

Bright Research Group Policy Brief. Issue 1, May 2013

# ELEV8

OAKLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL COSTS AND BENEFITS:  
MAKING DOLLARS AND CENTS OF THE RESEARCH



**BRIGHT**  
RESEARCH GROUP

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# ELEV8 OAKLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL COSTS AND BENEFITS: MAKING DOLLARS AND CENTS OF THE RESEARCH

It is increasingly recognized that the challenge of educating the nation’s children goes beyond having good curriculum and engaging teachers. For large swaths of America’s children, poverty, disintegrated communities, family stressors, and histories of trauma obstruct the path to success in school.

Community schools have emerged as a way to provide struggling students and their families with the tools they need to overcome barriers to learning. Community schools create value by increasing resources and, in the case of Elev8 Oakland, coordinating services to meet students’ multidimensional needs. Community schools’ most immediate impact is direct improvements in outcomes for the students and families that access services and supports through them. These resources serve as an anchor and ensure there is a physical and human resources infrastructure in place through which additional resources can be directed to students and families. The result can be significant sums of leveraged services and funds to low-income schools. Directing needed resources to under-resourced schools can also generate **long-term savings to society** by improving the outlook and life trajectory for the young people and families served. Long-term cost savings are quantified by reductions in costs associated with reliance on public systems, incarceration, and low lifetime earnings.

Elev8 Oakland is one such Community School model, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies to support students

and families at five Oakland middle school campuses. The Oakland-based nonprofit, Safe Passages, operates the program, which folds extended learning, summer school, family supports and services, and health care into an integrated school-based system of supportive services. Targeting students who are experiencing academic and/or social-emotional struggles, as well as their families, Elev8 Oakland oversees the coordination of services to remove barriers to learning.

## CREATING VALUE

This Policy Brief examines the costs and benefits of operating Elev8 Oakland’s community schools initiative. Beyond the direct impact on students and families served, there are two key ways that Safe Passages creates value. The first is by leveraging additional services and funds by providing the human resources and physical infrastructure to attract additional resources, and the second is by offering services that research shows are associated with long-term savings to society.

### Elev8 Oakland Leverages Its Initial Investment by \$3.3 Million:

Financial records of actual expenditures from Safe Passages and its Elev8 partners for 2011-12 show that The Atlantic Philanthropies’ annual direct school-site investment of approximately \$2.5 million enables the sites to attract additional resources and services valued at over \$3.3 million. The initial investment provides the infrastructure for drawing more resources to the middle school sites (by offering a center or site for service delivery and a coordinator to coordinate services). This expansion is made possible through several key partnerships with both public and private entities, including



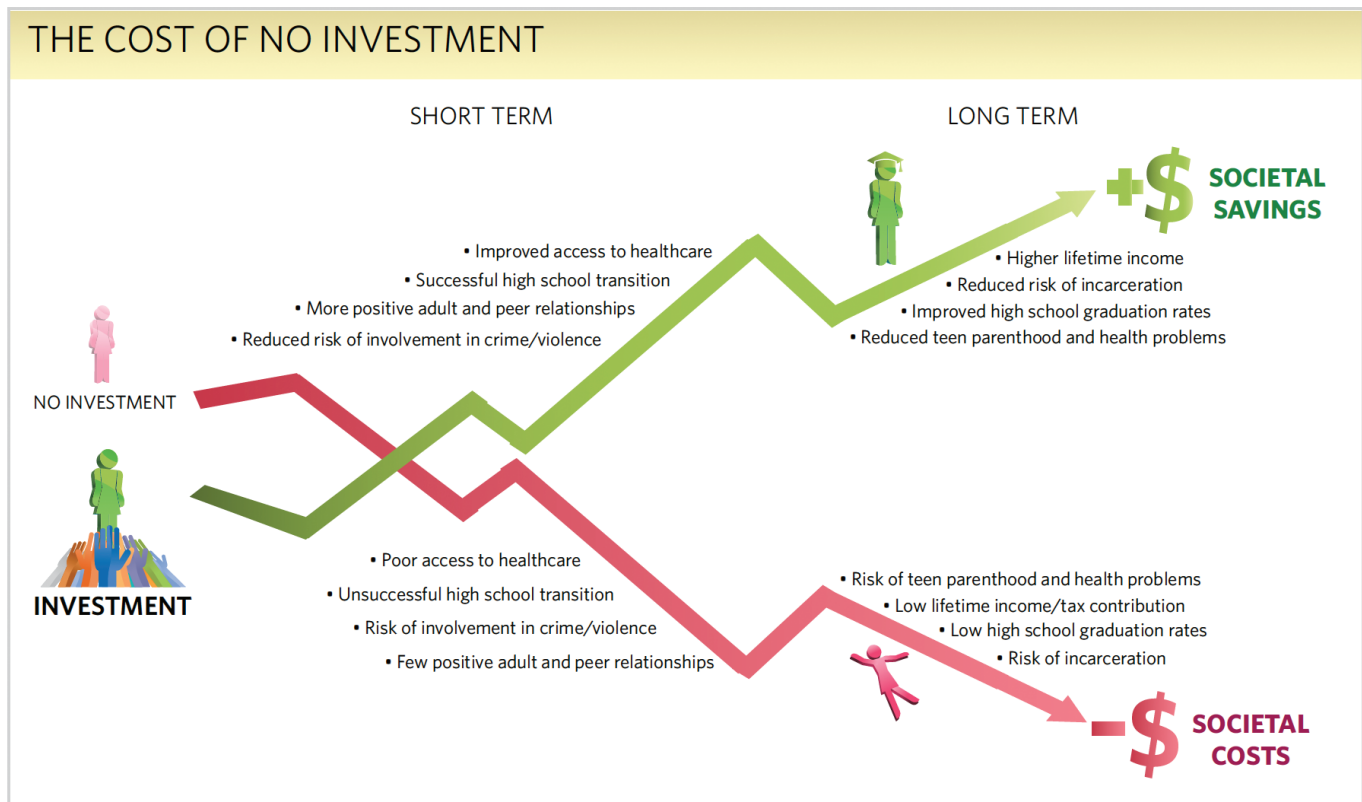
the city, school district, county, local health care providers, and national and local initiatives that share the vision of integrated and comprehensive school-based services.

**Elev8 Oakland Enables \$25 Million in Long Term Societal Savings:**

This Policy Brief demonstrates that every dollar The Atlantic Philanthropies invests in Elev8 Oakland is essentially multiplied in value by a factor of 2.27 through leveraged partnerships, and then again by a factor of 4.39 by preventing long-term hardship and reliance on publicly-funded social support systems. The initial investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies plus the leveraged investment total \$5.8 million in services, which further translate to an estimated \$25,668,479 in societal savings over the projected lifetime of the students and families served. The final factor by which the initial investment is multiplied for its long-term societal impact is estimated at 9.96 (2.27 x 4.39).

**THE ORIGINS OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS MODEL: PARTNERSHIP AS A SOLUTION TO PUBLIC EDUCATION'S EXPANDING PURVIEW**

As the family structure and the composition of the US labor force transformed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a swell of activism emerged, pushing for free, compulsory education for America's children. These early public schools were simply expected to provide a basic education to society's children and youth (Benson, et al., 2009). As soon as public universal education was in place, however, it became clear that social and economic inequalities translated into differential achievement. At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seminal education reformer, John Dewey, promoted the idea that the school house should function not only as a place to educate children, but as a social center, where supports for families and the community could be accessed (Dewey, 1902). While it is clear that children disadvantaged by poverty, violence, low parental education levels, social instability, prejudice, and other stressors do not graduate at the same rates as their more advantaged counterparts (Fram, et al., 2007; Kozol,



1992; Storer, et al., 2012), this idea of extending the purpose of schools to address barriers to learning did not take hold in a widespread way for nearly a century. Little by little during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as these social inequities and their impact on achievement have been researched and better understood, the mandate for what schools are expected to do has expanded (Dryfoos, 2002). Schools are increasingly expected not only to help students learn by teaching curriculum, but to help students learn by removing the obstacles that impede their learning, result in poor long-term outcomes, and entrench long-standing social inequalities (Blank, et al., 2010; Haveman, et al., 2001; Storer, et al., 2012).

At the same time that the role of schools has expanded, however, allocations of public dollars for public education have been shrinking. Between 2008 and 2013, inflation-adjusted per-student spending has decreased in a large majority of states (35), including California where students receive 17% less than they did five years ago (Oliff, et al., 2012). How, then, can schools meet inflated roles and expectations with deflated budgets?

For many schools and school districts the answer lies in forging strong community partnerships. By partnering with other local public systems, including county and city government, and with community-based organizations (CBOs), schools around the country have been able to leverage expertise and funding to meet the growing demand of serving the whole child. The natural evolution of these partnerships has given rise to a new concept: The Full Service Community School (Blank, et al., 2010; Dryfoos, 2002, 2003, 2005). The Federal Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) defines Full-Service Community Schools as “providing comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students’ family members, and community members that will result in improved educational outcomes for children.”

Elev8 Oakland is one model by which the Full Service Community School concept has been realized. Though it predates this definition, the Elev8 Oakland approach is based on a vision wherein access to educational opportunity, health services, and family support is not dictated by race or socio-economic status, and healthy and supported young people are better prepared to learn and succeed. Recognizing that schools are often at the center of communities, “Elev8 Oakland places educational supports, health services, family supports and engagement, and community revitaliza-

tion in the schools, where these services are most accessible to families” (Alvarado, et al., 2007).

*“The demand that [the school] shall assume a wider scope of activities having an educative effect upon the adult members of the community, has its basis just here: We are feeling everywhere the organic unity of the different modes of social life, and consequently demand that the school shall be related more widely, shall receive from more quarters, and shall give in more directions.”*

– John Dewey (1902)

## THE VALUE OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL: QUANTIFYING THE BENEFITS OF INVESTMENT

The long-standing common wisdom is that community partnerships benefit school communities in multiple ways. Out-of-school time (OST) programs support academic engagement and youth development; school-based health centers create access to essential medical and behavioral health services; and parent engagement and support efforts enable families to become true partners in their children’s education – in these ways collaboration between schools and community-based organizations are believed to expand and deepen schools’ capacity to reach students effectively. Theoretically, the value of these partnerships should be tremendous, not only in terms of meeting the immediate needs of students and families, but in creating long-term resiliency and reduced risk in the community. This Policy Brief draws on Safe Passages’ records showing Elev8 finances from 2011-12,<sup>1</sup> validated research, and input from Elev8 stakeholders to test that theoretical assumption and calculate a tangible value for Elev8 Oakland’s potential return on investment (ROI).

For each of the primary service categories this Policy Brief considers the extent to which having an Elev8 program enables school sites to leverage additional value through public and private partnership and collaboration. In most cases, the infrastructure put in place through Elev8 has enabled other partners to maximize and deepen their impact. For example, having a school-based health center on campus means that

<sup>1</sup> 2011-12 is used because it is the most recent full year for which service data were available. Furthermore, because Elev8 had already been in place for a few years at the time that 2011-12 services began, using 2011-12 ensures that the Elev8 infrastructure was adequately in place at all sites to enable leveraging conditions.

## BENEFITS OF EARLY INVESTMENT IN YOUTH



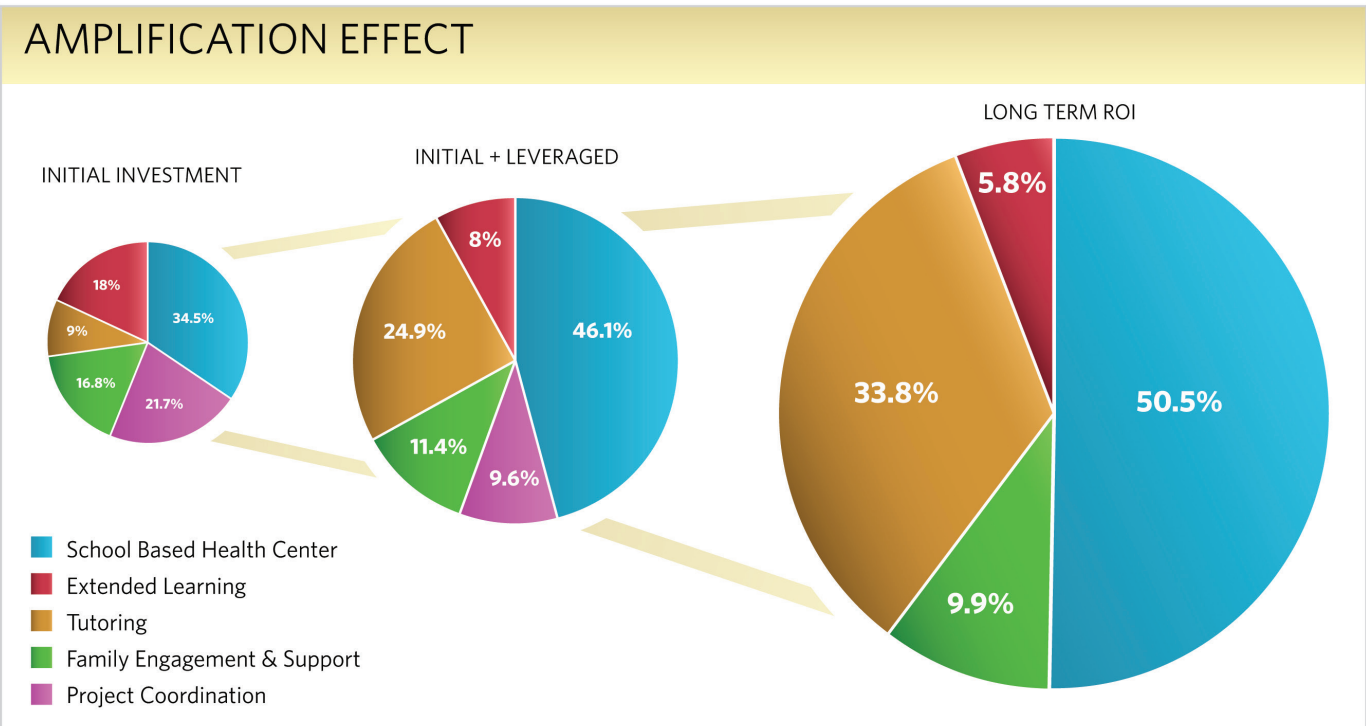
A school-based, community partner-run program that improves high school graduation rates among at-risk youth has the potential to *create a significant monetary benefit to society*. A recent study of Communities in Schools (CIS), a program that targets high school graduation rates, projected that within 9 years of service delivery society would see a return of \$11.60 for every program dollar expended to help at-risk youth graduate from high school (EMSI 2012). While the Elev8 Oakland model works on many of the same fronts as CIS, Elev8 is designed to support middle schools, rather than high schools. So, the exact return on investment calculated for CIS cannot be applied directly. Some research indicates, in fact, that earlier investments in youth create more impact than later investments (Heckman, 2006), implying that the potential return on investments made into Elev8 supports is substantial.

and establish protocols and organizational structures.

Next, the Policy Brief examines the potential long-term return on investment that might be felt on a societal level for each service category, by drawing on research studies designed to capture the value of school-based community partner-run programs. These studies translate outcome findings into a concrete, monetary calculus of what society gets as a return on its investment in community-school partnerships. For example, it is known that failure to graduate from high school is associated with unemployment, behavioral health needs, juvenile and criminal justice involvement, and a significant reduction in a person's contribution to the tax base (Bridgeland & Dilulio, 2006; Garfinkel et al., 2005; Wolfe & Haveman, 2002). All of these negative outcomes generate a monetary social burden in lost wages and revenue and increased consumption of costly service, and, more importantly, they result in poor quality life experiences for students.

Finally, for each service category the Policy Brief includes quotes from Elev8 stakeholders who were interviewed for the study. These are provided to furnish the reader with the human story behind the numbers and to demonstrate that it is by turning actual lives around that these programs enjoy a positive monetary return on investment.

a health providing partner has a private space to deliver care, and having a Family Advocate on campus means that the families most in need of food or legal help are effectively reached. An on-site coordinator can coordinate the delivery and blending of additional resources and supports. Under each category, these leveraged sums increase the value of services that are delivered. It should be noted that in 2011-12 all Elev8 sites were operating at their fullest capacity, with established partnerships and built infrastructure. Elev8 funds were first awarded in Fall 2008, including start-up monies to construct School-Based Health Centers, refurbish buildings



**Pictured above are pie charts showing the proportion of funds allocated in various spending categories.**

**The first pie chart shows** the initial investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies at all Elev8 Oakland sites combined in 2011-12.

**The second shows** those dollars alongside the value of services and goods contributed by Elev8 partners – these are considered leveraged values because without the Elev8 infrastructure, many of these dollars would be unavailable or far less effective in reaching students and families.

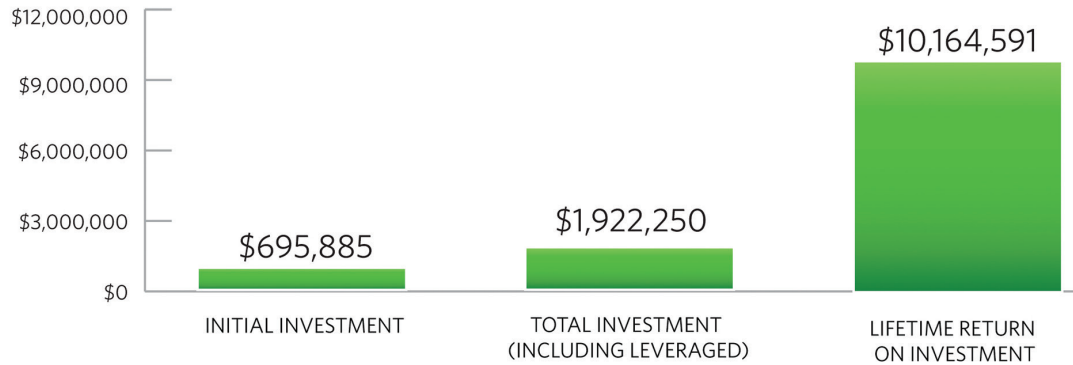
**The third pie chart shows** the projected societal savings returned on the combined investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies and Elev8 partners – the figures in this chart are arrived at by extrapolating from research that looks at the long-term return on investment (ROI) associated with many of the services Elev8 delivers. The three pie charts together show that the initial direct school-site investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies in a single year (2011-12) of \$2,576,007 translates, when leveraged service values are added in, to \$5,841,995, increasing the initial investment by a factor of 2.27. Taking this one step further and applying the return on investment factors

listed in the research cited throughout this brief, that \$5.8 million is further amplified into long-term societal savings by a factor of 4.39, to \$25,668,479 (see Table 1 for calculations), through reduced reliance on public services and higher lifetime earnings.

#### **ACADEMIC SUPPORTS: EXTENDED LEARNING, SUMMER AND SATURDAY SCHOOL, ACADEMIC MENTORING AND TUTORING**

Elev8 Offers offers Extended Day Learning at all of its sites, targeting students who score Below and Far Below Basic on their California state standardized tests or who are struggling with grades, behavior or attendance. While these programs include standard Out of School Time (OST)-type programming, with homework help and enrichment activities, they offer a more individualized set of supports than most OST programs because Elev8 Oakland has been able to leverage AmeriCorps funding to deliver more individualized Academic Mentoring and Tutoring services. AmeriCorps volunteers work on a 5:1 ratio, a contrast to most OST high quality program standards, which land around 15:1 (Michigan Board of Ed., 2008; The Trust, 2009). Further, because AmeriCorps is a federally subsidized program, the cost of partnership is a small fraction of the value of services. Safe Passages records show that in 2011-12, there was an initial investment of \$464,750 to support OST programming and \$231,135

## ACADEMIC INVESTMENTS & RETURNS



to support the AmeriCorps program (total \$695,885 in academic support services). These records also show that AmeriCorps volunteers worked 26,500 total hours – at a market value of \$55 per hour<sup>2</sup> the value of these services is estimated at \$1,457,500. In other words, the program leveraged an additional \$1,226,365 beyond the \$695,885 investment for a total investment of \$1,922,250.

**THE RESEARCH:** Looking past what is immediately leveraged, the long-term benefits associated with quality OST and Academic Mentoring/Tutoring services are also estimated to be significant. An often-cited study by Levine and Zimmerman (Levine & Zimmerman, 2003) puts the benefit/cost ratio of extended learning programs at \$3.19 for every \$1 expended (219% return on investment), projecting out to an eventual 40 year work life.<sup>3</sup> The long-term return on the

<sup>2</sup> The \$55 hourly rate is calculated based on an average of local private tutoring firm rates and craigslist postings of the rates of tutors for hire. Sylvan Learning Center, for example, offers group tutoring at its Oakland center at \$60 per hour, and craigslist tutors who are similar to Americorps volunteers in terms of age and qualifications (college students or recent graduates, not certificated teachers) in the area advertise on average at \$45 (range \$25-\$70) per hour for one student with a negotiated higher rate for small groups.

<sup>3</sup> The study assumes \$1,500 expenditure per child per program year. Elev8 Oakland expends approximately \$1,509 per student per year (\$464,750.00 expended to serve 308 students served in 2011-12), ensuring that the study program is a comparable enough to Elev8 to make a valid comparison.

<sup>4</sup> This English learner tutoring study assumes 4.5 months of tutoring with 60 sessions of

Academic Mentoring and Tutoring that Elev8 provides is valued even higher because many of the students reached are English learners. According to research conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and published in 2011 (Aos et al., 2011), the benefit/cost ratio for tutoring ranges between \$3.69 and \$10.05 for every \$1 expended, depending on whether the student being tutored is a native English speaker or is learning English as a second language (269% - 905% lifetime return on investment projecting out 59 years).<sup>4</sup> External evaluations demonstrating Elev8 Oakland Academic Mentoring and Tutoring services' significant impact on student achievement and standardized test scores support the application of this research to Elev8 services. *Using the figures provided by this research, the lifetime estimated return on investment for Elev8 Oakland OST is \$1,480,229 and for Academic Mentoring and Tutoring is \$8,684,363 (see Table 1 for actual calculations), or a total of \$10,164,592, which is 14.6 times the initial Elev8 investment of \$695,885.*

**STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES:** Conversations with families and Elev8 staff reiterate the immediate and long-term value

25 minutes each (1500 minutes per semester), which approximates what a high-dosage Elev8 student would get in one semester. Similarly, the native English speaker tutoring study assumes 8 months of tutoring with 68 sessions of about 40 minutes each (1530 minutes per semester).

Elev8 creates by offering integrated and school-based services. One Elev8 coordinator described the benefits of the academic support this way:

*Elev8 diversified the school and the school culture academically, emotionally, socially. The kids have the ability to do more than...ordinary academics through extended days. For example, students with low reading or math skills get the help they need through extended days and Saturdays... Elev8 establishes a life-long pattern of motivation for kids to be life-long learners. It starts with Elev8 in middle school. It tends to increase later success in life across the board.*

The leader of Elev8 health services at another site also saw great value in the academic supports, but from her perspective the benefit was more around reduced risk and increased connection:

*The after-school program has made a difference. I can see that involving kids in after-school has a direct link to higher attainment. A connection to adults leads to a connection to school which leads to academic attainment, which hopefully will lead you to higher graduation rates. Also by keeping youth busy during those hours you are dissuading them from other activities such as involvement in crime.*

## SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS: LOCATING CARE WHERE IT'S MOST EASILY ACCESSED

At each Elev8 Oakland site students and families can access high-quality professional health services. These are delivered by licensed nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, medical doctors, dentists and hygienists, and licensed mental health clinicians. The cost of these services would normally be prohibitively high for many Elev8 Oakland students and families – a large number lack private insurance, are unaware of public options, or are deterred from accessing preventive care based on their immigration status. Across the five campuses, \$602,500 of Elev8 dollars went to supporting the School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in 2011-12. These services were delivered through Health Lead Agencies at each school site with an additional \$200,000 for dental services and \$85,000 going to provide clinical case management and mental health services (Safe Passages Elev8 actual expenditures 2011-12), for a total of \$887,500. While this is no small sum, it only represents about 33% of the total, combined value when one takes

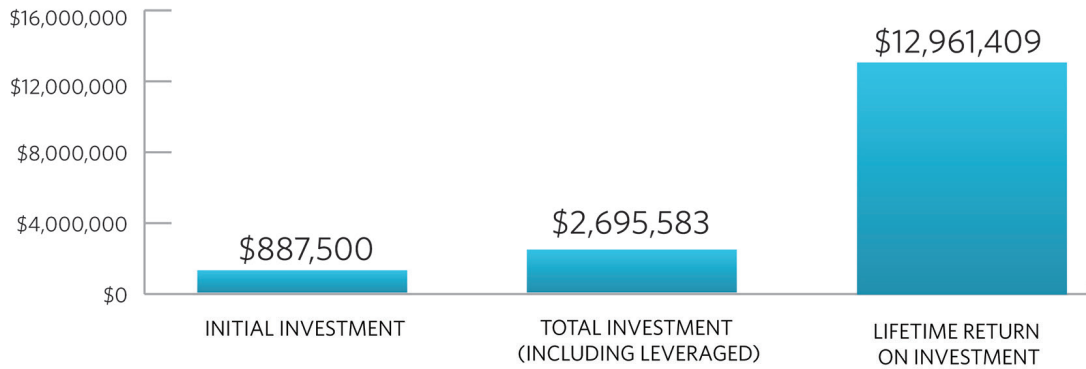
into account services leveraged through strategic partnerships with nearby University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), Alameda County, and Medi-Cal and EPSDT reimbursements. Early on Safe Passages began cultivating partnerships with UCSF and the County to leverage the resources and services that these local providers offer. At each Elev8 SBHC UCSF provides additional medical and dental care on site (valued at \$500,000 per year), and the County facilitates services that are reimbursed through the child mental health component of Medicaid known as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment, or EPSDT (valued at \$500,000) and Medi-Cal reimbursements for medical services (valued at \$333,083). The County also funds direct services for clients who are not EPSDT-eligible, valued at \$475,000. This is crucial because a large number of students who are in need of behavioral health supports do not qualify for EPSDT or Medi-Cal reimbursement. Combined, these leveraged services along with the Elev8 services are valued at \$2,695,583. Without the coordination of services provided by the Elev8 program, the additional leveraging of services would not have been as effective because schools would not have had the basic staffing and infrastructure to hold and maximize the resources. This includes the very structures that hold the SBHCs, which were built or remodeled with Elev8 start-up funds.

**THE RESEARCH:** Again, looking at leveraged funding and services only shows a portion of the monetary value that Elev8 affords in the long-term. Research on SBHCs points to even greater savings and value. A 2010 study out of the University of Cincinnati (Guo, et al., 2010) found \$1.68 returned for every \$1 expended (68% return on investment) over three years of school-based health center services (including dental and mental health).<sup>5</sup> In the study expenditures and savings were compared between students enrolled at schools with SBHCs on campus and schools (matched on demographic variables) with no SBHCs on campus.

<sup>5</sup> The study found that 56% of students on those campuses with SBHCs used SBHC services. Return on investment findings were based on a usage rate of 3.3 encounters per unduplicated student served by the SBHCs, or 1.8 encounters per student enrolled at schools with SBHCs on campus, and were not projected beyond the years that the student was enrolled. Elev8 Oakland SBHCs appear to be used at higher rates than those upon which the Cincinnati study based their ROI calculations – while the same percentage of Elev8 Oakland students used the SBHC as in the Cincinnati study (56%) the average number of encounters per student served in Oakland is 9.36 and the average number of encounters per middle school student enrolled the schools is 5.26. This implies that calculations based on the Cincinnati figures may underestimate the level of impact and savings that Elev8 Oakland SBHCs bring.



## SBHC INVESTMENTS & RETURNS



Findings point very clearly to savings and indicate that *eased access* to preventive care and insurance benefits helped students and families avoid emergency services and elude longer-term injury and illness. Additionally, because Elev8 has enhanced the accessibility of behavioral health supports, studies showing returns on mental health services for adolescents should also be considered. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy report (Aos, et al., 2011) identifies the benefit/cost ratio of cognitive behavioral therapy for adolescent depression as \$17.93 returned for every \$1 expended (1693% return on investment) projected out 59 years.<sup>6</sup> The very high estimated ROI on school-based mental health supports is grounded in research that clearly indicates the long-term value of early intervention in behavioral health treatment (Lochman & Wells, 1996), and the tremendous risk associated with mental health disorders that go untreated in adolescence (Crowell, 1998). It stands to reason that school-based medical prevention and early intervention might also offer long-term projected ROI, but because there are no current studies that project long-term savings from SBHCs, this brief can only rely on the three-year projection afforded by the University of Cincinnati study. *Based on the above-cited research, the initial Elev8 Oakland investment of \$887,500 into the mental and physical health of*

*students and families calculates to an estimated long-term societal return of \$12,961,409 (see Table 1), or 14.6 times the original outlay.*

**STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES:** The following quote is from the staff member who oversees the SBHC at one of the Elev8 sites (the Elev8 Health Lead).

*[Cost savings come from reduced] hospitalization rates for asthma, for example, that would result in emergency room visits, [or] parents' diabetes that goes unchecked. Connecting families with health insurance enrollment – that's something that we do – otherwise we know these families would be uninsured and relying on costlier services.*

What the Cincinnati study could not quantify as easily are the ways that on-site health services allow students to overcome health matters that might interfere with their ability to learn. Dental pain and other untreated health concerns, for example, have been shown to impede a child's ability to focus and perform well in school (Rothstein, 2001), and it is also clear that mental and behavioral issues, including exposure to trauma, interfere with learning (Grogger, 1998; Hurt, et al., 2001). As one Elev8 Health Lead put it:

*I like to think that everything we do saves lives and money. Because the clinic is here, students miss less time from*

<sup>6</sup> The study does not specify whether or not clients are medicated, nor does it include some of the other evidence-based therapeutic modalities used in Elev8 programs.

*school and parents less time from work. If you're in pain from dental issues or asthma, it's hard to concentrate on school so having treatment changes outcomes. Bring[ing] in behavior supports also keeps students in class and being successful. We see teens and preteens 6-12 grade. When they get to us it's clear that some have had no health care at all since they were about 4. So we get them back into a relationship with a doctor, get them up on their vaccines.*

From the Elev8 Coordinator perspective, the SBHC is part of an integrated system that removes barriers to learning:

*We respond quickly to students in jeopardy. There was a student with diabetes for example, who was performing badly academically, but nobody knew. The grandmother recognized that something was wrong and called us. We intervened, got the student treatment. So now that student can learn. Without us, who would that grandmother call? And how many cases are there like that?*

Another aspect of SBHCs whose value could not be captured in the Cincinnati study is the long-term impact that students and families who use SBHCs might take away, not only in terms of receiving services during their time at these Elev8 schools, but well after that, as described by the Elev8 Health Lead below:

*For the families and the children, we hope the long-term effect is that we have taught them how to be consumers of health care... One of the things that we take for granted when you come from a more privileged background is how to access care. A lot of our population is undocumented, so there are a lot of things that are not clear to them in terms of how to access care... We introduce them to health insurance options and show them...how to advocate for themselves, so that they have that internal efficacy and empowerment, so that once they are no longer at the school they have had success accessing and advocating for health care somewhere else.*

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORTS

The Elev8 Family Engagement and Supports component ensures that Elev8 families can access mental health, substance abuse, legal, employment, domestic violence, peer support and other critical services that support the health and well-being of the child and family. Families can

also “go shopping” in the food pantry, helping to combat the food insecurity that is endemic in some of Oakland’s low-income communities. Each Elev8 site has a Family Advocate position. The Family Advocate is responsible for overseeing outreach, providing family engagement programs and events, case management, and coordinating supports for family members in need. Once again, Elev8 has been able to leverage partnerships to stretch its investment of \$433,722. The value of goods and services contributed by the Food Bank (\$39,500), local legal services (\$178,500), and tax clinic professionals (\$13,500) amount to \$231,500, substantially increasing the value of family engagement and support that Elev8 families receive. It is also worth noting that families who participated in Elev8 Oakland free tax clinics in 2011-12 received a total of \$185,000 in tax refunds – while they do not figure into leveraged values, these dollars went directly to those families and are a tangible form of reinvestment into the community.

**THE RESEARCH:** There is limited research on the long-term monetary benefits of the kind of family engagement and supports that the Elev8 programs offer. However, a study in the 2010 Washington State Institute for Public Policy report (Aos, et al., 2011) shows that for programs focused on parent involvement<sup>7</sup> (one small aspect of the Elev8 family approach), the benefit/cost ratio is \$4.62 returned for every \$1 expended, projecting out 59 years (362% return on investment).<sup>8</sup> *Using these figures it is estimated that, over a lifetime the initial investment of \$433,722 might translate into over \$2.5 million in societal savings (see Table 1 for calculations), which is 5.85 times the original outlay.*<sup>9</sup>

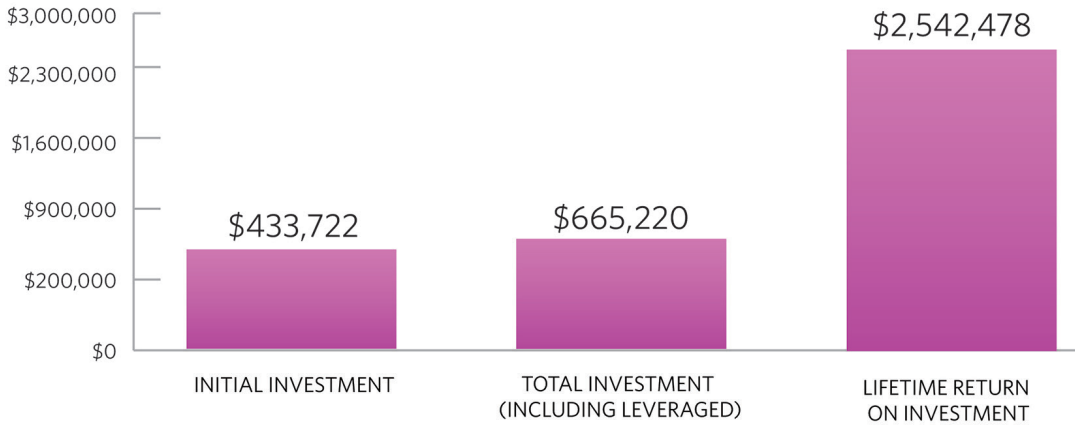
It should be noted that these numbers are based on a study that looks only at the positive impact on student achievement that is associated with greater parental involvement.

<sup>7</sup> The study looked at K-12 parent involvement programs in which, typically, school staff met with parents in person and maintained some form of ongoing contact (e.g., over the phone) to train and encourage parents to engage in academic activities with their children at home.

<sup>8</sup> This study assumes one-half hour per week of parent engagement services to maintain contact with parents during the school year (.5 per week x 37 weeks = 18.5 hours per academic year) – this is a very small fraction of the time that Elev8 devoted to family engagement and support in 2011-12, which involved 40 hours a week (40 per week x 37 weeks = 1480 hours per site per academic year), a figure that does not even include events, workshops, peer support, and services offered by partner agencies or during evening hours.

<sup>9</sup> ROI rate x (initial outlay + leveraged value); or \$4.62 x \$665,220 = \$2,542,478; ROI + initial investment; or \$2,542,478 + \$433,722 = 5.85

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INVESTMENTS & RETURNS



They do not capture the long-term savings that might be imparted through parent education, peer support, family case management, and others services and supports the Family Advocates facilitate. For example, the projected return on investment does not include societal savings that would be enjoyed if a family’s earnings were to increase as a result of employment services, or if legal services enabled a family to successfully overcome immigration or other legal barriers to livelihood. The projected return figure, then, is very likely to be an underestimation of the long-term benefit of Elev8 Oakland family support services.

**STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES:** One parent describes the ways that Elev8 Family Engagement and Supports helped her:

*Without Elev8 there would have been a lot of depression and hungry days. Being unemployed, they got me exercising and taking care of myself, getting out there looking for work, getting me involved in activities...They helped with counseling, the food bank, the lawyer helped me clean my record. I wanted to get my insurance agent license and they helped with that, now I'm doing that for work and also do it for free to help low-income parents here.*

ventional parent liaison to handle. Many of the families and students drawing down Elev8 services have multiple needs, which one set of services alone would never address. But, because the Elev8 family engagement approach is designed to provide individualized and peer supports, it has the capacity to turn a situation around, benefitting the parent and the student alike.

*At the very beginning we saw the very first year this student was terrible with truancy and attendance. Our outreach consultant did home visits but it didn't change. We knew outside stuff was happening. Mom had just had a baby, with no outside support and three kids total. And she did not have a job to go back to. The daughter was needing to help mom and missing some school because of that... We needed to bring in a nurse to say to the mom, "Can we help with the baby?" and the family advocate to say, "We are here to support you," and the outreach consultant, "Is there anything you need?" We wanted to help her because we knew that the only way to help her daughter was to help her mom.... In 8th grade the [student's] attendance turned around. Now the student is in high school and she's doing well.*

According to this Elev8 Coordinator, the challenges faced by some families are deep – too deep for a school or a con-

## GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

Each of the research studies cited above only considers one element of Elev8 Oakland separate from the whole. But at the heart of the model is the fact that Elev8 Oakland provides all of these supports *together*, at a single, convenient location, in an integrated and coordinated manner. This “one-stop shop” aspect of the model is identified again and again by stakeholders as a key part of the model’s value to families, to students and to the school. Accessing services through the school site is more convenient to families and students. For example, having a health center at the school creates a bridge between the language of health and the language of education. Having adequate behavioral health supports on campus enables school administrators to remove barriers to learning rather than removing students from the educational setting through suspension and expulsion. And, perhaps most importantly, having a Coordination of Services Team where the individual needs of students, be they academic or personal, are matched to appropriate services and supports, ensures that school and Elev8 personnel are on the same page in their efforts to help every student make progress toward academic and personal success.

The value of this integrated and coordinated approach to supporting families and students is illustrated in these statements from parents and Elev8 coordinators.

*When [my kids] they first got here, they couldn't read or write; now they can. Before, I couldn't help them with their homework but now I can. Now I know how...The case management helped us. For my daughters, the leadership program and extracurricular work, all the extended care, the 6th and 7th period. I learned many things with my child. I don't want to miss a day...They helped my husband get a job. The food bank helped us: when we didn't have enough – [with the food bank] I could feed my family.*

This parent, from another Elev8 site, had different needs, but a similarly positive experience:

*I've got two children, my son is in 8th grade and my daughter is in 6th grade. My daughter needed medical coverage; I didn't understand it and also needed legal services to work it out. They helped me and that helped her a whole lot...I've used every form of service. Both my children are currently using the mental health services... I used the Family Resource Center everyday... It's a way that can supply so many*

*needs that a family has. You don't need to shop around; they come to us.*

The multiplicity of services, from the viewpoint of this Elev8 Coordinator, prevents human hardship and creates societal savings:

*This is a game changer in their lives. We're building a culture of life—one that values neighbors, community, each other. There are students who I know would be in jail or out of school if it wasn't for our interventions...you can see [cost savings] now—if you projected out 5 years—students who drop out, looking for low-wage jobs, relying on social services. If they are successful they will save the County a lot of money. The health and mental health costs could be huge. No matter how much we spend now it's cheaper than sending them to jail.*

In sum, in Elev8 Oakland, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Safe Passages and its public and private partners, have built a model of the full service community school whose impact can be measured in multiple ways. By creating an infrastructure at the schools Elev8 makes a sticky surface on which additional student and family supports can be secured, thereby expanding the monetary impact of the program. Further down the line, these services can result in tremendous monetary savings by giving at-risk youth the tools they need to avoid dropout, crisis, criminal involvement, and devastating health outcomes. The value of these services is not simply financial, however. This Elev8 Coordinator offers a powerful perspective, informed by his own experience in the Oakland Unified School District some years ago:

*I sit back and think about what would it look like if we disappeared—just a principal, assistant principal, teachers and maybe a counselor. I think about the teachers and administrators who would have too much work on their hands—and they'd try to do it because that's what kind of people they are—and how many students would fall through the cracks. Drop out, get into gangs, get kicked out of the district. That's what happened to me. I was kicked out of the district when I was 15. To see the kids that are like me stay engaged and going on to High School and college—I can't imagine it without Elev8.*

## CONCLUSION

This policy brief demonstrates that adequate direct investment in students and families through community schools can create significant leveraging opportunities and long-term returns to society that far exceed the original outlay. It also points to additional areas of further research that are needed in order to quantify the cost savings of community schools models more comprehensively, including understanding the value of the coordination of services, quantifying the impacts of family support beyond student achievement, and recognizing the specific effect of working with students and families during the middle school years, as opposed to some other time in their education

## THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

The table on the following page lists Elev8 Oakland budget allocations in Column A. These figures represent the funder's direct investment in each service category. In Column B are the dollar values of services leveraged through partnerships made possible by the existence of the Elev8 program in each of the participating school sites. Column C is the per annum multiplier calculated according to the research cited in this Policy Brief that documents estimated return on investment for each listed program component or service category – the mathematical formulations from the cited research was broken down to an annual estimated return, to standardize the multiplier to a 49 year lifetime projection (number of years listed in Column D). The final column (Column E) shows the long-term return that society may enjoy once the initial investment and the leveraged value are added together and the return on investment formulae are applied to the combined service investment, to show an overall societal savings that multiplies the initial budget line by a factor of 9.96.

## REPORT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND COPYRIGHT

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Table 1						
Elev8 Program Element		Atlantic Investment 2011-12 year	Leveraged Monies	Estimated per Year Return per \$1 Expended (above recouped investment)	Number of Years Projected into the Future	Estimated Return on Investment
		A	B	C	D	(A + B) x C x D
<b>Extended Day Learning</b>		\$464,750	--	\$0.065 <sup>10</sup>	49	\$1,480,229
<b>Academic Mentoring and Tutoring</b>	<b>English Learners<sup>11</sup></b>	\$129,435	\$686,764	\$0.17 <sup>12</sup>	49	\$6,798,938
	<b>English Primary Language</b>	\$101,700	\$539,601	\$0.06 <sup>13</sup>	49	\$1,885,425
<b>School-Based Health Center<sup>14</sup></b>		\$843,000	\$833,083	\$0.56 <sup>15</sup>	3	\$3,638,179
<b>Mental Health/Clinical Case Management</b>		\$42,500 <sup>16</sup>	\$487,500	\$0.359 <sup>17</sup>	49	\$9,323,230
<b>Family Engagement and Support</b>		\$433,722	\$231,500	\$0.078 <sup>18</sup>	49	\$2,542,478
<b>Project Coordination</b>		\$558,900	—	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$2,576,007	\$3,265,948	9.96 (2.27 x 4.39)	—	\$25,668,479

<sup>10</sup> This figure derives from the Levine & Zimmerman 2003 study with the following caveat: the age of extended learning program participants in the Levine & Zimmerman study ranged from 6-13, averaging age 9, making the total time period of projected savings approximately 49 years. The annual return on investment is, therefore, calculated as \$1.065 per dollar expended, or \$.065 returned after initial investment is subtracted.

<sup>11</sup> Safe Passages records show that 56% of students receiving academic mentoring and tutoring have a language other than English as their first language, so Elev8 direct investment and leveraged dollars are allocated accordingly, with 56% for non-native English-speakers and 44% for native English-speakers.

<sup>12</sup> This figure derives from the Aos, et al., 2011 report, with the following caveat: projected returns on investment in the Aos, et al., report were calculated for the life cycle of the children served, assuming life expectancy of 65 (calculated as age 6-65, or over the course of 59 years). Projected savings in the matrix have been adjusted for the Elev8 start age of 11, and the time projection of 59 years has been reduced to 49 years in order to ensure a parallel to other measures on the matrix. The annual return on investment \$1.17 per dollar expended, or \$.17 returned after initial investment is subtracted.

<sup>13</sup> Also derived from the Aos, et al., 2011 study, and adjusted for age, this category of tutoring is calculated to have an annual return on investment of \$1.06 per dollar expended, or \$.06 returned after initial investment is subtracted.

<sup>14</sup> The SBHC investment figures include all direct and leveraged values for health, dental, and mental health services that were not cognitive-behavioral therapy for adolescent depression, which is calculated separately.

<sup>15</sup> This figure derives from the Guo, et al., 2010 study out of Cincinnati, with the following caveat: given that Elev8 SBHCs are utilized at a higher frequency than the SBHCs in the study, it is likely that this figure underestimates the rate of savings felt at Oakland sites. It should also be noted that, unlike the other studies cited in the matrix, the Cincinnati SBHC study only looked at actual deferred costs for the three years of SBHC services received, and made no lifetime cost deferral projections. The annual savings figure cannot, therefore, be projected out 49 years as the other figures are.

<sup>16</sup> The actual investment of Elev8 dollars for clinical case management is \$85,000, but, because depression figures as approximately half of adolescent diagnoses (Sarafolean, 2000), and the research only supports return on investment assumptions for depression treatment, the investment figure has been discounted by 50%. The remainder of the clinical case management dollars are represented within the SBHC figures.

<sup>17</sup> This figure derives from the Aos, et al., 2011 report, with the following caveat: the estimated life cycle in the Aos, et al., calculation is age 15-65, which works out to an annual return on investment of \$1.359 per dollar expended, or \$.359 after initial investment is subtracted.

<sup>18</sup> This figure derives from the Aos, et al., 2011 study, with the following caveat: the study's projections have been calculated at an annual return on investment rate, so that \$1.078 is returned per dollar expended, or \$.078 after initial investment is subtracted. It should be noted that the value presented here represents a small portion of the services and supports in the Family Engagements and Supports service category.

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