



Leading the Parade:

Transforming Urban Public Education
in Ohio to become a High Demand and
High Performing System in 2020



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About McREL

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) is a nonprofit education and research organization based in Denver, Colorado. For more than 40 years, McREL has been dedicated to helping educators use research to improve student achievement. As a national leader in research, school improvement, standards-based education, balanced leadership, professional development, and scenario planning, our highly respected education researchers and experts have provided services to educators in all 50 states and 18 foreign countries. Our Web site (www.mcrel.org) offers hundreds of reports, tools, guides, and services designed to improve school and student performance. To learn more about McREL, contact us at 303.337.0990 or info@mcrel.org.

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Executive Summary

Since 2001, superintendents and teacher union presidents from the eight largest urban school districts in Ohio—Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown—have worked together in a strategic alliance known as the “Ohio 8 Coalition.” Their mission is to work with policymakers to improve academic performance and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. Toward that end, the Ohio 8 is focused on four strategic priorities: 1) improvement and innovation, 2) policy, 3) leadership, and 4) capacity building.

In the fall of 2007, the Ohio 8 Leadership Council began examining future trends in order to reinforce its long-term vision and strategic plan. With support from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Ohio 8 members participated in a comprehensive scenario-planning process facilitated by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), an organization with expertise in future-focused strategic planning. The process enabled the Council to explore trends depicted in KnowledgeWork’s *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*, design future scenarios for the year 2020, and analyze the implications for urban education in Ohio beginning in 2008. Based on their deliberations, the Ohio 8 developed a set of robust recommendations and subsequent actions designed to position themselves successfully for the future.

Scenario Planning and the Ohio 8 Coalition

Scenario planning is the process of creating stories about possible futures in order to anticipate and prepare for changes beyond one’s control. Scenarios do not predict the future, but they do provide a way to identify and manage uncertainties. Scenario planning challenges the current mode of thinking, prompting new insights that drive transformation in organizations and institutions. The process incorporates the following eight steps: 1) select the issue of focus and timeframe, 2) explore the external world, 3) clarify uncertainties, 4) develop the scenario framework, 5) write the scenarios, 6) identify implications and options, 7) take action, and 8) monitor trends.

Scenario Planning for the Ohio 8 Coalition took place over a four-month period, March through June 2008, and involved 45 participants, including the members of the Ohio 8 Leadership Council, a Working Group appointed by each of the eight districts, Ohio 8 staff, and representatives from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

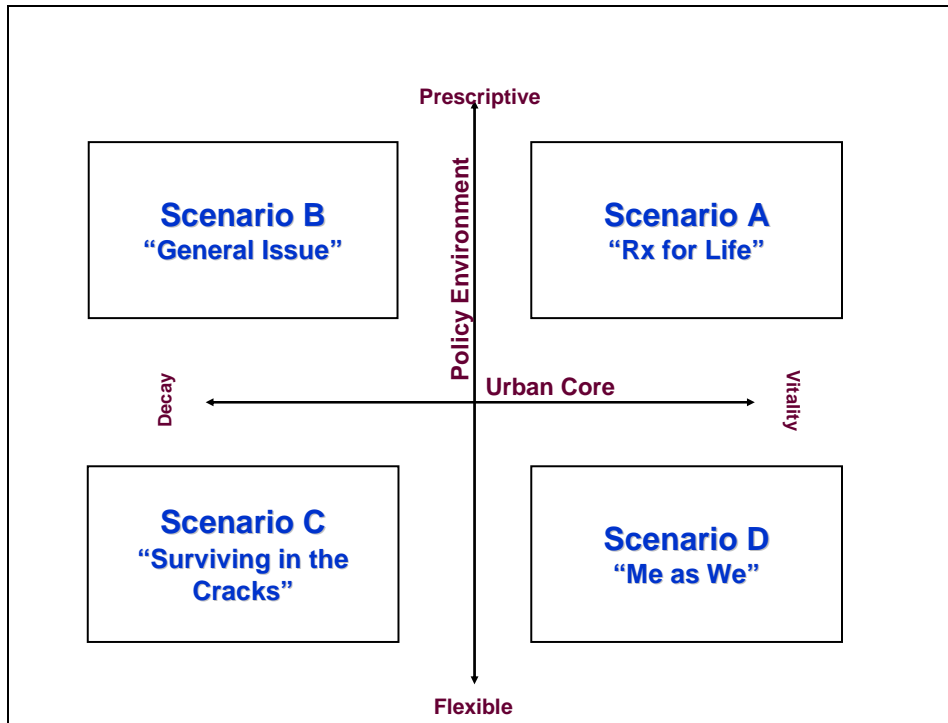
The process began with the formulation of a key strategic question, known as the focal issue. This question, *How can urban public education in Ohio transform to become a high-demand, high-performing system in 2020?* guided all subsequent work on the project.

Next, the group explored trends identified on the *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education* in various “impact areas” including family and community, markets, institutions, educators and learning, and tools and practices. Participants agreed on the two uncertainties most critical and relevant to the focal issue:

- The *urban core* and whether it will continue to decay or develop vitality
- The *policy environment* and whether it will become more prescriptive or more flexible

These critical uncertainties, when crossed on the two axes of a Cartesian plane, form the Ohio 8's Scenario Framework.

The Ohio 8 Scenario Framework



Working Group teams then articulated the key elements of each scenario: a general description; deep causes of events unfolding between 2008 and 2020; a timeline and potential news headlines over the 12 years; evidence and present-day signs foreshadowing each scenario; and a plausible and engaging plot, characters, and format.

McREL consultants then wrote four scenarios for a metaphorical “Center City, Ohio,” in the year 2020, based on the creative input of each team. Team members reviewed the drafts and provided feedback to McREL. In June, 2008, the revised scenarios were shared in a joint meeting with the Leadership Council and Working Group members. Participants identified the implications for urban public education in Ohio, strategic options if the Ohio 8 found themselves living within each scenario in 2020, and action steps the Ohio 8 can take today to position its members most effectively for each potential future.

An abstract of each scenario follows (see Appendices A and B for the complete text of all scenarios and the entire set of options and action steps).

The World in 2020: Four Possible Scenarios

Scenario A: R_x for Life

This is “a Hub world” where economic conditions, coupled with activist government and a strong sense of civic engagement, have produced an accessible, full-service delivery system for the residents of Center City and other urban communities across Ohio. In this scenario, prescriptive policies provide a uniform platform for addressing education, community, and healthcare needs in an efficient, effective manner. All governmental levels play a role in solving problems, and the public will to address numerous domestic challenges is strong. A new federal education law—All Children Exceeding Standards (ACES)—is prescriptive and far-reaching, focused on the mastery of standards.

In order to provide leadership in an “R_x for Life” future, the analysis of this scenario suggests that the Ohio 8 should begin today, working with state policymakers and other local leaders, to remove barriers to coordinating education and social services. In addition, the Ohio 8 might advocate on behalf of policies and revenue streams that will accelerate service coordination, identify existing programs that will hasten alignment, select a willing urban community to serve as a pilot or demonstration site, and catalyze a statewide communications strategy to build public support for and participation in such efforts.

Scenario B: General Issue

Limited public education resources, exacerbated by the ravages of urban decay, foreshadow a bleak existence for the residents of Center City in this scenario, where the schools by 2020 have become the last bastion of safety. Ohio’s inability to resolve state education funding in a way that benefits urban districts combines with dire economic straits, environmental disasters, and a prolonged war in the Middle East. By 2011, the reauthorized federal No Child Left Behind Act offers states a comprehensive system of national standards, curricula, assessment provisions, and data tracking with a heavy focus on STEM, as an alternative to the current system of 50 state standards and accountability programs. As downward economic trends in the urban core continue, those residents who are able, flee the cities. Urban schools become the site of last resort, serving only the poor and most vulnerable students. The federal government steps in, creating the General Issue (GI) Teacher program, which deploys soldiers once they return from the wars in the Middle East. The GI Teachers have a dual role—to teach mathematics and science while maintaining order in the schools and surrounding cities.

In order to reinforce the leadership position of its members in a “General Issue” future, an analysis of the scenario results in the recommendation that the Ohio 8 begin today to design a dual strategy, one that positions local school buildings as safe environments while creating broad-based public support for service learning.

Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

In this scenario, the bulk of the urban core has decayed and the majority of Center City dwellers languish in poverty with no jobs, absentee landlords, empty lots, crumbling schools, and few

opportunities. Absent is the compelling national and state leadership or unity of purpose needed to bring about large-scale solutions for school funding, early childhood education, or workforce development. Having tried and failed to improve urban education with prescriptive, high-stakes accountability measures, policymakers turn to alternative solutions once considered anathema within the public arena. In 2010, NCLB is reauthorized to support student vouchers in the urban areas, thereby expanding competition. Cities splinter into distinct neighborhoods characterized by a sense of isolation which separates neighborhoods ideologically, politically, and socio-economically. A fortunate few neighborhoods turn inward, becoming more self-reliant and entrepreneurial in the process, thus surviving in the cracks.

In many respects, a “Surviving in the Cracks” future represents the most challenging scenario for the Ohio 8 because it intersects urban decay with increasing competition for delivering education services. To simply ignore this scenario would likely accelerate the demise of public education as we know it today. Therefore, this scenario analysis encourages the Ohio 8 to seek out state support for broad collaborative approaches to improving education, particularly those which embrace the use of technology and individual learning plans for all students.

Scenario D: Me as We

In this scenario, widespread availability of free WiFi (through a wireless cloud in cities) and other innovative technologies, reinforced by federal and state policies encouraging grassroots solutions, fuel local ingenuity and productivity. Center City leaders, embracing a philosophy of enlightened self-interest, adopt an entrepreneurial, collaborative approach to local problem solving. They align public policies and private sector resources, making it possible for leaders from K–12 education, higher education, social services, the arts, and economic/workforce development to join with business leaders in addressing quality of life issues. Development impact fees, coupled with a new Ohio school finance law, provide local communities with a more stable revenue source. At the same time, skyrocketing fuel costs prompt state and local leaders to develop more efficient public transportation and offer economic incentives to live and work in the core city. Education focuses on lifelong learning delivered 24/7 and through multiple venues. The traditional high school diploma has been replaced by a competency-based credentialing system.

In order to reinforce the leadership position of its members in a “Me as We” future, the analysis of this scenario suggests that the Ohio 8 begin today to advocate for the joining of two critical ideas into the same education policy discussions: universal access to the Internet and the use of individual learning plans for all students.

Recommendations

The following five recommendations form the basis of a dynamic planning process for transforming urban education in Ohio into a high-demand and high-performing system in 2020. The recommendations reflect discussions from the Ohio 8 Coalition meeting in June 2008. The first two recommendations focus on successful implementation, whereas the last three address specific program priorities reflected in the scenarios (see the full report for details of each recommendation).

- 1. Use the future scenarios and work products contained in this report to help the Ohio 8 Coalition achieve its vision, mission, and strategic priorities.**
 - Align scenario planning recommendations with the Ohio 8’s existing strategic priorities.
 - Identify potential opportunities and barriers in the existing governance and funding system.
 - Translate the strategic options which appear in all four scenarios (robust options) into a concrete action plan that guides program implementation and operations.

- 2. Develop the organizational capacity to lead the parade.**
 - Engage the communication staff of each district, as well as external community experts, in designing an outreach strategy aimed at three key audiences: each district’s local community, state education leaders, and the general public.
 - Establish ongoing mechanisms to monitor and communicate trends and analyze the implications for urban education in Ohio.
 - Create formal structures among the Ohio 8, and other urban communities, to continually share progress, promising practices, and long-term results.

- 3. Prioritize service learning within urban school districts and communities.**
 - Convene a service learning “design team” and task force to explore how to integrate service learning innovatively throughout urban school districts.
 - Develop a plan to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders and build greater buy-in for service learning.
 - Convene a statewide summit or “institute” on service learning for educators, community leaders, and members of the public.
 - Provide professional development to teachers, principals, and others on how to successfully implement service learning.
 - Identify state and local resources to support service learning.
 - Provide incentives for districts to develop comprehensive service learning programs.
 - Implement structures to sustain and improve the implementation of service learning programs.

- 4. Develop the “Hub” concept as a full-service design for schools.**
 - Convene a task force or committee to explore the possibilities for creating a “Hub” pilot initiative.
 - Partner with key organizations such as the Aspen Institute, Knowledge Alliance, and others to support the design process and elevate the conversation.
 - Build political support for launching a pilot initiative.
 - Implement, support, and evaluate the demonstration “Hub” project.

- 5. Take the lead to help prepare Ohio urban education for 21st century teaching and learning.**
 - Reach common agreement on what students should know and be able to do to master 21st century skills and competencies.
 - Create and refine a system of competency-based assessments to monitor and report individual student progress.

- Develop support systems for 21st century skills, including universal access to WiFi.
- Create a commission to launch a 21st century skills effort.

Conclusion

By creating and reflecting on four likely scenarios in response to its focal issue, the Ohio 8 has begun to *lead the parade*, positioning itself for ongoing success on behalf of the children they serve now and in the future.

Transforming Urban Public Education in Ohio to Become a High-demand and High-performing System in 2020

“A good outcome would be a change in thinking about planning.
I hope that we become proactive and not reactive.
I’m tired of being behind the parade. I want us to lead the parade!”

~ Dr. Sylvester Small, Co-Chair, The Ohio 8 Coalition

Introduction

Since 2001, superintendents and teacher union presidents from the eight urban school districts in Ohio—Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown—have worked together in a strategic alliance known as the “Ohio 8.” Founded on the principle that a high-performance public education system is essential to the civic and economic health of Ohio’s cities, the Ohio 8 Coalition’s mission is to work to improve academic performance and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio. The Coalition carries out its mission by working closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor, and community officials.

The Ohio 8 is the first widely known collaboration of urban superintendents and teacher union presidents. Acting as partners, the Ohio 8 enables superintendents and union presidents to address issues of common concern. As a result, a shared administrator-teacher voice helps shape state policy and practice. Originally convened in 2001 to focus on a specific piece of legislation, the Ohio 8 now works on a wide range of school reform issues in the priority areas to improve academic performance, close achievement gaps, increase graduation rates, and help urban students attain 21st century skills. Over the next few years, the coalition will focus on four strategic priorities:

- **Improvement and Innovation:** Improve academic performance, close achievement gaps and increase graduation rates for Ohio’s urban children.
- **Policy:** Expand funding and policy support for urban education in Ohio at the federal and state levels.
- **Leadership:** Establish the Ohio 8 as a recognized statewide leader for urban education policy and practice.
- **Capacity:** Strengthen the Ohio 8’s capacity to provide sustained leadership in urban education policy and practice throughout the state.

In fall 2007, the KnowledgeWorks Foundation sponsored the Ohio 8’s participation in a comprehensive scenario-planning process through which the Coalition could explore trends of the future depicted in KnowledgeWorks’ *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*, develop scenarios of the future, and analyze scenario implications.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), an organization with expertise in future-focused strategic planning, facilitated the scenario-planning process, which focused on the following strategic question:

How can urban public education in Ohio transform to become a high-demand, high-performing system in 2020?

The work began with an introduction to scenario planning for the Ohio 8 leadership in November, 2007, and continued over a series of intensive workshops:

- Workshop #1: Exploring the Future and Defining Critical Uncertainties (March 2008)
- Workshop #2: Developing the Scenario Framework and Four Scenarios (April 2008)
- Workshop #3: Finalizing Four Scenarios for 2020 (May 2008)
- Workshop #4: Identifying Implications, Options, and Recommendations (June 2008)

The Ohio 8 Leadership Council committed to participating in Workshop #1 in March and #4 in June and appointed a Working Group composed of three representatives from each district to participate in all four workshops and take responsibility for completing the work during Workshops #2 and #3. All workshops took place at the Hyatt Capitol Square in Columbus, Ohio.

In March, 40 participants from the Ohio 8 Leadership Council and the Working Group convened in Columbus and prioritized key trends of the future, identifying two critical uncertainties that were considered most relevant and most uncertain for the future of urban public education in Ohio. These two uncertainties ultimately formed the scenario framework developed during the April workshop. The Ohio 8's Scenario Framework focused on the dimensions of the decay or vitality in the urban core crossed with the dimensions of either a prescriptive or flexible policy environment.

Between April and May the Working Group, with support from McREL and Peggy Siegel, an independent consultant, wrote four separate, plausible, logical, and relevant scenarios that became the context for identifying implications and determining strategic options that would enable urban public education to survive and thrive in each of the possible futures. The scenarios were analyzed for implications and strategic options by both the Ohio 8 Leadership Council and the Working Group during the June workshop. Strategies that applied to all possible futures were deemed the most "robust" options and were used to generate a set of recommendations for the Ohio 8 to pursue as it more strategically focuses on the future.

Through these discussions and analyses, the group determined that the Ohio 8 must get out in front on the key issues affecting urban public education and "lead the parade" so that the system can be transformed into a high-demand and high-performing one by 2020. This document describes the scenario-planning process used along with the discussion and analysis that informed the recommendations to help the Ohio 8 prepare for the future.

About Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is the process of creating stories about possible futures in order to anticipate and prepare for changes beyond one's control. Scenarios do not predict the future, but provide a way to identify and manage uncertainties. Scenario planning reveals risks and opportunities. It is especially useful for examining current or proposed policies in light of what the future may hold.

Scenario planning is different from other kinds of planning. It explores combinations of uncertainties, especially those that are challenging. It is ongoing and collaborative and results in the ability to identify changes early and respond to them as they arise. It challenges one's current mode of thinking, bringing new insights that drive transformation in organizations and institutions.

There are eight steps in the scenario-planning process:

1. Select the issue of focus and timeframe
2. Explore the external world
3. Clarify uncertainties
4. Develop the scenario framework
5. Write the scenarios
6. Identify implications and options
7. Take action today to prepare for tomorrow
8. Monitor trends

The scenario-planning process illuminates the issues so that leaders and stakeholders can think strategically. As the consequences of certain actions become clear and opportunities within different possible future contexts crystallize, leaders are better able to re-position organizations for success.

Scenario Planning for the Ohio 8

Although scenario planning is a well-developed tool that has been used by countless organizations to prepare strategic plans in response to foresight, each project is highly customized to its context.

Participants

Forty-five stakeholders from the various urban school districts that comprise the Ohio 8 Leadership Council, a Working Group, staff from the Ohio 8, and representatives from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation participated in the process.

Ohio 8 Leadership Council Members

(as of June 1, 2008)

Akron

*Sylvester Small, Superintendent
Akron Public Schools
David James, Superintendent Elect
Akron Public Schools
Bill Sieferth, President
Akron Education Association

Canton

Michele Evans-Gardell, Superintendent
Canton City Schools
Pam Jackson, President
Canton Professional Educators Association

Cincinnati

Rosa Blackwell, Superintendent Cincinnati City
School District
Tim Kraus, President
Cincinnati Federation of Teachers

Cleveland

Eugene Sanders, CEO & Superintendent Cleveland
Metropolitan School District
David Quolke, President
Cleveland Teachers Union

Columbus

Gene Harris, Superintendent
Columbus Public Schools
*Rhonda Johnson, President
Columbus Education Association

Dayton

Percy Mack, Superintendent
Dayton Public Schools
Patricia Lynch, President
Dayton Education Association

Toledo

John Foley, Interim Superintendent
Toledo Public Schools
Francine Lawrence, President
Toledo Federation of Teachers

Youngstown

Wendy Webb, Superintendent
Youngstown City School District
Will Bagnola, President
Youngstown Education Association

* *Ohio 8 Co-Chairs*

Ohio 8 Work Group Members

Akron

Ellen McWilliams, Assistant Superintendent
Jeff Moats, Teacher

Canton

Ken Brunner, Teacher
Marcia Cussen, Assistant Superintendent
Rod Meadows, Community Member

Cincinnati

Deidre Simpson, Teacher
Julia Indalecio, Teacher Programs Manager
Nick Payne, KWF Data Researcher

Cleveland

Renee Cavor, Deputy Chief
Monyka Price, Mayor's Office
Mary Ann Fredrick, Teacher

Columbus

Tei Street, Mayor's Office of Education
John Farley, Director-Grants Management
Barbara Boyd, Nationwide Insurance

Dayton

Eli Hurwitz, Teacher
Jane Rafal, Administrator

Toledo

Mary Smith, School Consultation
Cecelia Adams, Assistant Superintendent

Youngstown

Gail Gentile, Teacher
Karen Green, Administrator

Ohio 8 Staff

Bill Wendling, Executive Director
Michelle Willmott, Administrative Coordinator
Jim Kohlmoos, Consultant

KnowledgeWorks Foundation Consultants and Staff

Barbara Diamond, Senior Advisor
Peggy Siegel, Consultant
Kevin Boyce, Director

Step 1: Selecting the Issue of Focus and Timeframe

In February 2008, McREL conducted phone interviews with eight members of the Ohio 8 leadership. Four were superintendents, and four were teacher union presidents. These interviews were used to help identify the strategic question, or focal issue, to be discussed. Interview questions focused on the following aspects:

- Information interviewees wanted to know about the future
- Critical or strategic decisions on the immediate horizon for urban education in Ohio
- Imagining the possible future triumph or future failure of urban education in Ohio
- Sources of pride in urban public education in Ohio
- Sources of disappointment in urban public education in Ohio
- Preferred elements to retain and those to let go when moving to the future
- Benchmarks for success of the project

Interview results were summarized to understand the present context of urban public education in Ohio as well as shared aspirations for the future. A summary of participants' responses and key themes from the discussion and analysis appear below.

Questions about the Future: Urban Education in Ohio

When asked what they most wanted to know about the future of urban education in Ohio, the majority of respondents thought that questions around the state's ability to stabilize funding for education, especially as the need to develop new forms of schooling for the 21st century increases, were paramount. Other respondents raised broad questions about what the future of urban "schools" might look like (e.g., would they be building-based? would they house only high-risk students?). Two respondents expressed concern about the extent to which the state would muster the political and moral will to make education a success for all students. Other questions about the future included these:

- Will urban students be globally competitive?
- What support structures should be in place to ensure solid success for every student?
- Will we have quality teachers?
- Is there support and commitment for urban education from all stakeholders?
- Will the state be committed to a public system, or will it allow a move to privatization?

Questions about the Future: Local District

When speaking about the future of their own districts, most respondents asked the same general questions they had for the future of urban education in Ohio, although some shared specific questions pertaining to their local district. Additional questions about the future pertaining to local districts included these:

- How do we change and transition to the 21st century?
- What will replace the manufacturing economy?

- Will performance gains make a difference in the choices parents make of where to send their children to school?
- What does the community really want out of education?

Strategic Decisions on the Horizon

There were several strategic decisions on the horizon; chief among them was the question of how to fix the school funding formula in relation to the depressed economy statewide. Other strategic decisions included how to recruit and retain high quality teachers, especially after the baby boomers retire, how to re-tool education for 21st century competitiveness, how to overcome the perceptions of insecurity and real safety issues in urban schools, and how to develop the political will necessary to achieve success for urban education.

Imagining the Future Triumph of Urban Education

Respondents were asked to imagine the world ten years into the future and tell “the story” of the triumph of urban education. Contained within each respondent’s vision were all students achieving at high levels, closing the achievement gap, high graduation rates, college participation for all, and a focus on 21st century skills. Respondents described an educational system that serves all economic sectors of the community and uses data to drive decisions, and in which teachers’ practice improves, all elements of the system align, and all stakeholders have a laser-like focus on achieving common goals.

Key to this future success story was the ability of stakeholders to focus on success rather than failure. As one respondent noted, in this future, “Failure is not an option.” Another respondent echoed that in this future, “We overcame the lack of will and resources.” Other factors present in the future success story included having more early childhood education and the ability to make schools more relevant to students’ lives.

Imagining the Future Failure of Urban Education

In most cases, when asked to imagine ten years into the future in order to tell the story of the failure of urban education, respondents cited doing nothing and lack of political will as factors contributing to the failure. The inability to keep up with technological transformation also was cited, along with not being able to make school and learning relevant for students. One respondent was concerned with overly narrowing the curriculum, thereby eliminating a range of options, such as career and technical education, from students’ choices. Another respondent expressed the possibility of urban education destroying public education through the proliferation of charters and vouchers.

Sources of Pride

When asked what gave them pride in their work as an educational leader, several respondents cited their district’s recent success in improving achievement. One respondent was proud of the higher graduation rate that had been achieved (from 50% to 80%). Other sources of pride included hard-working, dedicated teachers; the spirit of cooperation and collaboration between the district and the union; and a commitment to professionalism among the teaching staff.

Sources of Disappointment

Respondents also shared aspects of the work of which they were not proud. Most frequently cited were school safety and the public's attitudes and perceptions of the issue. Other sources of disappointment included financial issues, an inability to meet the growing needs of students, and union members viewing the union as having an adversarial relationship with the district and administration rather than a partnership.

Things to Keep

Respondents expressed that as they moved toward a new vision for urban education in Ohio, there were several elements of the current system they wanted to retain, including these:

- A collaborative, team approach to solutions in education where all share the responsibility for meeting goals
- Maintaining education as a public good and a community responsibility
- Data driven decision-making including data teams at schools
- Ohio's state standards
- A commitment to innovation and flexibility in education
- Local control at the school level and a move toward de-centralization
- Recruitment, retention, and professional development of high-quality teachers
- On-site professional development, such as coaching and a comprehensive peer assistance and review process
- The P-16 concept
- Teachers taking ownership of their work
- A passion and commitment for the work
- The Ohio 8, itself

Things to Let Go

When asked what respondents would leave behind, a majority identified elements of a bureaucratic structure that impede improvement. Specific items included burdensome regulations such as new IDEA regulations, legislative mandates, and antiquated rules and regulations. One respondent raised the question of whether there were too many districts in the state. Others mentioned the politics and pettiness that can often get in the way of progress. Additional elements respondents identified included these:

- Inflexibility
- Traditions that hold back progress, such as "that is what we have always done"
- Perceptions of quality shaped by the media
- Legislative mandates
- The obsession with testing
- Principal preparation programs
- An evaluation system that is not peer-based
- Traditional, factory model schools
- Moves toward centralization

Benchmarking Success in Scenario Building

Nearly all respondents felt that the scenario-building process would be a success if it was relevant, engaging, could be applied to their home districts, and translated into action that would move the Ohio 8 toward its vision for urban education in the state. Many wanted to make sure the process led to “doing something, rather than just talking about it.” Some respondents hoped that the process would help the Ohio 8 develop a clear vision, create a sense of urgency, and become proactive, rather than reactive. One respondent hoped that the process would entail “honest dialogue from both sides and an action plan that shows what we are going to commit to.”

Key Themes from Interviews

Taken together, the interview responses revealed key themes and potential critical uncertainties that urban education leaders across the state were facing. As the leadership group and the McREL consultants developed the focal issue for the project, they considered questions such as these:

1. How should urban public education evolve in order to ensure public support in 2020 and beyond?
2. What will the demand be for urban schools in 2020?
3. What kind of leadership is needed to transform urban education in Ohio to prepare all children for the 2020 workforce and community?
4. What role should the Ohio 8 play in transforming urban education in Ohio for 2020?
5. What should be the new vision of urban education in Ohio for the year 2020?

Ultimately, the Ohio 8 Leadership Council identified the issue they believed most relevant (see Figure 1). From this point forward, the scenario-planning process was aimed at providing a structured response to the uncertainty inherent in this focal issue.

How does urban public education in Ohio need to transform in order to become a high-demand and high-performing system in 2020?

Figure 1: The Ohio 8’s Focal Issue

During the first workshop, the group agreed that the focal issue represented a question of critical importance to everyone and spent time clarifying and defining its key terms in order to ensure a shared understanding (see Table 1).

Table 1

Definitions of Terms within the Ohio 8 Focal Issue

Key Term	Definition
2020	Even though we are looking out to 2020—taking the long view—plans and action steps should be implemented right away, in 2008.
High Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitive workers (e.g., green collar jobs)• Flexible learners• Very high graduation rates• High rigor, relevance, and application
Transform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whatever it takes.• Something that is dramatic and significantly different that involves innovation (a significant departure from current operations of schools).• Redesign the fundamental workings of the education system.• There is a progression to learning.• School 1.0=How many answers do the students know? School 2.0=What do they do when they don't know? School 3.0=What can they do once they find the answers? School 4.0=What can they do when no one knows the answers?• It's like Bloom's taxonomy: The 4.0 School prepares students with higher order thinking skills (e.g., conceptualize, invent, analyze, synthesize). To that end, how do we as educators prepare them for an uncertain future? In order to address this issue, we need to ask: what is it we know and do not know about the future?

Step 2: Exploring the External World

Forces of change are trends outside of an organization that shape the future in both predictable and unpredictable ways. On March 13, 2008, McREL consultants, Laura Lefkowitz and Jill Conrad, presented on the trends shaping the future to the members of the Ohio 8 Leadership Council and scenario planning Working Group. They provided an overview of the *forces of change* as presented in the KnowledgeWorks Foundation's *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education: 2006–2016*. The forces of change were organized in the following “impact areas:”

- Family and Community (e.g., demographics, culture, etc.)
- Markets (e.g., economy)
- Institutions (e.g., globalization, politics, financial structures)
- Educators and Learning (e.g., teaching, education policy, schooling)
- Tools and Practices (e.g., technology)

Afterward, participants brainstormed uncertainties that were most relevant and also most uncertain for the future of urban public education. The top twelve critical uncertainties selected by the full group are identified below (see Appendix C for a complete list of all of the uncertainties identified by the full group).

Critical Uncertainties Considered by the Ohio 8

- What will be the expectations of high performance and standards?
- Will future schools be a K-12 model? K-10? Or K-14?
- Will urban education in the central city even exist?
- What will the economy be like?
- What will district enrollments be?
- Will there be more educational choices—more options?
- What will be the political dynamics and policy?
- What will the role of the teacher be?
- Will schooling take place in traditional buildings—will they exist?
- What will the jobs of the future be and what will be the skills needed?
- What will be valued by American society?
- What will teacher training look like?

Step 3: Clarifying Uncertainties

Individual participants gathered by the one uncertainty that most interested them and brainstormed together some possible endpoints to define the dimensions of tension in the uncertainty as it relates to the Ohio 8 focal issue. Figure 2 shows all of the critical uncertainties and endpoints identified by the Ohio 8 scenario planning group.

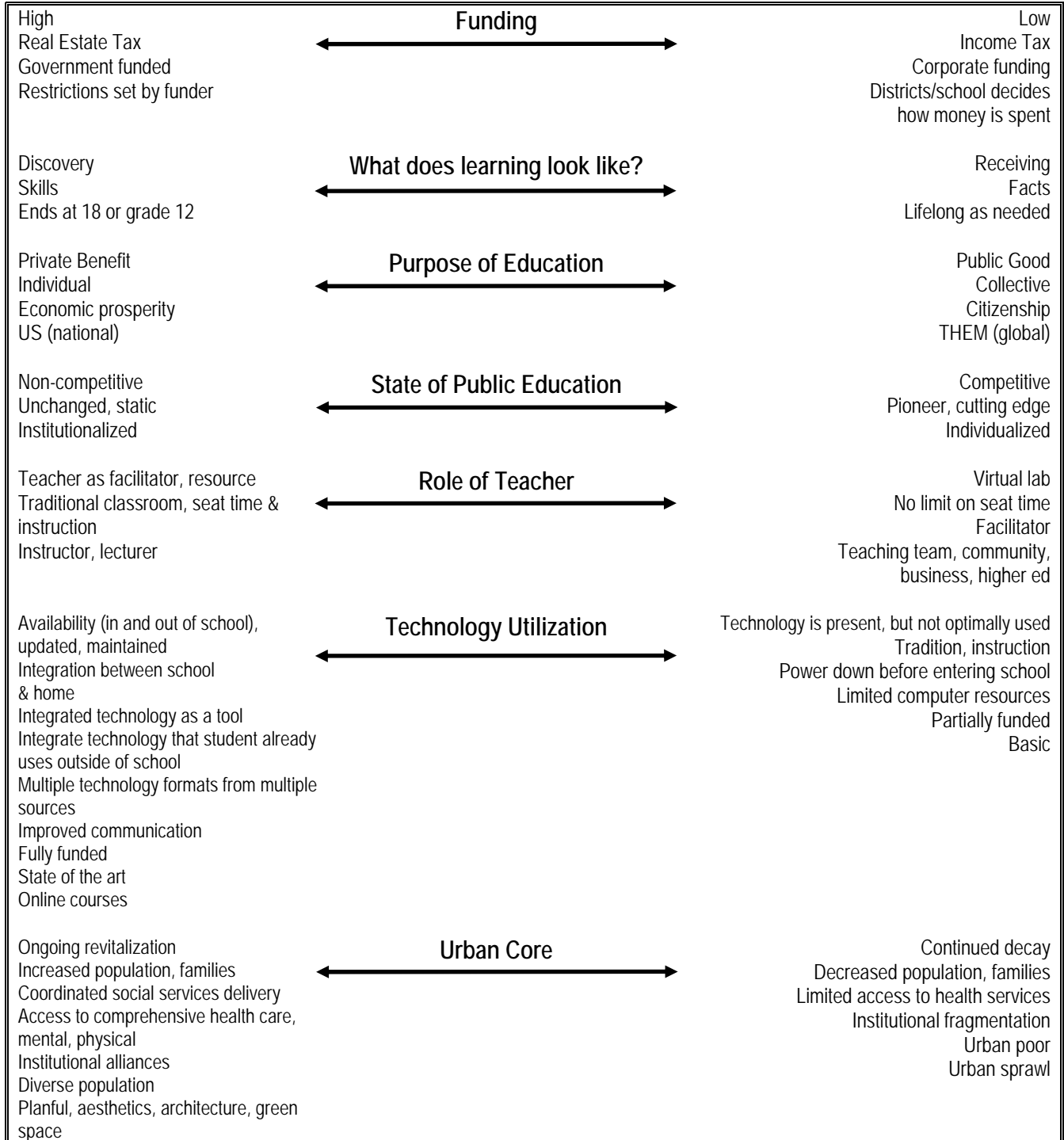


Figure 2: Clarifying Uncertainties

Further discussion and clarification revealed additional uncertainties and refinement of endpoints describing the dimensions of difference along each axis of uncertainty. Table 2 outlines the critical uncertainties that ultimately were included in the selection process.

Table 2
All Critical Uncertainties Defined and Considered

Endpoint	Critical Uncertainty	Endpoint
Advances private benefit	Purpose of Education System	Promoting public good
Ongoing revitalization	Urban core	Continued decay
Resist and ignore	Response to globalization	Embrace
Optimally used	Technology utilization	Not optimally used
Local real estate	Source of funding	State tax
Public	Control of schooling	Private
	School choice	
Receiving (school 1.0)	Learning	Discovering (school 4.0)
Facilitator; resource; any time any place; any one	Role of teacher	Traditional
	Technology	
	Education market	
	Leadership	
	Public support	
	State of public education	

Once everyone in the group had a chance to review all of the possibilities, participants used “dots” to vote for their top two critical uncertainties. The top two choices were to be the *most uncertain* and the *most critical*, or relevant, to the Ohio 8 focal issue. The vote narrowed the choices down to the following three critical uncertainties:

- Purpose of education system (advances private benefit/promotes public good)
- Urban core (ongoing revitalization/continued decay)
- Role of teacher, learning, and technology (facilitator/traditional)

Because the scenario-building process requires only two critical uncertainties, the group had to reach consensus. Subsequent discussions in small groups and among the whole group provided the following iterations of potential axes for consideration.

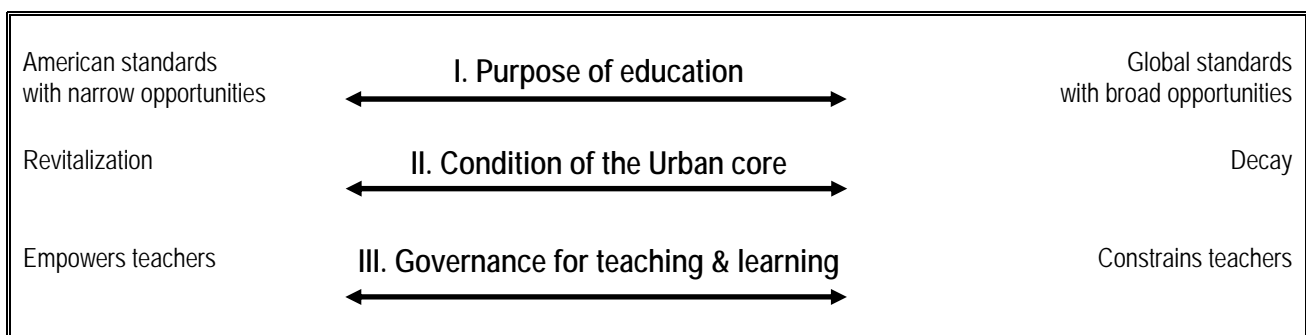


Figure 3: Critical Uncertainties I, II and III

As a result of further discussion, critical uncertainties I and III were joined together to produce the following options.

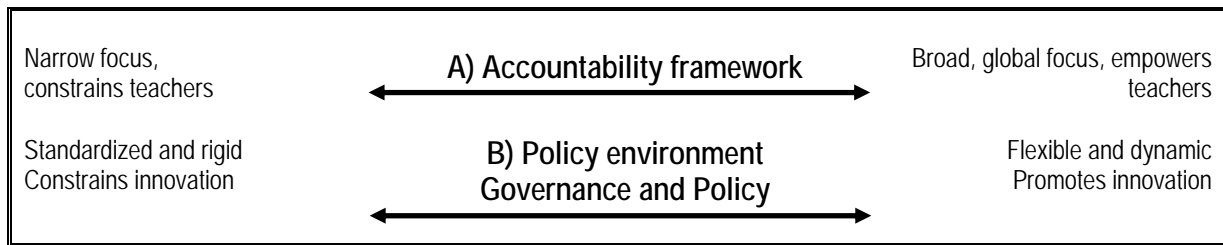


Figure 4: Critical Uncertainties A and B

Additional discussion led the group to identify the final two critical uncertainties (see Figure 5).

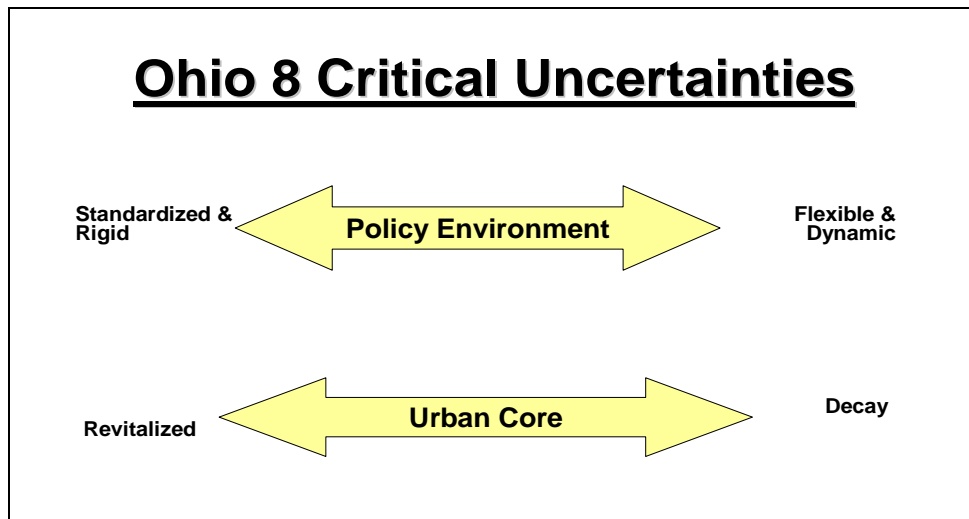


Figure 5: Final Two Critical Uncertainties Selected by the Ohio 8

The time between Workshops #1 and #2 allowed individual participants to reflect upon the meaning of these uncertainties and the language used to convey them. Thus, when the Working Group was re-convened in April, additional time was spent deliberating to ensure that these two critical uncertainties were indeed the most relevant and most uncertain to addressing the focal issue. Consequently, the group modified the framework slightly, with the following results.

Critical Uncertainty #1: Urban Core (Decay or Vitality)

The group viewed the term “vitality” as one that included all urban residents in the improvement. In contrast, the term “re-vitalization” reflects a more limited view that might focus on certain parts of a city, such as gentrification and targeted revitalization efforts, but not include vitality in terms of lifestyle and civic health for all.

Critical Uncertainty #2: Policy Environment (Prescriptive or Flexible)

The group wanted to avoid what they believed was a negative connotation conveyed by the term, “Standardized & Rigid.” They recognized that in some cases, a more “standardized,” or “prescriptive,” approach to policy could be positive or negative, depending on how it was implemented, whereas the term “rigid,” evoked only negative images when it came to policy. In addition, they chose the word “prescriptive” instead of standardized so as not to confuse readers with the notion of “standards-based.” The group also thought that having only one word on each endpoint was clearer.

Language is very important in scenario planning. Terms, especially those used on the scenario framework itself, can become laden with meaning. The critical uncertainties that form the scenario framework for the Ohio 8 scenarios, and the terms used to describe the extreme outcomes that are possible, are described below.

Critical Uncertainty #1: Urban Core



The urban core (called Center City) is the primary location highlighted in all four scenarios. It offers a generic description of the largest municipal jurisdictions within Ohio that are socio-economically and racially diverse. In recent years, the urban core has been impacted greatly by a severe downturn in Ohio’s traditional manufacturing economy, resulting in job loss, out-migration, and declining wages, as well as concomitant increases in poverty and crime. Collectively, these conditions create a growing uncertainty around the future of Ohio’s once thriving major metropolitan communities. The urban core, in essence, is at a critical crossroads.

Decay

At this extreme on the axis, the urban core has become a vast wasteland. Most, if not all, of its major institutions have collapsed. Poverty, crime, and despair are rampant. Everyone with the means and the will has escaped. The remaining residents feel walled in and closed off. Public schools have become the education service delivery system of last resort. The future is dismal, devoid of both opportunity and hope.

Vitality

At the other extreme on the axis, the urban core transforms into a vibrant area, the residency of choice for its citizens. A thriving economy produces new jobs and the requisite stable revenue base to confront socio-economic challenges in a thoughtful way. The spirit of collective self-determination and civic engagement permeates community actions to produce local solutions. Major social institutions, including education, have developed the capacity to serve their citizens well. The quality of life in all respects is superior. A bright future lies ahead.

Critical Uncertainty #2: Policy Environment



The policy environment describes the political setting in which public laws are formulated, implemented, supported, and evaluated. It also highlights the nature of the type of policy enacted, providing, in essence, the “rules of the game” for community action. Policy actions in the following four scenarios occur at the federal, state, and local levels. There is a tension in the current policy environment between the endpoints described below.

Prescriptive

Flexible

<p>Public policies produced within this setting are uniform, standardized, consistent, and universal. Such directives, particularly when resources are scarce, are intended to provide at least minimal services, a safety net, to all. Or, in some cases, they may serve as the way to regulate and constrain behavior. They may constrain local creativity and action or produce consistent service delivery systems, with programs and services frequently bundled and provided via convenient one-stop venues. Prescriptive policies may result in purely tax/fee-supported programs to address social needs or, by providing “a big enough pie,” leverage additional private sector engagement and support.</p>	<p>Public policies produced within this setting reinforce individualized, often diverse efforts to come up with creative solutions. The resulting programs and services are frequently customized to meet the needs of different beneficiaries. Entities operating within flexible policy conditions are often more agile at designing, implementing, and continually fine-tuning solutions. Such public policy entrepreneurialism often attracts private sector entrepreneurialism in kind, creating, in the best cases, a sum that is greater than its individual pieces. Conversely, in the worst cases, the same “free reign” can also prompt a proliferation of unaligned programs and services, further sub-optimizing the capacity of leaders to create and sustain comprehensive solutions, and compromising values of equity.</p>
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Step 4: Developing the Scenario Framework

After identifying its two critical uncertainties, the group explored the intersections of the two crossed on the x and y axis of a Cartesian plane, revealing four quadrants—or, possible future worlds—for each. The result produced a scenario framework (see Figure 6) to use for the rest of the scenario-building process, and ultimately for the Ohio 8 to develop a set of strategic options to prepare for the future.

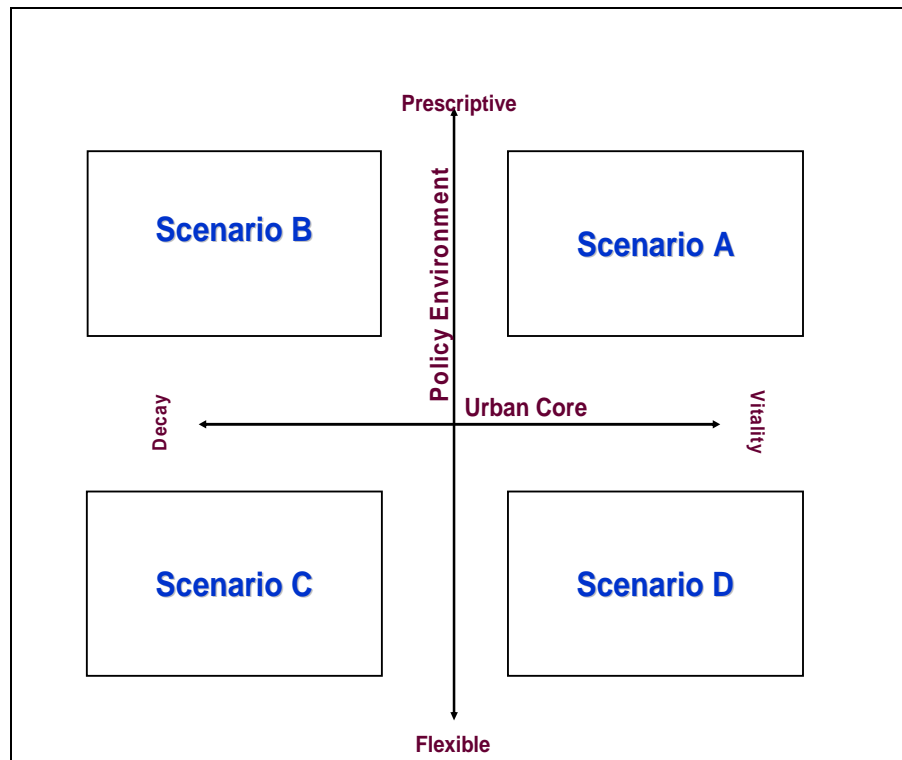


Figure 6: Ohio 8 Scenario Framework

Before moving forward in developing the key elements of each scenario, the Working Group made certain that the proposed framework met the criteria for a strong scenario framework. A scenario framework is strong when, as the basic story of each future scenario in each quadrant is told, and all four quadrants are fleshed out, the story in each quadrant is

- Different from the other scenarios in any of the other quadrants;
- Challenging to current thinking;
- Relevant to the focal issue;
- Logical, in terms of a possible sequence of events that could occur between now and 2020 to create such a world; and
- Plausible, in terms of such a world being, while challenging, still believable.

Using information from the *Map of Future Forces* and data provided on Ohio and urban education, participants further developed potential storylines for each quadrant by answering the following prompts:

- What is going on in the realm of *family and community* in this world?
- What do *markets* look like in this world?
- What is happening with *institutions* in this world?
- What does *education and learning* look like in this world?
- What sort of *tools and practices* are in use?

Ultimately, the group selected a basic storyline and an appropriate title for each quadrant (see Figure 7).

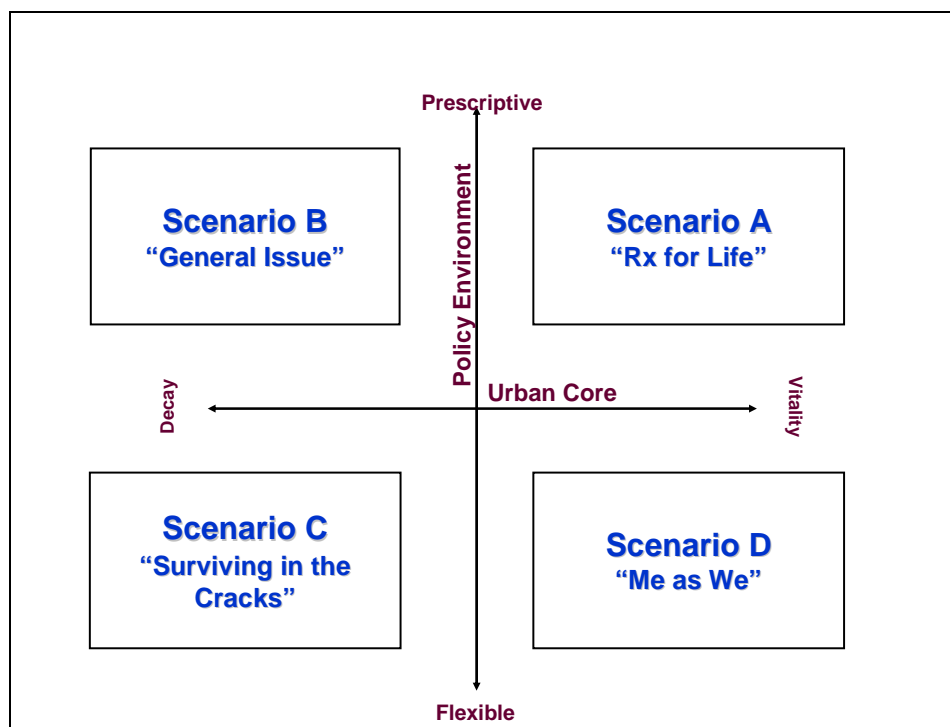


Figure 7: Final Scenario Framework and Titles for the Ohio 8 Scenarios

Once the scenario framework was determined, the group split into four small groups (see Table 3), each with an assigned scenario to develop further.

**Table 3
Scenario Work Group Members**

Scenario A: Prescriptive/Vital	Scenario B: Prescriptive/Decay	Scenario C: Flexible/Decay	Scenario D: Flexible/Vital
Monyka Price Ellen McWilliams Marcia Cussen Dierdre Simpson Barbara Boyd	Ken Brunner Nick Payne Julia Indalecio Eli Hurwitz	Mary Ann Frederick John Farley Rod Meadows Cecelia Adams Jeff Moats	David James Gail Gentile Jane Rafal Mary Smith Bill Wendling

Each group developed the following key elements for its particular quadrant in the framework:

- **Description of the Scenario.** Each group described possible events in the arenas of family, economy, communities, and other domains in 2020 in each scenario by responding to the prompt, “This is a world in which. . . .” This exercise helped participants paint a picture of what it might be like to live in that future world.
- **Deep Causes.** The groups identified pivotal events that *could* happen to bring about the future world depicted in each scenario. Deep causes help provide the logic of each scenario.
- **Evidence and Emerging Trends.** The scenario groups referenced the Ohio-specific trend data provided by McREL and KnowledgeWorks to identify, where possible, current evidence of these future worlds unfolding and emerging trends that might indicate the future heading in that direction. Basing the story on real trends helps increase the plausibility of the scenarios.
- **Timelines.** The scenario groups plotted out a timeline in two-year intervals between 2008 and 2020 to envision key events that might lead to the unfolding storyline within each scenario. Timelines help the story maintain coherence as it unfolds.
- **Headlines.** Group members generated possible “headlines” for news stories that might herald the unfolding stories within each scenario. Headlines help make the scenarios more engaging for readers.

The above elements, along with the groups’ guidance on storyline, plot, characters, and format for the story provided a foundation for the scenario writers to begin work. The following section presents details of these elements for one of the scenarios, Scenario A: R_x for Life (see Appendix D for full descriptions of all four scenarios).

Key Elements of Scenario A: R_x for Life

Describing the Scenario

This scenario depicts a world characterized by a vital urban core and a prescriptive policy environment. Key elements of this world include:

This is a world in which. . .

- Two parent families are living in the urban centers.
- Policies (government and private) mandate time to spend on family activities.
- There is universal health care, early childhood education, and family leave.
- There is a strong focus on a greening society (e.g., recycling is mandated).
- There is a high employment rate with built-in government incentives.
- State-developed job training centers—seamless job training system with focus on training aging population into new jobs and industries exist.
- Higher education is promoted and supported by the state.
- Women are participating in workforce at high levels.
- Diverse, alternative energy sources are developed, used, and expected.
- There are high graduation and attendance rates in schools. Student outcomes are tracked, P-22 at the state level.
- The focus of learning is on attaining job-ready skills and preparation for higher education and entry into career pipelines in targeted industries.
- ACES-All Children Exceeding Standards is new federal accountability system, replacing NCLB.

Deep Causes

Deep causes provide an explanation of how the world might have evolved from where it is today to the future world envisioned on the scenario framework. To derive deep causes, group members respond to questions such as, what caused the urban core to become more vital and the policy environment more prescriptive in 2020, such as it is in Scenario A? Was there a change in leadership? Did resources become scarce or more abundant? If so, what caused a change in availability of resources? Participants were asked to envision these and other possibilities and to select the most plausible deep causes based on their knowledge of future trends.

To begin thinking about deep causes for each scenario, the whole group first considered the entire scenario framework. That is, they identified what they thought might happen in the world, between 2008 and 2020, to move things in each polar direction on the framework—north, south, east, or west. They included ideas based on trend data, as well as possible wild card events, or unexpected events that change the course of history (see Table 4).

**Table 4
Deep Causes for the Ohio 8 Axes**

North prescriptive policy environment	South Flexible policy environment.	East Vital urban core	West Decay in urban core
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarcity of resources (war, environmental, health care costs) • Fear and distrust • Desire for tighter, closer community within the urban core • Economic recession • Research on school systems pointing to more prescribed system • Perceived breakdown of local control • Public perception and desire for 'most effective' way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth • Development of solid, marketable alternative fuel • Increased green collar jobs in US and in OH • Change in value system (individualism wins out) • Self-realization • Generations X & Y make this happen • Technology advances and accommodates flexibility, individualized approaches • Re-focus on domestic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on affordable public transportation • Continued increase in gas prices • Smarter, urban population, working and vibrant local economy • Gen X & Y values embrace urban lifestyles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic inaction • More sprawl and ex-urban centers created (faux small towns); there are better tax incentives for • Gas prices drop • Alternative fuels developed • Aging population prefers exurbs/ contained small towns • Aging boomers • New drug epidemic • Increased crime • Loss of jobs in the city • Concentration of poverty in urban core • New drug epidemic • Political unrest climate does not support urban core

The group developing Scenario A: R_x for Life then looked at what might cause the world to move in the direction of both the north and the east axes as described above. They further developed the scenario and revisited and revised the deep causes to align with the scenario. The final set of deep causes for this scenario follows below; a complete description of the deep causes is in Appendix E.

Deep Causes for Scenario A: R_x for Life

Between 2008 and 2020, the following events occurred to bring about the story told in Scenario A:

- Global competition has put pressure on education to provide greater academic rigor, increasing graduation rates at high school and college, and students attaining job-ready skills.
- Leaders become motivated to counteract the lack of civic-mindedness among citizens in the face of growing community needs.
- Lack of relevance in education prompts leaders to re-design education to become more relevant and aligned to workforce and community needs.
- Generation X leaders forge new partnerships within the urban core, enabling politics, business, and education to work together in new ways.
- Fed up with the “throw-away” society mentality, leaders re-focus citizens on green initiatives.
- Distrust of private entities due to corruption (e.g., housing foreclosures, private charter company scandals, etc.) drive leaders to turn to government for solutions to problems.

Evidence and Emerging Trends

Ensuring that the storylines presented in each scenario are plausible is an important aspect of scenario building. To increase the plausibility of each scenario, the Working Group referenced a set of Ohio-specific trend data provided by McREL and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation to identify current evidence and emerging trends of each future world unfolding (see Figure 8). A complete description of the evidence and emerging trends identified for the four scenarios is in Appendix F.

Evidence Right Now	Emerging Trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major cities are revitalizing urban centers • Schools with a specific focus are being created (e.g., STEM, performing arts) • Full Community Service schools are emerging; one-stop-shops • Accessible transportation is key • Diverse housing to attract diverse population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased discussion of national standards and national assessment • OH P-16 councils funded to build seamless system of education • Access to wireless throughout communities • Increased healthcare needs due to aging spurring workforce needs • Increased initiatives around “going green,” (e.g., LEED silver standards in new facilities)

Figure 8: Evidence and Emerging Trends for Scenario A

Timelines and Headlines

Another method for ensuring the plausibility of a scenario is to document key events that might lead to the unfolding storyline as “headlines” for news stories over a timeline from 2008 to 2020. See Figure 9 for the timeline and possible headlines generated for Scenario A; a complete description of the final headlines appears in Appendix G.

Timeline	Headlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008-Democratic President elected • 2009-War ends, soldiers come home • 2010-Go Green mandated by public officials • 2011-Changes to health care system benefits for all—it’s against the law to drive without car insurance • 2012-NCLB reauthorized with modifications • 2014-Public school funding finally resolved • 2015-Workforce development initiative; bachelors degrees required; \$\$ for college • 2016 neighborhood associations become change agents • 2017-Family is focus-parenting classes required; educating the whole family • 2020-all initiatives pay off—urban core soars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2009: “War Ends, Soldiers Come Home” • 2011: “Changes to Health Care System Benefits for All” • 2013: “P-16 Works: All Students Exceeding Standards Passed” • 2015: “Workforce Development: B.A. Required” • 2017: “Family is Focus: Parenting Classes Required” • 2020: “Urban Core Soars: Safe and Thriving for a Decade”

Figure 9: Timeline and Headlines for Scenario A

Step 5: Writing the Scenarios

Guidance from the Working Group on plot, characters, format, and storyline was combined by the scenario writers to spin a plausible story.

“Scenarios are stories. They are works of art, rather than scientific analyses. The reliability of (their content) is less important than the types of conversations and decisions they spark.”

--Arie de Geus, The Living Company

On May 14, 2008 the Working Group and scenario writers met to review and revise the drafts. In particular, they reflected on the degree to which each scenario met the criteria presented in Figure 10.

A scenario is effective if it is:

1. Plausible—it could happen
2. Logical—it makes sense
3. Challenging—it challenges our thinking about the future
4. Important and Relevant—it motivates action
5. Engaging—it sustains the interest of readers
6. Balanced—it balances each axis & endpoint
7. Captured with a Great Title—it sums it up

Figure 10: Seven Elements of Effective Scenarios

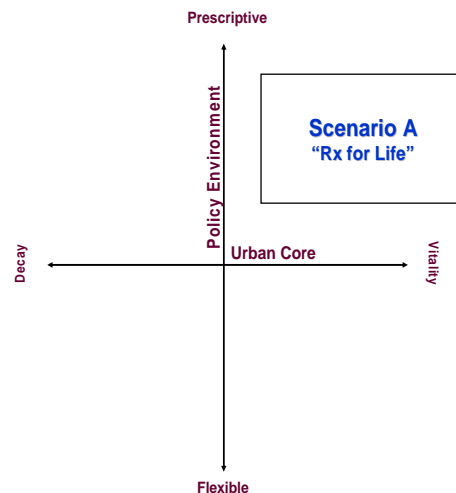
Based on feedback from the Working Group, McREL revised the scenarios to convey the essence of each in the clearest possible manner. A synopsis of each scenario follows. The complete scenarios, followed by an analysis of their implications, appear in Appendix A and B.

The World in 2020: An Overview of Four Possible Futures

Scenario A: Rx for Life

In this scenario, prescriptive policies bring about change in an efficient, cost-effective manner and provide a platform for the integrated support of education, community, and healthcare needs. All levels of government play a role in solving problems, and the public will to address numerous domestic challenges is strong.

In 2008, the foreclosure and housing crisis, as well as failed school privatization efforts, lead to the adoption of more standardized policies as leaders work to control corporate greed and corruption and



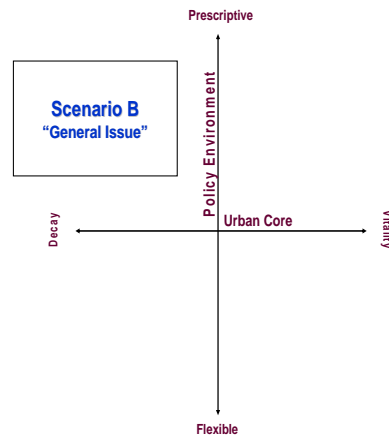
contain resources while optimizing the public good. In 2010, the Iraq war ends and leaders are able to focus more on education, health care, and the environment. Ohio’s economy also begins to rebound as new investments are made in renewable energy and other industries. As state coffers build, state leaders focus public resources on early childhood education, workforce development, and a fully aligned seamless P–20 education system.

New collaborations among numerous partners, within and outside of the urban core, provide universal health care and early childhood education, family-friendly policies in the workplace, and lifelong learning opportunities. The schools implement a program to engage parents more actively in their children’s education, which now includes a strong service learning component. Coordinated economic, workforce, and community development programs mitigate the adverse effects of poverty and provide growth opportunities. By 2020, the urban core is revitalized and local communities are thriving, anchored in large measure by innovative multi-generational community “hubs,” where citizens of all ages benefit from a coordinated, dynamic system of services.

The scenario depicts a podcast of an Ohio morning show featuring Justin Rivers, a member of the governor’s cabinet and an example of how the successful school and city programs begun in 2004 helped a young man, once in jeopardy of dropping out, become a visionary civic leader. Rivers recounts his story and describes the success of the multigenerational community hubs (called “The Hub”) as his mother, America, tunes in.

Scenario B: General Issue

In this scenario, the state’s inability to resolve its school funding system in a way that benefits urban districts combines with dire economic straights, environmental disasters, and a prolonged war in the Middle East to drain the urban core of its capacity to deliver a quality education. A suicide bombing on U.S. soil and several environmental disasters have the effect of diverting resources and attention away from education. At the same time, there is a sense of urgency across all states to become more economically competitive; graduating more students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields is viewed as a potentially cost-effective investment toward that end.



By 2011, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is reauthorized and states are offered a new, fully funded system of national standards, curriculum, assessment, and data tracking with a heavy focus on STEM, in place of the current hodgepodge of state standards and accountability systems. The money-saving features of the new program are irresistible to most states that face insurmountable bills in the areas of health care and anti-terrorism protection. Ohio adopts the national system, but the money saved is quickly absorbed by non-education priorities. With the school funding formula unchanged, urban schools suffer from declining enrollment, teacher

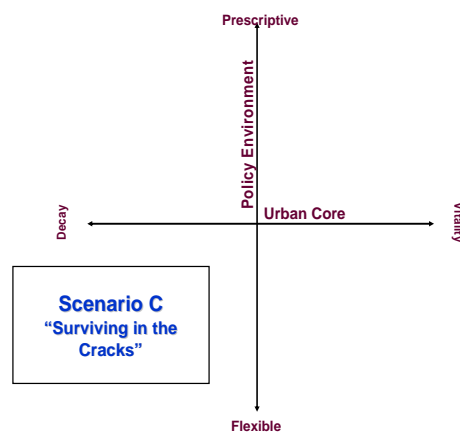
turnover, and lack of student achievement. Urban schools are the site of last resort for the poor and most vulnerable students.

As downward trends in the urban core continue, violence spreads, baby boomers retire, and urban districts are no longer able to recruit teachers. The federal government steps in, creating new teacher recruiting pipelines such as the General Issue (GI) Teacher program. This program deploys those soldiers still on active duty after they return home from the wars in Iraq and Iran. The GI Teachers have a dual role—to help advance mathematics and science teaching while also restoring peace and order in the schools and surrounding cities.

The story is told through the lens of two main characters in the spring of 2020—Dr. Brown, the district superintendent and Major Sergeant Joe Smith, a highly motivated GI Teacher deployed to Center City since 2017.

Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

In this scenario, the bulk of the urban core has decayed, and the majority of city dwellers languish in poverty with no jobs, absentee landlords, empty lots, crumbling schools, and few opportunities. Absent is the compelling national and state leadership or unity of purpose needed to bring about wide-scale solutions in school funding, early childhood education, or workforce development. Public resources bottom out, and policymakers are at a loss as to how to fix these seemingly intractable social problems.



Having tried and failed to improve urban education with prescriptive, high-stakes accountability measures, policymakers adopt a more laissez-faire approach, turning in desperation to alternative solutions once considered anathema within the public arena. In 2010, the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act expands federal support for student vouchers in urban areas, prompting numerous entities to compete in delivering key education services. Out of fiscal options, Ohio does the unthinkable five years later. In 2015, it becomes the first state to provide learning stipends (vouchers) directly to individual students. Now, with more alternatives available, individuals can select from a range of charter, private, and home schools as well as unique cooperatives, leaving the public schools as the choice of last resort.

Cities splinter into distinct neighborhoods characterized by a sense of isolation. Balkanized, people separate ideologically, politically, and socio-economically. Fighting against the ravages of VUCA¹, some communities turn inward, becoming more self-reliant and entrepreneurial in the

¹ VUCA is military shorthand terminology for “Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity,” a situation where “economic instability, lack of shared norms, and weakening infrastructures challenge urban communities to redefine sustainability.” Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, 2006–2016 *Drivers of Change*, www.kwfdn.org/map.

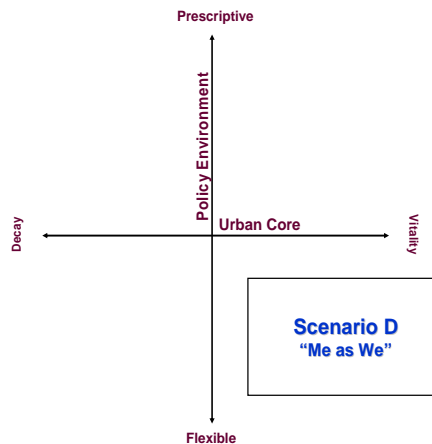
process. But these are the anomalies, the “survivors in the cracks,” in an otherwise bleak landscape of urban rubble, social alienation, and neglect.

This scenario unfolds from the perspective of high school student Daisy Rock and her family, friends, and teachers, as she delivers a commencement speech in the year 2020.

Scenario D: Me as We

In this scenario, the widespread availability of free WiFi (through a wireless cloud in cities) and other innovative technologies, reinforced by federal and state policies encouraging grassroots solutions, fuel local ingenuity and productivity. Community leaders, embracing a philosophy of enlightened self-interest, adopt an entrepreneurial, collaborative approach to local problem solving. They align public policies and private sector resources, making it possible for leaders from K–12 education, higher education, social services, the arts, and economic/workforce

development to join with business in addressing critical quality of life issues. Development impact fees, coupled with a new state school finance law, provide local communities with a more stable revenue source.



development to join with business in addressing critical quality of life issues. Development impact fees, coupled with a new state school finance law, provide local communities with a more stable revenue source.

At the same time, skyrocketing fuel costs prompt state and local leaders to develop more efficient public transportation systems and offer economic incentives to live and work in the inner cities. The education sector focuses more on teaching and learning, delivered 24/7 and through multiple venues. The traditional high school diploma has been replaced by a competency-based credentialing system. Education no longer occurs solely inside the classroom with an established curriculum; instead, it is a series of lifelong learning experiences, demonstrated through applied knowledge. Educational points of delivery are decentralized and technology permits a “cafeteria” learning plan, offering students of all ages myriad options. As a result, school districts no longer need all of their buildings, which are freed up for community uses, such as family learning centers.

Reenergized by their individual community efforts, urban education leaders statewide band together to benchmark successful practices and scale up innovation. In this dynamic environment, people flock back to the cities, increasing the fiscal, human, and civic capital available to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

This scenario is revealed from the perspective of Charlie Brush, who, in 2020, is conducting research for his high school senior thesis on the transformation of his home town, Center City.

Step 6: Identify Implications and Strategic Options

The final workshop on June 11–13, 2008, brought together the Leadership Council and the Working Group to identify strategies for transforming urban public education in Ohio. The group clarified the implications of each scenario and developed strategies the Ohio 8 should employ to be successful in any of these possible 2020 worlds. Using a SWOT analysis, participants identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for urban public education in Ohio if, in fact, any one of the envisioned scenarios became reality. For options, the group focused on this question: *If it was 2020, and this was the world in which you found yourself, what strategies would you need to pursue in order to be a high-demand and high-performing urban public education system?*

Step 7: Taking Action Today to Prepare for Tomorrow

The next step involved determining the best action steps that the Ohio 8 could take today in order to become better prepared for the world of tomorrow. Based on the strategic options identified, participants prioritized at least four strategies for each scenario.

The next section presents the implications, options and action steps developed for Scenario A: *R_x* for Life (see Appendix B for the analyses for each scenario).

Implications, Options, and Action Steps to Prepare for Scenario A: *R_x* for Life

Implications

A “hub mindset” epitomizes this scenario, in which Center City leaders—pursuing a coherent, collaborative approach to address local community needs—have created a vibrant, cradle-to-grave full service delivery model in the process.

In 2020, scenario protagonist Justin Rivers is a member of the governor’s cabinet. Justin oversees the Hubs, housed in modern, state-of-the-art buildings, which have emerged as important urban landmarks across Ohio. His life story also personifies the “turning point” of this scenario. Serving as a college intern in the mayor’s office a decade earlier, Justin used his own experience, as a potential high school dropout who successfully reclaimed his fate, to help Center City leaders design the more promising Hub option.

In this context, local leaders willingly transcend the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions, reaching out across the current array of public services, in order to design new, comprehensive solutions. They share the same vision, based on awareness that the sum of their aligned efforts is truly greater than the individual parts. Their willingness to embrace collective leadership enables Center City, bolstered by supportive state and federal policies, to meet four goals simultaneously: 1) *Equity*: consistently addressing the needs of all Center City citizens, 2) *Customer Convenience*: delivering multiple services within a common setting, 3) *Efficiency*: pooling finite resources, and 4) *Innovation*: leveraging existing programs to create new ones.

In this scenario, education leaders have seized the opportunity to join other community entities in forging a more compelling and viable future for Ohio’s urban districts. Common data systems that yield results in real time, as well as comprehensive assessment tools, accelerate their efforts. Working across the different sectors (e.g., health care, economic and workforce development, K–12 education, higher education, general local government and business) also guards against designing minimalist solutions, particularly as Center City becomes increasingly diverse socio-economically, racially, and generationally.

The converse situation is also true. If Center City educators had not accepted the leadership mantle, they would have run the risk in this scenario, with its vital urban core and prescriptive policy environment, of becoming complacent and settling for uniform programs with limited

expectations. Just as likely is the threat of becoming marginalized or isolated, losing the ability to wrap needed family and service learning around the delivery of lifelong learning.

Figure 11 provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that urban education systems in Ohio would have if they found themselves in the 2020 world of Scenario A: Rx for Life (see Appendix H for a full page image).

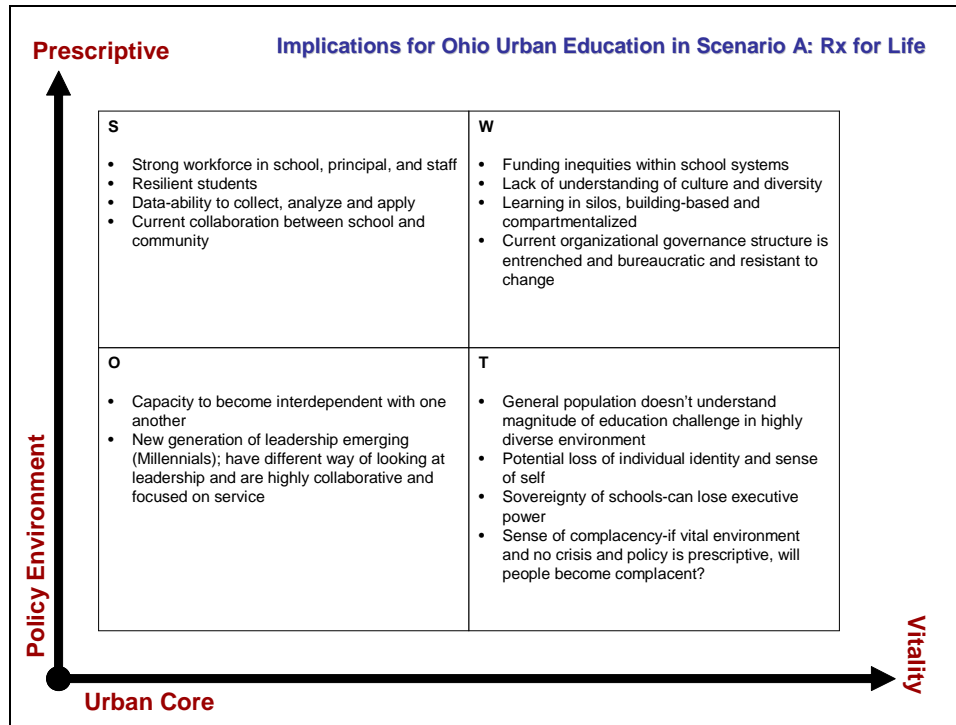


Figure 11: Implications for Ohio Urban Education in Scenario A: Rx for Life

Options

If Scenario A were to become Ohio’s “urban reality” by 2020, then the Ohio 8 should position itself in the following ways:

- Enhance member efforts to develop ongoing and effective partnership relationships with local counterparts, such as city and county governments, local post-secondary education institutions, civic organizations, and business leaders, to position education in perpetuity as the “hub” of a coordinated service delivery system.
- Champion the creation of “learning eco-systems” that engage parents and families with educators in the design and delivery of family-friendly education programs.
- Build broad-based support for individual learning plans that will identify and meet the needs of community residents longitudinally throughout life.
- Link the new green, “hub-type” facilities with Ohio’s ongoing economic transformation strategies.

- Position the Ohio 8 sites as urban prototypes for piloting innovative federal and state policies that reinforce the hub-based service delivery system.

A complete list of the strategic options developed for each scenario can be found in Appendix I.

Action Steps

If Scenario A in 2008 is “the preferred” or “anticipated” reality of the future, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following action steps today:

- Conduct research on other communities that have aligned delivery of social, economic, and education services as a strategy to accelerate successful local planning and implementation efforts across Ohio.
- Seek state support to pilot the Hub concept in a willing Ohio urban community.
- Map out existing community services and relationships: develop a sequenced alignment plan that incorporates early childhood, K–12, higher education, workforce development, and social service programs. Build on current organizational priorities and accountability systems in order to create interlocking missions, goals, operating procedures, and performance measures.
- Design digitally based comprehensive assessment tools for identifying, tracking, and evaluating the social, family, workforce, civic and educational needs of the entire community, from cradle to grave.
- Gain state support to pilot competency-based learning, which could eventually replace the current content-based assessment system.
- Concurrently, pilot the use of longitudinal student data bases, made available on a just-in-time basis to parents, teachers, and students.
- Develop a marketing and outreach plan to engage parents and community leaders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and extension of the Hub.

Robust Options

The Ohio 8 participants scanned the strategic options and action steps to identify the most salient themes that would help them address their focal issue: *How does urban education in Ohio need to transform in order to become a high-demand and high-performing system in 2020?* These themes led them to identify their “robust options,” also called “safe bets,” for developing a strategic action plan for the future.

The discussion of robust options revealed the critical importance of the Ohio 8 coalition *leading the parade* instead of being a part of the parade. This reflected the strong belief among the members of the scenario-planning team that the Ohio 8 should become more proactive and

strategic in its work, building on its existing capacities to prepare for the ever-unfolding 21st century world. This became the group's overarching theme for this project and, ultimately, the title of this final report. The robust options were combined with an analysis of the Ohio 8's goals for the scenario-planning effort to produce the following set of recommended actions. By implementing these recommendations, the Ohio 8 will be well-prepared to face any possible future.

Recommendations for the Ohio 8 Leadership Council

Recommendation #1: Use the scenarios and work products in this report to help the Ohio 8 Coalition achieve its vision, mission, and strategic priorities.

- a. **Align scenario planning recommendations with the Ohio 8’s existing strategic priorities**

Over the past year, the Ohio 8 Leadership Council has identified strategic priorities and developed a Work Plan to guide its efforts going forward. As a first step, the recommendations in this report should be aligned with the coalition’s existing priorities and any necessary adjustments to either the Work Plan or these recommendations should be made.

- b. **Translate the strategic options which appear in all four scenarios (robust options) into a concrete action plan that guides program implementation and operations.**

While the robust and strategic options developed during the scenario-planning workshop are a good first step, they do not, by themselves, represent a comprehensive strategic plan. A concrete action plan for implementing the recommendations that incorporates feedback from relevant stakeholders and identifies those accountable for results within specified time periods also helps to identify necessary short- and long-term investments for implementation.

- c. **Identify potential opportunities and barriers in the existing governance and funding system**

Without question, moving forward with the described “21st century agenda” will have multiple implications for governance as well as finance structures for schools and urban centers. Members of the scenario planning team acknowledged these implications and the need to adequately explore them. The Ohio 8 may want to consider ways to initiate these conversations among themselves and to include others.

Recommendation #2: Develop the organizational capacity to lead the parade.

- a. **Engage the communication staffs of each district as well as external communications experts in designing an outreach strategy**

A good first step would be to tap the expertise that exists within each of the 8 urban school districts to develop a more comprehensive communications plan aimed at three key audiences—each district’s local community, state education leaders, and the general public. The Ohio 8 could convene a meeting of the school district communications officers along with teacher associations’ communications representatives to review the strategic priorities and develop a draft communications plan. Consider including external public relations firms and community engagement specialists, as well. Successfully

pursuing all of the strategies needed to prepare for a challenging future between now and 2020 will require a broad base of support on the part of the public and elected officials. The Ohio 8 should create a comprehensive outreach plan reaching multiple stakeholders across the state. The goal of these communications efforts should be to build and create demand for a new vision for education in the 21st century where service learning is a vehicle for preparing students and the “Hub” is a primary delivery system that efficiently and effectively coordinates resources to achieve results.

b. Present results of scenario-planning process to and discuss final report with key leaders within each Ohio 8 school district.

Engaging members of the eight urban districts’ school boards and others in conversations about the future and relevant strategies to survive and thrive in any future is an important next step. The scenarios provide a unique way to convey an image of the future to any audience. Consider scheduling a formal time for the school boards to review the scenarios and their implications and options and to contribute their ideas on potential strategies for success within any scenario. Document the boards’ insights and incorporate their ideas into the Ohio 8’s final strategic plan.

c. Create formal structures among the Ohio 8 and other urban communities to continually share progress, promising practices, and long-term results.

While the Ohio 8 leaders bear the bulk of responsibility for the future of urban education in Ohio, the broader leadership community across the state will play an important role in all four scenarios. Consider publishing the scenarios in newspapers; posting them on Web sites, particularly in their DVD format; and inviting comment. Members of the scenario planning team might consider presenting the scenarios and the recommendations to the legislature; Chamber of Commerce; business, student, parent, and other civic organizations. Consider scheduling a series of community conversations across the state focused on the scenarios, their implications for the Ohio 8, and seek out community members’ recommended actions for the future. Document the insights of the community and incorporate key ideas into the Ohio 8 final strategic plan.

d. Establish ongoing mechanisms to monitor trends, communicate them, and analyze their implications for the Ohio 8.

Having articulated four possible futures through the scenarios, the Ohio 8 now should monitor which direction seems most likely to be unfolding. Consider establishing an ongoing “Futures Council” composed of members of the scenario Working Group and other district, state, and community stakeholders to take responsibility for monitoring trends and reporting on them over time. The Futures Council would meet regularly to analyze trend data and provide reports on which scenario appears prominent at certain points in time. The Council would also review the recommended strategies, revising as needed, and sharing their recommendations with the Ohio 8 leaders. Such a mechanism offers the Ohio 8 a way to build a “forward thinking” culture in which strategic options are employed proactively, not reactively.

Recommendation #3: Prioritize service learning within urban school districts and communities.

The power of service learning to bring relevance and “hands-on” application to the learning process, thereby motivating and strengthening students’ long-term commitment to improving their own lives and their community, was recognized as a key strategy necessary for success in any of the possible futures. Service learning is a teaching and learning methodology that intentionally connects authentic service learning projects with academic curriculum and standards. The Ohio 8 Leadership and Working Group members reached consensus on service learning as a priority strategy that would both help guard against decaying urban centers *and* develop the kinds of competencies necessary for students to be well-prepared for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century global world.

It is important to note here that the concept of service learning as a strategy for the Ohio 8 is more than a simple curricular offering. Indeed, the vision in this recommendation is that service learning would be intentionally tied to the long-term community development and economic revitalization goals of the city centers themselves. In addition, the service learning “culture” would be built into teacher preparation so that not only would the service be contributing to creating “vital” urban cores, but also to developing a commitment to service and to “giving back” to the community such that students, even after completing college, would return to the urban core and fill jobs in needed areas, such as teaching. The following steps are recommended for the Ohio 8 Coalition to advance service learning as a core strategy for preparing for the future:

- a. **Convene a service learning “design team” and a task force to explore how to integrate service learning throughout urban school districts.**

Research best practices and successful service learning programs. Assign a research assistant to gather existing information about service learning practice, programs, policies, and possibilities and to prepare a briefing report and presentation for all of the Ohio 8 members.

Assess the degree to which Ohio 8 member districts currently have service learning programs in place and identify their strengths and challenges.

Include analysis of existing service learning efforts in the briefing report and presentation.

- b. **Develop a plan to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders and build greater buy-in for service learning.**

Scaling up service learning programs across a district or several urban school districts requires considerable leadership and motivation on the part of existing staff. It will be important to develop a successful strategy to engage and motivate others to both recognize the value of service learning and to incorporate it into teaching and learning, school improvement, district reform, and community and economic development efforts.

Plan ahead to pilot the effort on a small scale and then scale up once a certain amount of success has been achieved.

Encourage the “bottom-up” growth of service learning by piloting the effort and then scaling up once a certain amount of success has been achieved.

- c. **Convene a statewide summit or “institute” on service learning to engage educators, leaders, members of the public.**

One way of generating interest, leadership, and new energy and resources to support a broad-scale service learning initiative is to convene a statewide summit on the topic. The Ohio 8 could partner with local foundations and other leaders to accomplish this and invite key leaders to the event. Planning for the event could include an intentional strategy to identify key advisory members and others who will work to follow up on recommendations and action steps generated during the summit.

Create a network of service learning leaders around the state where leaders meet regularly and continue to communicate through e-mail and blogs. This will create fertile ground for new ideas to surface.

- d. **Provide professional development to teachers, principals, and others on how to successfully implement service learning.**

Implementing service learning as a teaching and learning strategy requires considerable skill and coordination. The Ohio 8 should plan ahead to include service learning strategies in each district’s professional development plan. As a coalition, it may be possible to seek funding to support a statewide professional development plan.

Create a network of service learning leaders around the state where leaders meet regularly and continue to communicate with others through e-mail and blogs. This will create fertile ground for new ideas to surface.

- e. **Identify resources to support service learning at the local district and statewide level and provide incentives for districts to develop comprehensive service learning programs.**

Identify state and national partners who can provide support for an expanded service learning initiative across Ohio’s urban schools and communities.

Work with state legislatures, the department of education, and others to identify ways to motivate school districts to develop comprehensive service learning programs. One idea is to provide waivers to pilot districts doing service learning so that they are freed from other restrictions.

- f. **Implement structures to sustain and improve the implementation of service learning programs.**

Develop a statewide network of service-learning leaders who meet regularly and communicate with others through e-mail and blogs to create fertile ground for new ideas to surface.

Include the means to identify, benchmark, and share promising practices across service learning programs within Ohio and elsewhere.

Develop the capacity to use this information to advocate on behalf of service learning programs at the state and federal levels.

Recommendation #4: Develop “The Hub” concept as a full-service design for schools

The concept of The Hub was a prominent feature in Scenario A: Rx for Life. The Hub represented the notion of a full-service school or educational center that also would provide health and recreational services as a central coordinator for multi-generational learning and other community building activities. Additionally, the Hub would manage data and coordinate all manner of educational, health, and social services from one epi-center within the community. Actual learning activities, however, would take place out in the community.

a. Convene a task force or committee to explore the possibilities for creating a “Hub” pilot initiative.

Convene a collaborative team of education, policy, business, community, and other leaders to conduct research on full-service school designs and to incorporate the concepts developed during the scenario visioning process.

Develop a concept paper to capture the vision developed by the committee. To generate interest, disseminate the concept paper among key stakeholders, funders, and other leaders.

b. Partner with key organizations, such as the Aspen Institute, Knowledge Alliance, and others to support the design process and to elevate the conversation.

Identify key partners who can both support the design process and leverage resources to fund a pilot initiative for the Hub.

c. Build political support for launching a pilot initiative.

Engage a broader spectrum of the Ohio education and policy community in conversations about the concept. Record their responses and finalize the “design” based on their feedback.

Obtain political support for the design from the Ohio 8 Leadership Council, mayors, higher education, mental health organizations, business executives, and others

Identify an urban community that would be a good strategic location to launch a demonstration or pilot Hub project.

d. Implement, support, and evaluate the demonstration “Hub” project.

Focus on the demonstration effort as a laboratory from which to learn, but also to improve, over time.

Document successes and challenges and discuss them in a public forum

Convene leaders to discuss policy change implications necessary to replicate the Hub strategy across urban school districts in Ohio and nationwide.

Recommendation #5: Take the lead to help prepare Ohio urban education for 21st century teaching and learning

While many involved in the scenario planning effort understood what was meant by the term “21st century teaching and learning,” not all throughout the state nor within Ohio’s urban school districts do. Moving forward in the effort to fully prepare Ohio for 21st century teaching and learning will require that time is spent clearly defining what knowledge and skills students need to master to become prepared for this new world of the future.

a. Reach common agreement on what students should know and be able to do to master 21st century skills and competencies.

Convene focus groups from business, higher education, parents, research, and others to identify what “mastery” means in the 21st century.

b. Create and refine a system of competency-based assessment to monitor and report individual student progress.

Incorporate the use of digital lifelong learning plans for each student and eventually for every educator and community resident.

c. Develop support systems for 21st century skills.

Develop a comprehensive system of community supports that address non-academic barriers to learning for all students.

Develop a comprehensive system of recruitment, professional development (pre-service, in-service, job embedded) and retention to attract and keep high quality individuals as teachers.

d. Create a commission to launch a 21st century skills effort.

Take into account the individual student monitoring system from the very beginning, including life skills, ethics, problem-solving skills, tolerance, and address ways to assess

those on a large scale.

Mount an active campaign to bring in WiFi to Ohio's urban areas.

Advocate for digital individual learning plans for each student, longitudinal measures to identify and meet the learning needs of each student through a lifetime, and the comprehensive data bases needed to support such efforts.

Step 8: Monitoring Trends

As time evolves and events unfold, having a clear method to monitor developments toward a particular future will be critical to inform the Ohio 8 leaders when to act, and which strategies to employ. The group did not have time to discuss this or to identify trends or indicators that should be monitored for each scenario. The Ohio 8 Leadership Council members anticipate incorporating this element into their ongoing strategic planning work in the future. Some possible trends and events that could signal the development of each of the four scenarios are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Possible Indicators for Monitoring Trends in the Ohio 8 Scenarios

<p style="text-align: center;">General Issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing poverty in the urban core • Increasing violence in urban schools and cities • Inability to recruit and retain teachers • Proliferation of war in the middle east, complete with draining public dollars to support other priorities, not education • Continued migration to the suburbs and decline of urban population • Development of national programs like “Troops to Teachers” to support urban schools • National service programs and mentality 	<p style="text-align: center;">R_x for Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of urban centers with a focus on coordination of government services • National health care • Public transportation is free and widely available • Increased discussion on national standards but with a focus on competencies for the 21st century • Development of seamless P-16 system • Strong leadership focused on improving urban areas • Large investment in preschool education
<p style="text-align: center;">Surviving in the Cracks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State education funding remains the same • Ohio’s economy fails to recover • Increased diversity and sense of individuality • Lack of civic and cultural norms • Extreme localism (e.g., “balkanization”) in communities • Increasing skill and technological divide • Inability to address problems on a city-wide level 	<p style="text-align: center;">Me as We</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakthrough in WiFi cloud • Culture of grassroots collaboration and innovation • Culture of flexibility

Where are We Now? Where are We Headed?

As the workshop drew to a close, participants identified which quadrant they think is the current reality (yellow), the future in which they think urban public education in Ohio is heading (blue), their least preferred future (red), and their most preferred future (green). Results appear in Figure 12.

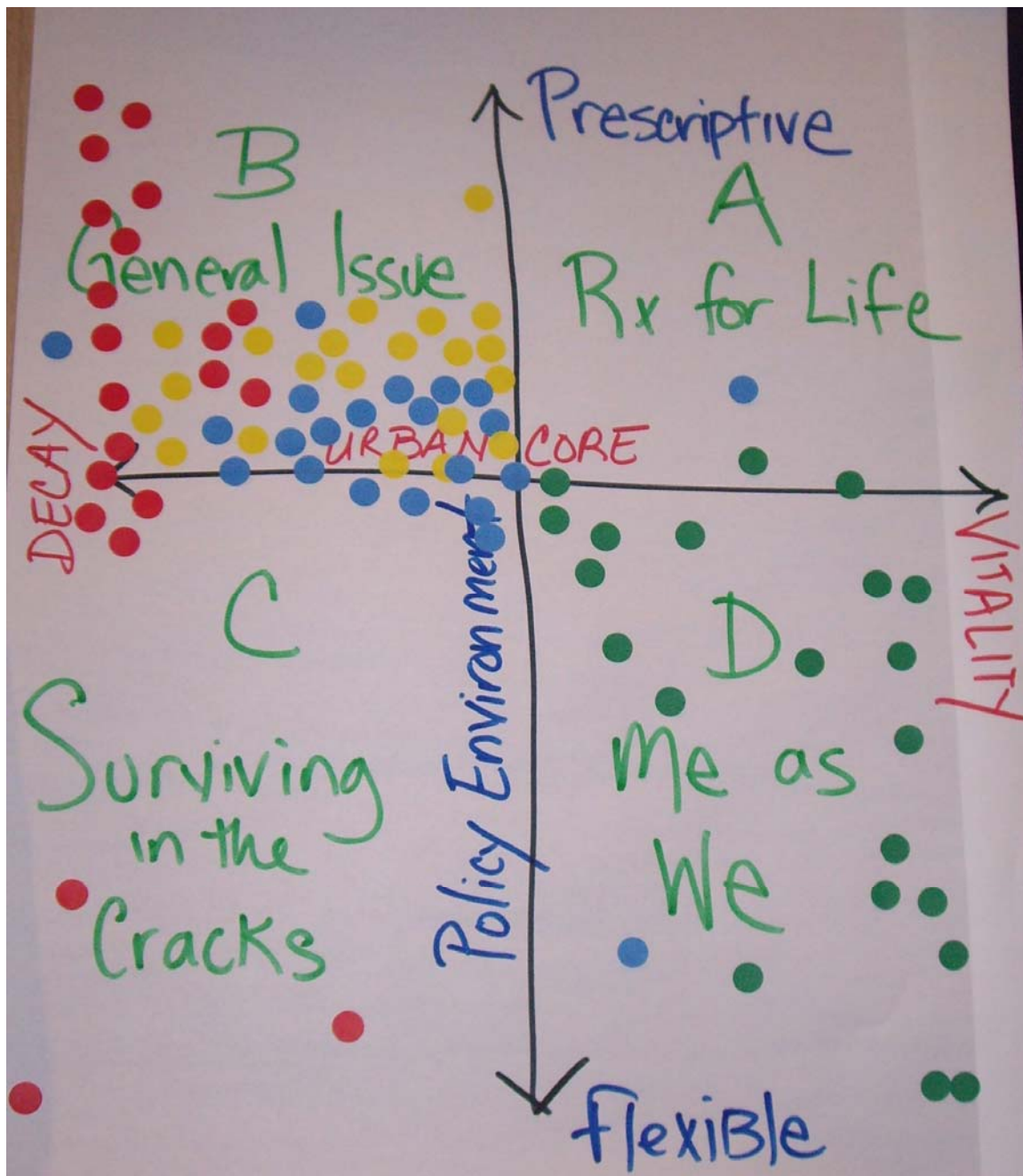


Figure 12: Results of “Where are We Now? Where are We Headed?” Activity

Conclusion

The scenario-planning process has helped participants anticipate four possible futures, identify relevant strategies to ensure the Ohio 8's success in any future, and position the Ohio 8 to become prepared for the future. By considering four possible responses to the focal issue—*How can urban public education in Ohio transform to become a high-demand and high-performing system in 2020*—the Ohio 8 Coalition has successfully begun to take the long view² in its strategic decision making and now has guidance on how to begin *leading the parade*. Careful implementation of robust and strategic options and monitoring of ongoing trends to ensure that options are well-aligned with the future context as it unfolds, will contribute to the Ohio 8's ongoing success.

² Schwartz, P. (1991). *The art of the long view: Preparing for an uncertain future*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Currency.

Appendix A: Transforming Urban Public Education in Ohio to Become a High-Demand and High-Performing System in 2020: Four Scenarios

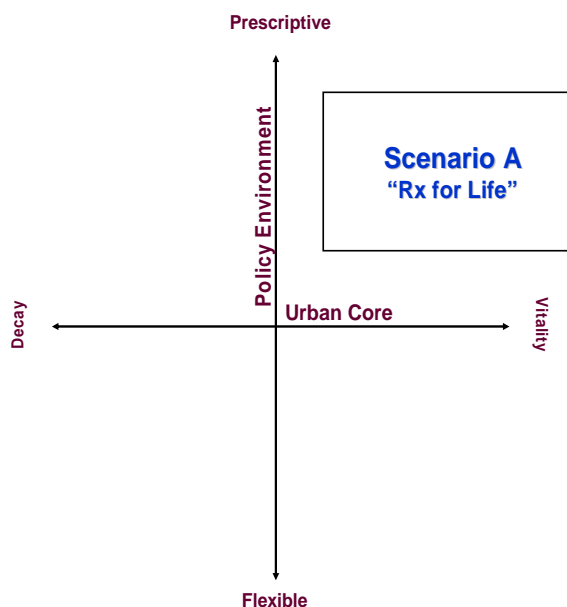
Abstract of Scenario A: “Rx for Life” (Vital Urban Core/Prescriptive Policy Environment)

In this scenario, prescriptive policies bring about change in an efficient, cost-effective manner and provide a platform for the integrated support of education, community, and healthcare needs. All levels of government play a role in solving problems, and the public will to address numerous domestic challenges is strong.

In 2008, the foreclosure and housing crisis, as well as failed school privatization efforts, lead to the adoption of more standardized policies as leaders work to control corporate greed and corruption and contain resources while optimizing the public good. In 2010, the Iraq war ends and leaders are able to focus more on education, health care, and the environment. Ohio’s economy also begins to rebound as new investments are made in renewable energy and other industries. As state coffers build, state leaders focus public resources on early childhood education, workforce development, and a fully-aligned seamless P-20 education system.

New collaborations among numerous partners, within and outside of the urban core, provide universal health care and early childhood education, family-friendly policies in the workplace, and lifelong learning opportunities. The schools implement a program to engage parents more actively in their children’s education, which now includes a strong service learning component. Coordinated economic, workforce, and community development programs mitigate the adverse effects of poverty and provide growth opportunities. By 2020, the urban core is revitalized and local communities are thriving, anchored in large measure by innovative multi-generational community “hubs,” where citizens of all ages benefit from a coordinated, dynamic system of services.

The scenario depicts a podcast of an Ohio morning show featuring Justin Rivers, a member of the governor’s cabinet and an example of how the successful school and city programs begun in 2004 helped a young man, once in jeopardy of dropping out, become a visionary civic leader. Justin



recounts his story and describes the success of the multigenerational community hubs (called “The Hub”) as his mother, America, tunes in.

Scenario A: R_x for Life

America Rivers awakes smiling ear-to-ear and turns on her WiFi iPod to download the day’s news. She can hardly wait to click on the daily podcast for the “*Ohio Success Stories Show*.” Today, they are interviewing her son, Justin. As America feeds her cat, Crawford, she also makes breakfast, readies for work, and pops on her new iViewer³ glasses to watch the show. Just as she loads the dishwasher, the podcast begins...

[Host of the Show, Blake Tanner]	<p>Good Morning, Ohio! Welcome to this edition of “<i>Ohio Success Stories!</i>” Today’s podcast is brought to you by <i>GreenFuels USA</i>.</p> <p>It is May 14, 2020, I’m Blake Tanner, and, today we have one of our state’s bright, visionary leaders with us, Justin Rivers. Justin, the youngest member of the governor’s cabinet, is the Executive Director of the Ohio Department of Community and Civic Health. Today is the third anniversary of the opening of “The Hub⁴,” Ohio’s innovative, multi-generational community centers for lifelong health and learning. They are called, simply, “The Hub” because that’s exactly what they are.</p> <p>Justin, it’s great to have you on our program today.</p>
[Justin Rivers]	Thank you, Blake. It’s great to be here.
[BT]	Justin, you have generated a lot of buzz around the state, especially in our eight largest urban areas, with these new health and learning hubs. Why do you think people are so excited about them?
[JR]	<p>I think the excitement reflects the sentiment that this is an idea whose time has come.</p> <p>With The Hub, we brought together several concepts, funding streams, and services that have been evolving for a long time under one roof and one network. After years of educating in silos—separating K-12 from higher education, education from the community, and even separating delivery of public services such as education and health care from one another—we finally figured out that we were spending twice as many resources and only impacting half of the people. And, our efforts are succeeding because we have informed, forward-thinking leadership at all levels.</p>

³ The iViewer, one of the resources provided by *City Health Care* services, is a set of dark glasses with high-tech personal earphones which syncs to the WiFi iPod and projects a holographic image in the distance, without restricting your vision. The iViewer, rolled out in 2018, has become wildly popular because it allows everyone to stay connected by watching programs and making video calls, while completing other tasks, thus facilitating multi-tasking.

⁴ “The Hub” is an example of an “Urban Learning Commons,” where “educational and learning resources are treated as critical common-pool resources (much like clean water, healthy oceans, and fertile land) necessary for sustainability in an innovation-driven economy.” Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education, 2006-2016*.

[BT]	What exactly is your vision for The Hub?
[JR]	<p>All of the existing hubs are modern, state-of-the-art buildings located in heavily populated urban communities and fully staffed with multiple service providers. They are, in a nutshell, one-stop-shops for both on-site and virtual P-20 education, community building and development, recreation, <i>and</i> health care—including psychiatric and social services. Think of them as the central axis for coordinating all of the data and accounts for each region so that service providers can collaborate with one another, <i>and</i> so that The Hub can communicate with satellite hubs serving neighborhoods within each region.</p> <p>So, let’s say you were to walk into The Hub with your son, Zach. He’s eight, right?</p>
[BT]	That’s right; he’s already eight years old.
[JR]	Zach’s learning agent ⁵ automatically knows what activities will best facilitate his learning. She will greet him in the lobby and schedule the activities, projects, and learning experiences best suited for his skill set. And for you, the recreation agent knows that you are looking for tennis partners, but also is aware that you have arthritis in your knee. The rec agent can put you in touch with other interested community members on a “tennis ladder,” as well as provide you with a knee brace. Because of the <i>Ensure Policy</i> , there is a highly advanced technology service that performs an “optional needs analysis” on all family members, enabling the service provider to identify health care, recreational needs, interests, or even augment existing skills.
[BT]	That’s amazing; how does it work? To have an analysis done or to receive some of the services, would we both have to be there for the day?
[JR]	Not necessarily. We don’t house all of the learning and recreation programs at The Hub, but we do coordinate it from there. For example, the best learning experience for your son to take part in—to master his competency level—may be off-site. It could be taking soil samples to ensure the quality of the soil in a community garden and computing the results over time. It could also be a collaborative project to design and build a bridge, utilizing core mathematics and physics concepts. For a project like that, we might coordinate it from one of the old classrooms near the Zanesville Bridge in Muskingum County. We do offer some classes and projects in The Hub, just not all of them. Some of our older students, with their parents’ permission, participate in international projects—like the water quality project in Honduras last summer. We call this a cognitive apprenticeship. ⁶ You might have heard about that on the news.
[BT]	I remember hearing about that. I know you had a lot of people of all ages involved in that project, but how have you managed to get so many urban students involved?
[JR]	We partner with neighborhood schools, collaborating on projects, analyzing student competency needs, and matching students with the right projects, wherever they might be. Fifty percent of the urban students in Ohio have taken advantage of the opportunities to experience multiple learning venues across their city—it doesn’t matter

⁵ “Learning Agents” are defined in the KnowledgeWorks Foundation *Map of Future Forces 2006-2016* as “new roles, processes, and relationships in the learning economy [which] spawn new career paths in education, [such as] content experts, learning coaches, network navigators, classroom managers, and cognitive specialists.”

⁶ The concept of “cognitive apprenticeships is presented in the KnowledgeWorks *Map of Future Forces* and refers to having the community become the classroom where thinking becomes visible and valuable skills are developed.

	which neighborhood they come from. And, the afterschool programs align with the respective K-12 programs, so students can keep up with their studies and earn credit. Currently, all of our schools provide consistent, professional development for K-12 districts. The schools have a partnership with employers to collect customer feedback on the performance and skills of high-school/college graduates in entry-level positions, and then teachers use that data to improve future curricula.
[BT]	I'll bet kids love meeting other kids from other parts of the city.
[JR]	They sure do.
[BT]	What about transportation? Isn't that a nightmare? How do students safely get from one place to the next?
[JR]	Fortunately, we've had <i>Zoomtrax</i> up and running statewide for the past five years, so public transportation is accessible, free, clean, and safe for everyone. We also offer the <i>iOgraph</i> ⁷ option for those who are homebound or too busy to travel.
[BT]	It's amazing how technology has advanced in just five years. So, participants can visit several Hubs on the same day, right? There's also the multi-generational aspects of these Hubs, which is really the cornerstone, isn't it?
All o[JR]	Yes to both of your questions. The community building across generations is unsurpassable with this model. Let's say you're an older person who has had a long career in the service industry, and you're interested in nanotechnology. We might teach you (along with high-school, college, and maybe even advanced middle-school students) to use an atomic force microscope—learning the fundamentals of nanotechnology together. The best part is that you learn both from and <i>with</i> each other.
[BT]	Quite impressive. I understand you have a lot of service learning projects, as well.
[JR]	Yes, many of the group projects encourage reciprocation with the local community, as well as on the national and international levels—like the one in Honduras. In my opinion, this individualized approach to learning creates and sustains a sense of vitality within these urban centers.
[BT]	Can you expand on that, Justin?
[JR]	In spite of the government programs in place, one of our cities still struggled with affordable housing and had a problem with homelessness. Two years ago, three of our learning agents collaborated with the city planner to create a year-long project for multi-age learners that designed and built affordable housing units for 100 homeless people in that city. The group offered job and psychological counseling to the homeless and tracked their success and ability to integrate into society. The learners studied the issues of poverty and homelessness from a sociological perspective, as well as urban planning, construction design, and financial management. They then selected a subject of interest to study in-depth and learned how to apply that knowledge to their everyday lives. It was a tremendous project that will continue to have an impact on that city.

⁷ The *iOgraph* is a new technology that allows virtual communication and participation by the holographic projection of your image (complete with motion, voice, etc.). To the naked eye, other participants see you as if you were actually in the same room, and likewise, you see and experience everything as if you were on location.

[BT]	<p>It sounds like The Hub is proving to be a valuable asset to cities, rural towns and to the state as a whole. I'm glad to know that my tax dollars are being spent in this innovative, yet efficient manner.</p> <p>Let's talk a bit more about the genesis of this concept. I understand that you have championed The Hub since you were in college.</p>
[JR]	<p>Actually, it grew out of my own experience growing up in Center City. I was a mediocre student in a school district where less than 55% of African-American boys graduated from high school. I graduated in 2008, thanks to the district's <i>Drop-In-Not-Out</i> program, but I doubted that I would ever be able to further my education. I had attended a <i>Black Coat</i> charter school, an alternative education program where diplomas were handed out, absent the appropriate oversight and without any evidence of mastery. So I graduated, but I lacked the knowledge and skills to pass a college entrance exam. You probably remember the media coverage of these scandals.</p> <p>At the same time, the automotive company laid off my mother and reduced her retirement benefit, leaving her struggling to get by. Luckily, I got a job working for the city in the Parks & Recreation Department. That's when I started to become interested in politics and in the world outside of my neighborhood. I clearly remember voting in my first presidential election in 2008. The outcome of that election was the turning point, I think, for me <i>and</i> our country.</p> <p>I worked with the Parks & Recreation until 2010, then enrolled in the AmeriCorps Program, which had undergone some changes and was targeting young people like me. That program gave me a new direction in life. I started college and enrolled in a multi-year internship with the Center City mayor's office, working on urban revitalization projects.</p> <p>When the economy began to improve, Center City tackled its problems one at a time. First, we initiated a universal pre-school program. Next, we created the data infrastructure for the new national universal health care system and assisted elder residents with their enrollment. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to better understand the needs of our elderly population as a result of working on that project. Lastly, we implemented in Center City a <i>GreenJobs Workforce Development Initiative</i> that the governor had initiated in 2009. By the time I graduated from college in 2014, I knew how all of these components worked together, and I understood how they could be improved by coordinating resources with services. After all, we are all one city, right?</p>
[BT]	<p>Yes, that's right. That was very forward-thinking of you.</p>
[JR]	<p>I don't know if it was forward thinking, but it seemed like common sense. The mayor supported my vision for Center City, and we devised a plan together. When he ran for governor in 2014, people were drawn to this vision, and he won. His campaign platform was, "<i>Look what we are able to accomplish for Center City. Why shouldn't every city benefit from this?</i>" So, we began working on the statewide plan for The Hub, and here we are.</p>

[BT]	<p>That is quite a success story, Justin. I can remember a time when people didn't like government interfering with private business or market-driven efforts. Many of the policies we now have are quite prescriptive in nature—counter to the independent, “just-do-it” nature of my generation, the <i>Gen-Xers</i>. Your <i>Millennial</i> generation seems more receptive to this “prescriptive” approach.⁸ Why do you think that is?</p>
[JR]	<p>That's a good question, Blake. I think there are several contributing factors, beginning with the consistency in policy that followed the 2008 presidential election. When the war finally ended in 2010, the federal government shifted its focus and resources to domestic priorities. At the same time, we faced two major crises in our nation: supporting health care needs of our aging population—many of whom, like my mother, could not afford to retire—and global competition. We needed to invest in the welfare of our people <i>and</i> in our communities. At the federal level, Congress and the president created the new national <i>Health Care Services Plan</i> and followed that with the reauthorization and transformation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act into the current <i>All Children Exceeding Standards (ACES) Act</i>. With the de-emphasis of state standardized tests and a greater focus on mastering lifelong learning skills, schools witnessed a 50 percent rise in literacy and 80 percent decline in drop-out rates. Students now demonstrate their competency through real-world, applied projects and get real-time feedback on their work to make improvements on the spot. Teachers—what we now call “learning agents”—work in teams, facilitate learning through projects, build a body of evidence of each student's mastery, and base instruction on each student's needs. As you and I both know, students are not all the same!</p> <p>Those years were spent establishing a new national direction and priority for human, community, and civic development, and re-establishing the United States as a respected world leader, especially in the educational arena. Policies were prescriptive because the uniformity provided the most efficient results on a broad scale—ensuring that all students were provided the same consistency and opportunities. We had finally found a way to join cost saving and equitable delivery of services in the same initiative. There was some pushback, especially from states where “local control” of education was a strong motivator for action or, in many cases, inaction. But eventually, dire economic realities pushed them to consider new solutions. The payoff has been great. Circling back to your question, Blake, I think that my generation saw the value of a strong role for government—so long as the focus was on results.</p> <p>Meanwhile, here in Ohio, I would say that our governor shares this philosophy. He is someone who, at one time, had the highest hopes for the “market” to provide government services. Then, like me, he saw too many instances where private industry, absent the appropriate oversight or controls, had had a detrimental affect on society. Whether it was pulling the retirement benefit rug out from underneath hard-working people, or the wide-spread corruption and scandal in the private educational management corporations, we both agreed that, ‘enough is enough.’ We chose to lead with the people's best interests in mind. And for us, that was a visionary role—to have</p>

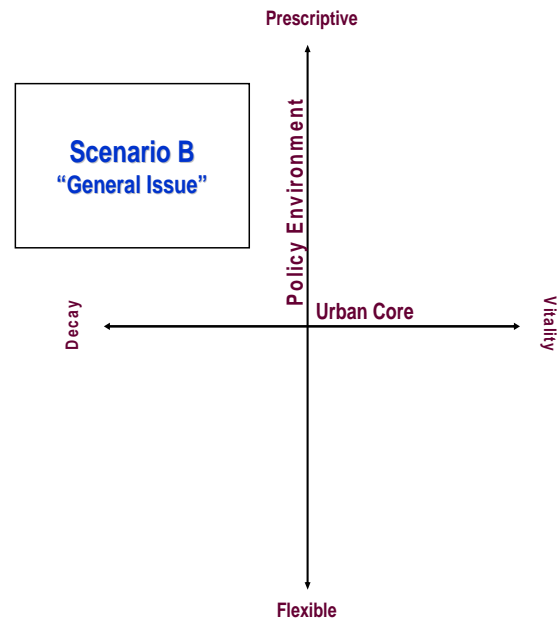
⁸ “Fragmenting Preferences” among the different generations is a concept highlighted in the KnowledgeWorks Foundation *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education, 2006-2016*

	government be the catalyst, often in partnership with our more enlightened business partners, for community and economic improvement. Thankfully, that is what has happened, and I am proud to have been a part of the transformation.
[BT]	I can see why the governor has chosen you to be a part of his cabinet, Justin. Your mother must be very proud of you.
[JR]	I think she is...in fact, I think she might be watching us on her iViewer.
[BT]	Thank you, Justin. That's all we have time for today. For more information about The Hub, log on to www.theHub.gov . Or, if you are interested in a virtual tour, sign up using your holographic avatar.

America Rivers walked to her morning yoga class at The Hub, listening to the conclusion of the 45-minute *Ohio Success Stories* podcast. “What a kid,” she thought. “What a country!” The quality of her life had improved dramatically in the last twelve years. Though she still had to work before retiring, she only worked part-time. The state paid for her health care, and the city offered flex-time for retired baby boomers that stayed in the workforce. She felt connected to her hometown, Center City, which had evolved into a vibrant community where more and more people of all ages were learning and working together on projects. “What a state! What a city!” she thought to herself, as she turned off her iViewer and dropped it into her bag.

Abstract of Scenario B: “General Issue” (Decaying Urban Core/Prescriptive Policy Environment)

In this scenario, the state’s inability to resolve its school funding system in a way that benefits urban districts combines with dire economic straights, environmental disasters, and a prolonged war in the Middle East to drain the urban core of its capacity to deliver a quality education. A suicide bombing on U.S. soil and several environmental disasters have the effect of diverting resources and attention away from education. At the same time, there is a sense of urgency across all states to become more economically competitive; graduating more students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields is viewed as a potentially cost-effective investment toward that end.



By 2011, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is reauthorized and states are offered a new, fully funded system of national standards, curriculum, assessment, and data tracking with a heavy focus on STEM, in place of the current hodgepodge of state standards and accountability systems. The money-saving features of the new program are irresistible to most states that face insurmountable bills in the areas of health care and anti-terrorism protection. Ohio adopts the national system, but the money saved is quickly absorbed by non-education priorities. With the school funding formula unchanged, urban schools suffer from declining enrollment, teacher turnover, and lack of student achievement. Urban schools are the site of last resort for the poor and most vulnerable students.

As downward trends in the urban core continue, violence spreads, baby boomers retire, and urban districts are no longer able to recruit teachers. The federal government steps in, creating new teacher recruiting pipelines such as the General Issue (G.I.) Teacher program. This program deploys those soldiers still on active duty after they return home from the wars in Iraq and Iran. The G.I. Teachers have a dual role—to help advance mathematics and science teaching while also restoring peace and order in the schools and surrounding cities.

The story is told through the lens of two main characters, in the spring of 2020—Dr. Brown, the district superintendent and Major Sergeant Joe Smith, a highly motivated G.I. Teacher deployed to Center City since 2017.

Scenario B: General Issue

Dr. Tammy Brown (“Tam”)

Dr. Tammy Brown, known among friends, colleagues, and students as “Tam,” is the highly respected superintendent of Center City Public Schools. A former teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent, Dr. Brown has led the district for the past ten years, and has “seen it all,” in the realm of urban public education. Yet, nothing could have prepared her for the last five years, when things really fell apart.

Tuesday, April 27, 2020

Dr. Tammy Brown removed the key from the ignition, exhausted after her three-hour drive back from Columbus, the state capital. She wanted only the comfort of being here, at home, after the frustrations of the day. “Tam,” as she was known by her students and staff, had spent the day trying to convince state legislators—again—that the inner city schools and communities were in such decay that a state of emergency should be declared and an emergency school finance restoration act passed. Once again, her arguments fell on deaf ears. Tam knew the popular definition of insanity was doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result, but she had learned throughout her career that persistence pays. These children, her children, and their futures, were worth the effort.

As Tam fell into bed, her mind raced. How did it get this bad? She dreaded another sleepless night spent rehashing in her mind the events of the last several years. Had she missed that one small opportunity to turn things around and make them better? Was there something she could have done for Center City? Many of her former colleagues had simply given up, left education altogether, or moved to the suburbs or out of state, where jobs and resources were more plentiful. But Tam still hoped that fixing urban public education was possible. She’d stay and fight on.

As the fatigue of the day grew heavier, a picture formed in her mind of what the district could look like. Sleep took over. Tam would be up by 5 a.m. to prep for the district’s all-staff meeting.

Major Sergeant (MSG) Joe Smith (“G.I. Joe”)

Major Sergeant (MSG) Joe Smith is a career officer in the U.S. Army. In 2017, after ten years fighting in the Iraq and Iran wars, MSG Smith was re-assigned to the General Issue (G.I.) Teacher program to help stabilize security, operations, and instructional programming in America’s most decayed urban school districts. He teaches mathematics and science at Center City High School and is grateful for the work, as job prospects everywhere are dismal, a result of outsourcing to India and China where high-tech labor is cheap and plentiful. Plus, he likes to work where he’s needed. Sometimes called “G.I. Joe” by his students and colleagues, he is increasingly troubled by the desperate situation he sees in Ohio’s urban centers.

Wednesday, April 28, 2020

Joe Smith was out of bed at the first sound of the alarm. 5:30 a.m., his usual wake-up time. It was the fourth Wednesday of the month, and that meant an early morning all-staff meeting. He quickly showered and headed out. He arrived at the high school parking lot in time to see Tam struggling to unload several boxes of materials from her car and offered to carry them inside. She gratefully handed them off. Once inside, he helped her set up the room for the meeting.

“Good morning, Dr. Brown. How did the meetings with the legislators go, yesterday?”

“Well, if it isn’t the incomparable, G.I. Joe! Good morning to you, sir. Oh, Joe,” she let out a heavy sigh, “You know, same old, same old. Of course, if I didn’t think there was a chance of a breakthrough someday, I wouldn’t even bother going anymore. We may only make inroads one legislator at a time, but eventually, we’ll have a majority who finally understand that they can’t keep draining resources away from our inner cities—essentially ghetto-izing them. Thank you for asking, Joe. It means a lot to have such a dedicated teacher like you who really cares and also sees the bigger picture.”

“Well, ma’am, I really do care. I mean, I know I’m not from here, having grown up in Nebraska, but in the three years that I’ve been here, I’ve really come to know and love this community, and I want to see it get back on its feet. I recognize, though, how impossible it is to meet the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets with our limited resources. We do our best, but something’s got to change. You know, I spent all those years serving in Iraq, helping to build their municipalities, their schools, their inner cities. It just steams me to think of the neglect that was taking place right here at home. Places like Center City used to be a source of pride for our nation, and now they’re nothin’ but decay and blight. They’ve turned into *Feral Cities!*⁹ and what we military-types call VUCA Communities.¹⁰ I was a little tee’d off when I got home to think that I had to serve some more—but when I realized the need in our inner-cities, I was glad that the federal government had an alternative program to join. I made the right decision. I’m proud to serve here, Ma’am.”

“Well, Joe,” said Tam, “We sure are glad to have you. Though I never in a million years would have thought I’d be grateful to have the military in our schools, you have really helped bring stability and safety to our high school.”

“Thank you, ma’am. That really means a lot to me. Uh, Dr. Brown, there is something I just don’t get, though. I mean, I know why the federal government had to cut its funding for education, with the trillion dollar war tab and new national health care program, but why didn’t the state of Ohio pick up the slack for urban schools? I thought the national curriculum and assessment program

⁹ *Feral Cities* “succumb to lawlessness as service infrastructures fail and social fabrics tear.: Source: See KnowledgeWorks Foundation, *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education 2006-2016*, www.kwfdn.org/map.

¹⁰ VUCA is military shorthand terminology for “Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity,” a situation where “economic instability, lack of shared norms, and weakening infrastructures challenge urban communities to redefine sustainability.” Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, 2006-2016 *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*.

meant that states no longer had to pay for that, so now they could focus their money directly on the schools and teachers.”

“Ahh...well, that is a really good question. We have a few minutes... why don't we go sit outside on the lawn and drink our coffee while we're waiting for the others to arrive, and I will try to explain it to you. They grabbed their coffee cups and two muffins and headed out to the weathered picnic table. Dr. Brown began,

“You know, Joe, I can barely remember a time when I wasn't fighting to fix urban schools. The problems can be traced at least as far back as the 1970s when Ohio first enacted a local property tax rollback. Back then, school districts that ran out of money would simply close their doors. Usually, if district closings became politically embarrassing, the legislature stepped in to authorize a state takeover. At best, this was a stopgap measure; districts still had to seek local voter approval of emergency levies and the state's involvement was no guarantee that education would improve. Even under “normal circumstances,” Ohio school districts were constantly headed to the ballot to seek voter support for just maintaining, let alone increasing, local millage rates.

Everyone agreed that Ohio's education funding formula was a mess. Having correctly identified the problem, however, no one was able to devise and enact a workable solution. Over the years, protracted court cases challenging Ohio's heavy reliance on the local property tax to fund education, interspersed with occasional ballot referenda, had failed to resolve the problem. Dilapidated school buildings, high teacher turnover, tattered textbooks, and low student achievement had always been most evident in urban and poor rural areas.

In 2008, Governor Ted Strickland and Lt. Governor Lee Fisher issued a report that painted a bleak picture of Ohio's future, one that, absent a dramatic turnover, was increasingly bereft of both “jobs and brains.” Their report contained the following statistics:¹¹

- On an average day, 45 more people left Ohio than moved into it. Since 2000, Ohio's population had grown less than 1 percent;
- The real wages of Ohio's workers continued to decline;
- Nearly 230,000 jobs were lost between 2001–2004;
- Ohio ranked 50th of 50 states in its ability to attract and hold onto well-educated young adults;
- The state also ranked dead last in small business ownership rates.

Except for Columbus, the state capitol, the eight largest urban communities were all experiencing severe population losses.¹²

That was 2008, the year of that remarkable presidential election. I wasn't alone in holding out hope that a new president would bring new energy to education, but unfortunately, that wasn't the case. As you know, the suicide bombing in the middle of the 2009 inaugural parade only hardened the administration's resolve to continue the Iraq war and expand it into Iran. On top of that,

¹¹ *Turnaround Ohio: The Strickland Vision to Move Ohio Forward*, 2008, page 37.

¹² Memorandum from Bill Wendling, April 15, 2008, citing articles from *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Toledo Blade*, and *Canton Repository/Associated Press*.

we've had tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, drought, and bio-diseases. I remember thinking Hurricane Katrina was the worst disaster of the nation, but Katrina looks like a walk in the park now. And, of course, the 2011 flood of the Ohio River devastated our communities.

China and India were beginning to dominate the global economy around that time, too, graduating more scientists and engineers than we could ever dream of. Naturally, jobs were outsourced there and our own kids, who weren't interested in math and science just ended up working at Wal-Mart. The pressure was on to get more U.S. students to study in the STEM fields just to remain competitive. Congress finally reauthorized the NCLB in 2011 by cutting a deal with states—there would be a new system of national standards, curriculum, and assessment, focused heavily on STEM, but that the federal government would pay for, along with the new national student data system, tied, of course, to the national security database. By that time, most governors, either formally or, as in the case of Ohio in 2008, informally assumed more direct control over education. Leaders really saw this centralization effort and national curriculum as a way to guarantee at least a basic level of language arts, mathematics and science education for every child.”

“So, Dr. Brown, if the feds were picking up the bill, wouldn't the state of Ohio have more money for education, since they no longer had to pay for things like state tests? Where did the state's money for education go?”

“Well, Joe, most of the money saved went to recovery funds from the flood and other priorities like higher education as part of the state's long-term economic development strategy. The remaining funds, in the form of per pupil dollars, flowed to the suburbs. Families either left the urban centers or sought out one of the charter schools sprouting up in the cities. We had to depend almost totally on federal intervention. What was left in the K-12 coffers, as has always been the case in Ohio, was raised locally—and so once again, only the suburban areas were able to benefit.”

“I'm afraid I have to ask the obvious: Exactly why did families leave the urban public schools?”

“The accountability system under the new NCLB was very prescriptive. Teachers were told what to teach and how to teach it. Schools and districts that achieved a 90 percent proficiency rating on the national assessment made AYP and, in exchange, earned more flexibility and autonomy. Those that didn't make AYP had to stick to the scripted program and choose from among five “teaching-in-a-box” approved programs. Of course, most suburban districts were able to make their AYP and soon, these schools began to go above and beyond the national curriculum, offering creative programs that families wanted. The harshest sanctions and interventions were reserved and targeted at the districts that didn't make AYP. As you've probably figured out, in most cases, those were the high-poverty urban districts like us.¹³

¹³ One of the concepts in the 2007 House-Labor HHS “discussion draft” of the NCLB reauthorization would assign different sanctions to schools that missed one AYP target than those missing two or more targets. Based on the current data, this would create a situation where more diverse urban districts, primarily, would receive the harshest of all sanctions. The Council of Great City Schools is on record opposing this approach.

Consequently, student enrollment in the urban core declined significantly. Families sought out charters, private schools, and neighborhood parochial schools, and took advantage of Ohio's expanded voucher system, which the General Assembly had extended for use in any community beginning in 2011. Some parents home schooled their children. By 2015, public education, especially in the inner-cities, had become welfare education and the choice of last resort.

Lawlessness, violence, and desperation spread throughout Center City. The housing market bottomed out, and jobs were nonexistent. Center City's workforce in 2015 was composed primarily of casino workers, prison guards, police officers, hospital aides, home health care workers who cared for the city's growing elderly and disabled vets, and black market traders. The dropout rate doubled. It was out of control.

That's when the feds finally recognized that neither the states nor the urban centers themselves could manage the situation, and they stepped in. First, they recruited high school dropouts into the armed forces, ensuring that they complete their degrees while serving. This had a large impact because Center City's dropouts now had a viable alternative to becoming career criminals, and it helped replenish the depleted armed forces. Then, they developed new programs to deploy a pipeline of teachers for the urban schools."

"So, that was the beginning of the G.I. Teacher program," said Joe. "But, I still don't understand why people who were out of work didn't become teachers."

"Well, all of this happened when Baby Boomers were retiring in large numbers. It was from about 2010 to 2015, I think. By 2015 almost all of the urban schools in Ohio were in corrective action. Besides, most teachers wanted freedom to teach the way they knew was best, and with all of the violence in our cities, new teachers stayed away. So, we began opening our doors to these programs—and I honestly don't know where we would be without them.

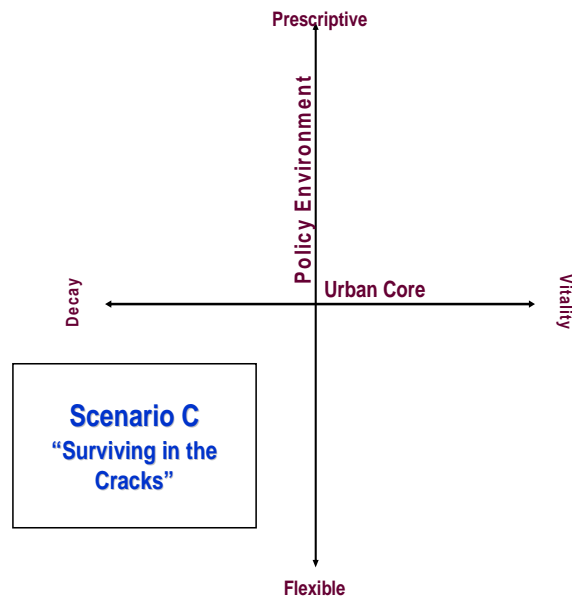
We are so grateful to have you here, Joe. Not only do you teach our kids the math and science they need, but you help keep us safe. Still, it's really a stop-gap measure. We can get by with "troops," like you, but it's not a long-term solution.

That's why I keep hauling myself down to the capitol year after year, because I want the state leaders in Columbus to wake up and realize that it is up to us! We can't just rely on the feds. And these local urban districts and communities can't do it alone. But if we pull together, with a vision and support from the state, I know we can bring this inner city back to what it once was. We need a good plan and a sustainable influx of resources to get us started. And we need to get our people involved in every step along the way. We need to build community."

Dr. Brown's voice rose as she became passionate about the future she envisioned for her students and for her city.

Abstract of Scenario C: “Surviving in the Cracks” (Decaying Urban Core/Flexible Policy Environment)

In this scenario, the bulk of the urban core has decayed and the majority of city dwellers languish in poverty with no jobs, absentee landlords, empty lots, crumbling schools, and few opportunities. Absent is the compelling national and state leadership or unity of purpose needed to bring about wide-scale solutions in school funding, early childhood education, or workforce development. Public resources bottom out and policymakers are at a loss as to how to fix these seemingly intractable social problems.



Having tried and failed to improve urban education with prescriptive, high-stakes accountability measures, policymakers adopt a more laissez-faire approach, turning in desperation to alternative solutions once considered anathema within the public arena. In 2010, the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act expands federal support for student vouchers in urban areas, prompting numerous entities to compete in delivering key education services. Out of fiscal options, Ohio does the unthinkable five years later. In 2015, it becomes the first state to provide learning stipends (vouchers) directly to individual students. Now, with more alternatives available, individuals can select from a range of charter, private and home schools as well as unique cooperatives, leaving the public schools as the choice of last resort.

Cities splinter into distinct neighborhoods characterized by a sense of isolation. Balkanized, people separate ideologically, politically, and socio-economically. Fighting against the ravages of VUCA¹⁴, some communities turn inward, becoming more self-reliant and entrepreneurial in the process. But these are the anomalies, the “survivors in the cracks,” in an otherwise bleak landscape of urban rubble, social alienation, and neglect.

This scenario unfolds from the perspective of high school student Daisy Rock and her family, friends, and teachers, as she delivers a commencement speech in the year 2020.

¹⁴ VUCA is military shorthand terminology for “Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity,” a situation where “economic instability, lack of shared norms, and weakening infrastructures challenge urban communities to redefine sustainability.” Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, 2006–2016 *Drivers of Change*, www.kwfdn.org/map.

Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

Daisy Rock cleared her throat and looked out at friendly faces. She had just been introduced as valedictorian, class of 2020, by her high school principal. She took a deep breath and began: “I’ve titled my commencement speech, *Understanding Our Past so We Can Prepare for Our Future*, because this day has been 12 years in the making.”

Looking backward to move ahead

“My family came to the Grant neighborhood in 2008,” Daisy recalled. “Grant, as you know, is one of 20 smaller communities within Center City. My dad had just lost his job, and to save money, we moved in with my grandmother. Times were really tough.”

Daisy described a community, five square miles in size, swept up in the throes of economic distress. For years, Ohio had suffered from a decline in its basic industries. The urban areas were especially hard hit, drained of both jobs and population. Mounting unemployment, crime, and housing foreclosures afflicted Center City, as did soaring health care costs. Manufacturing plants all over the state were shutting down, throwing hundreds of people out of work. The Grant neighborhood, unfortunately, was living out the consequences.

Lily Rock, Daisy’s mother, looked up at her daughter. She, too, flashed back to the day they had moved to Grant. Her husband, depressed by the lack of available work, disappeared six months later. Neither Lily nor their two daughters had seen or heard from him since. Fortunately, the neighborhood, united by hard times, had become their extended family.

Daisy continued. “I remember my first day of school. Walking there was terrifying for a 5-year-old. Buildings were boarded up, garbage was strewn everywhere, and all sorts of scary-looking people were hanging out on the streets. At first, my elementary school seemed more like a prison than a school. It was an imposing three-story brick structure built in 1922. Thankfully, my kindergarten teacher was so nice. Even more importantly, she pushed me to do well and was always there to see that I did. School became my safe haven.”

Daisy’s kindergarten teacher, now retired but herself an active member of the Grant neighborhood, smiled up at her former student. She remembered a shy little girl who, despite having to attend a school with dilapidated classrooms and few educational supplies, was perpetually inquisitive and eager to learn. Truth be told, Daisy had been one of her favorite pupils.

A step back into the past

It wasn’t as if state policymakers so long ago had intentionally turned their backs on Ohio’s school children. In 2007, the Governor, Ted Strickland, had introduced *Turnaround Ohio: The Power of Putting It All Together*, a comprehensive economic plan, which contained numerous education reforms.

At first, it looked as if the 127th General Assembly would enact many of the governor’s initiatives. But then political reality, exacerbated by a huge budget shortfall, interceded. Exciting new initiatives—expanded child care and early childhood programs, communitywide Internet access, dual enrollment programs between high schools and colleges, and a revamped state aid formula—were abandoned, victims of the fierce competition for funds resulting from a myriad of existing programs. By the end of the legislative session, *Turnaround Ohio* had itself been turned around.

When state government failed to come to the rescue, the fiscal burden shifted to Ohio's local communities. Dwindling state resources had put added pressure on the local property tax to make up the difference. Three times between 2008 and 2009, the Center City School District, of which the Grant neighborhood was a part, appealed to local voters. And three times the voters, overwhelmed by their own money problems, responded with a resounding "no."

In 2010, the federal government reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which had enormous consequences for urban areas like Central City. Overwhelmed by mounting health care and military costs, coupled with a weak economy, the President and Congress had little appetite, or resources, left over for enacting major education reforms. Instead, Congress decided to make the next generation of No Child Left Behind a model of local flexibility. The reauthorized education legislation maintained its strong focus on raising achievement, but this time, it gave states and local districts more latitude in determining how they reported student outcomes. Congress also expanded its support of urban school vouchers, despite previous heated battles, in the hopes of attracting additional education providers to the cities. Finally, the federal lawmakers channeled additional funds into local technology grants.

The economic situation in Ohio continued to worsen. As had been noted in the Strickland/Fisher *Turnaround Ohio* Plan, the state ranked last among all states in its ability to attract well-educated young adults. Ohio also had trouble enticing new businesses to incorporate within the state. Consequently, lost manufacturing jobs were not replaced with more environmentally viable "green jobs," as in other states. The effort to revamp the state school aid formula, based on increasing the sales tax, was defeated at the last minute in 2011, followed by defeat of a similar, citizen-led ballot initiative the next year.

In 2012, Wall Street lowered Ohio's bond rating, making it impossible for the state to borrow money. That same year, 15 major companies filed for bankruptcy or moved out of state. Meanwhile, Ohio also endured its share of highly publicized "perp walks" as several bank officials were indicted for alleged predatory lending practices.

Living conditions within Center City, as in most Ohio major metropolitan areas, mirrored the state's economic pathologies. Crime rates soared; basic maintenance of buildings, roads, and bridges was delayed; and abandoned housing and boarded up store fronts blighted more and more neighborhoods.

Daisy recounts the impact on her life

"I was in the sixth grade," said Daisy, "and remember being sent home early when the boiler burst. Even before that, we had doubled up our classes because half the building was no longer habitable."

Throughout Daisy's school years, the federal government offered little fiscal relief to schools, having turned its attention to universal health care, the lingering needs of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the federal deficit. The lack of new monies for education had a detrimental impact on collective bargaining agreements across Ohio. Unable to reconcile differences over the teacher salary schedule and working conditions in general, local teacher unions threatened to strike. Many public school teachers simply went to schools in the city's (safer) borders, where dozens of alternative schools had sprung up, due to the availability of federal urban voucher funds.

The turning point

Politically intimidated by prior failed efforts to raise taxes, the two gubernatorial candidates pursued radically different education improvement strategies in 2014. One candidate strongly favored minimalist government, providing basic, one-size-fits-all services for everyone. In contrast, his opponent, and the eventual victor, emphasized innovation. Her plan, *Flexibility for Results: New Approaches for New Solutions*, was based on a novel four point agenda: 1) focus state government expertise on aligning public services and helping local communities to do the same; 2) provide opportunities for business, university, and foundation leaders to partner with local communities in coming up with innovative solutions; 3) accelerate, through open source technology, the sharing of successful practices; and 4) use the results of successful innovation to deregulate state policies. The new state plan offered enterprising communities the opportunity to pursue creative solutions despite the dismal circumstances surrounding them.

Two years earlier, following defeat of the statewide education sales tax referendum, all of Ohio's districts had filed a class action suit in state court challenging the constitutionality of the state funding formula on both adequacy and equity grounds. The districts eagerly awaited the decision of the Ohio Supreme Court which, early in 2015, ruled in their favor.

State leaders had reached a political tipping point: Ohio had hit rock bottom. Front page headlines from the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* described the situation in dire terms: "Born out of desperation: Ohio at a crossroads." Clearly, "business as usual" was no longer a viable option.

With nowhere else to turn, Republicans and Democrats joined forces. Ohio then became the first state to completely "voucher-ize" its state funding formula, providing each child with an individual learning stipend. Ohio lawmakers also supported the new governor's *Flexibility for Results* plan. Together, they appealed to Ohio's business leaders, think tanks, and leading universities to volunteer their expertise, working with government leaders, to design new solutions.

Grant seizes the opportunity

Grant, unlike other neighborhoods within Center City, had one important factor working in its favor: a strong tradition of community leaders pulling together, particularly in times of crisis. Never had they faced a greater crisis. Increasingly walled off, both physically and emotionally, Grant residents turned to each other for support and to craft a solution. "Self-reliance became our new neighborhood mantra," Daisy reminded everyone. "We began to take matters into our own hands."¹⁵

The first step was to build on successful existing practices. Residents tasked community leaders with contacting other Ohio communities, including the STRIVE programs from the greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area and Stark County, to learn more about how to align community goals and initiatives. Community leaders also took advantage of the new state initiative, inviting a team of state experts to help Grant align its existing local education, workforce development, and social service programs. "It was during these hard times that I found my role models," said Daisy. "I learned so much by watching the people of our small community come together with a united vision of making our schools and lives better for everyone in Grant."

¹⁵ These actions are an example of "Smart Mobbing," defined in the KnowledgeWorks Foundation map as an "increase in (the) skills of local businesses, health practitioners, parents, educators, and activists to form ad hoc groups to break the rules and catalyze change."

The Grant neighborhood schools then petitioned the Center City School District for a local waiver to pilot the use of individual learning plans for every student so they could assess individual progress over time. At the same time, Grant community leaders were forging new alliances with local unions, businesses, higher education, and faith-based organizations. They also reached out to atypical partners—charter schools, home schoolers, and sectarian schools—to put aside their differences in order to share technology and promising practices. In the ultimate irony, pooling the use of existing facilities enabled private sector providers to secure additional funds from the federal urban school voucher program. As a result, the collaborative use of facilities enabled Grant, unlike other Center City neighborhoods, to share space in creating a “dotted line, cradle-to-grave” system of services, based on cobbling together the combined support from neighborhood early childhood and adult centers, social service clinics, training centers, hospitals, post-secondary institutions, libraries, and the faith-based community.

A native son weighs in

Listening to Daisy’s description of those days, Jake Hayes recalled when he first decided that it was time “to give back.” The successful CEO of Dot-Com, Inc. and a self-made millionaire, Hayes had grown up in the Grant Neighborhood during the 1970s and 1980s, the beneficiary of a good public education. It pained him that his boyhood community had fallen on such hard times.

In 2016, the federal government finally weighed in by providing a flexible economic stimulus package to the urban areas. Businesses that agreed to relocate within federally defined depressed areas would get a break on their federal corporate income taxes. The federal initiative gave Hayes the means to recruit several of his buddies from the high tech world to relocate to the Grant neighborhood. Partnering with community leaders, the new business partners leveraged their support by helping Grant leaders secure a sizeable grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which brought WiFi to the neighborhood. A federal technology grant then provided the needed professional development funds to Grant’s teachers and administrators.

Flush with these one-time resources, Grant created a novel communitywide co-mentoring program with students mentoring older teachers and parents on the use of technology, and individuals working together across different institutions, with everyone pooling their individual expertise for the greater good. Jake Hayes had also requested a mentor, so that he could truly understand the needs of the community from the perspective of those who mattered most—its students.

By good fortune, Daisy was assigned as Hayes’s mentor. Together, they shared a breakthrough moment: that, despite the overwhelming poverty, nearly all Grant neighborhood kids enjoyed access to a cell phone. Consequently, Jake and Daisy formed what they called “The Grant Neighborhood Cell Phone Brigade.” They recruited leading business and university experts to design a communitywide communications strategy for parents, teachers, administrators, students, and community leaders based on cutting-edge cell phone applications. And they used the cell phones to activate the individualized learning plans for every student, which enabled teachers, parents, and most importantly students themselves, to assess their progress on a daily basis.

The irony was not lost on Hayes. Emerging technologies, such as gated communities, electronic surveillance and security devices, were being used by his Grant partners to pull together inwardly, sheltering themselves from the increasingly dangerous environment that engulfed them. At the same time, technological advancements had made it possible, unlike most of Center City, for them to reach out, creating a portal to the entire world.

Ohio's education leaders shared Grant's innovative neighborhood engagement model with comparable small communities both within Center City and across the state. "I remember being part of a statewide urban advocacy group invited to testify before a joint session of the Ohio House and Senate," Daisy recalled. "I still can't believe that I was one of the students invited to testify before the Legislature," she proudly recounted. "It was wonderful to be able to represent Grant in relating all that we had accomplished." Their efforts resulted in enactment of model legislation in 2018.

Daisy concludes her commencement speech

"Each of us," Daisy observed, "can point to individuals who have made a huge difference in our lives. Some special people in my life are my mother, big sister, kindergarten teacher, high school principal, and co-mentor Jake Hayes. They, and everyone else in this room, can be immensely proud of the small, but enduring community that we have created together." Daisy paused, smiled, and closed her speech: "We are like flowers that, despite the rubble all around us, search out the light. We can and do survive through the cracks."

Sitting in the audience, Lily Rock took pride in her daughter's accomplishments. But she also knew how lucky Daisy was to have grown up in Grant. It was the same thought that crossed the mind of Daisy's cousin, Jamal "Stoney" Rock, seated next to her. Stoney was from the neighboring Harding community, a mere seven miles away if measured by distance, but worlds apart from Grant in reality.¹⁶

Harding was the opposite of Grant and, unfortunately, more representative of the rest of Center City. Everything that had benefited Daisy—a strong nuclear family, a teacher who had taken a special interest in her early on, collaborative community leaders, the willingness to pull together to try to invent new solutions, and the unique intervention of a business partner—had been missing from Stoney's world. He had not made good choices, even with the student learning stipend, mainly because there were no good options in Harding from which to choose. Thus, while Daisy was on her way to The Ohio State University in the fall with a full scholarship, Stoney, who had dropped out of school, had no idea where his own future was headed.

As the commencement exercise ended, Daisy's high school principal joined in the celebration. At the same time, he could not help but think to himself, "Grant has done an unbelievable job of preparing its young people to enter the world. Yet, there is so much to do beyond our small community. Because of the encroaching urban decay that surrounds us," he sighed, "most of our outstanding young people will be forced to leave the area in order to pursue their hopes and dreams."

The paradox was bittersweet.

¹⁶ The Grant neighborhood is an example of a *Social City*, which "places a premium on connectedness and stability" and "where participatory democracy thrives." In contrast, Daisy's cousin, Stoney, resides in Harding, a *Feral City*, which has "succumbed to lawlessness as service infrastructures fail and social fabrics tear," illustrative of what has become of most of Center City in this scenario. Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education, 2006-2016*.

Abstract of Scenario D: “Me as We” (Vital Urban Core/Flexible Policy Environment)

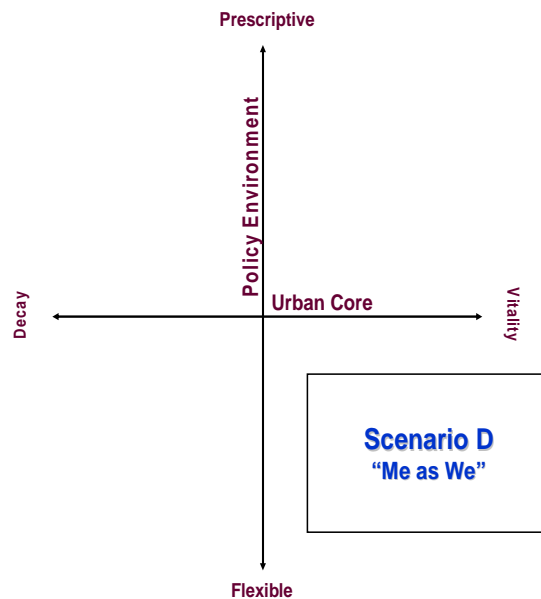
In this scenario, the widespread availability of free WiFi (through a wireless cloud in cities) and other innovative technologies, reinforced by federal and state policies encouraging grassroots solutions, fuel local ingenuity and productivity. Community leaders, embracing a philosophy of enlightened self-interest, adopt an entrepreneurial, collaborative approach to local problem solving. They align public policies and private sector resources, making it possible for leaders from K-12 education, higher education, social services, the arts, and economic/workforce development

to join with business in addressing critical quality of life issues. Development impact fees, coupled with a new state school finance law, provide local communities with a more stable revenue source.

At the same time, skyrocketing fuel costs prompt state and local leaders to develop more efficient public transportation systems and offer economic incentives to live and work in the inner cities. The education sector focuses more on teaching and learning, delivered 24/7 and through multiple venues. The traditional high school diploma has been replaced by a competency-based credentialing system. Education no longer occurs solely inside the classroom with an established curriculum; instead, it is a series of lifelong learning experiences, demonstrated through applied knowledge. Educational points of delivery are decentralized and technology permits a “cafeteria” learning plan, offering students of all ages myriad options. As a result, school districts no longer need all of their buildings, which are freed up for community uses, such as family learning centers.

Reenergized by their individual community efforts, urban education leaders statewide band together to benchmark successful practices and scale up innovation. In this dynamic environment, people flock back to the cities, increasing the fiscal, human, and civic capital available to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

This scenario is revealed from the perspective of Charlie Brush, who, in 2020, is conducting research for his high school senior thesis on the transformation of his home town, Center City.



Scenario D: Me as We

Center City, Ohio
April 14, 2020
9:00 a.m.

Charlie Brush was feeling the pressure. To fulfill his high school senior thesis requirement, he was tracing the story of how Center City, his hometown, had emerged as a national model of community vitality. The turn-around was grounded in a series of technological innovations, accomplished through public and private sector collaboration.

Charlie's Uncle Mickey, Michael Steven Graham, a retired political science professor, had served as domestic policy advisor to the President of the United States from 2009–12. Graham had enjoyed a front row seat to the political action in Washington, so Charlie was eager to capture his uncle's thoughts about those years when Center City first began to change.

Uncle Mickey now spent half of each year living in Florida. Because Charlie had procrastinated in writing his thesis, his uncle was already down South without access to a Web cam. It's my own fault, thought Charlie. Now I've got to resort to using outdated technology – ugh – like e-mail. At least, his uncle was on the Internet!

West Palm Beach, FL
April 14, 2020
11:00 a.m.

Michael Graham came in from his daily walk on the beach and decided to check his e-mail. He was both surprised and pleased to hear from his favorite nephew, Charlie.

To:MSGraham@verizon.net
From: Brushfire@CenterCity.rr.com
Subject: How Center City got to be the way it is

Hi Uncle Mickey,

I hope you are enjoying sunny Florida! Everything is fine here. I'm writing my senior thesis on the transformation of Center City, beginning 12 years ago when you worked for the president. Here's what I need to know from someone, like you, who was there: what prompted all of the changes?

Best wishes,
Charlie

P.S. Please say "hi" to Aunt Helen.

April 14, 2020
Noon

To: Brushfire@CenterCity.rr.com
From: MSGraham@verizon.net
Subject: Here's your information

Dear Charlie,

It's so good to hear from you! When are you and your family coming to visit?

Knowing you as well as I do, you've probably waited until the last minute (it's in our family DNA) to write your senior thesis, so to answer your question right away, here's how everything began:

The 2008 presidential campaign was the turning point for Center City and, in my opinion, for the country. You probably don't remember, Charlie—you were only six at the time—that our nation, weary of the protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic recession at home, hungered for change. Most people also had had their fill of partisan and ideological conflicts.

As the first order of business, the new president and Congress ended the war in Iraq, beginning with an 18-month withdrawal of U.S. troops. Congress then turned its attention to solving the multitude of problems closer to home. First up, was what to do about education reform policy and the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Many groups had real problems implementing NCLB, particularly the method by which it held schools accountable for raising student achievement. Communities like Center City felt that the law failed to fully support their efforts and punished schools despite the incremental gains they had made with individual students.

The new administration had pitched a big tent that attracted a collection of disparate, and sometimes contentious, education constituencies. The president had selected a well-respected, large city school superintendent as his new secretary of education. Urban school districts nationwide were encouraged by this appointee, because she had earned a reputation as an innovative thinker and doer.

In 2010, the Internet, in a figurative sense, rode to the rescue. Instead of trying to repair NCLB, the Administration “started over,” by inviting states and communities from around the country to engage in an open source discussion to define—beyond the current mishmash of content standards and workforce skills—what lifelong learning really looked like for the 21st century. Remember how Wikipedia got started? It was similar to that. The outcome of the dialogue produced a set of “lifelong learning competencies.”

The Administration then invited states and communities to determine for themselves how best to insure that all students achieve the competencies needed to become lifelong learners. In the spirit of local flexibility, the federal government set only two ground rules: 1) Communities must provide every student with an individual learning plan in digital form and 2) They must involve the entire community, including education entities, the private sector, the non-profit sector, parents, community groups, and students like you, Charlie, in the discussions.

Instead of trying to mandate accountability in federal law based on 50 different state definitions (i.e., Adequate Yearly Progress a la NCLB) the administration provided incentives to spur local communitywide innovation. The resulting Local Grassroots Solutions (LGS) package contained the following elements: 1) Funds to provide for universal WiFi so that communities nationwide could host small “d” democratic discussions to identify and resolve local challenges; 2) State/local planning grants to fund communitywide service delivery alignment across the P-20 education, workforce training, social services, and arts sectors; 3) Technical assistance challenge grants to leverage support to local communities from teams of state government, private sector, and non-profit organization experts; 4) Incentive funds to collaborate with states in developing uniform data systems; and 5) A massive infusion of federal funding to support research on and the dissemination of local innovative practices nationwide.

Congress enacted the new education package with rare alacrity by the end of 2009. Ohio’s leaders, led by the Governor and General Assembly, quickly recruited expert public/private sector teams to assist local implementation. Then Ohio’s leaders serendipitously created a national model of innovation by offering to reassess, amend, or remove any state policies that impeded successful implementation.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the President and Congressional leaders embarked on a “new solutions” campaign to enlist broad-based support and active participation from the American public. I still chuckle when I think of this, Charlie, but it’s typical of the administration’s efforts. Do you remember Millennial Girl from the presidential campaign? She was on You-Tube. Anyway, the administration selected her as the face of the Digital Natives for LGS. Her mission: recruit active participation from teens and twenty-somethings.

Well, Charlie, this should give you the info that you need. Thanks for the chance to revisit such an exciting time! Good luck with your thesis. Please don’t forget to save me a copy.

Uncle Mickey

P.S. Your Aunt Helen and I can’t wait to see you at your graduation in June!

Charlie was grateful that his Uncle’s memory was so good. His next step was to learn more about what Center City actually did in 2010 and beyond in taking advantage of the grassroots opportunity that the federal government had provided. For starters, he turned to his friends on FaceSpace.¹⁸

¹⁷ This concept is known as “Distributed Innovation.” For additional information, see: KnowledgeWorks Foundation, *2006–2016 Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*, www.kwfdn.org/map.

¹⁸ In 2016, Facebook and MySpace merged to create FaceSpace, owned by Google.

The FaceSpace Blog
Thoughts on Center City
By Charlie Brush
Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 9 PM

Yo dudes and dudettes,

I'm writing my senior thesis on how our awesome city came to be that way and thought that you, the all-knowing and ever-present friends of the wonderful me, could help. Sooooo, here are my questions:

1. When the federal government "WiFi-ed" us, who got the ball rolling?
2. What was done to align local programs and services?
3. How specifically did Local Grassroots Solutions impact education in Center City?
4. What are some of our most stellar programs, and how did you participate?
5. What's Millennial Girl really like, and does she like younger men? - PS - just kidding on the last point; PPS - not really kidding, if you know her!

Let her rip - Over/out,
The Brushman

Comment (posted April 16, 1:10 a.m.)

Charlie,

I was up late last night, helping my older brother file his income taxes electronically. What a mess! Since I was too wired to sleep, I put in some FaceSpace time and ran across your All Points Bulletin.

As you know, my dad, Thomas Bachman, was Center City's mayor in 2010. He thought the new federal and state grassroots-friendly initiatives were the perfect chance to forge a local coalition of African American and Hispanic community leaders; Baby Boomers who had been waiting 40 years to reengage locally in transformational change efforts; Millennials, tech-savvy young people who wanted to help government solve problems; and all others who simply yearned to help define the future.

As a first step, my dad sponsored a contest to name our local WiFi initiative, which also provided participants with \$100 laptops. The campaign was a great way to publicize the issue and get people involved. By the way, the winning name, suggested by a fifth grader, was "Me as We."

I remember how jazzed my dad was by all of the energy created around the effort. (The positive publicity didn't hurt his local reputation either!) But more importantly, there were some awesome discussions with state and other local leaders. My dad's office would post a specific public policy issue over the Internet, with instructions on how people could respond. He'd get all kinds of suggestions. Teams of employees and community volunteers would sort through them and post

additional questions online. Once his office made a decision, it would post its actions and recognize everyone who had contributed. The discussions were also a great employee recruitment venue, identifying prospective workers and partners. The coolest part was that someone could raise one interesting idea, and 10 new ones followed.

WiFi also helped enhance state/local relationships. I can think of at least one example. In 2009-10, Ohio's Governor miraculously got the Legislature to enact a new school funding formula. The reform package contained incentive grants for local communities willing to collaborate in providing public services to their residents. My dad, along with Dr. Campbell, the school superintendent, hosted an open source discussion with the other seven large urban districts. Together, they identified ways to save money on food services, joint purchasing, and transportation. It worked so well that in 2012, the eight urban communities formalized their collaboration, calling it "WiFi: Why Not?" In 2016, the new Governor and Legislature sponsored legislation creating eight regional offices of education innovation that would inform state policymakers of emerging needs and help them work on the solutions.

Well, that's it, Brushman—besides, I need to crash. Hope this helps (:

Your buddy,

Eric

PS Millennial Girl did come to visit Center City in 2010. She was way cool, but I heard she got married and now has three kids - ha! ha!

Comment (posted April 16, 9:55 a.m.)

Hi Charlie,

I saw your SOS. As you know, I was a teacher in the school system in 2010. The bottom line is that the changes were revolutionary! Prior to the federal initiative, the public, private, charter, and voucher schools, not to mention the home schoolers, were all competing for students, teachers, attention, and support. There weren't any venues or incentives for us to cooperate, but that all changed once we started having open source conversations. Here are some quick thoughts on how:

Open source discussions brought home the fact that we shared the goal of helping all students become lifelong learners. The digital learning plans made it possible for students to document their competencies in a variety of ways and share their progress with others in real time and from many locations, not just school buildings. In 2010, a public/private sector team of experts from state government helped us identify ways to align local education, workforce development, and social services. The federal government funded research partners to document whatever we tried and to provide ongoing feedback. (Talk about a 180 degree change from the former Department of ED!)

Once we got in "a sharing mood," we started pooling our respective promising practices. Because charters had more flexibility to try out new instructional approaches, they became our "laboratories of innovation." External evaluators documented the progress, and the charters

helped us make the case with state government and our local school board to further deregulate the public schools.

In 2010, we started working with social services, employment services, and arts communities to design and build the “infrastructure” of the digital individual learning plans. Parents can now register their children at birth, take a needs/interest assessment, and receive support in parenting skills or other areas identified in the assessment results. We then provided the digital individual learning plan to each child, based on an early assessment of his or her individual learning style, and Facebook (now FaceSpace) co-piloted the Face for Life Page, which captures and assesses a student’s daily learning.

By 2014, more and more students customized their instructional options, like a cafeteria plan. Center City moved away from using high school diplomas and towards a skill-based credentialing system. Learning could now take place 24/7, and distance learning made curricula available online from leading U.S. universities worldwide.

Don’t think for a minute that teachers were passive participants in all of these changes. The chance to become true “learning agents”¹⁹ reenergized my colleagues and me. Teachers now facilitate, along with parents, social workers, and students themselves, the development of the digital individual lifelong learning plan and credentialing pathway for each student. Teachers also work together to develop their own individual learning plans and participate in professional peer reviews. Naturally, the role of administrators has shifted too. Administrators now assess progress based on the plans, and teachers receive targeted resources, ongoing professional development, and supportive oversight.

The collaboration was fun, and we developed some really imaginative partnerships. Our teacher’s union and school board even created a learning community of teachers, administrators, and school board members to track and act on emerging trends. They then invited Center City’s local post-secondary education institutions to co-create an online professional development and knowledge management center to address the ongoing needs and interests of our education workforce. At the same time, our school buildings began transforming into multi-purpose community centers that offered direct services, such as health care, around the clock.

As a result of all these changes, teachers and administrators, both new and experienced, flooded our community with employee applications from across the nation and other countries, especially after *On Line Time* (the Internet version of the old TV show, *60 Minutes*) featured us worldwide.

That’s probably more than you ever wanted to know, Charlie, but it gives you a good idea of how, once people have the opportunity to network in new ways, grassroots collaboration can become viral, taking on a life of its own.

¹⁹ See KnowledgeWorks Foundation, *2006-2016 Map of Future Forces*, www.kwfdn.org/map which defines “learning agents” as pursuing new career paths in education as “content experts, learning coaches, network navigators, classroom managers, and cognitive specialists.”

I'm off to work. Have a great day. We can talk more when I get home tonight.

Love,

Mom P.S. Please don't forget to take out the dog!

Comment (posted April 16, 7 p.m.)

Charlie,

You had asked for information on Center City's "more stellar programs." You certainly know about this one because in 2018, when you were 16, you helped create it. That's when you came to Greenview, Inc., my environmental consulting company, as a student intern and helped me organize the Plug and Play Network, a communitywide mentor program that matched up Center City's Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants. It was amazing that when we first put out the call, 85 percent of our students signed up to mentor an adult business person in using emerging technologies. As you'll recall, we assessed students on what they learned and on their teaching skills using their digital learning plans.

I think the Plug and Play Network produced two significant "inter-generational" gains for the community. First, the initiative reinforced an ethos of community service among our younger folks, particularly those who spend most of their time online by themselves. Second, it helped people like me, who will soon be retiring, pass the torch to Gen Xers and Millennials who will assume leadership positions in Center City.

I hope this helps, Charlie. It's only fitting that I can return the favor since you were such a good mentor. I'm now blogging non-stop, thanks to you! When you get the chance, stop by and I'll share some of the incredible Web sites that I've discovered!

Best,

Rowland

Rowland Bayard

CEO, Greenview, Inc.

TXT MSG, Posted April 16, 10:30 p.m.

TO: CB

Text: Plse incl r Legacy Project: studnts training srs using avatars 2capture living histories, w/ 4 the Center City virtual scrapbk! I supplied the tunes.



THE DOC OF ROCK

Charlie visits the YouTube Archives

Clio's previous comments had intrigued Charlie. She was brilliant, granted, but Charlie expected that even she and the other members of his own personal social network, could not know or recall everything that was going on at the time. So he decided to view the YouTube archives to find

communitywide efforts underway between 2010 and 2019: sure enough, there was a treasure trove of video on Clio's dad, Mayor Bachman. Charlie was intrigued by the video clip of a city council meeting in 2011, when the Mayor, Superintendent Campbell, and a coalition of enlightened local CEOs and union leaders testified on behalf of enacting development impact fees²⁰ to offset the negative impact on school revenues of past tax rebates used to attract new businesses.

Next, Charlie viewed a YouTube clip featuring a state expert team explaining how local universities could recruit graduate students to write ethnographies of ongoing local improvement efforts that captured lessons learned in real time. Truly a communitywide grassroots effort!

The Center City FaceSpace blog

Charlie wasn't finished yet. He also wanted to tap the ideas from people beyond his personal Face for Life page, whom he might not know. In 2016, the Center City grassroots office had created a blog on FaceSpace.com in order to identify emerging challenges from within the greater community. Anyone could post an issue or join a discussion, and students who participated could receive certification as part of their digital individual learning plans. Charlie visited it to see what issues were currently in the queue.

FaceSpace.com

A place for friends and for those who want to be
Center City Grassroots Community Site

Posted by Hugo Kilfoyle on Saturday, March 13, 2020 at 10:05 AM

Looking for partners to create a blog for parents of digital addicts. Please contact hogok@sel.com.

Posted by Wilma Kingzett on Monday, March 28, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Design challenge: In search of partners to develop policies supporting fringe benefit portability options for teachers. Please contact wk48@verizon.net.

Posted by Dot Palermo on Wednesday, April 17, 2020 at 2:05 AM

Yo cyberspace, join me in exploring the use of GPS implants as a way to keep student records for lifelong learners. Follow the yellow brick road to Dorothy@oz.net.

Before he left the site, Charlie made a note to himself to sign up for the last discussion.

Charlie finishes his research

²⁰ "Development impact fees" are one-time charges applied to offset additional public service costs, such as water and sewer systems, roads, schools, libraries, and recreational facilities, attributed to new development. Source: Lawrence W. Libby and Carmen Carrion, "Development Impact Fees," *The Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet*, CDFS-1558-04. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1558.html>

Charlie was feeling enlightened; he never realized just how many doors had been opened for him by the contributions of people his parents' age and older.

It was great fun living here, he thought, on his way to Memorial Arena. Things were so good that in 2020, Center City could even boast a winning basketball team! Walking to the arena, Charlie passed people of all races, ages, and ethnicities, sitting in outdoor cafes or enjoying the city parks. He also heard many different languages, proof that Center City had truly become a global community.

As word of Center City's rebirth spread, individuals who had once fled the cities began to return, attracted by multi-generational neighborhoods and eco-friendly housing. People particularly liked being able to walk most places or take public transportation nearly anywhere.

Charlie remembered that a recent online edition of the local daily news had listed Center City's accomplishments. Included was the factoid that by 2017, per capita income had doubled because of the influx of new people. And this year, the community had reached a long sought after milestone. Because of its grassroots-driven initiatives and focus on all students as individuals, Center City had finally eliminated the student achievement gap!

WiFi is wonderful, thought Charlie, but even he had to acknowledge its limitations. Until humans actually become avatars, they will crave human contact. Nothing beats cheering for a winning sports team or attending a concert with thousands of other raving fans.

As he was about to enter the arena, Charlie looked up and, for the first time, noticed the inscription chiseled above the main entryway. The quote was from poet T.S. Elliot. Born in 1888, more than a century before the digital era, Elliot could just as easily have been describing Charlie's world when he wrote this:

Those who trust us educate us

Appendix B: Implications, Options, and Action Steps

Implications, Options, and Action Steps to Prepare for Scenario A: R_x for Life

“Communities and families will become differentiated by their ability to catalyze collective action and mobilize resources for specific and targeted priorities.”

Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation
2006-2016 *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*

Implications

A “hub mindset” epitomizes this scenario, in which Center City leaders – pursuing a coherent, collaborative approach to address local community needs – have created a vibrant, cradle-to-grave full service delivery model in the process.

In 2020, scenario protagonist Justin Rivers is a member of the governor’s cabinet. Justin oversees the Hubs, housed in modern, state-of-the-art buildings, which have emerged as important urban landmarks across Ohio. His life story also personifies the “turning point” of this scenario. Serving as a college intern in the mayor’s office a decade earlier, Justin used his own experience, as a potential high school dropout who successfully reclaimed his fate, to help Center City leaders design the more promising Hub option.

In this context, local leaders willingly transcend the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions, reaching out across the current array of public services, in order to design new, comprehensive solutions. They share the same vision, based on awareness that the sum of their aligned efforts is truly greater than the individual parts. Their willingness to embrace collective leadership enables Center City, bolstered by supportive state and federal policies, to meet four goals simultaneously: 1) *Equity* – consistently addressing the needs of all Center City citizens; 2) *Customer Convenience* – delivering multiple services within a common setting; 3) *Efficiency* – pooling finite resources; and 4) *Innovation* -- leveraging existing programs to create new ones.

In this scenario, education leaders have seized the opportunity to join other community entities in forging a more compelling and viable future for Ohio’s urban districts. Common data systems that yield results in real time, as well as comprehensive assessment tools, accelerate their efforts. Working across the different sectors – health care, economic and workforce development, K-12 education, higher education, general local government and business – also guards against designing minimalist solutions, particularly as Center City becomes increasingly diverse – socio-economically, racially, and generation-ally.

The converse situation is also true. If Center City educators had not accepted the leadership mantle, they would have run the risk in this scenario – with its vital urban core and prescriptive policy environment – of becoming complacent, settling for uniform programs with limited expectations. Just as likely is the threat of becoming marginalized or isolated, losing the ability to wrap needed family and service learnings around the delivery of lifelong learning, from the cradle to the grave.

Figure 13, below, provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that urban education systems in Ohio would have if they found themselves in the 2020 world of Scenario A: Rx for Life. (Please see Appendix H for a full page image.)

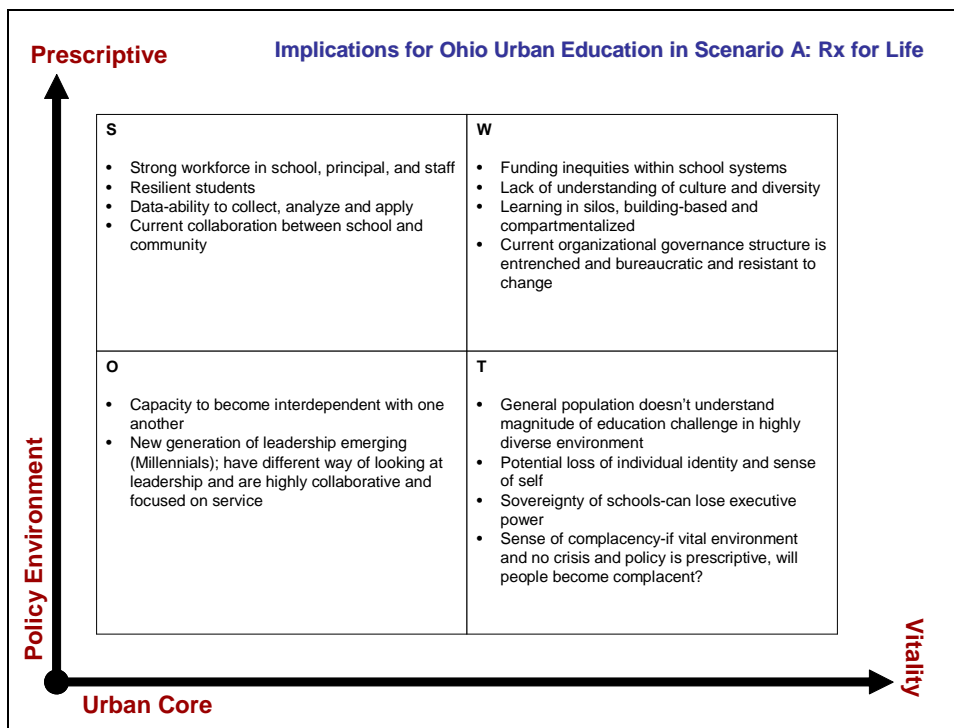


Figure 13: Implications for Ohio Urban Education in Scenario A: Rx for Life

Options

If Scenario A were to become Ohio’s “urban reality” by 2020, then the Ohio 8 should position itself in the following ways:

- Enhance member efforts to develop ongoing and effective partnership relationships with Ohio 8 local counterparts – city and county governments, local post-secondary education institutions, civic organizations, and business leaders – to position education in perpetuity as the “hub” of a coordinated service delivery system.
- Champion the creation of “learning eco-systems” that engage parents and families with educators in the design and delivery of family-friendly education programs.
- Build broad-based support for individual learning plans that will identify and meet the needs of community residents longitudinally throughout life.
- Link the new green, “hub-type” facilities with Ohio’s ongoing economic transformation strategies.

- Position the Ohio 8 sites as urban prototypes for piloting innovative federal and state policies that reinforce the hub-based service delivery system.

A complete list of the strategic options developed for each scenario can be found in Appendix I.

Action Steps

If Scenario A in 2008 is “the preferred” or “anticipated” reality of the future, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following action steps today:

- Conduct research on other communities that have aligned delivery of social, economic, and education services as a strategy to accelerate successful local planning and implementation efforts across Ohio.
- Seek state support to pilot the Hub concept in a willing Ohio urban community.
- Map out existing community services and relationships: develop a sequenced alignment plan that incorporates early childhood, K-12, higher education, workforce development, and social service programs. Build on current organizational priorities and accountability systems in order to create interlocking missions, goals, operating procedures, and performance measures.
- Design digitally-based comprehensive assessment tools for identifying, tracking, and evaluating the social, family, workforce, civic and educational needs of the entire community, from cradle to grave.
- Gain state support to pilot competency-based learning, which could eventually replace the current content-based assessment system.
- Concurrently, pilot the use of longitudinal student data bases, made available on a just-in-time basis to parents, teachers, and students.
- Develop a marketing and outreach plan to engage parents and community leaders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and extension of the Hub.

Implications, Options, and Action Steps to Prepare for Scenario B: General Issue

“In extreme urban areas decimated by poverty, pollution, and economic instability, public schools become the zone of health and security—physical, intellectual and emotional.”

Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation

2006-2016 *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*

Implications

Enveloped by poverty, crime, and social anxiety, local leaders in this scenario have turned to the schools as the last bastion of safety and well-being. “Empowerment through service learning” emerges as their best hope for containing the overwhelming adversity.

In 2020, two protagonists share the spotlight: Dr. Tammy Brown, respected local superintendent of Center City Schools and Major Sergeant Joe Smith, a veteran of the Iraq and Iran Wars. Their chance meeting in the high school parking lot, and ensuing discussion recounting the gradual disintegration of Center City over the past 12 years, form the basis of Scenario B. The turning point occurred five years earlier, when the federal government stepped in by implementing the G.I. Teacher program that eventually brought “GI Joe” to Center City as a teacher/security guard.

Federal military intervention represents only half the solution, a stop gap measure at best. Placing security forces inside the classroom can help stabilize a precarious situation. What it cannot achieve unilaterally is a new beginning, which is why Scenario B ends with Dr. Brown proclaiming, “we need to get our people involved in every step along the way. *We need to build community.*”

Toward that end, education leaders living in this scenario can choose, despite the tremendous odds stacked against them, to rise to the occasion. Making explicit the linkage between lifelong learning and service learning can become their greatest weapon in the Center City arsenal against urban decay. “Growing our own,” beginning with broad-based policies that engage students actively within the greater community, reinforce parental and employer involvement inside the schools, and promote teaching as a valued profession, are at the front line of this battle. *General Issue*, in essence, evolves into *General Service*: students of all ages who are exposed to the intrinsic rewards of service learning are much more likely to dedicate themselves, as prospective teachers, parents, employees, and residents, to that same community later in life.

The converse situation is far less appealing. If local leaders do not accept the leadership mantle, they will unwillingly, but invariably bear witness to the further decay of Center City. Their inactivity will become synonymous with abandonment, eventually hastening the destruction. Their inactivity, therefore, is not an option.

Figure 14, below, provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that urban education systems in Ohio would have if they found themselves in the 2020 world of Scenario B: General issue. (Please see Appendix H for a full page image.)

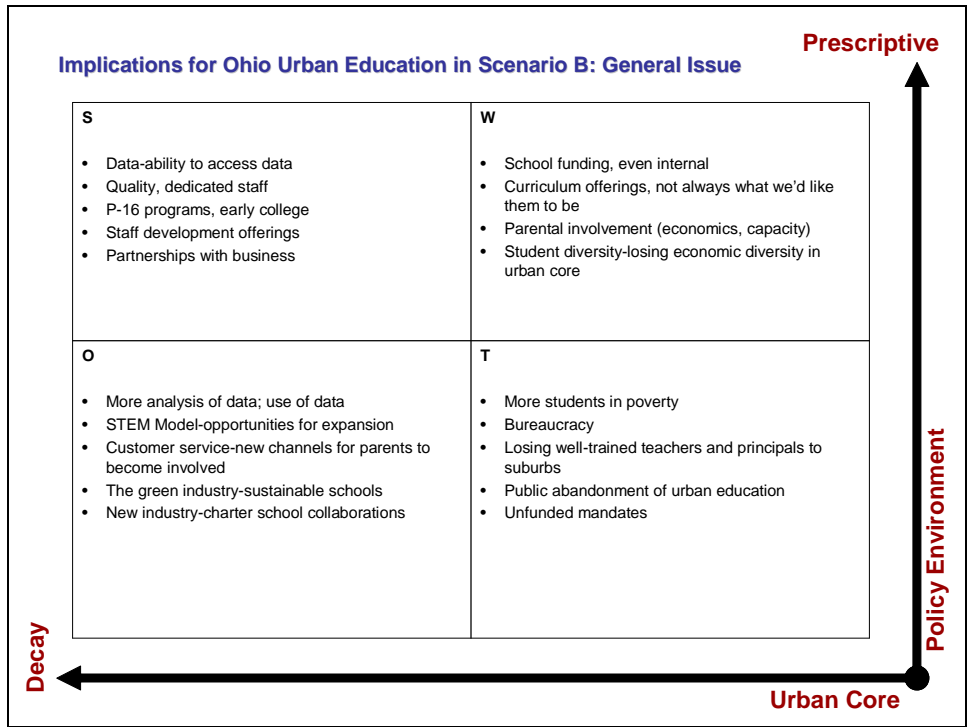


Figure 14: Implications for Ohio Urban Education in Scenario B: General Issue

Options

If Scenario B were to become Ohio’s “urban reality” by 2020, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following strategic options:

- Create, with other local leaders from Ohio 8 districts, programs that expand service learning opportunities for students of all ages.
- Explore, with local businesses, options for employees and teachers to co-design curricula, which coordinate classroom and service learning activities and outcomes.
- Expand professional opportunities for teachers inside local community agencies and businesses; conversely advocate on behalf of release time, spent with students and inside classrooms, for community and business people.
- Advocate on behalf of college credits for service learning experiences, captured in subsequent student reflections.
- Participate in developing comprehensive data systems that provide information on individual service learning experiences.
- Develop assessments that measure both quantitative and qualitative impact, including academic performance and civic engagement indicators, of service learning initiatives.

Include the capacity to benchmark service learning programs within the Ohio 8 communities as well as those operating within different states nationwide.

- Position the Ohio 8 sites as urban prototypes for piloting innovative federal and state policies that reinforce service learning.
- Based on the success of the Ohio 8 communities, advocate state government for a universal service learning requirement for all Ohio students.

Action Steps

If Scenario B in 2008 is the “preferred” or “anticipated” reality of the future, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following action steps today:

- Advocate for federal, state and local policies that will ramp up security inside local schools so they can become safe havens inside otherwise decaying communities.
- Develop seamless “troops to teachers” career paths for security forces, and other professions, to become educators.
- Conduct research on other communities within Ohio and nationally that have implemented comprehensive service learning programs.
- Seek state support to pilot the comprehensive service learning concept in a willing Ohio urban community.
- Develop a communications and outreach plan to engage parents, business, and community leaders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and extension service learning initiatives.
- Develop, with local higher education institutions, a seamless and robust teacher recruitment and retention program, beginning with the elementary grades.
- Advocate for federal and state loan forgiveness programs for college graduates who become teachers in the urban areas for at least four years.
- Advocate for federal, state, and local housing stipends for teachers and administrators who agree to live in the urban areas.

Implications, Options, and Action Steps to Prepare for Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

“Extending the trend toward choice and customization in everything from media and appliances to food, health, and education, people are becoming more active participants in creating their own worlds...”

*Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation
2006-2016 Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*

Implications

“Surviving in the cracks” is an apt description of this scenario, where only a few neighborhoods endure, based entirely on their own individual grit and entrepreneurial spirit – and as a courageous affront, at least in the short-term, to the urban decay that surrounds them.

Protagonist Daisy Rock embodies this scenario, literally, as she reflects back, during her high school commencement speech in the year 2020, on 12 precarious years of hardship and survival. The turning point in Scenario C is the juxtaposition of two factors – desperate socio-economic conditions coupled with neighborhood resiliency – which merge to generate creative, but highly vulnerable solutions.

Turning inward to design new approaches to learning is how neighborhood leaders in Scenario C respond, based on public/private school collaborations that likely never would have occurred except in the face of an acute challenge – the total “voucherization” of Ohio’s state aid formula in 2015. Confronting the challenge brings Center City to a pivotal crossroads: will vouchers escalate abandonment of the public schools? Or, as in the case of Scenario C, will it trigger action on the part of neighborhood schools, faith-based institutions, technology entrepreneurs, and parents who are often in conflict with one another, to instead align their priorities, resources, and separate funding streams? The implications are profound: Even if neighborhoods successfully turn inward, how long will they be able to withstand the pervasive impact of poverty?

In many respects, Scenario C represents the ultimate challenge for local leaders. If they do nothing, even successful neighborhoods that manage to “survive in the cracks” will likely lose both the capacity and the will over time to forge creative solutions. As schools are overrun by non-traditional competitors, the demise of public education as we know it may not be far behind.

Figure 15, below, provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that urban education systems in Ohio would have if they found themselves in the 2020 world of Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks. (Please see Appendix H for a full page image.)

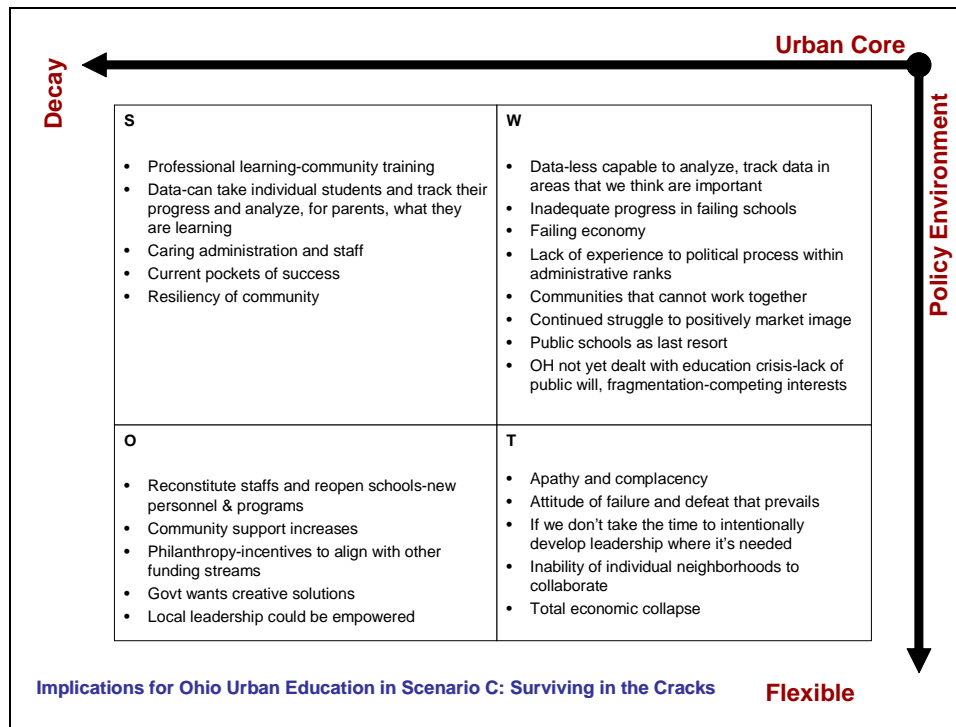


Figure 15: Implications for Ohio Urban Education in Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

Options

If Scenario C were to become Ohio’s “urban reality” by 2020, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following strategic options:

- Pursue an aggressive *strength-in-numbers* strategy, so that the “survival in the cracks neighborhoods” can collaborate, both within and across urban jurisdictions, in order to share resources, programs, experiences, and lessons learned.
- Escalate the development of digital individual learning plans for all students as a way to identify and champion the needs of all children, particularly within a voucher-based education system.
- Advocate on behalf of universal WiFi as a way to network, nationally and globally, innovative educators, students, parents, and community leaders from “survival in the cracks neighborhoods.”
- Design an ongoing communications strategy aimed at policymakers and the public that highlights the economic and social inequities of the decayed urban areas, coupled with the success stories of the “survival in the cracks neighborhoods.”

Action Steps

If Scenario C in 2008 is the “preferred” or “anticipated” reality of the future, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following action steps today:

- Conduct research on other communities that have identified and supported their own lighthouse versions of “survival in the cracks” neighborhoods as a strategy to accelerate successful planning and implementation efforts in Ohio.
- Seek state support to pilot public/private sector innovative approaches, potentially around the use of vouchers, on a neighborhood basis.
- Gain state support to pilot the use of individual student learning plans.
- Actively seek out socially-conscious entrepreneurs to partner with in the design of technology-based education solutions.

Develop a communications and outreach plan to engage parents and community leaders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and scale up of neighborhood solutions.

Implications, Options, and Action Steps to Prepare for Scenario D: Me as We

“Ubiquitous computing and wireless connectivity, embedded in physical environments, will turn physical places into aware contexts—environments that recognize people, information, and activities, and then respond appropriately.”

*Source: KnowledgeWorks Foundation
2006-2016 Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*

Implications

In this scenario, life is good in Center City, as local leaders have taken advantage of flexible federal and state policies to create a vital, vibrant, and engaged community. Protagonist Charlie Brush, a high school senior in the year 2020, reveals the evolution of his city’s success through a series of technology-based dialogues with participants or observers of the key events.

The turning point occurs in 2009, when the federal government spurs communitywide innovation by funding universal access to WiFi. The resulting wireless cloud above Center City provides local leaders with the 21st century platform to engage in entrepreneurial collaboration, thereby inventing their own future. Traditional boundaries among various governmental sectors (K-12 education, higher education, the social services, the arts, etc.) and the private sector fall by the wayside. The community-at-large becomes the classroom, with all Center City residents simultaneously becoming lifelong learning agents and recipients. At the heart of the transformation is a competency-based learning system which increasingly shifts responsibility to

individual students, working with adults and one another, for accessing and applying knowledge. Learning, in essence, has become viral.

In this context, local leaders confront a critical choice, but a choice worth embracing. Given the momentum for change, they can either lead the effort, insuring widespread community engagement in the process, or view events from the sidelines as other parties – particularly the likely proliferation of education competitors – determine their fate.

Figure 16, below, provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that Ohio urban education systems would have if they found themselves in the 2020 world of Scenario D: Me as We. (Please see Appendix H for a full page image.)

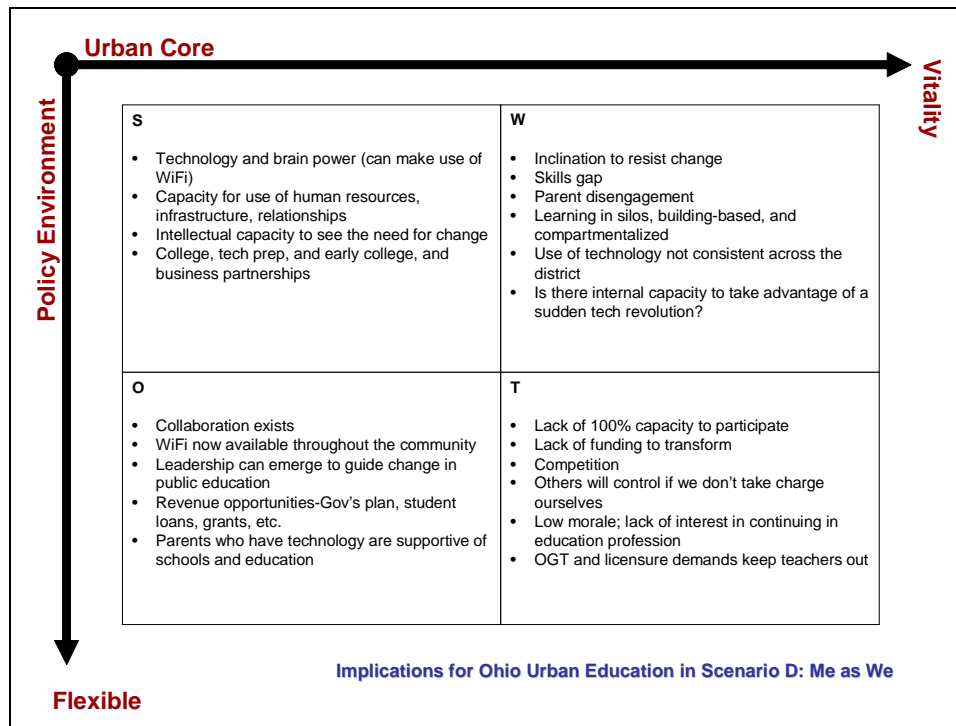


Figure 16: Implications for Ohio Urban Education in Scenario D: Me as We

Options

If Scenario D were to become Ohio’s “urban reality” by 2020, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following strategic options:

- Lead the effort for Ohio to embrace a competency-based education system tied to creating digital individual learning plans for all students.
- Design an ongoing communications strategy aimed at policymakers and the public that highlights the economic and educational benefits of a “Me as We” approach to community resurgence.

- Design and champion revenue generating alternatives to the use of local property taxes that will accelerate, rather than prevent, inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Position Ohio as a national benchmark in the innovative use of WiFi in education and community engagement.

Action Steps

If Scenario D in 2008 is the “preferred” or “anticipated” reality of the future, then the Ohio 8 should pursue the following action steps today:

- Conduct research on other communities that have access to universal WiFi and/or have implemented a competency-based education system, in order to accelerate comparable planning and implementation efforts in Ohio.
- Seek state support to pilot the communitywide use of WiFi in at least one Ohio 8 site. Optimally, tie this initiative to the use of individual student learning plans (as well as service learning.) Determine how to use the pilot results to advocate on behalf of universal WiFi for the urban core.
- Engage as active partners in Ohio’s state and local P-20 education initiatives.
- Position the “Me as We” scenario as a key strategic piece of the Governor’s economic transformation and education innovation initiatives.
- Advocate on behalf of professional development opportunities for teachers and parents, particularly on state-of-the-art technologies, which will accelerate their ability to become learning agents.
- Actively seek out socially-conscious entrepreneurs to partner in the design of technology-based education solutions.
- Develop a communications and outreach plan to engage parents and community leaders in the design, implementation, evaluation, and scale up of “Me as We” scenario solutions.

Appendix C: Uncertainties about the Future of Urban Public Education in Ohio

Brainstorming Uncertainties

Participants split into four groups and brainstormed to answer the following questions:

As you think about the future and the Ohio 8 focal issue above, what are you most uncertain about? What would you most want to know the answer to in order to address the focal issue in 2020?

Group 1

- Role of teachers
- School/non-school time
- Values and religion & promiscuity
- State of technology
- Competency-based assessment (accepted measure of progress?)
- Prevalence of ESL learners
- Impact of ills of society (drug addiction, poverty, fetal alcohol syndrome)
- Special education; number of disabled
- Balance between faith and science
- Kindergarten readiness of urban kids
- Genetically altered food
- State of the environment
- Federal role in education
- Housing
- How are schools funded
- Extent of home schooling, charters, vouchers
- Number of school districts, 612? 88?
- Role of business sponsorships, etc.
- Role of community
- Tax system (e.g. business tax abatements)
- Length of school day
- Length of school year
- Carnegie units or skill development
- Health—state of population
- Enrollment changes
- Demographics in market
- State of democracy—rights
- Stance of elderly on public education
- State of economy—income, stock market
- Career opportunities

- Is there a middle class?
- What does family look like?
- Transportation, gas prices?

Final 3: 1) What is the impact of ills on society? (drug addiction; poverty; fetal alcohol syndrome); 2) what is the state of public education? role of competition, charters, vouchers; 3) What is the role of the teacher?

Group 2

- Funding
- Technology
- Higher education
- Delivery of education
- Educator adaptability to change
- Cultural—community
- Instructional operations
- Will there be urban education or one huge district
- Relationship between the local community and public education
- External forces—housing, etc. affects on public education
- Safety in schools
- Schools—welcoming environments
- Impact of globalization, job opportunities for students and parents
- Will we have met state and national standards
- Will the community value our students

Final 3: 1) funding; 2) what does learning look like; 3) what do cities look like?

Group 3

Known

- Children
- Jobs
- Technology
- Educational technology/workforce in 2020
- will have the K12 experience
- Government will still have a role in public education
- More choices
- Job fluidity

Group 4

Certainties

- There will be children
- Children's needs will increase

- Expectations from public constituencies
- We will need to educate for change
- All kids will need to be educated
- Increased diversity
- Increased tensions between economic classes
- Technology-savvy students
- Technology integrated into society
- Increased mobility
- Role of educators will change
- Solutions are more holistic
- Compression of time
- Accountability

Uncertainties

- Role of government
- Who will be held accountable
- What does learning look like
- Needs of kids—will we be able to meet those needs
- How do we measure outcomes
- What is the assessment model
- What skill sets are needed for ‘success’(public view)
- What will econ classes look like
- Labor management issues
- Mobility
- Funding
- Delivery model (timing, 13 years?)
- Public v. private
- Structure of cities and communities
- How do we compare
- What’s our global position
- Local effects?
- Governing structure of schools
- Who are we attracting to teaching
- What does school look like

Appendix D: Descriptions of the Four Scenarios

Developing Scenarios...: *This is a world in which... What's going in in families, communities, markets, institutions, education, and technology?*

Scenario B

- It is a police state. Policies clamp down and become prescriptive driving more and more people out of the urban core (suffocates people)
- Urban population decreases—people leave in droves
- People search for alternatives
- There is fear in the urban centers—violence
- There is a weak Ohio and national economy
- People become disenfranchised—families in poverty, homelessness increases, reliance on scarce supply of public housing; absentee landlords
- Increase in teen pregnancy
- Attempt to address healthcare needs of elderly, but not enough for all
- Casinos fund education
- Few jobs available—grassroots economics provides some opportunity
- Education focused on cost efficiency; not much use of technology

Scenario C

- There is survival of the fittest
- There is breakdown of the traditional family structure
- Have and have-nots pronounced. Gated communities have extra security. Vacant homes in the urban core
- Shopping areas abandoned.
- No services for people who rely on welfare
- Service (low-paying) jobs continue to grow
- Some areas of urban core pull it together through neighborhood activism, but only in a few areas
- Local grassroots efforts grow, over time
- Continued proliferation of charter schools, virtual schools, home schools, and other choices
- People define themselves in terms of their very local neighborhood
- Economy relying on individual, entrepreneurial businesses (not big industries)-policy reflects this
- Declining education options leads to vouchers

Prescriptive Scenario A

- Two parent families are living in the urban centers
- Policies (government and private) mandate time to spend on family activities
- There is universal health care, early childhood education, and family leave
- There is a strong focus on a greening society (e.g., recycling is mandated)
- High employment rate with built in government incentives
- State-developed job training centers—seamless job training system with focus on training aging population into new jobs and industries
- Higher education promoted and supported by the state
- Women participating in workforce at high levels
- Diverse, alternative energy sources developed, used, and expected
- High graduation and attendance rates in schools. Student outcomes are tracked, P-22 at the state level.
- Focus of learning is on attaining job-ready skills and preparation for higher education and entry into career pipelines in targeted industries
- ACES-All Children Exceeding Standards is new accountability system

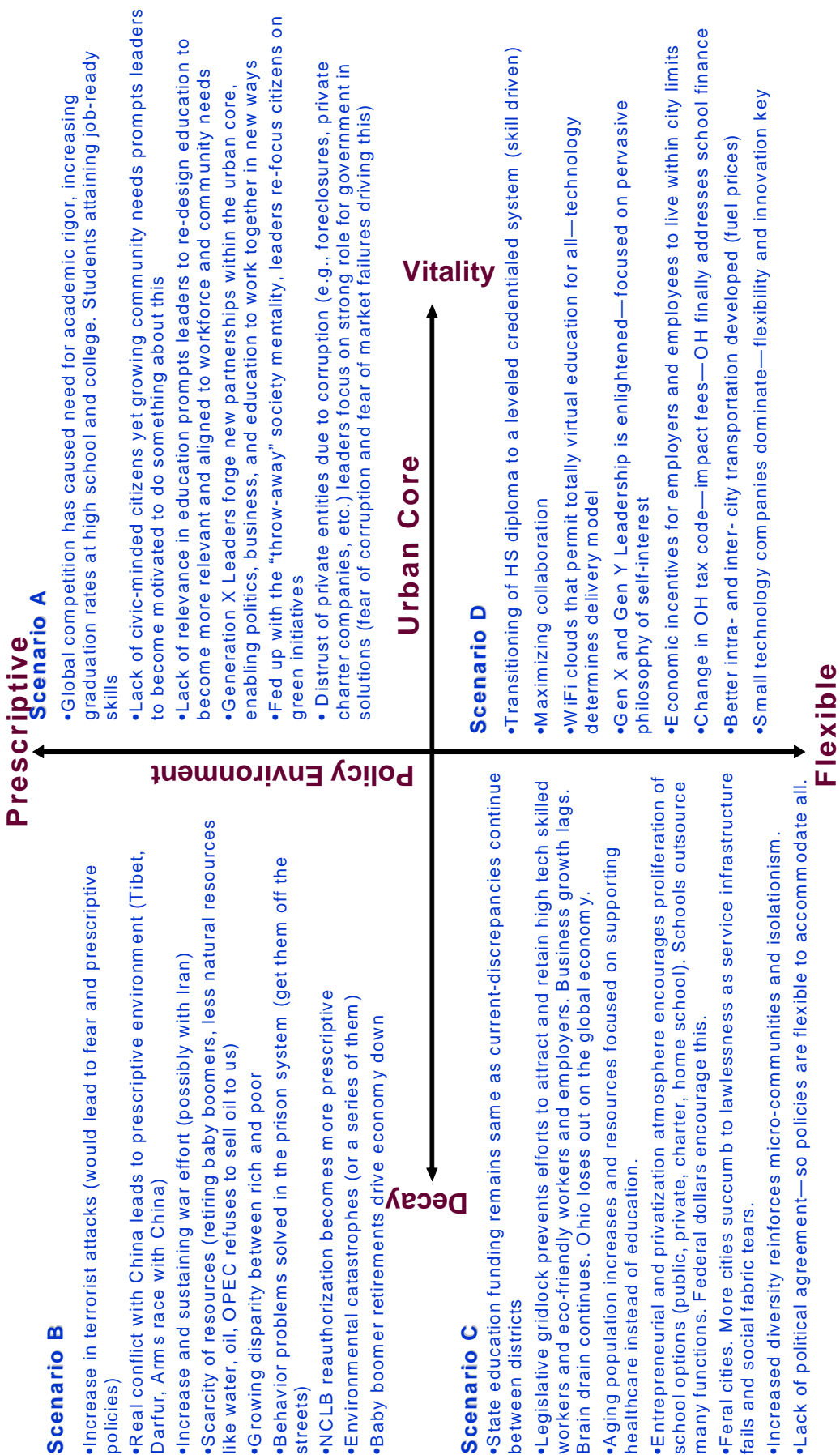
Scenario D

- Family-friendly legislation leading to creation of multi-generational, multi-income housing. Eco-friendly, healthy places to live within the urban core
- Wireless cloud that would allow a vast majority of people to live virtually through work, schools, obtaining services, etc. Urban schools would change to accommodate any time, any place learning.
- School buildings used for multiple purposes—health care, community use. Open 24/7. Education resources focused on learning rather than buildings.
- Distance learning is maximized—students taking classes at Oxford, Sorbonne. Cafeteria plan for education (mix and match). Learning woven into everyday life and other activities (not set time, 8-3).
- Cities are vibrant centers of commerce and community life.
- Families and children moving into urban core for lifestyle option.
- Community institutions (and private) work collaboratively on youth issues
- Many jobs are as contractors, independent consultants.

Flexible

Appendix E: Deep Causes for Each Scenario

Deep Causes: *What events could lead to this scenario? What would have to happen between now and 2020 for the world described here to be possible?*



Appendix F: Evidence and Emerging Trends for Each Scenario



Appendix G: Timelines and Headlines for Each Scenario

Timeline and Headlines for Scenario A: R_x for Life

Headlines (Scenario A)

Timeline: What events unfold in the scenario between 2008-2020?

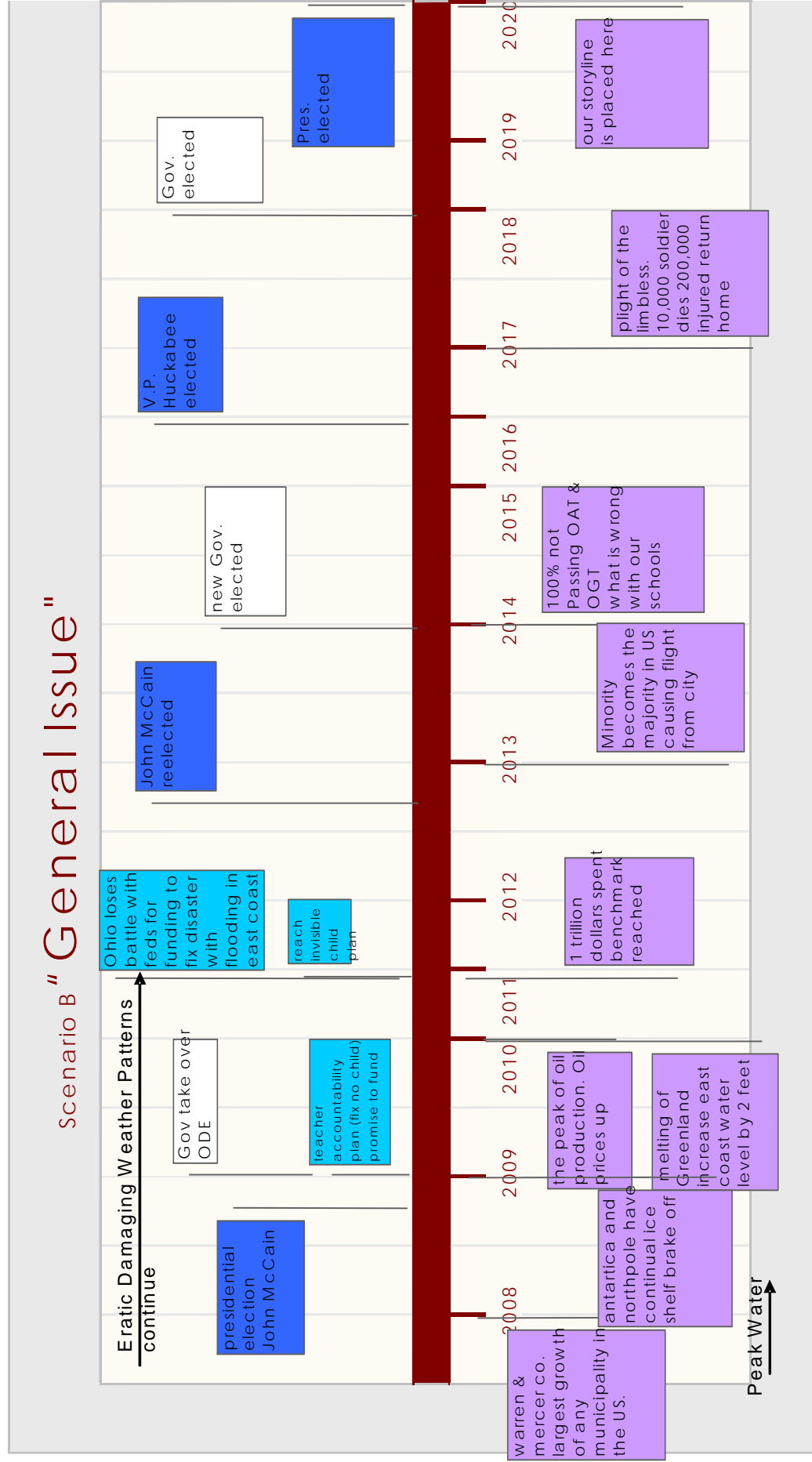
Scenario A: Rx for Life

- 2008-Democratic President elected
- 2009-War ends, soldiers come home
- 2010-Go Green mandated by public officials
- 2011-Changes to health care system benefits for all—it’s against the law to drive without car insurance
- 2012-NCLB reauthorized with modifications
- 2014-Public school funding finally resolved
- 2015-Workforce development initiative; bachelors degrees required; \$\$ for college
- 2016 neighborhood associations become change agents
- 2017-Family is focus-parenting classes required; educating the whole family
- 2020-all initiatives pay off—urban core soars

Year	Possible Headlines for Scenario A
2009	“War Ends, Soldiers Come Home”
2011	“Changes to Health Care System Benefits for All”
2013	“P-16 Works: All Students Exceeding Standards”
2015	“Workforce Development: B.A. Required”
2017	“Family is Focus: Parenting Classes Required”
2020	“Urban Core Soars: Safe and Thriving for a Decade”

Timeline and Headlines for Scenario B: General Issue

Timeline: What events unfold in the scenario between 2008-2020?



Timeline and Headlines for Scenario C: Surviving through the Cracks

- 2008
 - Democratic president elected
 - Governor's economic plan deadlocks in Senate
 - Job loss
 - Housing crisis
 - Health care and aging population drains budget
 - Leverage public dollars around challenge grants—new solution
- 2010
 - ESEA (NCLB) reauthorized and provides states with greater flexibility
 - Technology universally available to all but urbans unable to afford it
 - Predatory business practices are prosecuted and CEO's found liable and jailed [*wouldn't this lead to more prescriptive policy??*]
- 2012-2014
 - Green job opportunities pass OH by; no start up money
 - New governor term leads to partnership education system (P-12 pipeline)
- 2015-2017
 - Ohio 8 adopts individualized versions of P12 pipeline models
 - Implementation of universal healthcare draws money from state education budgets, increasing demand for innovation
 - Fear of crime drives increased security demands
- 2018-2020
 - Gates Foundation presents Innovation award to Ohio 8
 - Brain drain-Major companies fold and leave OH

Headlines (Scenario C)

Year	Possible Headlines for Scenario C
2009	Gov Agenda Leverages Public Money for Challenge Grants-New Solution
2011	OH Foundations Match State Challenge Funding-New Community Schools In Urban Centers
2013	
2015	OH Suburban Schools Look to Urbans for Leadership
2017	
2020	Ohio 8 Receives International Recognition for Educational Model of School Systems

Timeline and Headlines for Scenario D: Me as We

Timeline: What events unfold in the scenario between 2008-2020?

Scenario D: Me as We

- 2008—Democrat wins Presidential election
Gasoline prices continue to rise (\$5/gallon)
- 2009—Governor reforms ODE and school funding
- Ohio 8 explores collaboration in areas of business support services (food service, purchasing, transp)
- 2010—Stock market stabilizes; start of generational shift to Gen Xers
- Gov unveils urban incentive program (re-election issue)
 - Partnerships with hospitals and other urban cores
- 2012
- Transition away from HS diploma to credentialing system

Timeline: What events unfold in the scenario between 2008-2020?

Scenario D: Me as We (continued)

- 2014-educational points of delivery are decentralized (learning takes place at home, school, libraries, hospitals, colleges, etc.)
- Student internships directly tied to learning
 - Alternative fuels and environment-driven businesses increase by X %
- 2015—seamless P-16 system—technology permits cafeteria plan (more flexible options)
- School districts divest themselves of capital assets—creation of regional building authorities
- 2016—Presidential election;
8 regional offices of education innovation established by Ohio 8
- 2020-Ohio 8 districts are centers of excellence

Headlines (Scenario D)

Year	Possible Headlines for Scenario D
2009	ODE Re-engineered to Provide Districts with More Flexibility
2011	\$50 laptops and universal wifi in cities Me is We...
2013	ODE replaces HS diploma with cred
2015	P12 and Higher Ed Merge to Enhance Educational Delivery
2017	Per Capita Income Doubles City Populations Increase
2020	Achievement Gap Eliminated

Appendix H: Implications-SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) Analysis

Implications: *It's 2020, and this is the world that exists around you—but urban public education in Ohio is exactly the same as it is today. Given the current realities in Ohio, what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats exist in this world of 2020?*

Scenario B: General Issue

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data-ability to access data •Quality, dedicated staff •P-16 programs, early college •Staff development offerings •Partnerships with business 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School funding, even internal •Curriculum offerings, not always what we'd like them to be •Parental involvement (economics, capacity) •Student diversity-losing economic diversity in urban core
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More analysis of data; use of data •STEM Model-opportunities for expansion •Customer service-new channels for parents to become involved •The green industry-sustainable schools •New industry-charter school collaborations 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More students in poverty •Bureaucracy •Losing well-trained teachers and principals to suburbs •Public abandonment of urban education •Unfunded mandates

Scenario A: Rx for Life

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strong workforce in school, principal, and staff •Resilient students •Data-ability to collect, analyze and apply •Current collaboration between school and community 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding inequities within school systems •Lack of understanding of culture and diversity •Learning in silos, building-based and compartmentalized •Current organizational governance structure is entrenched and bureaucratic and resistant to change
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Capacity to become interdependent with one another •New generation of leadership emerging (Millennials); have different way of looking at leadership and are highly collaborative and focused on service 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •General population doesn't understand magnitude of education challenge in highly diverse environment •Potential loss of individual identity and sense of self •Sovereignty of schools-can lose executive power •Sense of complacency-if vital environment and no crisis and policy is prescriptive, will people become complacent?

Scenario C: Surviving in the Cracks

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional learning-community training •Data-can take individual students and track their progress and analyze, for parents, what they are learning •Caring administration and staff •Current pockets of success •Resiliency of community 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data-less capable to analyze, track data in areas that we think are important •Inadequate progress in failing schools •Failing economy •Lack of experience to political process within administrative ranks •Communities that cannot work together •Continued struggle to positively market image •Public schools as last resort •OH not yet dealt with education crisis-lack of public will, fragmentation-competing interests
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reconstitute staffs and reopen schools-new personnel & programs •Community support increases •Philanthropy-incentives to align with other funding streams •Govt wants creative solutions •Local leadership could be empowered 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Apathy and complacency •Attitude of failure and defeat that prevails •If we don't take the time to intentionally develop leadership where it's needed •Inability of individual neighborhoods to collaborate •Total economic collapse

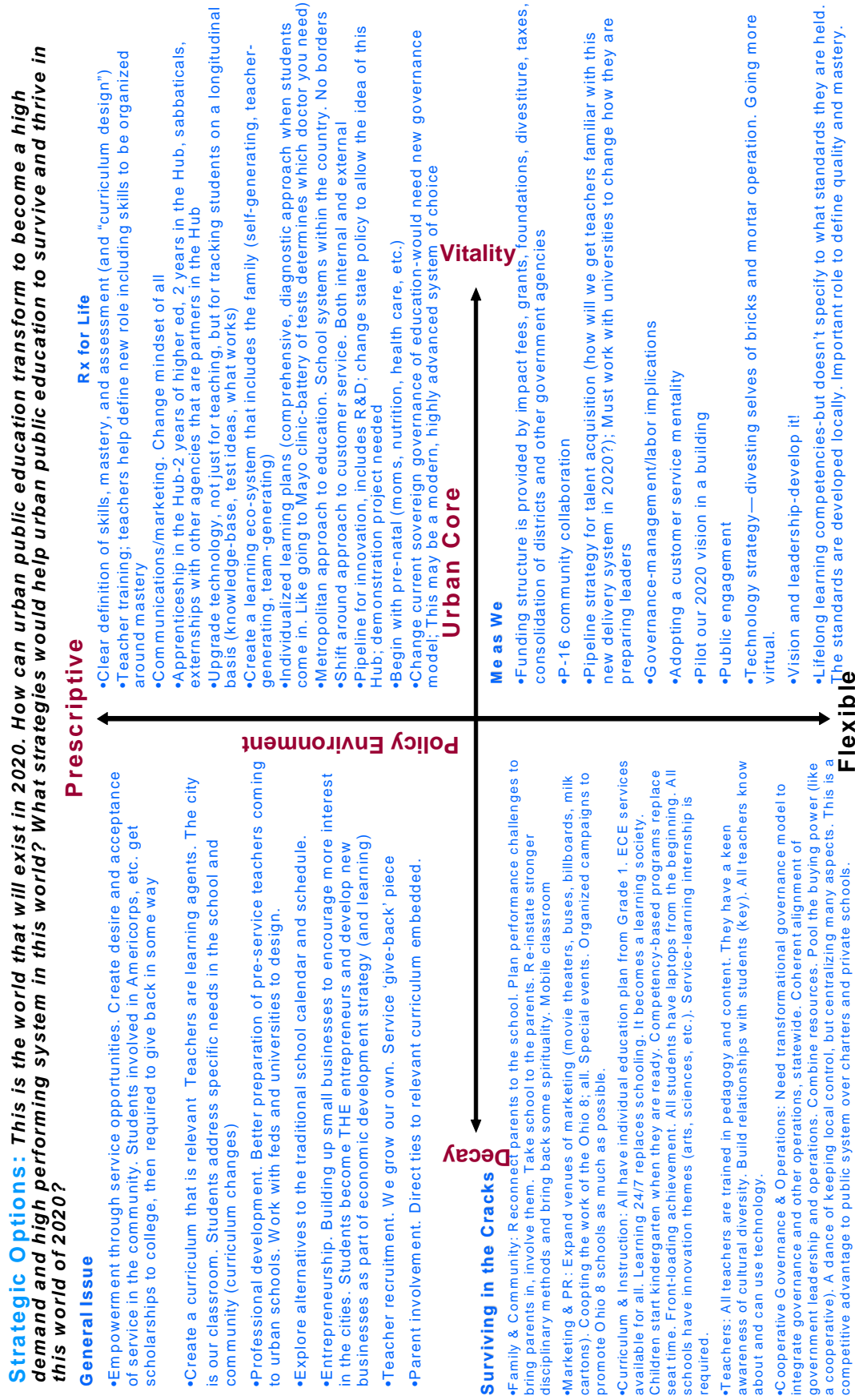
Urban Core

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technology and brain power (can make use of WiFi) •Capacity for use of human resources, infrastructure, relationships •Intellectual capacity to see the need for change •College, tech prep, and early college, and business partnerships 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inclination to resist change •Skills gap •Parent disengagement •Learning in silos, building-based, and compartmentalized •Use of technology not consistent across the district •Is there internal capacity to take advantage of a sudden tech revolution?
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Collaboration exists •WiFi now available throughout the community •Leadership can emerge to guide change in public education •Revenue opportunities-Gov's plan, student loans, grants, etc. •Parents who have technology are supportive of schools and education 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of 100% capacity to participate •Competition •Others will control if we don't take charge ourselves •Low morale; lack of interest in continuing in education profession •OGT and licensure demands keep teachers out

Scenario D: Me as We

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data-less capable to analyze, track data in areas that we think are important •Inadequate progress in failing schools •Failing economy •Lack of experience to political process within administrative ranks •Communities that cannot work together •Continued struggle to positively market image •Public schools as last resort •OH not yet dealt with education crisis-lack of public will, fragmentation-competing interests 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data-less capable to analyze, track data in areas that we think are important •Inadequate progress in failing schools •Failing economy •Lack of experience to political process within administrative ranks •Communities that cannot work together •Continued struggle to positively market image •Public schools as last resort •OH not yet dealt with education crisis-lack of public will, fragmentation-competing interests
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reconstitute staffs and reopen schools-new personnel & programs •Community support increases •Philanthropy-incentives to align with other funding streams •Govt wants creative solutions •Local leadership could be empowered 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Apathy and complacency •Attitude of failure and defeat that prevails •If we don't take the time to intentionally develop leadership where it's needed •Inability of individual neighborhoods to collaborate •Total economic collapse

Appendix I: Strategic Options for Each Scenario





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