benefit. If it were simpler, would it happen everywhere? This chapter argues that community-facing schools could become commonplace, rather than exceptional, through the establishment of effective and enduring partnerships and updates to governance and funding models.

Keywords Schools as community hubs · Mixed-use social infrastructure precincts · Social infrastructure · Community facilities · Community schools · Learning environments

Introduction

How can research, policy and practice be linked to inform the planning, design, governance, and use of school infrastructure to meet the emerging needs of local communities? This question directed a three-year investigation into how best to plan,

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B. Cleveland et al. (eds.), *Schools as Community Hubs*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7_2

design, govern and manage schools to operate successfully as 'more than a school' and encourage the development of better connected and more resilient communities.

The research project, Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs, brought together a multi-disciplinary team of academics with backgrounds in education, urban planning, architecture, evaluation, human geography, wellbeing sciences, and educational facility planning to investigate the socio-spatial operation of schools as community hubs. Building Connections was funded by the Australian Research Council's Linkage grant scheme and involved five state government and industry research partners from four Australian states and four Ph.D. candidates. Gaining insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with developing, implementing, and sustaining schools as community hubs required cooperation between researchers from multiple disciplines and collaboration with diverse participants and stakeholders from around Australia and internationally.

In the coming decade, Australia will require hundreds of new schools to meet the demands of a growing school-aged population (Goss, 2016). This presents a significant opportunity to embed new knowledge about the role that indoor and outdoor spaces can play in developing and supporting school-community relations and providing the social infrastructure assets needed by communities in cost efficient ways.

Historically, schools have been some of the most underutilised assets in Australia, with many used sparingly outside of school hours or on weekends (Cleveland, 2016). The co-location of school infrastructure with other forms of social infrastructure could play an increasingly important role in providing communities with the venues they need to flourish. Well distributed facilities are required across Australia to accommodate early years and adult education, sports, recreation, library and information services, visual and performing arts, and health and wellbeing services. Adapting the programming of existing school facilities and designing new schools to become anchor organisations in mixed-use social infrastructure precincts could play a transformative role in providing essential infrastructure for local communities, especially in high-growth inner urban, peri-urban, and regional city contexts.

Of course, this situation is not unique to Australia. The notion that schools should have stronger relationships with their communities has been promoted by governments, educators, health service providers and community developers in Europe, North America, and Australia over past decades (Cummings et al., 2011; Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Hands, 2010; Pelletier & Corter, 2005; Salagaras, 2009; Sanjeevan et al., 2012). In Australia, a policy cycle focused on the multiple roles of schools in society has been recurring every few decades since the 1930s. Bursts of concentrated research and policy development have regularly included a focus on strategies for community infrastructure provision (Lewi & Nichols, 2010). Another 'community turn' (McShane, 2006) in public policy is currently evident.

Despite temporal cycles of interest in schools as community hubs, the literature concerning school facilities has predominantly focused on their design for teaching and learning, overlooking the role of school infrastructure in supporting the education, and health and wellbeing of the wider community (McShane & Wilson, 2017). Nevertheless, the days of Australian school sites operating from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

appear numbered (Cleveland & Woodman, 2009). Population growth, the densification of cities, and increasing demand for high-quality venues for a range of activities, programs and services is demanding that school infrastructure contributes more to social infrastructure networks, to offer a broader demographic access to the facilities and services they need.

Initially, this chapter describes the range of operational forms, or types, of schools as community hubs. Two illustrative examples are then described: one from Australia and another from Denmark. The strategies adopted by the research team to create a framework for planning, designing, governing, and managing schools as community hubs are then outlined and the emergent 'How to Hub Australia' framework is presented and discussed—drawing on and highlighting the key issues and themes addressed throughout the book. With a view to how the framework may be implemented, the question, 'If it were simpler, would it happen everywhere?' is addressed. To conclude, suggestions are made for shifting currently transformative approaches to school development to become normative, and practical suggestions are made to help achieve this.

Types of Schools as Community Hubs

Across Australia and elsewhere, almost all schools play the role of community hub to some extent, yet to vastly varying degrees. Looking at schools in Ontario, Canada, Clandfield (2010) suggested that school-community relations may be considered along a five-part continuum, extending from the community use of schools to fully integrated school-community relationships. At one end of the continuum he identified two types which he described as 'sharing on demand':

1. Community use of schools—involves community groups booking a space for use after hours, such as for "a public meeting in the auditorium, a sports event in the gym or on the grounds, a book club in the library, or a craft demonstration in an art room" (pp. 15–16).
2. Parallel use and shared use of schools—involves regular use of school facilities over time by approved groups, such as a yoga studio using the gymnasium each weekend, night classes for adults in classrooms, or a municipality operating play groups for children and carers in multipurpose spaces.

Clandfield (2010) described two further types as being associated with 'rationalising services and use of space':

3. Co-location of community services—involves the use of school property by either the school or municipality to operate, for example, a day-care centre, public library, swimming pool, or community centre, with services targeted to the needs of the local community, making efficient use of public space.
4. Full-service schools—involves an array of services around the needs of children and their families, where, for example, family services supplement a day care

centre, migrant services are offered to newly arrived families, breakfast and meal programs are offered to children in need, and medical services are integrated into school operations.

Finally, Clandfield (2010) identified the 'two-way hub', which he suggested must go beyond the parallel use of school-located facilities:

5. The school as community hub—involves the school's curriculum and learning activities contributing to community development, and community development activities contributing to and enriching curricula and learning within the school.

Clandfield (2010) envisaged the 'two-way hub' as:

> … a kind of New Commons where education for all, health, recreation, poverty reduction, cultural expression and celebration, and environmental responsibility can all come together to develop and sustain flourishing communities on principles of citizenship, co-operation and social justice. (p. 20)

The term 'school as community hub' used in this chapter—and indeed throughout this book—does not specifically align with Clandfield's use of the same term and his description above. The Building Connections project was not premised on a specific aspiration for what schools as community hubs might be. However, the project found strong support around Australia and internationally for better developed school-community relations, especially associated with the types Clandfield (2010) identified as the 'co-location of community services' on school sites and the creation of 'full-service schools'. Support was also found for deeply integrated relationships between schools and community development activities, along with acknowledgement of the operational challenges that such integration can present.

Leading Examples

Several projects in Australia and internationally have become recognised as exemplar schools as community hubs, helping others rethink how schools might better engage with their urban surrounds and local communities.

The Korayn Birralee Family Centre opened in 2020 in Corio, Victoria, as a new addition to the schools as community hubs landscape in Australia. It represents efforts of the Victorian State Government to expand full-service school models in underprivileged communities. It was inspired by Doveton College, built over a decade earlier in an underprivileged area in outer Melbourne and commonly acknowledged to be the 'lighthouse' with respect to community-facing schools in Australia. Doveton's first decade of operation has been well-documented (see for example Glover, 2020) and has informed the development of many subsequent schools.

The Korayn Birralee Family Centre was created through a partnership between the Victorian Department of Education and Training, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, City of Greater Geelong, Our Place and Northern Bay P-12 College, with philanthropic support from the Coleman Foundation. The centre and college

are connected both physically and operationally, although they sit on parcels of land owned separately by the Department of Education and Training and City of Greater Geelong (see Fig. 1).

Korayn Birralee means 'Corio children' in the local Indigenous language, Wadawurrung. The centre includes a shared entry and reception with Northern Bay P-12 College (see Fig. 2). It offers long day care, kindergarten, maternal and child health services, playgroups, parenting programs, five consultation rooms for allied health services, a specialist family support program room, toy library, multipurpose community room, parent lounge and an extensive, nature-inspired outdoor play area (Our Place, 2021). In keeping with an approach developed by Our Place, as applied at ten school sites across Victoria between 2019 and 2022, five core strategies have contributed to achieving positive outcomes for children, families, and communities:



Fig. 1 Arial view of Korayn Birralee Family Centre, with connection to Northern Bay P-12 College (Image courtesy of Brand Architects. Photograph by Blue Tree Studios)



Fig. 2 Entry to Korayn Birralee Family Centre, with passage through to Northern Bay P-12 College (Image courtesy of Brand Architects. Photograph by Blue Tree Studios)

1. High-quality early learning, health, and development
2. High-quality schooling
3. Wrap-around health and wellbeing services
4. Engagement and enrichment activities for children
5. Adult engagement, volunteering, learning and employment (Our Place, 2021, p. 8).

'The Heart' project in Ikast-Brande, Denmark, opened in 2018, creating "a meeting point where relationships between various societal and age groups can be formed and maintained" (C.F. Møller Architects, 2022, p. Projects section). As a major expansion of the International School Ikast-Brande, the multi-functional building (see Fig. 3) and outdoor areas (see Fig. 4) support a variety of community events, exercise, and recreational pursuits, plus places to work that include a café and office facilities.

The project has drawn significant international attention, due partly to its wonderous architecture, and partly due to the partnerships established between the Ikast-Brande Municipal Council, International School Ikast-Brande and other stakeholders, highlighting the productive involvement of Denmark's 98 municipalities in school provision and governance (Moos, 2014). The project was delivered through partnerships with local businesses, the Danish foundation Realdania and the Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities. The Carlsberg Foundation contributed artworks to both the building and the site (IAKS, 2022).

'Hjertet' (The Heart) acts as a link between several organisations in a growth area of Ikast, being situated between the HHX Ikast Business College, Ikast-Brande upper secondary school, the teacher training college, and Ikast-Brande International



Fig. 3 'The Heart' in Ikast, combining education, activities, community, exercise, and recreational pursuits (Image courtesy of C.F. Møller Architects. Photograph by Adam Moerk)



Fig. 4 Arial view of 'The Heart' in Ikast (Image courtesy of C.F. Møller Architects. Photograph by Adam Moerk)

School. The latter uses a wing of the building as classrooms during the school week, in addition to the school's other facilities located nearby.

Various wings of the 'multi-building' are arranged around a central square with a performance stage. The school's classrooms occupy one wing and may be converted into multiple rooms and art workshops for clubs and evening community classes. The ground floor is complemented by a café and a shop area where local organic groceries and crafts are sold. The first floor has rooms for activities such as dance, yoga, cultural events, performing arts, and counselling services for young people in the municipal Youth and Education Advisory Centre. Outside, the landscaped areas include a skate bowl and flow skate park, a cycle pump-track, parkour facilities, playgrounds, beach volleyball pits, and a multi-use playing field. Less active pursuits are also afforded for boules, picnics, and campfires. The facilities are intended to support the participation of community members of all ages, offering them multiple opportunities to engage in activities that foster social connection and wellbeing (IAKS, 2022).

Research Design

With a broad research agenda, the multi-disciplinary Building Connections project was designed around a mixed methods approach. This enabled academics, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) candidates, industry partners, and collaborators to contribute based on their disciplinary perspectives and expertise. As mentioned above, the project drew on perspectives covering education, urban planning, architecture, evaluation, human geography, wellbeing sciences and educational facility planning.

The methodologies and methods applied across all aspects of the project are too numerous and varied to outline in this chapter. Here, the focus is on how the findings

from different research activities were brought together to generate the emergent 'How to Hub Australia' framework, which is introduced below.

Literature Scoping Study

The project began with a literature scoping study. Boolean key words searches were conducted for a variety of synonyms related to three terms: 'school', 'infrastructure' and 'community'. A library of 302 relevant publications was produced and an annotated bibliography of the most salient publications was generated to inform subsequent research.

International Conference

The Schools as Community Hubs International Conference 2020: Building Connections for Community Benefit explored the wide-ranging issues pertinent to the field of inquiry, with an international audience. 130 delegates from Australia, North America, Asia, and Europe attended. The event provided insights into current and historic initiatives and research related to schools as community hubs. Further, it created a community of academic and industry practitioners who are engaged in complementary research. A 180-page proceedings was published (Cleveland et al., 2020). This included 14 peer-reviewed papers from 25 authors in Australia and the United States.

Expert Focus Groups

Three expert focus groups (Krueger, 2014) brought together a total of 71 experts from industry, government, and academia to identify the opportunities and constraints associated with schools operating as community hubs. These sessions were held online and included participants from Australia (33) and abroad (38). Public-facing summaries were published to share the emergent themes and insights from Australia (Chandler & Cleveland, 2020), Canada and the United States (Chandler & Cleveland, 2021), and the United Kingdom and Europe (Chandler & Cleveland, 2022).

Four Ph.D. Projects

Four Ph.D. projects funded by the Building Connections project all informed the 'How to Hub Australia' framework. While all still underway at the time of writing, the literature reviews, interviews, focus groups, workshops, impact models, and other

fieldwork activities undertaken by Carolina Rivera (lived experiences of schools as community hubs), Hayley Paproth (evaluative thinking and schools as community hubs), Rob Polglase (policy settings for schools as community hubs) and Natalie Miles (schools and social infrastructure networks) and their supervisors all contributed to generating new understandings.

National Survey of Schools

The Connecting Schools + Communities Survey was created by the Building Connections research team to understand how and why schools share their facilities with their community and to seek school and hub leaders' perceptions about the opportunities and challenges associated with doing so. A rigorous approach to item generation and development (Rattray & Jones, 2007) helped inform the 'How to Hub Australia' framework by drawing together insights from other research activities. While the data from the survey was not analysed at the time of writing, the process of developing, piloting, and refining the survey was informative.

Edited Book

The production of the 21 additional chapters in this edited book expanded the reach of the project across Australia and into Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, United Kingdom, and the United States, uncovering important insights into research and industry developments associated with schools as community hubs.

Value Focused Thinking Framework

The six guiding principles of the 'How to Hub Australia' framework were identified via a structured decision-making process called value-focused thinking, a methodology suited to decision-making in complex settings where the needs of many different stakeholder groups must be considered (Keeney, 1992). This approach to data synthesis was used to integrate initial findings from the research activities outlined above. Ruby Lipson-Smith, Ph.D., led three workshops attended by all members of the Building Connections research team. She adopted the value-focused thinking methodology (Lipson-Smith et al., 2019) to help the team identify what is fundamentally important when developing, implementing, and sustaining schools as community hubs. A detailed set of means objectives (things that will help achieve the fundamental objectives) was also identified.

Meta-Synthesis

To draw the multiple strands of research together and generate the factors within the framework, a process of meta-synthesis (Walsh & Downe, 2005) was adopted. This approach to amalgamating the findings of similar qualitative studies in a related area was described by Walsh and Downe (2005, p. 205) as one that "enables the nuances, taken-for-granted assumptions, and textured milieu of varying accounts to be exposed, described and explained in ways that bring fresh insights". They cited Stern and Harris (1985) as the first to coin the phrase 'qualitative meta-synthesis'. This, they differentiated from the meta-analysis of quantitative studies by suggesting that "the latter aims to increase certainty in cause-and-effect conclusions in a particular area, while the former is more hermeneutic, seeking to understand and explain phenomena" (Walsh & Downe, 2005, p. 204). Ultimately, the translation and synthesis of findings from across the research activities undertaken by the Building Connections team produced the 'How to Hub Australia' framework, which is introduced below.

The 'How to Hub Australia' Framework

The 'How to Hub Australia' framework depicted in Fig. 5 is intended to help policymakers, school leaders, and designers overcome the uncertainties and perceived obstacles that tend to limit the provision and use of school facilities for broader community benefit. The framework offers evidence-based advice on school infrastructure provision and management linked to the activities, programs and services that may be offered from school sites in addition to schooling. It highlights the need to adopt a broad perspective on the roles that schools play in society, and the need for supportive policy, leadership, and evaluation.

Additional layers of information will be added to the core framework to produce an evidenced-based resource to help inform the decision making and efforts of stakeholders wishing to develop, implement, and sustain schools as community hubs. Work is underway to produce this content, based on the research undertaken by the Building Connections research team. Resources produced by others will also be curated for inclusion in the framework. The overarching school context and culture, six principles and 12 factors that make up the framework are outlined below.

School Context and Culture

It is important to note that the success of each school as community hub is contingent on responding appropriately to its unique context and culture. The adoption of a 'more than a school' mindset should be paired with a clear and well-informed

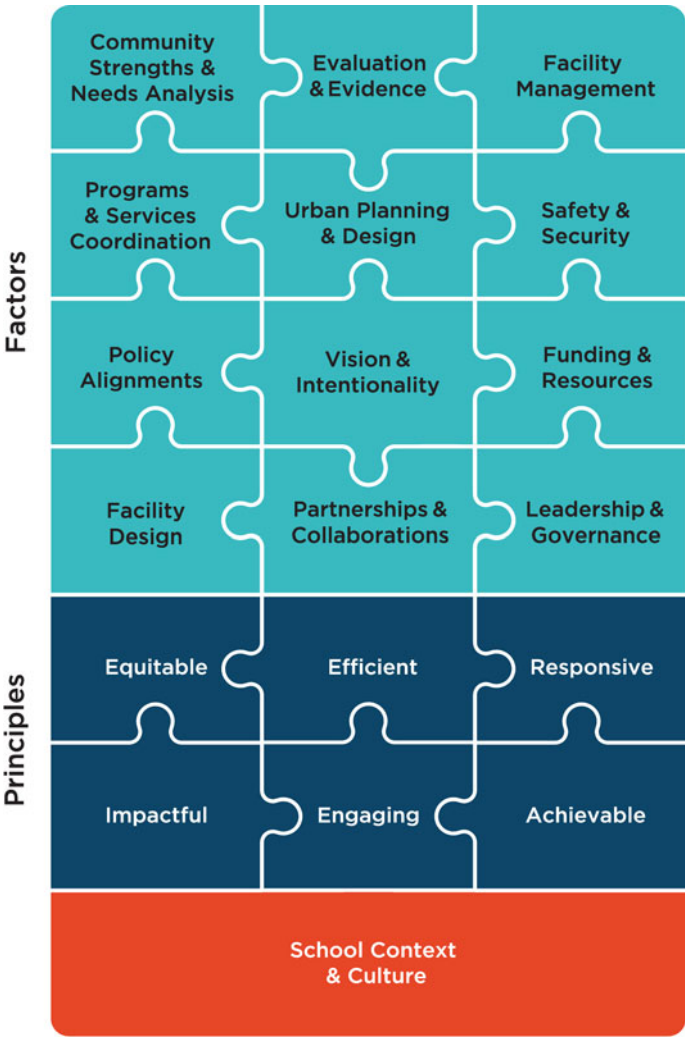


Fig. 5 The 'How to Hub Australia' framework (Cleveland et al., 2022)

perspective on why enhanced school-community relations should be established. Every school should respond to its unique socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural situation differently.

Principles

Six overarching principles should shape school as community hub initiatives:

Engaging Maximising stakeholder engagement is critical to fostering initial interest, connection, and long-term contributions to hub operations. Developing and sustaining partnerships that promote a sense of ownership and belonging is foundational to ongoing success. Stakeholders and partners may typically include both funders and users: education authorities, federal and/or state government departments, local municipalities, philanthropic organisations, service providers, sporting clubs and associations, school principals, school council members, parents, students, teachers, and community members.

Achievable: Maximising the feasibility of school as community hub initiatives requires due diligence, with a view to the future. Hub initiatives should be tangible, attainable, and based on a clear vision.

Equitable: Maximising access to hub activities, programs and services means providing equitable and inclusive opportunities for education, health, and wellbeing to all who wish to participate.

Efficient: Maximising the efficient use of hub resources means ensuring outcomes are assessed relative to the emotional investment, funding, labour, and spatial assets contributed. If intended outcomes change, so should assessment of efficiency.

Responsive: Maximising alignments between hub offerings and community strengths and needs is essential when initiating new hub projects. Adapting hub models to new locations requires close attention to local needs. Responding to changing contexts, such as demographic changes over time, should keep hub activities, programs, and services relevant.

Impactful: Maximising the positive and lasting impacts of schools as community hubs depends on regular patronage. This requires attention to the quality and long-term sustainability of activities, programs, services, and facilities. It is critical for hub offerings to reach intended populations and for contact to be maintained over time.

Factors

Twelve factors are offered to help guide those undertaking school as community hub projects.

Community Strengths and Needs Analysis: Every school as community hub is different. Detailed insights into local community contexts and requirements should inform hub objectives. Place-based approaches that engage community members and other stakeholders in the planning of activities, programs, services, and facilities is important, because one size does not fit all.

Vision and Intentionality: Developing a shared vision with stakeholders is essential to short-and long-term success. Championing this vision and adopting an intentional approach will attract like-minded partners and collaborators, guide decisions and facilitate action.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Schools can't go it alone. Schools have limited resources. Partnerships with like-minded community members, organisations and service providers are critical to establishing and operating a school as community hub. Facilitating communication, nurturing relationships, and developing robust partnerships requires significant investment of time and resources, but dramatically expands capacity for lasting impacts.

Leadership and Governance: School principals need support. Ideally, school leaders will champion hub projects, without becoming overwhelmed by additional hub-related responsibilities. Investing in their capacity to work with the community and external organisations, adopting distributed leadership models, and appointing dedicated hub leaders employed by the school or partners, will help prevent principal burn-out. Clear governance structures and decision processes also reduce stress.

Policy Alignments: Schools as community hubs inhabit fragmented policy environments. Enacting policy often requires crossing jurisdictions and funding agencies. Early insights into how the policies of stakeholders may influence a hub's development and operations should inform the way forward. Monitoring policy updates and their influence on hub resourcing, facilities and operations is also important. Regular engagement with policy makers enables advocacy for policy changes and fosters ongoing support.

Funding and Resources: Reliable, long-term funding and financial management are essential. Blending and braiding funding from different sources—often tied to reportable outcomes—is often required to support hub operations. Further, facility construction and management often necessitate contractual agreements between partners. Upfront agreements on who's paying for what helps avoid disputes.

Programs and Services Coordination: Random acts of programming won't deliver impact. Strategic planning ensures day-to-day activities, programs and services achieve the desired outcomes. This requires effective governance and choosing not to partner with stakeholders whose objectives do not align with the hub vision. Training and retaining skilled coordinators is critical.

Urban Planning and Design: Schools don't exist in isolation. Planning for hubs must consider their location relative to other infrastructure, plus their physical integration with immediate urban surrounds. The connection of school facilities with social infrastructure networks can enhance community education, health, and wellbeing. Design should boost the neighbourhood aesthetic, with welcoming thresholds between school and public property to foster a sense of belonging and encourage community members to access hub activities, programs, and services—as appropriate at different times of the day (see 'safety & security' below).

Facility Design: Design for learning and community. Identifying all user-groups is a prerequisite to good facility design. Buildings and outdoor spaces should accommodate core school activities, with flexibility for other uses. Digitally connected facilities should enable multiple modes of communication between program/service

providers and users. Spaces should be welcoming and inclusive, designed for all ages and abilities. Shared or co-located facilities can create budget efficiencies through capital and operational cost sharing.

Safety and Security: No school should be a fortress. Balancing security with an environment that welcomes the community is achievable. Safety is of heightened importance when children mix with adults from the wider community and is best discussed early in design, when both 'hard' and 'soft' security options can be explored. When stakeholders collaborate openly, solutions to security challenges can be found. Well-defined access protocols for different user groups during school times and outside hours should guide security measures.

Facility Management: Sharing facilities means sharing their management too. Sharing school facilities with the community increases the complexity of school site management. It is important to involve the managers of school facilities early to ensure sustainable arrangements inform the master plan and individual facility designs. Partnering with facility management groups, or outsourcing such services, can improve community access, while reducing the administrative burden on school personnel.

Evaluation and Evidence: High-quality feedback should inform decisions. Evaluation is vital as new hubs develop and as existing hubs evolve. Lessons from other hubs can help steer new projects in the right direction. Regularly collecting, analysing, and reporting evaluation data helps to sustain hubs. Metrics that go beyond students' academic achievements to assess the impact of hubs on belonging, engagement, satisfaction and tangible benefits to individuals, families and the wider community should be considered. Partnering with trained evaluators can help overcome the challenges this may present.

If It Were Simpler, Would It Happen Everywhere?

Applying the six principles and 12 factors outlined in the 'How to Hub Australia' framework is not necessarily easy. Building and operating schools as community hubs requires consultative planning, working with others, making good design decisions, and the agility to respond to changing circumstances based on evidence about what's working and what's not. Yet, these alignments can be established through relationships between different levels of government, different government agencies, services providers, community groups and other participating organisations—often aided by skilful facilitation and philanthropic support (McKenzie, 2019).

Notably, where governance for schooling and additional services (e.g., early years, community wellbeing) sits across the same level of government, multi-service hubs with schools at the centre tend to be more common. For example, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has only two levels of government (federal and territory) and the Education Directorate has responsibility for schooling and early years services. The directorate holds a clear policy position on schools operating as community

hubs in its ten-year strategy titled The Future of Education (ACT Education Directorate, 2018). Under the heading 'strong communities for learning', the strategy advises that teachers and school leaders should work in partnership with families, other professionals, and support staff, to reorient schools as multi-service environments to better meet the academic and wellbeing needs of students, their families, and members of the broader community. The strategy promotes collaborative partnerships between schools, government, and community service providers to enhance wellbeing, resilience, and connections throughout the community:

> This means that parents and carers are active participants in school life, involved in the learning of their children. Professionals such as social workers, psychologists and other health professionals bring their expertise to support student wellbeing and engagement in learning and provide families with convenient access to services including through outreach models. Other partners, like community service providers, unions, business, cultural and sporting organisations, enrich what schools can offer to students and the wider school community. (ACT Education Directorate, 2018, p. 6)

Similarly, Danish schools are planned, designed, and resourced by local administrations with responsibilities for governing and financing schools, along with a range of community services. In Denmark, funding flows from the national government to 98 municipalities, where decisions are made about education services and associated social infrastructure (Moos, 2014). There, municipal-level administration of schools assists integrated infrastructure planning and shared use. This promotes an expectation that school facilities should be accessed by local residents for a range of services and community activities.

Policy settings that streamline governance and funding arrangements, as found in the ACT and Denmark, may reduce the burden of establishing effective and enduring partnerships between core service organisations, such as schools and early years providers (McCulloch et al., 2004). Of course, establishing partnerships with external organisations and service providers often remains essential to meeting community needs. Also, breaking down siloed approaches to service and infrastructure delivery is essential if schools are to extend their reach to benefit the broader community. When multiple levels of government are involved, for example state governments with responsibility for school education and municipal governments responsible for early years and community services, further collaborative efforts are needed to align objectives, timelines, and funding.

Simplifying, or normalising, the partnership models that can shape community-facing schools (Hands, 2010; McShane, 2006; McShane & Wilson, 2017) could see schools as community hubs become more commonplace, rather than the exception. Establishing effective and enduring partnership models that prioritise the stability of governance and long-term funding, would go a long way to making currently transformative approaches to school development normative, enabling more schools to make a meaningful difference for children, families, teachers, and various populations within local communities.

Conclusions

What roles do we wish our schools to play in contemporary society, and how can we build them accordingly?

This chapter outlined various types of schools as community hubs, described illustrative examples from Australia and Denmark, profiled the strategies adopted by the research team to create the 'How to Hub Australia' framework for planning, designing, governing, and managing schools as community hubs, and suggested that attention must be paid to policy settings related to governance and long-term funding of community-facing schools if progress is to be made towards developing more community-facing schools.

Leadership and evaluation also have significant roles to play in determining what types of facilities should be built on school sites to support the education, health and wellbeing of young people and the wider community. Expanding the mindsets of school principals and others towards seeing themselves as civic leaders of communities, as well as leaders of learning, would aid a school as community hubs agenda. Leaders are needed to both shape new hub projects and steer existing projects as they evolve over time—leading and responding to evaluative evidence as a key driver of decisions.

Finally, it is hoped that the 'How to Hub Australia' framework will help inform all stakeholders wishing to contribute to school as community hub projects, offering them insights into the issues to be addressed and advice on the challenges to be overcome. This chapter introduced the framework in its simplest form. Additional layers of information will be added to produce an evidenced-based resource to help inform the actions of those wishing to develop, implement, and sustain schools as community hubs, towards developing better connected and more resilient communities. Collectively, the chapters that follow in this book elaborate on the issues and themes highlighted in the framework.

Acknowledgements This chapter is based on research conducted as part of the *Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs* project, supported under the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme (LP170101050).

Special thanks to the graphic design team at Clarke Hopkins Clarke, including Farhan Mahmud, Millicent Steele, and Partner Simon LeNepveu, for preparing the 'How to Hub Australia' framework graphic shown in Fig. 5.

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