

Should the Sacramento City School Board create a streamlined K-12 pathway for local families by adding grades 7 and 8 to Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School?

A feasibility study for Sacramento City Unified School District.

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*A digital summary of this report for parents and families is
available at:*

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Executive summary

Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School (Health Professions High) is a high performing, under-enrolled school.

Leataata Floyd Elementary School (Floyd Elementary) is an under-performing, fully enrolled school.

Both are public schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District (Sacramento City district), in Sacramento, California.

Health Professions High and Floyd Elementary are immediately next door to each other in Sacramento's Upper Land Park neighborhood, an area widely known for Marina Vista and Alder Grove, two large, low income and historically segregated public housing communities occupied primarily by people of color. These communities are widely considered to be underserved by city services, including in education options.

The Sacramento City School Board asked us to investigate whether transforming Health Professions High into a grades 7-12 integrated middle school-high school – creating a “community learning center” K-12 pathway on one block, from a K-6 Floyd Elementary to a grades 7-12 Health Professions Middle/High School - would benefit Sacramento students and families, especially those in the area around those schools.

This report concludes the benefits of the community learning center and grade 7-12 models in the Upper Land Park neighborhood are ultimately outweighed by the substantial risks they present for Upper Land Park and Sacramento City families, for three major reasons:

- Grades 7-12 at Health Professions High carries a significant risk of increasing segregation of Upper Land Park families within Sacramento City district, isolating them from other Sacramento City families in a school pathway that is uncertain to outperform existing popular school choices - yet likely keeps them just blocks from home for the majority of the first 18 years of their lives.
- Adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High forces the school to deal with several big changes to school culture all at the same time, and is ultimately more likely to create more problems than solutions for Health Professions High student outcomes.
- Health Professions High's under-enrollment is rooted in perceptions about the safety of the school and area for students, and concerns about the narrowness of the health professions pathway. This study found the 7-12 model unlikely to address these underlying issues.

Though adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High is not the answer, the current realistic education options available to Upper Land Park families are unacceptably poor. This study urges the Sacramento City School Board to take action

to improve outcomes for Floyd Elementary students.

Specifically, this study recommends the district and these schools take more cost efficient, less risk-fraught actions to capture many of the benefits of – and lay the groundwork for – a community learning center and create a better pathway for Floyd Elementary students. They also allow Health Professions High and Floyd Elementary to deal with major changes to school culture and operations one at a time, rather than all at once. These recommendations increase the likelihood of creating a quality, desirable, integrated middle school option and community learning center in Upper Land Park.

This study's recommendations for Sacramento City district policymakers are:

1. **Increase school site-led collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.** Such collaboration, in community health services, student-to-student mentorship, and recruitment, would capture many of the benefits of the grade 7-12 school and community learning center model with less risk and cost. It would also test the viability of, and lay the groundwork for, adding grades 7-8 at Health Professions High.
2. **Create a focused Health Professions High branding & marketing strategy, and consider broadening Health Professions High linked learning pathway beyond the health profession.** Health Professions High can specifically target Upper Land Park families as a potential source of students. Health Professions High School is not just for students who want to be nurses and technicians, a common perception in Sacramento City district. Health Professions High is also for students who want a small school, professional exposure, and a college and career readiness track. However, if appeal of the health professions pathway remains low among Sacramento City district families, a broader pathway, or adding even a second, dual pathway, is likely to broaden Health Professions High's appeal to families from across the district and region.
3. **Deeper study of Floyd Elementary-Health Professions High family & community needs.** Exploring the depth and impact of Upper Land Park school segregation and trauma is essential to collecting the community views and hard data required to continue exploring options and developing an informed, detailed vision for this area's future, beyond this study's recommendations. Serious long term solutions to under-performance and under-enrollment at Upper Land Park schools start with understanding how these schools learning environments are deeply affected by their surrounding communities.

Recommendations for policymakers

Recommendation #1: Increase school site-led collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.

A successful, stable K-12 pathway between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High would require an enormous amount of collaboration between these schools anyway. Why not start with the collaboration first, and add grades 7 and 8 later, rather than the other way around or, worse, having to implement both at the same time?

Collaboration between these schools does already exist. It is successful. And more can be done with the support and encouragement of the Sacramento City School Board. Sacramento City district can capture many of the benefits of the K-12 pathway by simply funding and supporting increased collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.

Increased neighborhood collaboration is likely to spread more information about Health Professions High among Upper Land Park families, and be more cost effective way to build a Floyd-Health Professions pathway – the same pathway that has so much potential to improve Floyd student performance and boost Health Professions High enrollment.

“ [Health Professions High] - is that a public school?”
- Parent at Leataata Floyd Elementary School

School site collaboration will also test the proposition, and lay the groundwork, for a future community learning center. If collaboration is fruitful, it can increase. Over time, Floyd families will come to know whether Health Profession High better – Health Professions High will come to know what the Upper Land Park community wants and needs. If the collaboration is popular and successful - the groundwork is laid for the K-12 community learning center pathway on the Floyd-Health Professions block.

The school sites themselves are most in touch with their families' and communities' needs. They should lead this collaboration. Collaboration can take many forms –this report does not deem to know which collaborations would be most high impact. This research revealed many ideas for collaboration, including:

- Increased Health Professions High outreach and recruitment into Floyd Elementary and Upper Land Park – a recruitment day at Health Professions High for 6th grade families.
- Providing community health services for Upper Land Park families on site at Health Professions High, supported by Health Professions High students. This

could be a community health day, a community partnership, or an ongoing clinic.

- Student mentorship, especially in reading and other academics, college tracks, and healthy habits, between Health Professions High students and Floyd Elementary students.

Some collaborations are easier than others. Some are simple and can be undertaken right away by the school sites with support from Sacramento City district. Others are complex – they might require partnership with the City of Sacramento, Mercy Housing, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), Sacramento Police Department, private sector health care partners, and so on.

Regardless of what level of engagement the school sites choose and Sacramento City district supports, one of this report's clearest findings is the unrealized benefit of supporting increased Floyd-Health Professions collaboration.

Recommendations #2: To broaden Health Professions High's appeal in the Sacramento region, create a focused Health Professions High branding & outreach strategy and consider broadening the school's linked learning pathway beyond the health profession.

Qualitative research suggests Health Profession High's enrollment is low at least partly because knowledge of this school was low among parents interviewed, and because the health professions pathway may have limited community appeal.

Qualitative research revealed even in the Upper Land Park community that surrounds the school, some parents did not know:

- Health Professions High School exists; is a public school; is not a continuation high school – is an option for their children.
- Health Professions High School graduated 98% of its 2016 senior class.
- Health Professions High sent 84% of its 2016 graduates on to higher education¹.
- Health Professions High School is not just for students who want to be nurses and technicians. It is also for students who want a small school experience, professional exposure, a college and career readiness track, etc.

This report recommends Health Professions High and other small schools of choice in Sacramento City district should share best practices and benefit from each other's lessons learned in successful outreach and recruitment.

Some straightforward marketing strategy changes may also benefit Health Professions High, such as:

- Changing the name of the school to Arthur A. Benjamin High School, or another name that reflects that the school is appropriate for and Sacramento City district students – not just those interested in a narrow health profession.

- Profiles of successful recent graduates, including their job title, estimated salary, and testimonials from the student. Consider hiring recent graduates for outreach activities.
- Profiles of partner employers who have hired Health Professions High graduates and interns, with current job openings (with salary) and testimonials.
- Increasing school site visits to the Health Professions campus for 7th and 8th graders and their families.
- Targeting Upper Land Park families in Health Professions recruitment through community-focused tactics – keeping in mind the languages and cultures of the families in Upper Land Park.
- Targeting Leataata Floyd families specifically through outreach to families with 6th graders.

Outreach into the neighboring Upper Land Park area and specifically at Floyd Elementary families is particularly high value as it has potential benefits of capturing some of the benefits of the community learning center model as well as bolstering Health Professions High enrollment with a community whose current educational options are not serving them well. Floyd Elementary families are a rich and relatively untapped potential source of Health Professions High students.

If increased knowledge among district parents (and especially Upper Land Park parents) about Health Professions High does not solve the school's low enrollment, then appeal of the health professions pathway must be brought into question. Broadening the health professions pathway, or adding a second, dual pathway at the school would give Upper Land Park families more pathway options in their neighborhood.

“ All these things I didn't know about the success... of Health Professions [High] students. I had no idea. ”

- Parent at California Middle School

Sacramento City district should consider whether the health professions pathway is overly “narrow and isolating,” as one educator put it, to appeal to a broad swath of Sacramento region families. Hesitation about the narrowness of this linked learning high school pathway was raised repeatedly by parents and educators that participated in this study. Adding a second (non-health) linked learning pathway at Health Professions High school – one with clear demand among Upper Land Park families – could also permanently solve Health Professions High's under-enrollment by consolidating existing Sacramento City district pathways in one place. For example, one suggestion that came up in the course of this research was to move New Technology High School's pathway to share a campus with Health Professions High.

“ Was Health Professions [High] designed for the community in which it resides? If it was built for this community, then it would be full.”

- Educator at Floyd Elementary School

Recommendation #3: Conduct a deeper study of Floyd Elementary-Health Professions High family & surrounding community needs.

Adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High does not address the root causes of that school's under-enrollment, or Floyd Elementary's underperformance. In fact, the likelihood of successfully implementing grades 7 and 8 at Health Professions High is more likely to be affected by those root causes than to change them.

“ [As a district,] we've got to do something different.”

- Educator at Leataata Floyd Elementary

Educators, parents, and district leaders were nearly unanimous in reporting the neighborhood circumstances – the “deep trauma and segregation” in Upper Land Park – limits the ability of teachers to effectively teach, and of Health Professions High to recruit students. There was a widespread feeling that inaction, as one educator put it, creates a “moral imperative from our [school] board to recognize they are perpetuating something.”

This study focused on the question of the likely costs and benefits of adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High, and it was beyond the scope and resources of this study to address the broader – and greater – questions:

- What Upper Land Park families to find out what these families want and need from their public education provider.
- What Floyd Elementary, Health Professions High, California Middle, and McClatchy High need in order to create a viable, successful learning environment for Upper Land Park students.

A comprehensive community engagement survey of Upper Land Park families and how Sacramento City district was the #1 request from educators at the Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High school sites.

"If the community needs [around our school] are not addressed, then our enrollment will never be what it needs to be," says one Health Professions High educator.

“ Talk about becoming a doctor when the kids don't like science or math. ”

-Upper Land Park community member

In particular, Sacramento City district should explore the depth and impact of school segregation in these neighborhoods and answer questions such as:

1. How does the surrounding neighborhood affect the learning environment at Health Professions High, and the readiness of Upper Land Park students to learn in the Health Professions High classroom?
2. What services are available to low income (Title 1) students and how can Sacramento City district support school sites to take advantage of those services?
3. Are Floyd Elementary students prepared to learn when they arrive at school, and if not, why? What can Sacramento City district do to help these children be ready to learn when the bell rings?
4. Why do Floyd Elementary students choose C.K. McClatchy High School over Health Professions High School? What does this community want from Health Professions High? How can Health Professions High serve this community more?

The fact is, Floyd Elementary School students are effectively segregated from the rest of Sacramento City district at grades K to 6. Floyd students are 98.5% of colorⁱⁱ. 100% of students meet the federal poverty thresholdⁱⁱⁱ. Nearly all students live nearby in Upper Land Park's 751 units of public housing.

One of this study's clearest findings is the learning environments and reputations of both Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High are deeply affected by their surrounding communities and their needs.

Understanding those dynamics and examining the data and perceptions behind them, beyond the anecdotal, is an essential first step to giving Upper Land Park families better education options.

End of Executive Summary & Recommendations

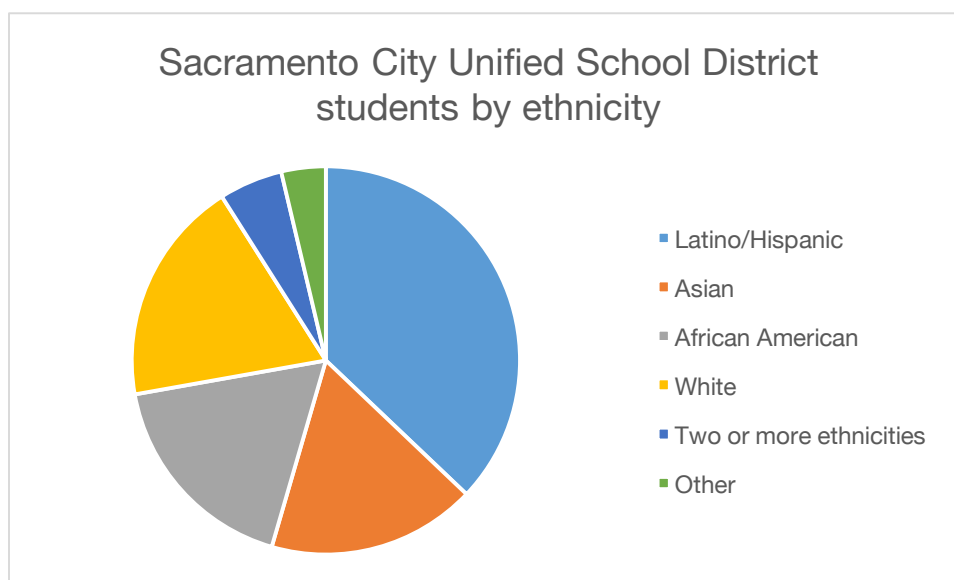
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Section I Introduction

Background.

Sacramento City Unified School District (Sacramento City district) is one of the largest and most diverse public school districts in the Western United States.

Of the District's 43,000 students, roughly 2 in 5 are Hispanic or Latino/a, while 1 in 5 are White, 1 in 5 are African American, and 1 in 5 are Asian. Sacramento City district families speak more than 40 languages, while 38% do not speak English at home^{iv}.



Source: Sacramento City Unified School District

Within Sacramento City district, Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School (Health Professions High) is a high performing, under-enrolled school. Leataata Floyd Elementary School (Floyd Elementary) is an under-performing, fully enrolled school immediately next to Health Professions High in Sacramento's Upper Land Park neighborhood^v.

The proposal.

At the request of the Sacramento City School Board, this study investigates whether adding grades 7 and 8 to Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School transforming that school into a grades 7-12 integrated middle school-high school, would benefit Sacramento students and families, especially those in the Upper Land Park neighborhoods around those schools.

The grade 7-12 school model at Health Professions High is an intriguing "two birds with one stone" solution – one that could provide a community learning center" K-12 pathway from Floyd Elementary to 12th grade graduation, while also consistently

supporting Health Professions High being fully enrolled.

Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School.

Within the Sacramento City district context, Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School (Health Professions High, or HPHS) is a school with a strong, consistent track record of graduating students and sending them on to higher education^{vi}. The school was established in 2002 on much of the latest research and best practice in public education, including the Gates Foundation-backed small school model^{vii} and the Irvine Foundation-backed linked learning model^{viii}.

Health Professions High consistently graduates a higher percentage of its senior class than the Sacramento City district average and the California State average^{ix}.

In 2016, Health Professions High graduated 98% of its senior class, and 85% of graduates are going on to higher education^x.

This is all the more impressive when factoring in that nearly 100% of Health Professions High students come from low income families and receive free or reduced lunch, while nearly 15% are English as a Second Language (ESL) students.^{xi}

Table A: Graduation rates, 2010-2015			
School year	Health Professions High	Sacramento City district	California statewide
2014-15	94%	80%	82%
2013-14	92%	85%	81%
2013-12	96%	85%	80%
2012-11	81%	80%	79%
2010-11	88%	75%	77%

Source: California Department of Education

On many other metrics, Health Professions High falls close to, and in some cases below, District averages. On average, from 2012 to 2015, 40% of Health Professions High graduates met University of California/California State University enrollment standards (commonly referred to as “A through G requirements”), while 46% of overall Sacramento City district graduates did so. Health Professions High also has lagged overall district averages in API, a common school performance metric, and truancy rates^{xii}. More data is available in Appendix B: Grades 7-12 model student outcomes - data & analysis. Health Professions High is not going to make US News & World Report’s list of top public schools in the country. What Health Professions High does do impressively is consistently graduate low income students and send them on to higher education.

Despite these accomplishments, Health Professions High School enrolled just 47% of its full capacity over the past three years (2013-2015)^{xiii}. What can be done at Health Professions High to enroll this high performing school to capacity?

Leataata Floyd Elementary.

Next door to Health Professions High is Leataata Floyd Elementary School (Floyd Elementary), a Superintendent's Priority School and one of the most challenging elementary schools in the entire state of California. Data shows Floyd Elementary in the bottom 10% of schools both statewide, among similar schools statewide^{xiv}, and among Sacramento City elementary school^{xv}. Fully 100% of Floyd Elementary students receive free or reduced lunch because of their families' low income status^{xvi}, and Floyd Elementary families earn, on average, just half the Sacramento County median income^{xvii}. This research revealed widespread deep concern from every corner of the district that Sacramento City district education is failing Floyd Elementary families.

“ I have 6th graders with 1st grade reading level.... They aren't prepared for Cal Middle School, they get passed through there too. They are at McClatchy [High School]... they don't even know their ABCs.”

- Educator at Floyd Elementary School

Floyd Elementary is the neighborhood school for the Marina Vista and Alder Grove public housing communities, which total 751 residences with 1,900 residents^{xviii}. Marina Vista homes are directly across the street from Floyd Elementary, while Alder Grove homes are 5 blocks away^{xix}.

In and around the school, it is common perception that Floyd Elementary's purpose was and is to segregate these public housing children from the rest of the district.

“ This is a school that serves public housing. Solely.”

- Educator at Floyd Elementary School

While the role of the school in segregation is certainly a complex and open discussion, this study found no debate that more – much more – must be done for families at Floyd Elementary. Parents at other schools notice cohorts of Floyd children, too. *“They should not be throwing kids from Floyd [Elementary] into special [education classes] just because they are from Floyd,”* one C.K. McClatchy High School parent says.

What can we do to support the students and families around Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High better?

“ This school was put here for a reason.... You put this school here so these kids won't go to Crocker Riverside, Land Park.... You put a school smack dab between two projects. What's gonna be the outcome?”

- Educator at Floyd Elementary School

The neighborhood.

The area around Health Professions High and Floyd Elementary is known primarily for the two large public housing communities that dominate the area. These two communities, Marina Vista (also known as Seavey Circle) and Alder Grove (also known as New Helvetia), are in the Upper Land Park, or Broadway, neighborhood of Sacramento. For the purposes of this report, these neighborhood names all refer to the areas around Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.

This neighborhood is within the 95818 zip code that includes most of the low crime Land Park area. Yet interviews with district parents and employees repeatedly showed that the area around Health Professions High and Floyd Elementary is widely perceived to be undesirable and a deterrent for outside families choosing to send their children to these schools.

“ Drug paraphernalia in the areas around there. Police activity all the time. Too close to the freeway, too close to the river.”

- Parent at School of Engineering & Sciences

Paradoxically, active real estate development immediately next door to the two schools, and a proposed plan to redevelop the Marina Vista and Alder Grove communities further complicate the future of the neighborhood. The development may gentrify, integrate, or otherwise change the neighborhood and Floyd Elementary over time.

The Mill at Broadway development, still under construction, will include a public market, and 1,000 residences. Home are currently for sale from \$200,000 to the “low \$400,000s” per unit^{xx}. Sales and marketing are targeted towards millennials. Units are on sale now, and The Mill's developer has already contributed funding and work to build a community garden for Floyd Elementary.

The future of the public housing redevelopment plan of Marina Vista and Alder Grove's

1,900 residents is less certain^{xxi}. Extensive planning is completed, but funding for the project is unsecured^{xxii}.

Opinions are mixed on what Upper Land Park's future might be. All together, there are some very interesting consequences for these uncertain developments around Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.

Appendix E contains a map of the Upper Land Park Neighborhood, with Health Professions High, Floyd Elementary, and the Alder Grove and Marina Vista public housing communities marked, for reference.

Section II

Study methodology

This study's data methodology had four main parts:

1. National survey of the popularity and performance of the grades 7-12 school model, including surveying school districts with at-scale implementation of the 7-12 model on their reasons for implementation, performance of the model to date, and lessons learned.
2. Literature review of relevant research of the grades 7-12 school model, especially its effect on student outcomes.
3. Collecting and analyzing quantitative student performance and attendance data for Sacramento City district, focused on Health Professions High.
4. Qualitative interviews & community outreach with families and educators at Sacramento City schools central to this study.

Grade 7-12 model review

This study began with a survey of the popularity and performance of grades 7-12 schools across the USA, and in California, to see how common of a school model grades 7-12 is, and how it performs relative to grades 7-8 middle schools and grades 9-12 high schools, on average.

We found the grades 7-12 model is not common - just 11% of California public high school students attend a grade 7-12 school^{xxiii}. We also found grades 7-12 schools most common in small and rural districts – but these districts will not teach us much about how the grades 7-12 school is likely to perform in Sacramento City District. So, we further focused our search into districts that shared core traits with Sacramento City district – diverse, mid-sized, urban districts.

We found public school districts in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Cincinnati, Ohio, to be the most similar districts nationwide to have implemented the 7-12 model at district scale. When available, we collected staff opinions, news coverage, and basic student performance data about the grades 7-12 model in those districts.

Literature review & expert interviews

We conducted an academic literature review on the topic of the grade 7-12 school model. Generally, we found the most relevant academic research on this topic focused on effects on student performance of integrating middle school grades (7-8) into either elementary (creating K-8 schools) or high school (creating grades 6 or 7-12 schools). In academic education research, this is commonly referred to as measuring the effects of “school transitions” on student performance.

We contacted and interviewed leading middle grade education and grade reduction researchers from Harvard University, Stanford University, and Sacramento State University about the relevance of their research to the specific Sacramento City district and Health Professions High context. A full list of contributors to this study can be found at the end of this report.

Sacramento City district quantitative data

The bulk of this study focused on quantitative and qualitative research inside the Sacramento City district focused around Health Professions High, Floyd Elementary, School of Engineering & Science. We also conducted quantitative and qualitative research and analysis around California Middle School, and C.K. McClatchy High School since those schools are the current dominant pathway within Sacramento City district for Floyd Elementary families. We analyzed data from the following sources:

- Sacramento City Unified School District
- California Department of Education

We also collated data together with primary source data direct from the following Sacramento City district school sites:

- Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High
- Leataata Floyd Elementary School
- School of Engineering & Sciences

We analyzed attendance data for Health Professions High, School of Engineering & Sciences, and relevant comprehensive middle and high schools. We built an attendance model to reveal how the grades 7-12 model would be likely to affect attendance both in the short and long run. The complete model is attached in Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model.

We also collected and analyzed student performance data for relatively diverse and challenging mid-sized metro school districts that have implemented the grades 7-12 model widely across their district. For this data, we looked at the following school districts:

- Baltimore City Public Schools (Maryland)
- Cincinnati Public Schools (Ohio)
- Indianapolis Public Schools (Indiana)
- Tulsa Public Schools (Oklahoma)

Sacramento City district qualitative data & community outreach

Our data originates from data requests to the Sacramento City district itself, as well as the California Department of Education and its counterparts in Indiana, Ohio, and other states where the grades 7-12 model exists.

We interviewed more than 63 hours of interviews with 54 teachers, families, and current and former District leaders from these school sites.

As will be clear throughout this report, some of the comments made in qualitative research by Sacramento City District staff, parents, and teachers are controversial. In order to learn from – and protect – the honest opinions of all parties, all interviews conducted with Sacramento City district educators, staff, and leaders were done so anonymously.

Community outreach to Health Professions High, Floyd Elementary, School of Engineering & Science, California Middle School, and C.K. McClatchy High School constitutes a key collection point for this study's qualitative data and analysis. Because of the significant focus and resources required to conduct a statistically representative sample survey of Sacramento City district and school site parents, such a sample remained beyond the scope of this study.

For clarity, throughout this report, all direct quotes from qualitative interviews are formatted in *italics*.

Analytical model

This study used a cost-benefit model to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data we collected.

In the course of the study, it became clear risks were more important than financial costs to the feasibility of the grades 7-12 model at Health Professions High – specifically, risks to fail to realize the model's potential benefits, or even to exacerbate the concerns that prompted consideration of adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High in the first place. Therefore, this study focuses on weighing the potential benefits of the proposal against the implementation risks.

Section III

Analysis: Feasibility of a grades 7-12 Health Professions High School

Why explore a grade 7-12 model at Health Professions High.

The grade 7-12 middle-high school model at Health Professions High is an intriguing “two birds with one stone” solution – one that could provide an alternative, better “community learning center” pathway to graduation for Floyd Elementary's students

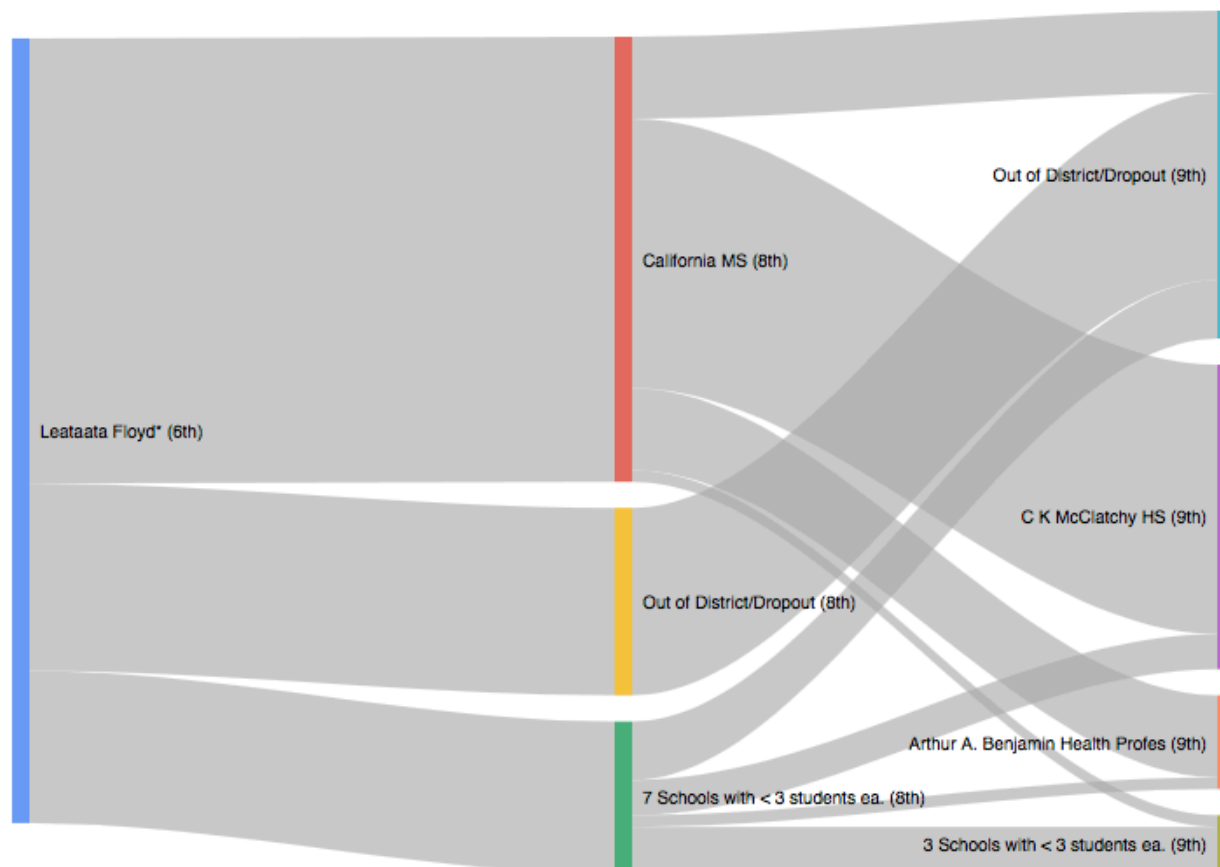
while also consistently supporting enrollment at Health Professions High.

Reason #1: A new, better pathway for Floyd Elementary students & families

Adding grades 7-8 at Health Professions High is likely to further segregate Upper Land Park families from the rest of the Sacramento City district, and that a new pathway for Floyd Elementary families is not certain, or even likely, to be any better for students than current predominant pathways.

Today, the most common path from Kindergarten to 12th grade for a Floyd Elementary student is the pathway through that student's prescribed neighborhood (default) schools - from Floyd Elementary, to California Middle School, to McClatchy High School^{xxiv}.

Figure A: Elementary to High School Student Pathways: Leataata Floyd 6th Grade Class (2012-13)



Source: Sacramento City Unified School District. Interactive version available in Appendix D: Leataata Floyd Elementary School cohort pathways through SCUSD.

While Floyd Elementary is an underperforming school, California Middle and McClatchy High are solidly performing schools overall where it is commonly understood by parents, teachers, and principals alike Floyd Elementary graduates underperform the average by a wide margin. Floyd Elementary graduates average a GPA of 1.79 at McClatchy High – below a C- grade average – fully 30% lower than the school's overall average GPA of 2.55^{xxv}.

Table B: McClatchy High Student Average (mean) 9th Grade GPA (2015-16)		
Student's Elementary School	Average GPA	Average grade
Leataata Floyd Elementary	1.79	C-
Other Elementary school	2.55	C+/B-
All McClatchy High students	2.52	C+/B-

Source: Sacramento City Unified School District

The community learning center model is based on concentrating supports and resources for a community in one place – in this case, on one block where Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High are located. If top notch resources, educational programs and supports are available there, then segregation either does not happen, or does not matter – the community learning center is delivering excellent programs and outcomes based on the surrounding community's wants and needs, in this case Upper Land Park.

In order for a Floyd Elementary (K-6) to Health Professions High (7-12) pathway/community learning center to be worth the costs and risks associated with implementing the model, the new Floyd Elementary to HPHS community learning center would have to be significantly and consistently better than the existing predominant Floyd Elementary-California Middle-McClatchy High pathway.

Why a grades 7-12 Health Professions High is likely to increase in segregation of Floyd Elementary students within the district: A 7-8 grade option at Health Professions High would attract more families from Floyd Elementary than from other parts of the district, or from out of district. This concentration of Floyd Elementary families at Health Professions High, in many cases just across the street from their own homes, would have the effect of keeping Alder Grove and Marina Vista students within just a few blocks of their homes for the majority of their first 18 years of life. As Upper Land Park families concentrate at the Floyd-Health Professions schools, it is inevitable that resources targeted for these families currently provided at California Middle School and McClatchy High School, such as the McClatchy Men's Leadership Academy, become focused at Health Professions High, which leads more Upper Land Park students to those schools. This study expects the school to receive concentrated cohorts of Floyd Elementary students, further isolating these students from the rest of their school district and their peers in other

neighborhoods. This potential, and even likely, increased segregation was a major concern to parents, teachers, and district leaders interviewed from Floyd Elementary, Health Professions High, California Middle School, and McClatchy High.

“ You're not gonna pull anybody else from any other area.... [You'll] make it even less likely anybody else is going to go over to Health Professions [High]. ”

- Educator at C.K. McClatchy High School

This issue is discussed in greater depth later in this same section.

A mixed track record for the combined middle-high school model

nationally: There is relatively strong academic evidence suggesting benefits to reducing the number of school changes a student makes - but the grade 7-12 model has not always succeeded nationally. The track record of the grades 7-12 community school in other mid-sized metro districts is indicative of this model's benefits, and pitfalls.

“ [The grade 7-12 school model] rescued some of those kids.... I did see a few snippets of where it worked well for some kids. ”

- Dianne Arnold, Indianapolis Public Schools Board President

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) is one such example. IPS is another mid-sized, relatively diverse metro school district^{xxvi}. Under former Superintendent Eugene White, who was interviewed for this report, IPS implemented the grade 7-12 “community school” model at 7 schools between 2005 and 2013, based partly on the research (summarized later in this section) about benefits to students of reduced grade transitions.

By 2015, the model was under fire. *“Particularly where we have high schools that have middle grades ... we really see some struggles,”* IPS Superintendent Lewis Ferebee said in January 2016. *“I don't think our middle grade students are being served well in that configuration”^{xxvii}.*

After seeing 7th and 8th graders in combined 7-12 high school flatline or drop in student outcomes, IPS announced in July 2016 it was reversing course and moving away from the 7-12 school by the 2016-17 school year^{xxviii}. The lesson is clear: reaping the benefits of a grade 7-12 school model is not certain.

“*The data has shown that [students] being in those [grade 7-12 schools] has not been successful.... Our goal now is to create the best situation for children based on data.*”

- *Wanda Legrand, Indianapolis Public Schools Deputy Superintendent for Academics*^{xxix}

In theory, the grade 7-12 model holds great promise. In practice, that promise is not met without patience, consistent resources and commitment to the hard work of building and executing the grade 7-12 school model well over a long period of time.

Several significant school site-specific cultural changes, all at once: The changes to school programs and culture from a grade 7-12 model are significant. In the specific case of Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High, the grades 7-12 model would bring several school changes, each individually formidable, that district, School leaders and families would grapple with all at once:

1. Increased teacher workload, and resulting increased turnover and recruitment
2. Possible overall school enrollment/attendance growth
3. Change in school culture from bringing 12 and 13 year olds to school campus
4. Adding a concentrated cohort of Upper Land Park/Floyd Elementary families and related supports & programs
5. Shift in recruitment focus from 9th grade families to 7th and 9th grade families and effects on Health Professions High recruitment success, which already shows upward trends

Section IV elaborates on each of these factors in more detail.

The education profession does not need another study to prove that just because a certain practice or model is statistically better on average nationally does not mean that model will apply well to a given local situation. In the case of the grade 7-12 model community high school, it is clear that the specific circumstances around Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High, especially in terms of the already

troublesome isolation of Floyd Elementary families from the rest of the Sacramento City district, do not suggest the model's advantages would be maximized in this local context.

Reason #2: An avenue to increase enrollment at Health Professions High

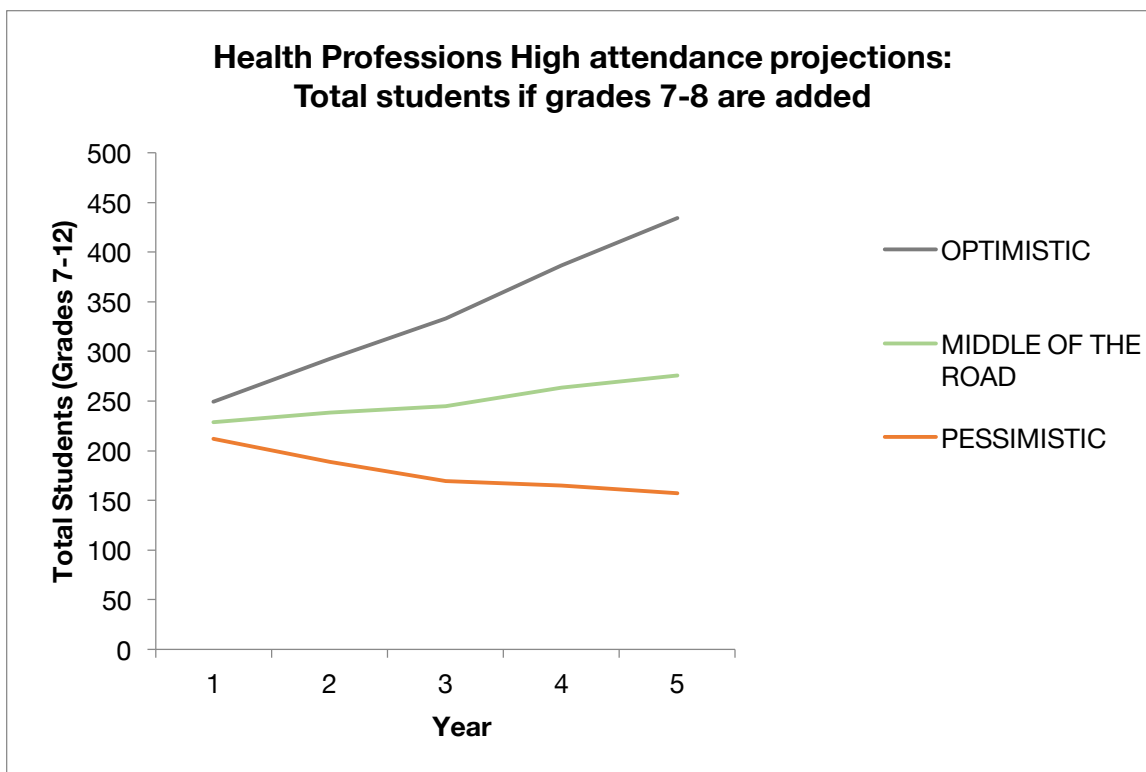
Adding grades 7-8 alone, without other changes to Health Professions High's curriculum, outreach and marketing, and district integration, is also unlikely to result in a fully enrolled school.

The success of the grades 7-12 model at School of Engineering and Science – also a small linked learning school – was a key reason for commissioning this study: to see if the same model might work at Health Professions High. This research revealed there are important reasons why this study does not expect the 7-12 model to succeed at Health Professions High the way it does at School of Engineering & Sciences.

In fact, examination to the School of Engineering & Sciences 7-12 model convinced us that the a 7-12 Health Professions High carries a high risk of increased student attrition. It is no surprise that adding 12, 13 and 14 year olds to a high school presents a major change in school culture. For example, the tenor of school dances and functions change, and while this may appear as a petty concern, it is important for small schools of choice competing with large comprehensive high schools – with their homecomings, and many other key social events critical at this age – for students.

Student outcomes are, of course, deeply tied to school culture. Whether adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High would change school culture for the worse is anybody's guess, but there is little doubt that there would be a drastic change in school culture, especially within the first few years, and a likely increase in student anxiety and therefore attrition. School of Engineering and Science, for its part, has significantly higher student attrition rates than district average^{xxx}. School of Engineering & Sciences teachers and administrators overwhelmingly observe that older students are not always enthused to share a campus with their 7th and 8th grade colleagues, one key cause of high student attrition there. In this way, this study reveals a real, if pessimistic, possibility that a grades 7-12 Health Professions High could see even decreased enrollment due to this model.

(Report continues on next page.)



Source: Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model. See the complete interactive mode, where you can plug in your own assumptions, in Appendix A.

This research revealed a relative consensus, at every level of the District, from leaders to administrators to teachers to parents (both inside and outside Health Professions High itself), on why Health Professions High is under-enrolled. This gives reason to be skeptical that School of Engineering & Sciences 7-12 model's success would be replicated at Health Professions High.

1. **“Narrow” health professions pathway:** As one school leader asked, “was *Health Professions [High]* designed for the community in which it resides? If it was built for this community, then it would be full.”

Many parents expressed concern about choosing what they felt was a specific profession at the 9th grade level. “*It sounds like a really great program for nursing*” one School of Engineering & Sciences parent reported.

“Most kids who go there [*Health Professions*] go in for nursing.”

-Parent at C.K. McClatchy High School

Another parent with children at School of Engineering & Sciences (SES) told us her son wants to be a doctor, but goes to SES for high school because of what

she perceives as stronger science options there: *"If Health Professions [High] had more rigorous courses, that would be a possibility."*

The perceived narrowness of the pathway is a factor in high school choices Floyd Elementary families as well. *"They see it as a nursing school. They see it as specialized,"* says one Floyd Elementary educator.

2. **Safety concerns:** Across the district, teachers, school leaders, and parents report the geographic location of Health Professions High (and Floyd Elementary), next to the Alder Grove and Marina Vista housing communities, deters some parents. Additionally, the memory of a 2009 school-wide fight incident at Health Professions High has clearly lingered. While this study found no newspaper articles or district reports documenting the study, the incident came up repeatedly in interviews with parents, teachers, and district leaders.

“ No, I would never send my kid to school there [to Health Professions High]. No. Never... It would have to be the last school on earth.... Drugs, poverty level... ”

-Parent at School of Engineering & Sciences

The year after that incident marks the beginning of a steep decline in Health Professions High enrollment. Yet, there has not been another incident since. Teachers and parents at Health Professions High do not report current existing safety issues for students.

3. **Small school vs. “traditional high school” experience:** It is well known across the district and in public education in general that the small school model, while statistically a best practice, is not enticing to all families. Many interviewees cited a student’s desire to follow their friends, participate in competitive sports programs, and have the “traditional high school experience.” Many parents and students choose a high school together with their friends and classmates – inevitably, most students choose large comprehensive high schools.

Applying these reasons to a hypothetical grades 7-12 Health Professions High relies on qualitative research, and logic. Based on interviews with district leaders and parents, this study concludes none of the above reasons for parents not choosing Health Professions High at the 9th grade level are “solved” or mitigated at the 7th grade level.

1. **“Narrow” health professions pathway:** For parents concerned about the narrowness of a health professions pathway – for whom Health Professions High is not a top choice because their child has not shown a specific interest

- in a health profession – the concern is unlikely to get better at a younger age. If anything, expect the *perceived* narrowness of the Health Professions High profession pathway to work against enrollment even more at the 7th grade level than at the 9th grade level.
2. **Safety concerns:** Perceptions of Upper Land Park generally, and Health Professions High specifically, as potentially unsafe for children will, if anything, work against the school even more for 7th grade families than it does for 9th grade families.
 3. **Small school vs. “traditional high school” experience:** Health Professions High will still be a small high school under a grade 7-12 model. While there is no logical reason this parent concern would worsen under a 7-12 model, there is equally no reason to believe the 7-12 model would “solve” or mitigate this parent concern.

The result: increasing concentration of Floyd Elementary families within Sacramento City district

This study’s qualitative research did not reveal any new value proposition that would make a 7th at Health Professions High more attractive than the school is as a 9th grade option.

“*You're not gonna pull anybody else from any other area... [it will] make it even less likely anybody else if going to go over to Health Professions [High].”*

- *Educator at C.K. McClatchy High School*

Health Professions High’s proximity both to home for Marina Vista and Alder Grove families, and to Floyd Elementary, where younger siblings might be in school, would be an attraction.

This is especially true if a Floyd Elementary (K-6)-Health Professions High (7-12) pathway is promoted to Floyd Elementary families as specially implemented for their benefit, designed with to extend and connect programs and supports for these families between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High.

The result is a distinct likelihood that implementing a grades 7-12 model at Health Professions High would, troublingly, disproportionately attract Floyd Elementary families as compared to Sacramento City district families (and out of district families) more broadly, and further isolate those families from the rest of the district.

As more than one educator pointed out, this concentration of Floyd Elementary families would have two important feedback loop effects:

- **Social feedback loop:** It would reduce the number of Floyd Elementary students at California Middle School certainly, and likely at C.K. McClatchy High School as well. Because it is well understood students tend to travel in friend cohorts in their school choices, more Floyd Elementary families choosing Health Professions High would lead to even more Floyd Elementary families choosing Health Professions High – a feedback loop.
- **Support feedback loop:** Because the creation of a 7-12 option at Health Professions High would be created specifically with Floyd Elementary families in mind, resources for programs and supports targeted at Floyd Elementary families that currently exist at California Middle School and C.K. McClatchy, such as the McClatchy High Men's Leadership Academy (led by teacher Malcolm Floyd, son of Leataata Floyd) and the on-site school counselor at California Middle School, would almost certainly be relocated to Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High. While concentrating these supports in one connected school pathway does have the potential create better educational option for Floyd Elementary families, it is more likely to have a segregating effect. As resources and supports become concentrated in a Floyd-Health Professions pathway, more and more Floyd Elementary families are encouraged to enroll there. As one McClatchy community member put it, we don't force them to segregate – we just make it easy for them to segregate themselves.

“You move those services... people that need those services will follow those services. Same with schools. ‘Sorry we can't meet your needs here. But let me give you [the Principal of Health Professions High's phone] number, she's really great'.... We make it so easy.... It's going to create segregation.”

- Educator at C.K. McClatchy High School

The consequences of this likely concentration of Floyd Elementary families in a Floyd-Health Professions pathway carries serious educational risks and consequences.

Single pathway risk

One focused pathway for a specific community is the educational equivalent of putting all your eggs in one basket. If the Floyd-Health Professions pathway does not excel in tackling with is, by all accounts, a very difficult educational task of breaking the cycle

of educational failure around Floyd Elementary, Sacramento City district will have concentrated an already underserved population in a further underperforming pathway.

As detailed above, combining an increased teaching workload with a drastic change in school culture, launching new community supports and programs for an influx of Floyd Elementary students, and a new need to split recruitment focuses between two different grade levels, and the community learning center model becomes hard to recommend.

An entire childhood just three blocks from home

Interviews with Sacramento City district educators and families both from around and away from the Upper Land Park neighborhoods repeatedly expressed concern about the future of Floyd Elementary students spending their K-12 education, the first 18 years of the lives, within 3 blocks of their housing communities – an environment many educators described as itself detrimental to learning.

“ Health Professions High will need internships to get kids out of this area. Otherwise they might spend the entire first 18 years of their lives in a one mile radius.”

- *Educator at Floyd Elementary School*

Many parents and educators expressed the value they saw in spending time away from those housing communities, and being exposed to the neighborhoods, lifestyles, and cultures of others. Many parents and educators close to Marina Vista and Alder Grove communities were passionate about the value of Floyd Elementary children being able to “escape” from “toxic stress” situations many Upper Land Park children face in those communities.

One educator at Floyd Elementary conveyed a story of how some students began crying in the bus on a field trip: these students had never been on the freeway. They were scared. “That’s deep segregation,” the educator remarked.

Floyd Elementary is already a 100% Title 1 (low income) school serving almost exclusively a large community of public housing families just blocks from the school site. The likelihood of increasingly concentrating these families in their own educational pathways is the greatest risk this study revealed in the grades 7-12 proposal for Health Professions High.

Reducing diversity at California Middle School and C.K. McClatchy High School

A significant finding of qualitative research in the California Middle School and McClatchy High School communities consistently found concern there as well for the

potential of the effect of increased segregation on those schools. It was a frequent refrain in interviews with Sacramento City district families and staff: The district does “a terrible disservice if we don't give the student here at Floyd [Elementary] the opportunity to be exposed to the diverse educational opportunities at Cal [Middle School] and McClatchy [High School].”

Several parents noted diversity of the student body at these schools as a main attraction for them, while educators expressed belief that experiencing a diverse student body is itself an important form of education and that all Sacramento City district students benefit from non-segregated schools.

This observation is not a core consideration in crafting this report's conclusion but it was a consistent and notable concern from the Sacramento City district community and merits a mention. Diversity for diversity's sake is not the goal. This report does not recommend Upper Land Park families are integrated into the rest of Sacramento City district for the benefit of other families, but for their own benefit.

Benefits of the grades 7-12 model.

This study examined three main reasons for the hypothesis that a grades 7-12 Health Professions High would have a positive impact on student outcomes for Health Professions High and Floyd Elementary students.

#1: Replicating the success of School of Engineering & Sciences' grades 7-12 model. School of Engineering & Sciences is in many ways a sister school to Health Professions High. SES is a fellow small school, and a fellow linked learning school. The grades 7-12 model is broadly popular among School of Engineering & Sciences parents and educators. This study interviewed those educators involved in the initial design of School of Engineering & Sciences as a grades 7-12 school to get a sense of why the school was established that way and reviewed whether those decision makers, and School of Engineering & Sciences teachers and families, were satisfied with that model's performance for students – this study did so with an eye for understanding if the same logic and results might apply to the 7-12 model at Health Professions High.

Ultimately, this study concludes School of Engineering & Sciences was not a good proxy for the likely outcomes of the 7-12 model at Health Professions High for two key reasons:

- A. **The difference in school site locations:** Sacramento City district parents and teachers consistently identified School of Engineering & Sciences' location and safety, in the well regarded Pocket neighborhood, as a key reason they considered the school for their children. In contrast, Health Professions High's location in the Upper Land Park neighborhood consistently identified as a reason why parents would not send their child to school there.

“ [There is...] way too much gang activity there. It's a bad neighborhood.”

- Parent at C.K. McClatchy High School

- B. The difference in school pathways:** There is a marked difference between the health professions pathway and the engineering and sciences pathway. The differences between these two linked learning pathways affect both family perception of the schools, and also family level of interest. While this study did not comprehensively evaluate the specific level of differences in perceptions and interest between the Health Professions High and School of Engineering & Sciences pathways, research did reveal differences significant enough to warrant mention as an important reason why the performance of a specific educational model at SES would not be a valid proxy for the results that same model would be expected to produce at Health Professions High.

“ It wasn't [my child's] area of interest.... Isn't it for techs and nurses? My understanding, it seems more like a vocational type of training.”

-Parent at California Middle School

#2: Benefits of the “community learning center” 7-12 model: national research on reducing/eliminating school transitions. This study reviewed literature as well as key examples of grade 7-12 schools in mid-sized urban public school districts nationwide in order to learn from the national success and challenges of this model. Nationwide academic research is clear in showing a statistically significant correlation between reducing the number of times a student changes schools and increased student academic outcomes. Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor Martin West and Researcher Guido Schwerdt write:

The achievement drops we observe as students move to both middle and high schools suggest that moving from one school to another (or simply being in the youngest grade in a school) adversely affects student performance. The size and persistence of the effect of entering a middle school, however, suggests that such transitions are particularly damaging for adolescent students or that middle schools provide lower-quality education than K–8 schools provide for students at

the same point in their education.^{xxx}

However, the existing research literature stops short of endorsing the grades 7-12 community learning center model. For starters, most existing studies focus on K-8 elementary/middle schools. As seen above, this study's academic and expert literature review revealed no rigorous, conclusive statistical studies specifically correlating the grades 7-12 model with improved student outcomes.

The grades 7-12 model builds on strong nationwide academic research foundations showing that reducing the number of school transitions a student makes, typically through a K-8 model but sometimes through a 7-12 model, is correlated with lasting educational benefits.

Why exactly this is the case is still a matter of academic discussion, but there are many logical reasons to consider:

- Reduced school transitions reduce student stress related to changing school sites and systems. Eliminating these stressful transition points, especially at the critical ages of 11-14, allow students to focus on learning.
- More time spent on a single school site allows for development over time of deeper relationships between parents, students, teachers and school leaders.
- Allows for teachers, especially middle school teachers who typically see only two years of a student's development, to watch students grow and change over a longer period of time. This longer viewpoint may give teachers a more complete sense of a child's growth and trajectory, encouraging teacher professional development, and more holistic teaching.

For a linked learning school such as Health Professions High, a six-year pathway to teach specialized curriculum such as medical science and career planning, and to expose students to professional internships, outside speakers, and career networking may further amplify the benefits of the integrated pathway for student outcomes.

There are several very important caveats to this research as we apply it to the specific situation in Upper Land Park.

Most of the national academic research focuses on benefits of the K-8 model. Professor West again: *"The transition to high school causes a small drop in student achievement for all students who make this transition (as distinct from those in schools with 6-12 grade configurations). However, this drop holds far less policy significance both because of its size and because the decline does not appear to persist beyond grade 9."*^{xxxii}

Additionally, it is important to temper this expectation with data. Approximately 50 students have graduated from School of Science & Engineering during the past 3 years, having completed the full SES pathway from grade 7, all the way to SES graduation – an average of 17 students per year^{xxxiii}. This is because the School of

Engineering & Science sees overall average student attrition rates for students significantly higher than either Health Professions High and C.K. McClatchy.

Attrition at the middle school level at School of Engineering & Sciences is also significantly higher than its counterparts, California Middle School or Sam Brannan Middle School, where attrition is effectively 0%^{xxxiv}.

Table C: Student Attrition Rates by School and Grade Transition						
	Grade Transition					
School	7 to 8	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12	Average
Health Professions High School	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	14%	13%	13%	13%
School of Engineering and Sciences	12%	21%	14%	22%	19%	17%
CK McClatchy High School	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	1%	13%	3%	5%
Hiram W. Johnson High School	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	3%	7%	-1%	3%
John F. Kennedy High School	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	2%	7%	4%	4%
Luther Burbank High School	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	1%	4%	4%	3%
Average	12%	21%	6%	11%	7%	11%

Source: California Department of Education. Full student retention/attrition data and an interactive attendance model are available in Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model.

Mentorship within a grades 7-12 model of young middle school students by older upperclassmen was consistently cited as a hypothetical benefit of the grade 7-12 model. Yet, this study was unable to identify consistently successful implementation of this mentorship concept in 7-12 schools. Many School of Engineering & Science parents reported older children watching over and looking out for younger siblings and their friends, but a formal senior to middle schooler mentorship model remained elusive.

Some common concerns among parents and teachers about the grades 7-12 model repeatedly raised themselves throughout this study – mostly bullying and dating between high schoolers and middle schoolers. As it turns out, these rarely manifest in grades 7-12 schools – they were not reported by any study participant from national researchers to school leaders to teachers or families as a real problem. This is partly due to simple and common tactics used by grades 7-12 schools, such as a separate lunch period for 7-8 grades than from the 9-12 grades. The small school model also lends itself to peer pressure for older students to ignore younger children. All School of Engineering & Sciences teachers reported high schoolers bullying middle schoolers was virtually non-existent since it was simply “*not cool*” to bully a child so young, as

one School of Engineering & Sciences educator puts it. *"I don't think I dealt with that [an upperclassman bullying a middle schooler] even once,"* reported one School of Engineering & Sciences official. High schoolers dating middle schoolers is, by all accounts, both within Sacramento City district and in other districts using the grade 7-12 model, a frequent parent concern but a rare real-life occurrence. A former Indianapolis Public Schools educator reported *"these concerns dissipated very quickly"* as the 7-12 model was implemented.

#3: A K-12 "community learning center" pathway for Upper Land Park families

The grades 7-12 school model goes hand-in-hand with the "community learning center" concept. A pathway for Upper Land Park families through Floyd Elementary for grades K-6, and then next door to Health Professions High School for grades 7-12, presents the opportunity to concentrate programs, services and supports for neighborhood families in these area. This K-12 pathway on one block could be a consistent pathway to graduation and college for neighborhood families, where teacher-family relationships stay in place from K to 12, where stability, long-term relationships, and familiarity make typically fraught transitions from elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school, easier and better for student outcomes. This is, in fact, much of the benefit found in national academic research of the grades 7-12 model^{xxxv}.

Summary

This study found there are more efficient ways for Sacramento City district to capture many of the benefits of the community learning center and grades 7-12 model without the significant risks posed by transforming Health Professions High into a grades 7-12 school immediately.

In short, this study recommends Sacramento City district lay the groundwork for a community learning center first – not last. This study recommends the district consider adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High only after such a groundwork has been laid – and not before.

Section IV

Key decision points for policymakers: considerations in implementing a grades 7-12 school at Health Professions High School

This report explored the implementation process and core costs associated with adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High. Research conducted with Sacramento City district staff, educators and leaders involved at Health Professions High, School of Engineering & Science (a grades 7-12 school), and Kit Carson School (originally a grades 7-8 school, currently expanding into grades 7-12).

Key decision points for decision makers weighing the implementation of adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High include:

1. One-time implementation costs
2. Ongoing operational costs
3. Implementation risks and mitigation

District officials at every level were unanimous in stating the implementation and ongoing financial costs of the proposal were not prohibitive. This study found no reason to conclude otherwise. In the interests of an efficient study, we did not focus on a deeply comprehensive estimate of the financial costs of this policy.

In fact, this study determined that the central factor in the overall cost efficiency of a grades 7-12 Health Professions High will be whether or not the school is fully enrolled. A fully enrolled school is more cost efficient than an under-enrolled school – the closer Health Professions High School is to fully enrolled, the more cost efficient it will be. This is the major financial cost variable in considering the proposal at hand.

Interactive attendance modeling helps us understand how the grades 7-12 model would be likely to affect Health Professions High's enrollment under various possible conditions, attached to this report in Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model. This model allows readers to see how various enrollment scenarios affect overall Health Professions High attendance in the long run, and understand the likely operational cost efficiency of a grades 7-12 Health Professions High.

One-time implementation costs

The most significant one-time costs associated with transitioning Health Professions High to a grades 7-12 school are:

1. Developing grades 7-8 curriculum for Health Professions High.
2. Initial teacher turnover costs from teachers who choose not to teach in a grades 7-12 school.
3. Teacher training for classroom management and pedagogy for grades 7-8.
4. Possible minor facilities-related costs such as purchase of new desks, classroom refurbishment, and so on.

The majority of the work related to transforming Health Professions High into a grades 7-12 school is done by school site educators. Health Professions High teachers and district staff would lead curriculum development for the health professions pathway at the 7 and 8 grade levels. Teacher training for classroom management skills for

We estimate curriculum development be in the range of \$45,000-\$55,000 to develop the necessary linked learning integrated units for middle school grades curriculum.

Ongoing operational costs

Aside from increased enrollment at Health Professions High, the major ongoing operational costs to the proposal center on the finding that a grades 7-12 school presents an increased workload on teachers that creates costs for school districts in several ways.

Primarily, a higher teacher workload is likely to increase teacher turnover and make successful teacher recruitment more costly. A grades 7-12 model is also likely to have a direct financial cost in adding teacher instructional minutes and the resulting additional salary for teachers.

These costs are highly variable – teacher turnover is unpredictable and depends on so many factors, from school leadership to district-union relations to student cohorts and resulting increased recruitment costs are indirect. Therefore, these costs are difficult to estimate precisely. In the interest of efficient and focused research, we chose not to pursue a detailed analysis of these costs.

Increase in educator workload and likely increased teacher turnover at Health Professions High.

Attempts to create a culture shift in a work environment are met with resistance – the significant culture shift inherent in adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High is no exception.

In total, this study interviewed 16 teachers at Health Professions High, and School of Science & Engineering (SES). Like Health Professions High, SES is a small school and a linked learning school. SES is also a grades 7-12 school. These interviews revealed serious classroom-level differences, from workload to managing a classroom and student behavior, between a traditional 9-12 high school, and a grade 7-12 school where students range from ages 12 to 18. The key takeaway is that a grade 7-12 school often requires teachers to be more flexible and dynamic in their teaching, to teach a wider variety of classes and ages resulting in more “preparation periods,” a wider variety of classroom management strategies (ways of managing student behavior, which varies greatly between 12 to 18 year olds), and an interest in a more dynamic work environment.

The average single grade, single subject high school teacher has one – or at the high end, two - preparation periods per day, and teaches the same class (or two) throughout that day. Meanwhile, School of Engineering & Sciences teachers regularly prepare three classes per day. Some prepare four classes per day, and sign a waiver in order to do so – the Sacramento California Teacher's Union contract outlines a standard of just one “prep period” per day for teachers^{xxxvi}.

“ *I don't think I've ever worked so hard in my life.*”

- *Educator at School of Engineering & Sciences*

The 7-12 model at SES is successful because most SES teachers do not just survive in this dynamic, every-class-different work environment, but that most of them enjoy and prefer it. When you add the additional workload of a small school teacher to the workload of a teacher working across grades 7-12 the result is a work environment that some teachers do enjoy and thrive in – but not all teachers.

SES teachers alternately described the workload of the grade 7-12 model as “stretched,” “excruciating,” “incredible,” and “wearing,” among other words. One teacher cautioned peers at a grades 7-12 school “have to be ready to put in extra work.”

“ *Teacher burnout [here] is a real thing.*”

- *Leader at School of Engineering & Sciences*

SES teachers also require a broader suite of classroom/behavior management skills than colleagues at a 9-12 high school^{xxxvii}. Training for Health Professions High teachers in managing both younger students, and broader range of student interactions, would be required. According to teachers at School of Engineering & Sciences, “*the middle school [student] is way different.*” There are “*more silliness, behavioral issues*” with 7th and 8th grade students.

Some teachers, even most, at Health Professions High will heartily welcome this additional challenge and training, and even enjoy it – but not all. Some teachers interviewed for this study reported they consider themselves high school teachers and would not look forward to teaching middle school students. “*I chose high school for a reason,*” said one Health Professions High educator.

Similarly, at Kit Carson School, a Sacramento City district middle school that is currently adding grades to become a grades 7-12 school, one leading educators says the “*staffing piece is the most challenging.*”

A grade 7-12 model at Health Professions High would narrow the band of teacher that will thrive and succeed in that school. The model would inevitably create some initial teacher turnover as existing teachers opt out of the dynamic grades 7-12 environment. On an ongoing basis, recruitment and retention of

teachers is likely to get harder at Health Professions High under a 7-12 model – both as a transition cost and an ongoing cost. While School of Engineering and Science provides an example that the grades 7-12 model can be successful and popular among a teaching staff, it also provides an illustrative example of the risks and changes to teaching culture that take place in converting a grades 9-12 high school into a grades 7-12 model.

Among the 14 teachers at Health Professions High and School of Engineering & Sciences interviewed, the sentiment was on the whole positive about the grades 7-12 model, despite the additional workload involved in this school configuration. One teacher expected most other teachers to say “*hell no*” to the average SES teacher workload, and some teachers at a 9-12 high school to say they “*will leave this school immediately*” if asked to teach grades 7 and 8.

School of Engineering & Sciences teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the model – but were also clear about the fact that they are a self-selecting bunch who are teaching at School of Engineering and Sciences because they believe in the model. “*This high school is a jewel of the Sacramento City system,*” one teacher told us.

Importantly, Health Professions High teachers were also, on the whole, enthusiastic about their ability to execute the new model, despite the workload and challenges.

“ *There's not any doubt in my mind about our ability to make this happen.* ”

- *Educator at Health Professions High School*

Increased instructional minutes costs.

There is a small difference in existing teacher contracts between middle school instructional teacher minutes, and high school teacher minutes, which is likely to lead to an additional ongoing cost of operating a grades 7-12 school.

As of August 2016, Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) – Sacramento City Unified School District contracts include 15 minutes less, or 4% less, teacher instructional minutes for middle school teachers than for high school teachers^{xxxviii}.

Sacramento City district’s two public non-charter grades 7-12 schools, Kit Carson School and School of Engineering & Sciences, have resolved this question they have in their own school models through paying teachers for this

difference in teacher minutes.

Because Kit Carson School and School of Engineering & Sciences are both grades 7-12 schools, and teachers within each school are not designated as either a middle school teacher or a high school teacher – teachers at these schools oftentimes teach both middle and high school grades – both schools currently have arrangements for teachers at those schools to receive additional payment for additional instructional minutes taught above set contract amounts.

Both schools are currently exploring other solutions for the grades 7-12 model that is fair and desirable for all teachers and complies with SCTA and CTA contracts. For now, the solution is an ongoing operational cost equivalent to a 4% increase in teacher salaries that results from paying school site teachers for 15 additional instructional minutes per day.

Implementation risks

Adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High constitutes several significant changes to the school at once. Managing so many significant changes all at the same time makes adding grades 7 and 8 just as likely to harm enrollment, retention, and the school's ability to successfully adjust to the new model as the new model is to help.

Some of those reasons are laid out in Section III. Each one of these culture shifts by itself is surmountable. Each culture shift has strategies and tactics for managing the change effectively. However, the risk posed for Health Professions High is, what happens when all of these significant cultural changes happen all at the same time? The long list of cultural changes and new challenges listed in this report Health Professions High leaders would be forced to grapple with all at once present a collective significant risk to successfully implementing the grades 7-12 model at that school:

1. Increased teacher workload, and resulting increased turnover and recruitment (*addressed above in this section*)
2. Overall school enrollment/attendance growth
3. Change in school culture from bringing 12 and 13 year olds to campus
4. Adding a concentrated cohort of Upper Land Park/ Floyd Elementary families and related supports & programs
5. Shift in recruitment focus from 9th grade families to 7th and 9th grade families and effects on Health Professions High recruitment success, which already shows upward trends

This section explores these risks one by one.

(Report continues on next page.)

Overall school enrollment growth.

One of the main purposes of this study is to explore whether a grades 7-12 model will help grow Health Professions High enrollment. The 2015-16 school year, Health Professions High enrolled 214 full time students^{xxxix}. When Health Professions High does solve its enrollment and fills out its school capacity of 500 students, just this change in enrollment numbers alone will be a formidable change in school culture.

At some point, Health Professions High School will have to deal with this challenge as part of the inevitable path to filling the school. There are tactics for doing so, as well as resolve and confidence at Health Professions High and within Sacramento City district for doing so. However, simultaneously managing several other similarly serious changes to school culture at the same time will pose a greater challenge, and greater risk to successful execution.

Change in Health Professions High culture from adding younger students.

Without question, adding 12 and 13 year olds to a high school campus will have a significant effect on that school's culture. The addition of younger students on campus is certain to present a major change in school culture demanding time and energy of school educators and staff.

Interviews with School of Engineering & Sciences families and teachers suggests one reason for SES' unusually high student attrition rates is that older students do not like sharing a high school with 7 and 8 graders.

This leads to certain small tensions inherent in a grades 7-12 school. For example, SES educators report 7 and 8 graders have asked to attend the school dances. It is not surprise that many high schoolers opted then not to attend the dance since it was dominated by middle schoolers. This is not as easy to solve as it might sound at Health Professions High, or any small high school, where there are oftentimes not enough students to have even one successful dance, let alone two dances for two different age groups.

This effect is amplified by the fact that both SES and Health Professions High are small schools. Middle school students at School of Engineering & Sciences make up 48% of the school's 536 students^{xl}. Health Professions High, with total enrollment under 250 students, is likely to see an outsize effect on culture with the addition of a 7th grade class.

Increased concentration of Floyd Elementary cohorts.

A marked increase in the number of Health Profession High School students from the Upper Land Park area, like the one expected if HPHS is transformed into a grades 7-12 school, is likely to present a significant school cultural change as well.

“ *Can Health Professions continue its track record of graduating seniors to college when there are double the students, and those students require a lot more support?*”

- *Educator at Leataata Floyd Elementary School*

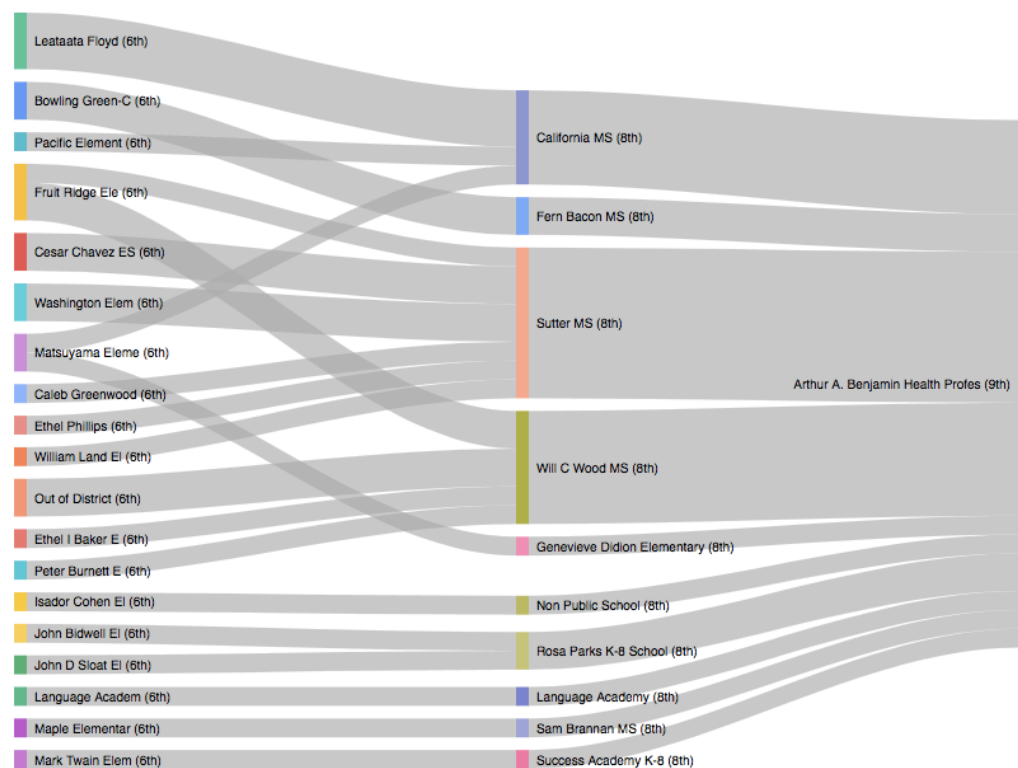
As detailed above in Section III, implementing a grade 7-12 model presents a real risk of attracting a disproportionate number of Floyd Elementary students to Health Professions High – and not because HPHS is especially attractive to Floyd Elementary families, but because HPHS is, if anything, less likely to be attractive to many Sacramento City district and Sacramento region families at grade 7 than grade 9. For Floyd Elementary families, however, geographic proximity is likely to attract them.

Analysis of attendance data shows that elementary and middle schools feeding into Health Professions High are currently quite diverse, with no dominant pathway leading students to Health Professions High. Among elementary schools, Floyd Elementary is already a top in-district feeder elementary school for Health Professions High. Additionally, Health Professions High is currently the second most popular in-district high school option for Floyd Elementary students^{xli}.

This is because Health Professions High draws from an impressively diverse set of feeder schools – for the incoming 2015-16 freshmen class, at least 19 different elementary schools and 10 different middle schools, to be exact. Just 11% of that incoming class came from Floyd Elementary^{xlii}.

(Report continues on next page.)

Elementary to High School Student Pathways: Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High (HPHS) 9th Grade Class (2015-16)



Source: Sacramento City Unified School District. Interactive version available in Appendix C: Health Professions High School cohort pathways through SCUSD.

Also discussed above in Section III is the unfortunate reality of the social feedback loop, leading to further concentration. Drastically increasing the concentration of Floyd Elementary students at Health Professions High represents yet another culture change that would require the focused time and efforts of Health Professions High staff.

Implementing supports and programs for local families – as is the idea of the community learning center model – would be a major possible benefit of the 7-12 model at Health Professions High.

Strategic shift in Health Professions High outreach from incoming 9th grade families to incoming 7th and 9th grade families.

Adding two grades to a school does not automatically add students – it simply expands the scope of the age of student that can enroll in that school. At Health Professions High, adding grades 7 and 8 does not guarantee additional students – but it does expand the group of students Health Professions High can recruit to join the school.

But filling those two new grades is not optional. Adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High has the consequence of requiring Health Professions High to fill them.

Instead of focusing outreach and recruitment efforts on one group of students and families – 8th graders moving into 9th grade – a grades 7-12 school must recruit two different age groups: 6th graders moving into 7th grade, and 8th graders moving into 9th.

What happens when dividing Health Professions High's recruitment attentions between two different groups of parents? And does dividing attention lead to less effective recruiting? Would this offset some of the hoped-for enrollment gains from a grade 7-12 model?

There are no clear predictions or answers to these questions. Yet, this study's qualitative research suggests allowing Health Professions High to focus on and build expertise and experience in recruitment of one demographic group might produce better, more efficient enrollment results.

This is yet another complicating factor that makes transforming Health Professions High into a grades 7-12 school less predictable – and most importantly, it makes the risks of failure higher, and the benefits less certain.

Health Professions High enrollment is currently not static, or stagnant.

Quantitative analysis of Health Professions High enrollment shows that the school indeed saw steep drops in enrollment and exceptionally high student attrition in the past five years.

In the 2010-11 school year, Health Professions High had full time enrollment of 427 students. During the next five years, the school lost fully 50% of its student body. In 2012-13, the school enrolled 391 students – it lost nearly 100 of those students, 25% of the total school, the next year. Student cohort attrition rates peaked with a 37% loss of students from one year to the next in 2011^{xliii}.

High attrition rates speak volumes. On one hand, high attrition rates tell us there are reasons students are leaving a school. Equally, it would be very difficult for a school to increase its overall attendance with attrition rates at or over 30% - to do so would require recruiting huge freshmen classes to compensate for student loss over the four year high school period.

Since 2012-13, Health Professions High cohort attrition rates have declined steadily. While the school's enrollment had not as of this past school year begun to rise, data shows student attrition is no longer increasing and has not been since the 2012-12 school year.

In fact, Health Professions High student retention rates increased dramatically between the 2013-14 school year and the previous year. In 2013, Health Professions High increased the size of a cohort – the incoming 11th grade cohort – for the first time in its history. Today, average Health Professions High cohort attrition rates are lower than at its sister school, the School of Engineering & Sciences^{xliv}.

Health Professions High Attrition Rate: % Y to Y class size change			
Year	From grades 9 to 10	From grades 10 to 11	From grades 11 to 12
2010-11	10%	35%	26%
2011-12	37%	31%	37%
2012-13	34%	26%	6%
2013-14	13%	-4%	17%
2014-15	-7%	15%	17%
<i>Average</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>21%</i>

Source: California Department of Education. Complete attendance data for Health Professions High and other Sacramento City district schools is available in Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model.

In fact, there are signs enrollment at Health Professions High may increase.

This summer of 2016, Health Professions High is launching an intensive outreach campaign to spread the word about the high school and boost enrollment. The campaign involves television advertisements, billboards, and bus ads. Only time and analytics will tell if the campaign is effective.

At the time this report went to press, the school had 72 committed incoming freshmen for the 2016-17 school year. Health Professions High reports that the average number of committed students at this time of year is typically less than 40. The bulk of these commitments occurred before HPHS began its city-wide summer advertising campaign mentioned above^{xlv}.

Health Professions High enrollment is not static – it is improving. The school has reversed its attrition rates and brought them in line with its peer, School of Engineering & Sciences.

While it is premature to declare Health Professions High's under-enrollment is already going away, there is enough of a positive trend to suggest that this issue might be solved through less drastic means than adding grades 7 and 8 to the school.

Lessening these risks

These are a lot of significant changes and work to throw at one school site, all at once. More than one district leader (from inside and outside Sacramento) correctly pointed out "*there are risks involved in every model*" – true enough.

Yet, research uncovered ways to address each of these changes one by one as much as possible, laying the groundwork for a community learning center with outreach and program first, and reconsidering adding grades 7 and 8 to Health Professions High afterwards. This study's recommendations in the conclusion, the next section, are intended to help Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High capture the benefits of the community learning center and the grades 7-12 model while doing exactly that.

(Report continues on next page.)

Section V Conclusion

It is a truism that segregation is bad. It's bad because families without money, power, connections, involvement, and tools are most often neglected – and those are the same families that get segregated. This is very much the case in Upper Land Park.

“ *If the kids are dropping out, then it doesn't matter how many linked learning programs you have.*

-Educator at Floyd Elementary School

What do Upper Land Park families want? Sacramento City district has to ask them – and Health Professions High can help the district learn from the experience of working with these families as high schoolers, rather than from studying these families.

This study's conclusion and recommendations are, therefore, simple – take other actions first to lay the groundwork for a K-12 community learning center pathway first. Consider adding grades 7 and 8 on this block as one of the last steps, once the collaboration and success in the Upper Land Park community is proven.

“ *If the community needs [around our school] are not addressed, then our enrollment will never be what it needs to be.*

-Educator at Health Professions High School

Build collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High. Recruit Floyd Elementary graduates to Health Professions High. Succeed with those graduates through the 12th grade level. Graduate them and send them to higher education, as Health Professions is so good at doing. Along the way, Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High will gain experience collaborating as a pathway. Health Professions in particular will learn what it takes from teachers, programs and resources to graduate Floyd Elementary students with success.

For these reasons, this study recommends increasing collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High, taking action to spread information about Health Professions High among Upper Land Park families and broaden its appeal

regionally, and – most importantly – asking Upper Land Park's families to lead a discussion about what they want and need to succeed.

This report recommends the district and these schools take more cost efficient actions to capture many of the benefits of the community learning center and create a better pathway for Floyd Elementary students than currently exists, including:

- 1. Increase school site-led collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High**, including in community health services and student mentorship. If Health Professions High can attract Floyd Elementary graduates for 9th grade, many of the benefits of the grade 7-12 model would be captured with enormously less risk and cost.
- 2. Create a focused Health Professions High branding & marketing strategy and consider broadening Health Professions High linked learning pathway beyond the health profession, or even adding a second career pathway at the school** for target families to increase region-wide knowledge about HPHS' many successes and attract more students from across the region.
- 3. Deeper study of Floyd Elementary-Health Professions High family & surrounding community needs** to explore the depth and impact of school segregation in these neighborhoods. The learning environments and reputations of these schools are deeply affected by their surrounding communities. Truly understanding those dynamics and examining the data and perceptions behind them, beyond the anecdotal, is an essential first step to creating a vision for Upper Land Park families future education options.

The tenants of the community learning center concept hold great promise as guiding vision for changing the status quo education outcome for Upper Land Park families.

However, transforming Health Professions High into a grades 7-12 school is a drastic change that, taken prematurely, holds great risk of further segregation and isolation for Upper Land Park.

So many of the benefits of the grade 7-12 model can be captured through more efficiency, less risk-fraught methods. If successful, collaboration between Floyd Elementary and Health Professions High will benefit Sacramento City students in better education options, and more. It may not end segregation in this neighborhood, but it will provide more, better options for families closer to their homes.

Ways to take action

Get involved

Join a Sacramento City Unified School District event. See the District's events and meeting calendar:

<http://www.scusd.edu/calendar>

Share your opinion

Tell a board member what you think. Your Sacramento City School Board representative's contact info is available here:

<http://www.scusd.edu/contact-district>

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Full list of report contributors

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Indiana Department of Education
Ohio Department of Education
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ERIC, US Department of Education Institute of Educational Sciences
(<http://eric.ed.gov/>)
Google Scholar database (<http://www.scholar.google.com>)

Families at:

Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School
Leataata Floyd Elementary School
School of Engineering & Sciences
California Middle School
C.K. McClatchy High School

Sacramento City Unified School District

Teachers at Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School
Teachers at School of Engineering & Sciences
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END

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Health Professions High School Class of 2016 Post-Secondary Plans (Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School)

ⁱⁱ Leataata Floyd Elementary School 2014-15 School Accountability Report Card Published During the 2015-16 School Year (Sacramento City Unified School District).

ⁱⁱⁱ Sacramento City Unified School District: <http://www.scusd.edu/priorityschools>

^{iv} Sacramento City Unified School District: <http://www.scusd.edu/about-us>

^v Appendix E: Map of Upper Land Park, Sacramento

^{vi} Health Professions High School primary source documents (see Appendix F: Selected bibliography)

^{vii} New Visions for Public Schools: <http://www.newvisions.org/pages/small-schools-study>

^{viii} James Irvine Foundation: <http://interactives.irvine.org/linkedlearning2016/>

^{ix} California Department of Education

^x Health Professions High School Class of 2016 Post-Secondary Plans (Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School)

^{xi} Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School 2014-15 School Accountability Report Card Published During the 2015-16 School Year (Sacramento City Unified School District)

^{xii} Appendix B: Grades 7-12 model student outcomes - data & analysis.

^{xiii} California Department of Education

^{xiv} California Department of Education

^{xv} California Department of Education

- xvi Sacramento City Unified School District: <http://www.scusd.edu/priorityschools>
- xvii Farm project takes root at Sacramento schools near urban development (Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee)
- xviii Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency
- xix Appendix E: Map of Upper Land Park, Sacramento
- xx The Mill at Broadway: <http://millatbroadway.com/>
- xxi Resident Needs Assessment: Marina Vista and Alder Grove Housing Communities (Institute for Social Research, California State University-Sacramento)
- xxii Sacramento seeks to demolish, rebuild public housing projects (Tony Bizjack, Sacramento Bee)
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- xxvi Indiana Department of Education:
<http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx?type=corp&id=5385>"= blank
- xxvii For IPS, middle school test score struggles are a puzzle to solve (Dylan Peers McCoy, Chalkbeat.org)
- xxviii IPS board to Ferebee: Discontinue 7-12 high schools (Hayleigh Colombo, Chalkbeat.org)
- xxix For IPS, middle school test score struggles are a puzzle to solve (Dylan Peers McCoy, Chalkbeat.org)
- xxx Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model
- xxxi The Middle School Plunge (Martin West and Guido Schwerdt, EdNext).
- xxxii The Middle School Plunge (Martin West and Guido Schwerdt, EdNext).
- xxxiii School of Engineering & Sciences (primary source)
- xxxiv California Department of Education
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- xxxvi SCTA-SCUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement: http://www.scusd.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scta_contract_all.pdf
- xxxviii SCTA-SCUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement: http://www.scusd.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scta_contract_all.pdf
- xxxix Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model
- xl Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model
- xli Appendix D: Leataata Floyd Elementary School cohort pathways through SCUSD
- xlii Appendix C: Health Professions High School cohort pathways through SCUSD
- xliiii Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model
- xliv Appendix A: Health Professions High School Attendance model
- xlvi Health Professions High School (primary source)