SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALING

IN YOUTH URBAN EDUCATION ORGANIZING:

A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF

THE PHILADELPHIA STUDENT UNION

by

Aaron Searson

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Affairs and Public Policy

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"If there is no struggle

There is no progress.

Those who profess to favor freedom,

And yet deprecate agitation…

Want crops without plowing up the ground,

They want rain

Without thunder and lightning.

They want the ocean

Without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one;

Or it may be a physical one;

And it may be both moral and physical,

But it must be a struggle.

Power concedes nothing without a demand.

It never did and it never will."

– Frederick Douglass

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Asian Americans United
AEJ	Alliance for Educational Justice
AISR	Annenberg Institute for School Reform
AOP	Alliance Organizing Project
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BLM	Black Lives Matter
BSAC	Boston Student Advisory Council
CNS	Campaign for Nonviolent Schools
CPER	Communities for Public Education Reform
DOE	Department of Education
DOL	Department of Labor
FCYO	Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing
J4J	Journey for Justice
LSC	Local School Council
MMP	Media Mobilizing Project
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PCAPS	Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools
PCCY	Public Citizens for Children and Youth
PFT	Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
PSU	Philadelphia Student Union
RFA	Research for Action

SDP	School District of Philadelphia
SRC	School Reform Commission
SSC	Student Success Center
YJC	Youth Justice Corps
YUC	Youth United for Change

ABSTRACT

Since 1995, the Philadelphia Student Union (PSU) has been a leading youth-led urban education organizing group. PSU has operated at several scales—including the school, district, state, and national levels—as well as in ideological dimensions. Thus, PSU is an appropriate unit of analysis to gauge the extent to which urban youth education organizing can forge sustainable and scalable progressive reform visions.

Based on interviews and textual analyses—conducted primarily from 2012 through 2015—PSU benefitted from exceptional executive leadership and adopted strategies to enhance internal stability, including: decentralized, transformational, and servant leadership development; leadership pipelines; mission integrity; an individual donor model; leveraging intermediary support; youth-focused recruitment; systemic and diverse supports; harnessing institutional memory; and planning and self-evaluation. Nonetheless, PSU and youth organizing are vulnerable to staff and student turnover, limited resources, and intermediary uncertainties.

Sustainability is a prerequisite for scaling, which requires change theories, strategies, and methods. PSU's model of scaling change begins with self-representation and politicization. Equipped, empowered youth are then given meaningful opportunities for collective action. Significantly, empowerment does not guarantee political power.

Framing around root causes is a core theory of change for PSU. Additionally, PSU's reputation as principled, informed, effective, reliable, and proactive has garnered it widespread credibility, essential to scaling.

PSU also embraces “glocalized resistance” (Köhler & Wissen, 2003), which confronts immediate anxieties through community organizing while affecting larger structures through extralocal and framing strategies (Warren, 2011; Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2002). In education, glocalism connects across “constituencies, issues, and geographies” to influence national framing about public education’s “purpose, problems, and promise” (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 4). PSU has scaled school and local mobilization through cross-cutting coalitions, while balancing collaboration and conflict with decision makers. It has scaled “down” through small schools, and strived to achieve spread and power through media and movements (Elmore, 1996, p. 20).

Yet a multi-dimensional approach overextends its limited capacities and exposed resource and infrastructure shortcomings in the youth organizing infrastructure, particularly at the state level. Governance trends in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), in statehouses, and at the federal level make lasting progressive change virtually untenable. PSU thus increasingly adopted adversarial and movement-building theories and tactics. This transformation aligns with Fung and Wright (2003) and Oakes and Lipton (2002), who argue external pressure and movement approaches are logical when reform contexts become degenerative and inegalitarian. Multiscalar, intersectional movements with political and ideological power are crucial to scaling sustainable and progressive urban school reform.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Over the last few decades, education organizing has emerged as a powerful lever for engaging youth (Rogers, Mediratta, & Shah, 2012; Saunders, Rogers, & Terriquez, 2013), particularly urban, low-income youth of color (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003; Webster, 2007).

While those aged twelve to nineteen most endure "vicissitudes of social policies and programs," they also have capacity for collective agency (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 17). During adolescence, youth acquire abilities for social change, including the capacity to dissect the multiscalar and complex structures and processes involved in school reform (Larson & Hansen, 2005).

Youth organizing, or youth action, is distinct from youth development in tapping into these newfound capacities. Youth action is more likely than other youth engagement to demand accountability and pursue aggressive or political strategies, which appeals to young activists (Wheeler, 2003). Ishihara (2007) conceived youth action as an avenue through which youth tackle power and resource differentials. Youth organizing is more concerned with advancing self-interest than other modes (Warren, Mira, & Nikundiwe, 2008).

Youth action is also unique from other youth engagement due to its stance toward youth risk. Kirshner (2009) suggests youth confront issues causing risk, rather than be sheltered from risk or thought of as vessels of risk factors. Garbarino (1995) identified "social toxins" as the most pressing threats to youth, including institutional racism and scarce extracurricular opportunities (p. 85). Ruddick (2006) championed research about how youth could deconstruct environmental conditions like overcrowding in schools, instead of studying ways to medicate or punish students.

Youth action's distinctiveness is significant, since Trent and Chavis (2009) argue grooming "change agent" capacities to confront risk results in greater community capacity than service provision. Change agent faculties include strengthening bonds, fostering strategic alliances, and harnessing data (p. 107), all integral to scaling. Similarly, scholars profess schools should serve as active sites of democracy, rather than passive recipients of top-down and neoliberal reform aiming to suppress risk (Ravitch, 2013; Anyon, 2014; Gold et al., 2002; Mele, 2013; Orr & Rogers, 2011; Balch-Gonzalez, Cook, & Richards, 2010).

Youth action has also shown promise for galvanizing progressive urban educational change at multiple scales (Joselowsky, 2007; Rogers & Morrell, 2011; Conner & Rosen, 2013). Regarding PSU, *multiscalar* change encompasses: "deep" normative transformation within classrooms and schools (Coburn, 2003); change across the SDP, and at state and national scales; and progress in normative, ideological contestation (e.g., framing the dropout crisis as a "pushout" crisis). *Scaling* refers to the theories, strategies, and methods designed to address each of

these dimensions. Multiscalar change is essential because the deep-seated nature of urban public education dilemmas suggests they cannot be solved school by school, or divorced from historical, political, economic, and ideological contexts (Lipman & Haines, 2007; Henig, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006).

However, there are formidable barriers to the sustainability and scaling of such change. For PSU to stimulate long-term educational change, it must minimally attain sustainability and alignment internally and externally (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Gold, Simon, & Peralta, 2013; Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009). Youth groups especially face many challenges to viability.

Meanwhile, scaling progressive urban reform must include building power to address root causes and to affect norms, relations, and policymaking on multiple levels (Joselowsky, 2007; Coburn, 2003). This requires credibility, framing, coalitions, and cross-cutting glocalized movements (Renée & McAlister, 2011; Henig, 2011; Anyon, 2014). Balancing depth, scope, and spread in reform is a core tension in scaling (Trent & Chavis, 2009).

While tackling each of these dimensions, scaling strategies and tactics of youth education organizing groups must address the hegemony of corporate reform. This paradigm prioritizes values like competition, efficiency, and austerity, and devalues grassroots input and collaboration (Gold, Simon, Cucchiara, Mitchell, & Riffer, 2007; Orr & Rogers, 2011; Lipman & Haines, 2007; Ravitch, 2013). Neoliberal reform also suggests education problems can be expediently resolved,

when decades of research have not unearthed panaceas for instant progress (Ravitch, 2013; Hornbeck, 2015).

Research Questions and Overview of Methodology

This study explored the following two broad research questions.

1. What strategies has PSU implemented to promote internal stability, integrity, and growth over time?
2. What theories of change, principles, strategies, and methods has PSU adopted to attempt to influence the various dimensions of scale important to urban educational reform?

Findings pertinent to PSU's sustainability and scaling reflect themes in the literature, as well as grounded theory that emerged from data. This study utilizes a historical case study approach. Primary methods were unstructured interviews, textual analysis, and analysis of PSU's IRS form 990s.

Significance of Research

Myriad studies have explored aspects of sustainability and scale in education and youth organizing, including several involving PSU. For example, Bhimji (2007) learned how PSU's "free spaces" of empowerment, democracy, and inclusion support retention (Boyte & Evans, 1986, p. 110), and how PSU's political education and media symbolize student movements for expanding educational rights. Conner, Zaino, and Scarola (2013) documented how PSU's framing and assertive self-representation

helped it facilitate multilevel change and boost its credibility among key decision makers. Yet no research provides an in-depth historical look at the theories, principles, and methods by which youth-led groups like PSU navigate both challenges of maintaining internal stability and of striving to have influence at multiple scales.

Having sustained for nearly a quarter of a century, PSU is one of the oldest youth education organizing groups in the country. Conner and Rosen (2013) highlighted PSU's longevity by noting that it has endured SDP churn by organizing under seven different superintendents with distinct visions and styles, as well as under multiple interim leaders. Conner et al. (2013) identified PSU as one of the most "established" and "well-known contemporary youth organizing groups" (p. 561). PSU's durability allows investigation of what accounts for its long-term sustainability, and how its strategies for stability and scaling evolved alongside ascendant reform regimes, power webs, and sociohistorical trends governing the SDP over the last few decades.

Understanding strategies for stability, growth, and managing adversity is especially critical to youth organizing since it is more vulnerable to instability, and to school reform since significant change takes time. Few studies have probed specific leadership development processes in youth action and their significance to organizational sustainability and scaling. My study analyzes PSU's leadership development processes and evolution, such as developing a curriculum, media and communications training, and a pipeline providing progressive and meaningful opportunities to lead.

In addition, my longitudinal exploration of PSU's executive leadership sheds light on how and why adult leaders are integral to youth action groups, and how these groups manage executive transitions. There is scarce research on executive leadership in youth action, or on how groups navigate executive transitions.

There is also little analysis of how youth groups evolve financially or engage intermediaries. PSU's case is remarkable because of how it was innovative in adapting to changing local and national philanthropic priorities. Each of these topics is critical to the sustainability of youth action.

Meanwhile, understanding PSU's scaling is significant because it attempted to tackle multiple dimensions of scale. Since each of these scales is essential to sustaining equity-based reform, it is critical to better understand how groups and the field address each of these facets, and how they navigate challenges presented by such ambitious organizing over time. As well, PSU's scaling strategies—such as coalition-building and accruing credibility—have arguably contributed to its sustainability.

This case is also significant because PSU has been an antagonistic counterweight to dominant regimes and values over multiple decades. The SDP has been a primary locus for the ascension of prevailing modern regimes in urban school reform, which increasingly gained bipartisan support over the last few decades. These trends included: privatization, state control, austerity and inequitable funding, zero tolerance, high-stakes testing, and school closings. PSU has been steely in resisting these trends, often in a leading role.

In 2001, Philadelphia became the largest urban school district to turn over control to its state government (Simon, Gold, & Cucchiara, 2011). The SDP long displayed top-down governance (Mediratta et al., 2001b), but became arguably less democratic under neoliberal reform and state control (Conner et al., 2013). Simon et al. (2011) found market-based reform diminished the impact of groups that favored public engagement and equity. The School Reform Commission—which governed the SDP after the state assumed control—did not align with the values of SDP youth action that prioritized inclusion (Simon et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, by 2003, Philadelphia had the most charters of any city at 45 (Tyler, 2002). 31 percent of Philadelphia's youth were in charters by 2015 (Woodall, 2015), the third highest proportion of students in charters among cities (Public Citizens for Children and Youth [PCCY], 2015).

Charterization and privatization combined with "urban austerity politics" (Lipman, 2015; Köhler & Wissen, 2003) to decimate the SDP. The SDP had been steadily counting on less local revenue since 1998, until federal and state cuts reversed this trend in 2012. After federal stimulus money expired, Corbett cut $1.1 billion from Pennsylvania's K-12 budget. Pennsylvania students lost on average $450, but Philadelphia's already-low per-pupil expenditures were cut by more than $1,300 on average, the most losses per pupil in the state (Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, 2013, as cited in LeBlanc, 2013). Such drastic alterations in state funding are especially detrimental to the SDP because, relative to other large urban districts, it depends more on state-based revenue (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2015a).

The SDP closed 30 schools from 2010-2014, most of which ceased operating in 2013 to resolve a $300 million budget deficit. District schools lost more than 25,000 students in that time, one-sixth of the student population (Limm, 2014). In this milieu, PSU transgressed the "pattern of spectatorship" assumed by neoliberalism and led effective if ultimately limited resistance (Bhimji, 2007; Conner & Rosen, 2013).

PSU also is noteworthy for its leading role in fruitful efforts to "flip the script" of the conversation around causes of violence and dropouts in urban public schools (Dzurinko et al. (2011). This was integral to transforming degenerative narratives about urban youth of color that led to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia embracing zero tolerance, which "took on a life of its own" (Jordan, 2015). From 2003-04 to 2008-09, ten-day out-of-school suspensions in Philadelphia skyrocketed from zero to 1,078, and expulsions exploded from 31 in 2003-2004 to 191 in 2009-2010 (Rainbow Research, 2012). Between 30 and 42 percent of out-of-school suspensions in the SDP were due to "disruption." While schooling 9.4 percent of the state's youth, the SDP was responsible for 28.4 percent of student arrests in 2013 (Jordan, 2013).

Meanwhile, ally Youth United for Change (YUC) found that boredom and lack of engagement were also pushing many peers out of school. High-stakes testing contributed to disengagement (YUC, 2011), another trend PSU confronted. Testing "has been another way to distinguish the haves from the have-nots." Across the country, under-resourced schools are prompted to take resources from a holistic curriculum and extracurricular programs to prioritize test prep (Herold, 2013; Hing,

2013). Similar to Ravitch (2013), PSU underlined profit motives underpinning the testing industry.

Because of PSU's long-term positionality as a central countercurrent to the prevailing regimes of austerity, privatization, zero tolerance, and high-stakes reform, it is an apt barometer of how student-led reform visions are scaled and their potential influence. My study explores the theories, strategies, and methods behind resisting these trends at multiple scales and over time.

This study is also important since most studies about scale and education reform focus on short-term change, despite the long-term and dynamic nature of meaningful educational change (Elmore, 1996; Coburn, 2003). More rigorous longitudinal and historical reform research is imperative, especially since there are many threats to enduring progressivism in urban reform.

Furthermore, scholars like Gold et al. (2013) and Renée & McAlister (2011) have stressed conceptualizing and evaluating indicators of scaling in grassroots school reform. PSU is ideal to inform these benchmarks, since it has existed for more than two decades and tried to achieve multiscalar transformation. This case also sheds light on pivotal reform and theory of change concepts like framing and depth, spread, and scope (Coburn, 2003; Trent & Chavis, 2009).

Rogers et al. (2012) called for appreciating the mechanisms through which youth action cultivates conscientious citizens. PSU's political education, crucial to members understanding and tackling scale, addresses this gap.

These authors also endorse examining how groups like PSU tactically engage diverse audiences. PSU's case illuminates its evolving strategies for engaging and messaging to dynamic target systems, cardinal challenges for education organizing (Henig, 2011; Coburn, 2003; Renée & McAlister, 2011). This study also addresses a pivotal facet of scaling neglected by the literature: how grassroots education mobilization encounters state politics.

Finally, PSU provides insight into theories, strategies and methods for movement-building, another area urgently needing operationalization. PSU is a fitting case for such analysis due to its positionality between local and extralocal mobilization, past and recent foment, discursive and political contestation, and between interdependent protest.

Summary and Timeline of PSU and Reform Context

To understand PSU's case and its strategies for sustainability and scaling, it is crucial to better understand its evolution within the context of school reform at multiple scales. In addition to the context already discussed that establishes the significance of PSU as a case study, the timeline in Table 1 highlights key organizational developments and campaigns over time—including setbacks—as well as relevant historical events in the SDP, in Pennsylvania, and in federal policy. Chapter 2 also provides more information about PSU within the context of the evolution of urban youth education organizing.

Table 1 Timeline of Key Events

Year	**Key Events**
1993	***Pennsylvania*** • School funding formula frozen.
1994	***Federal Policy*** • Zero tolerance policies became prevalent nationwide after Congress required states to adopt laws that guaranteed one-year expulsions for any student who brought a firearm to school. All 50 states adopted such laws, which were required to receive federal funding. The intent of zero tolerance—which became widespread in the 1990s and 2000s—was to deter serious, violent, or illegal behavior with strong discipline. Drugs, guns, and violence were primary targets. In practice, zero tolerance was used for a much wider spread and utilization for minor offenses (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011; Sellers, 2013). Though rates of criminal activity in schools have barely changed, zero tolerance policies and increased presence of school police officers helped almost double the amount of suspensions in schools from 1974 to 2000 (Wald & Losen, 2003).
1995	***PSU Organizational Event*** • PSU founded by Eric Braxton and about a dozen peers, who wanted to transform a lack of student voice in the decision-making process about schools and subpar urban education conditions.
	School District of Philadelphia • David Hornbeck becomes superintendent. PSU was most harmonious with Hornbeck, especially around state school funding.
1996	***PSU Campaign*** • Organized first walkout and confronted mayor Ed Rendell, contributing to $15 million in additional school funding.
	PSU Organizational Event • Beginning its leadership program, PSU conducted a sixteen-week long "Community Outreach and Leadership Development" (COLD) course. COLD interrogated root causes of social problems and learn leadership skills such as "public speaking, political organizing, conflict resolution, working with the media, and peer counseling."
1997	***PSU Organizational Event*** • Opened its first school chapters.
	Pennsylvania • The state passed the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, which enabled creation of publicly funded, independently operated schools with specialized curricula.
1998	
1999	
2000	***PSU Campaign*** • Campaigned to better student-staff relations and instruction at Bartram High School.
2001	***PSU Organizational Event*** • PSU incorporated under the name Philadelphia Student Union.

Year	**Key Events**
	PSU Campaign • PSU was a chief player in resistance to wholesale privatization of the SDP, which prevented privatization of high schools and central offices, secured a second mayoral appointment to the School Reform Commission (SRC), and reduced the number of schools handed over to for-profit providers.
	School District of Philadelphia • The state-sanctioned SRC was formed to replace the school board and oversee the SDP. The SRC, consisting of 3 appointees by the governor and 2 by the mayor, oversaw an era of rampant SDP privatization and further constricting of the budget, with little improvement in the SDP's image, leadership, finances, or outcomes (Rainbow Research, 2012). The state takeover was immediately followed by Edison gaining control of 60 schools and the SDP central office.
	Federal Policy • The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed. NCLB significantly strengthened the federal role in schooling, tied academic success to test scores, and led to unprecedented growth of charters. Avenues to grassroots engagement are conspicuously absent from NCLB (Joselowsky, 2007).
2002	***PSU Campaigns*** • Joined Philadelphia Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform. • PSU-led research and organizing compelled the SDP to double counselors in Philadelphia public high schools. PSU also designed the Student Success Center (SSC) model, which provided districtwide student supports and served as a blueprint for other urban districts. PSU had to regularly safeguard SSCs from being weakened or axed, and they were no longer funded after 2012.
	School District of Philadelphia • Paul Vallas becomes chief executive officer of the SDP. Vallas, who previously presided over the Chicago School District, was comfortable with ushering in privatization. Still, PSU was able to negotiate several significant policy gains.
2003	***PSU Campaigns*** • Bartram High School students conceptualized Student Success Centers, which were established in 14 schools. • Led a grassroots coalition to redesign West Philadelphia High School (West) as a community-based school. In 2006, PSU ensured West was not removed from the SDP's capital budget, and $81 million was restored for West. In 2007, PSU conducted student surveys to guide creation of four themed academies. Construction on the new facility began in 2009. PSU was pivotal in ensuring the new West building opened in fall 2012. • PSU and YUC led small schools mobilization, through 2009.
	Pennsylvania • Ed Rendell becomes governor.
2004	***PSU Organizational Event*** • PSU's restructuring begins in late 2004, as it transitions from Mr. Braxton. PSU is mostly internally focused during this period, and endured tumult of ineffective interim co-directors and student leadership; of a counterproductive culture antagonistic to adult leader; and of a lack of processes to handle grievances or to replace directors. Operations ceased and PSU's board temporarily shut it down in 2005.

Year	**Key Events**
	PSU Campaigns • PSU embarked on a long-term campaign to highlight inegalitarian distribution of qualified and experienced educators across the SDP. PSU linked with the Education First Compact to develop a Teacher Quality/Equity Platform. The platform included convening a public hearing at City Council. Also, PSU galvanized support for teacher incentive grants. PSU also surveyed teachers, conducted public actions, spoke at an SRC meeting, and produced a video. • Pressured the SDP to contract Fellowship Farm to help students and teachers from Bartram High School improve relations.
2005	
2006	***PSU Organizational Event*** • Ms. Dzurinko becomes executive director. PSU institutes policies to address executive succession, including a 5-year commitment for executive directors and a Transition Committee dedicated to managing executive turnover. PSU begins a period of growth that reasserts its stability and reputation. • Leadership development curriculum codified, emphasizing media and communications.
2007	***PSU Campaigns*** • Pennsylvania's costing-out study released, due to years of grassroots pressure. In 2008, funding is expanded throughout the state, and a formula adopted. PSU documents positive impacts of more funding and initiates a statewide movement-building effort in reaction to internalizing the widespread and diverse nature of underfunding. • United with West Philadelphia High School leaders to develop and implement restorative practices, contributing to a 70 percent lessening of violent incidents across 3 years.
	Pennsylvania • Costing out study reveals pervasiveness of funding inequity, including in rural and suburban areas.
2008	***PSU Campaigns*** • Led productive trainings of school security at Sayre High School, which led to conducting citywide trainings of school police officers and served as a national model for cultivating relationships, trust, and awareness between students and school police. • PSU was the primary student voice in Cross City's Effective Teaching Campaign. PSU utilized public actions and petitions as part of broader organizing demanding that the mayor, the SDP, and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) prioritize the needs of youth during contract negotiations. Throughout PSU's teacher quality campaigns, PSU clamored that state and city leaders were obligated to invest in teachers and schools facing the toughest circumstances. Ultimately, the contract included site selection in all high-needs schools, and enhanced training and supports for new teachers. Since 2009, PSU helped grow the Teacher Action Group. • PSU helped establish the Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ), which it anchored from 2010 – 2012. AEJ has helped mitigate the school-to-prison pipeline, including spurring the Departments of Education and Justice to establish the Supportive School Discipline in 2011. AEJ mobilized multiple intergenerational rallies in Washington, DC, which helped in forming the Congressional Caucus on Engaging, Educating and Employing America's Youth in 2011.

Year	**Key Events**
	School District of Philadelphia • Arlene Ackerman appointed as superintendent. Ackerman created Imagine 2014, which accelerated charterization and closings. Widespread cheating allegations, ineffective handling of school violence, and top-down governance led to Ackerman's 2011 resignation. Ackerman was actively hostile to grassroots organizing.
	Pennsylvania • During Rendell's last four-year term, his administration invested $1.15 billion in funding, a high-water mark for budget increases in basic education funding in Pennsylvania. In addition, the state legislature agreed to a needs-based formula.
	Federal Policy • Barack Obama's signature Race to the Top (R2T) initiative launched, a $5 billion initiative to increase test scores via competition between states for funding tied to score gains. It further supported charters and devalued equitable financing and poverty reduction.
2009	***PSU Organizational Event*** • Devoted staff position to individual donor coordinator.
	PSU Campaigns • Envisioned and developed the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools (CNS). CNS spurred alterations to the SDP's code of conduct. In 2012, CNS secured student inclusion in the SDP's Safety and Engagement committee. In 2013, CNS won piloting of restorative justice in 10 high schools.
	School District of Philadelphia • CNS was sparked in December 2009, in the aftermath of 30 Asian immigrant students being viciously beaten by Black peers at South Philadelphia High. The incident caught national attention due to student walkouts and a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation that revealed school leadership knew about simmering tensions and acted "deliberately indifferent" (Chow, 2015). Youth flash mobs in Philadelphia occurred around the same time and also involved violence (Kelley, 2010).
2010	***PSU Campaigns*** • Following violence at South Philadelphia High School in December 2009, PSU was asked to help cultivate leadership for cross-cultural understanding at the school. PSU facilitated monthly, multi-lingual meetings between Black, White, and Asian immigrant students. Unprecedented relationships and collaborative problem-solving led to a vastly improved climate, and the school was removed from the "persistently dangerous" list in fall 2012. • Incubated a partnership with the Office of School Safety to nurture student leadership in engaging school police in two neighborhood high schools with climate dilemmas. Districtwide student-led trainings of more than fifty school police officers led to consequential change. • At Furness High School (Furness), PSU joined with the principal to improve attendance, climate, and student achievement. Even so, Furness was still slated for closure in 2011. PSU was instrumental in mobilizing students to meet with the principal and voice their desires for keeping Furness open at SRC meetings. Furness was taken off the school closings list; PSU also met with local congressmen to champion federal investment in schools.

Year	**Key Events**
2011	***PSU Organizational Event*** • PSU participates in Capacity-Building Initiative (CBI) launched by Communities for Public Education Reform (CPER) in 2011. CPER began in 2007 as a national funders' collaborative that promoted movement-building for equitable reform led by low-income students of color. PSU received executive coaching consultation, and support for the grassroots alternative plan to downsizing put forth by the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS). PSU and YUC also led a youth organizing training for CBI.
	Pennsylvania • Corbett assumes office. State school funding is cut by more than $1 billion (Hing, 2013). Corbett's budget also increased prison funding by $423 million (PSU & Decarcerate PA, 2014).
2012	***PSU Organizational Event*** • William Penn, a major regional foundation, ceased support for PSU after 17 years of sponsorship. William Penn aligned with wholesale charterization
	PSU Campaigns • Responding to BCG's downsizing plan for the SDP, PSU and YUC combine with teachers, parents, labor, and community activists to form PCAPS. PCAPS crafted an evidence-based alternative to BCG's plan, and led protests against closings and privatization. Due to staunch community opposition, the SRC postponed voting on BCG's blueprint. By 2013, the SDP cut ties with BCG. • Building a statewide youth network culminates in a 2012 mass rally in Harrisburg to resist budget cuts under Corbett. PSU led all facets of coordination, including leadership development, political education, communications, tactical strategies, and engaging lawmakers. • PSU helped conduct a No Vouchers tour to state lawmakers' offices in opposition to a bill that would redirect money to private schools. The action prompted a senator to reject vouchers. • Co-founded Journey for Justice (J4J), a national grassroots multigenerational force against school closings and privatization in poor communities of color. J4J engaged the DOE, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Office of Civil Rights to investigate civil rights violations caused by these trends.
	School District of Philadelphia • Boston Consulting Group creates plan to downsize the SDP—marked by sixty-four school closings and the gutting of budgets, resources and personnel . The SDP closed 30 schools from 2010-2014. • William Hite becomes superintendent. Austerity, SDP contraction, and privatization continue.
2013	***PSU Organizational Event*** • Mr. Rivera becomes executive director. • Organized a walkout of thousands of SDP students, in protest of intensifying austerity.

Year	**Key Events**
2014	***PSU Campaigns*** • Contributed to change in federal school discipline and climate policy, progressing toward restorative practices. • Helped coordinate a die-in protesting structural violence at SDP headquarters, in support of Black Lives Matter, and a national day of action facilitated by the Alliance for Educational Justice. • Staged die-ins at Masterman (middle and high school) and Science Leadership Academy (SLA).
2015	***PSU Organizational Event*** • PSU evicted from the West Philadelphia space it called home for almost 5 years. PSU raised money to afford a new space via an Indiegogo campaign.
	PSU Campaigns • SLA conducted a "More Than a Test" campaign, which included a test-in, forum, and website highlighting the ills of high-stakes testing and standardization, as well as growing grassroots opposition to these regimes.
	Pennsylvania • Tom Wolf becomes governor, capitalizing on support for increasing school funding and expanding access to pre-kindergarten.
	Federal Policy • The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is passed, replacing NCLB. ESSA retained NCLB's standardized testing requirements, but directed more control to states and local districts in determining accountability standards. ESSA also compels schools to offer college and career counseling and advanced placement courses to all students.
2016	***PSU Campaign*** • After mobilizing around a PSU member being assaulted by a school police officer, Superintendent Hite agrees to five PSU demands addressing brutality by school police and climate.
	Pennsylvania • After another audit of the state's school funding mechanism underscored deep inequities, a fair funding formula is passed. Additionally, the state's auditor general deemed Pennsylvania's charter school law "the worst" in the country. The law gave little power to districts to guarantee new charters are high-performing and equitably serving students, and it compelled districts to spend much time and resources when closing underperforming charters (McCorry, 2016). Cyber charters are specifically called out for being irresponsible with public money.
2017	***PSU Organizational Event*** • Hiram Rivera steps down as executive director.
	School District of Philadelphia • The SRC voted to dissolve itself, effective summer 2018, succumbing to years of grassroots pressure seeking a return to local control.
2018	***School District of Philadelphia*** • SRC disbanded and district control returned to the city and its newly selected Philadelphia School Board.

Year	**Key Events**
	Pennsylvania • A lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's system of funding public schools is allowed to move to trial.
	Federal Policy • The Trump administration's Federal Commission on School Safety, formed after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas high school, recommended rolling back policies that discouraged school officers from disciplining students for minor disruptions and that pushed for more positive and less punitive responses to student behavior.

Sources: PSU's website, GuideStar profile, and newsletters

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one summarizes the study's purpose and approach—including defining the problem—and also outlines the study's significance, research questions, and methodology. Chapter two situates PSU within the conceptualization, emergence, and maturation of youth urban education organizing. This chapter outlines features and foci of youth organizing, highlighting its approach to student-related dilemmas. To appreciate PSU as the unit of analysis, I elucidate the different models of youth organizing. This chapter also suggests the unique role of PSU's target population and organizations like PSU in scaling youth urban education organizing and progressive reform. Finally, I summarize the promise of and barriers to youth action.

Chapter three surveys literature to develop frameworks for analyzing PSU's strategies for sustainability and scaling. This chapter raises tensions in the literature that resonate with PSU's case, such as friction between collaboration and conflict.

Ideas in this chapter were in literatures about education and youth organizing, organizational sustainability and integrity, and grassroots, multiscalar change.

Chapter four outlines the study's methodology, including research questions, data collection methods and sources, sampling, data analysis procedures, and methodological limitations. Chapter five presents findings about PSU's strategies for stability, and then about its change theories, principles, approaches, and methods for multiscalar influence. The chapter charts PSU's key adaptations over time. Data is related to key themes and frictions in the literature.

Chapter six offers syntheses about PSU's experience with sustainability and scaling, including how its evolution reflects on literature and what data suggest is unique about PSU's case. Recommendations and conclusions are discussed.

Chapter 2

EVOLUTION OF YOUTH URBAN EDUCATION ORGANIZING

To better understand PSU and its experience with sustainability and scaling, it is important to trace its development within the conceptualization and evolution of youth urban education organizing. Youth organizing is an outgrowth of: traditional community organizing; youth movements of the 1960s and 1970s; and positive youth development (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Pittman, 2000). Youth action's most kindred historical and conceptual forebear is the heritage of youth and students as movement agents (Hoose, 1993; McElroy, 2001; HoSang, 2003).

Contemporary youth action arose in a context of persistent institutional failure, epitomized by the distressed schools in urban, low-income communities of color where PSU focuses its efforts (Perez, 2003). Youth action evolved alongside education organizing before their merger. It arose by the end of the 1980s to confront Reagan-era challenges (Rogers & Morrell, 2011). Then, a consensus about the necessity of youth leadership in education organizing crystallized in the early 1990s (Delgado & Staples, 2008). A youth action infrastructure coalesced, including independent nonprofits (HoSang, 2003; Rogers et al., 2012). PSU arose during a mid-1990s surge in education organizing (Mediratta et al., 2001a). By 2000, three of four youth groups tackled school reform (Endo, 2002).

As with PSU, schools are focal sites of contestation for poor urban youth of color. Students have linked academic performance to poverty and segregation (HoSang, 2003), and there has been much mobilization around learning opportunities,

college access, and the penal regime (Rogers et al., 2012). Students have fought to provide education to homeless and detained youth, and to demilitarize schools (LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

From 2010-2013, youth action wins in the United States were most prevalent in "educational justice/education reform." Twenty-four of 84 victories involved schools (HoSang, 2003; Braxton, Buford, & Marasigan, 2013).

Anti-privatization battles are vital to youth education organizing in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Newark (Jaffe, 2015). Immigrant student mobilization has also exploded, launching protracted struggles and winning tuition benefits and bilingual reform. The United We Dream Network—spanning 25 states and 52 groups—led organizing around the Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (HoSang, 2003; Braxton et al., 2013).

Youth action has evolved into a multiscalar movement. Ishihara (2007) reported 94 percent of groups had collaborations in other cities. The vast majority of youth-led reforms occur at scale (Warren et al., 2008). In the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) 2013 national field scan, 80 percent of 84 wins were at least at a community level (Braxton et al., 2013). Burgeoning youth activism has brought renewed attention to youth and educational rights (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Renée & McAlister, 2011; Braxton et al., 2013).

PSU's emergence coalesced in tandem with the blossoming of youth education organizing over the last few decades, and it has addressed the most pressing issues of concern for youth. Next, I describe the models of youth and education organizing, and

how PSU is structured. This is relevant to comprehending PSU and its efforts for stability and scaling, such as networking with divergent groups.

Organizational Models of Youth and Education Organizing

Nonprofit organizations are the lifeblood of movements (Delgado & Staples, 2008), including for educational justice. PSU and many partners are non-profits. Youth education organizing groups are mostly composed of high schoolers (Mediratta et al., 2001a).

According to Delgado and Staples (2008), youth action groups are generally community-based, disconnected from larger networks, and streamlined with small staffs. Meanwhile, education organizing is typically linked to broader agendas and propped up by larger networks (Mediratta et al., 2001a), reflecting the shift of community organizing to schools (Warren, 2011; Shirley, 2011). PSU is autonomous, grassroots, and streamlined, but collaborates with broader networks.

At the beginning of the century, a quarter of education organizing groups were youth-based and another quarter multigenerational. By 2013, about half of youth organizations operated intergenerationally. A quarter of 2013 FCYO scan respondents identified as youth-led entities in adult-led groups. Twenty-four percent of groups were youth-led; youth in these organizations "provide leadership for design, implementation, and evaluation of organizing campaigns, as well as management of the organization" (Braxton et al., 2013, p. 15). For HoSang (2003), PSU exemplifies

growth of independent youth organizations, with a strong emphasis on youth ownership, decision-making, and leadership.

Though there are distinct modes of youth engagement, unity among these strains is significant to maximizing scaling of progressive reform. Youth organizations may provide services first and move into organizing, or vice versa (Zimmerman, Chow, & James, 2005). Ideally, “smart education systems” (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, n.d.) can unite organizing, services, and advocacy to optimize resources, opportunities, and support for students (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Most groups seeking educational change are multi-racial—primarily Black and Latino—including PSU. Some focus on vulnerable gender and ethnic groups. In more recent years, PSU has amplified challenges faced by immigrants and recruited more immigrant students (Conner & Rosen, 2013). Most education organizing groups, like PSU, focus on poor and working-class constituencies (Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Youth organizing groups are mostly structured by geography, issue, and identity; PSU fits this mold. Culture, art, and creativity are intrinsic to youth organizing, including “hip-hop activism” (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 61). As scholars like Weiss (2003) and Bhimji (2007) discovered, PSU exemplifies youth organizing by exhibiting its key characteristics.

The Promise and Constraints of Youth Urban Education Organizing

Youth action has become a "viable and significant method for involving disenfranchised communities" (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 20); "young people are helping to define important reforms of our time" (Braxton et al., 2013, p. 7). Youth have been front and center of progressivism necessary for equitable school reform (Anyon, 2014; Lipman 2011).

The maturation of national youth education organizing over the last few decades in response to neoliberal and penal regimes exemplifies "spade work." This mobilization that precedes "mass flowering" often goes unrecognized, but is equally pivotal (Anyon, 2014, p. 188).

Yet youth- and equity-centered reform is not guaranteed; degenerative policy paradigms and deep-seated inequities persist. Youth organizing is still a maturing, resource-challenged field with a lack of campaign prototypes, training resources, and politically influential networks (HoSang, 2003; Delgado & Staples, 2008). There are few robust national education organizing networks at the federal level (Warren, 2011).

Due to obstacles to the optimal scaling of youth urban education organizing, it is imperative to understand how groups like PSU seek sustainability and scaling to enhance capacities, campaigns, and movements. The following chapter explores theoretical and empirical facets of sustainability and scaling that relate to PSU's case.

Chapter 3

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE IN YOUTH EDUCATION ORGANIZING

Organizational sustainability is an essential prerequisite for scaling. Groups like PSU must strive for sustainability due to meaningful educational change generally requiring at least seven to ten years (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Over time, groups like PSU must also aim for alignment to ensure integrity of mission, values, and process (Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009; Trent & Chavis, 2009). These ideals are challenging since youth-based groups are prone to dissolution (Parham & Pinzino, 2004).

This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding facets of organizational sustainability and scaling within the field of youth education organizing and urban school reform. First, it contextualizes PSU within the modern consolidation of youth organizing, a blossoming but vulnerable phenomenon. Then, it excavates literature on the following aspects germane to PSU's experience with sustainability: leadership development; executive leadership; staff management and capacity building; keys to fiscal stability and the relationship between financing and scaling; intermediary support; recruitment and retention; and the role of planning, documentation, and evaluation. Many of these elements are also integral to scaling.

Next, this chapter explains the theories and literature related to PSU's scaling, including:

- the rationale for under-resourced urban public schools and their students being central to reform efforts;

- the role of political education, praxis, and empowerment in urban youth education organizing;
- the significance of framing to urban reform and urban youth, and the methods by which youth education organizers engage in framing;
- pathways to credibility and legitimacy, crucial elements for scaling reform, including data and research;
- the importance of multidimensional theories of scaling, including "deep" change, spread, grassroots localized reform, and vertical power-building, such as through coalition-building and electoral strategies;
- the processes and challenges of engaging dynamic targets, including balancing collaboration and conflict;
- and the promise and challenges of intersectional movement-building.

A Sustainable Field? The Vulnerability of Youth Organizing Groups

Youth-led mobilization has energized organizations and movements for centuries, but the field of youth education organizing solidified over the past few decades. In the 1990s, heretofore spontaneous and volunteer youth mobilizing efforts crystallized into formal organizing projects. Non-profits were established to fundraise, hire staff, develop leaders, and run long-term campaigns (Rogers et al., 2012).

Education organizing budgets range from less than $100,000 to greater than $500,000; most have small staffs and rely on volunteers (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Renée & McAlister, 2011). External shocks can be devastating for the field. Youth action groups, which also face many obstacles to stability, should experiment and take risks to adapt (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Leadership development is focal to weathering threats to stability. The next section highlights the central role of leadership development in the sustainability and scaling of youth organizing groups. It outlines the purposes and processes of leadership development, and the roles and skills of youth organizing leaders.

Leadership Development for Sustainability and Scaling

Leadership development is cardinal to the sustainability and scaling of youth action. It should be ongoing to mitigate turnover, and is vital to program integrity (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009). It involves gaining experience engaging decision makers and diverse adults, such as urban reform stakeholders (Rogers et al., 2012). Politicized leadership development buttresses movements (Kim & Sherman, 2006; Bhimji, 2007).

Youth action promotes transformational leadership (Staples, 2004), enabling decentralization and spread. All youth should participate in decision-making and experience consequences of leadership. Still, most youth action groups rely on a cadre or small group of student leaders. Developing a core of leaders is fundamental to smooth leadership transitions and organizational stability (Delgado & Staples, 2008; LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Youth action should include leadership workshops and mentoring activities (LISTEN, Inc., 2003). Leadership development can occur via “project creation,” “institution governance,” or “issue-based advocacy” (Stoneman, 2003), and through art and expression (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Groups should cultivate youth leaders to serve multiple roles vital to sustainability and scaling, such as "researcher, organizer, advocate, coordinator, evaluator, advisor, and policymaker" (Fernández, 2002, p. 7). Youth action leaders must learn to administer meetings, fundraising, and outreach. Public speaking and grant writing can be indispensable to youth confidence (Polk & Clayborne, 2004). Youth organizers need to be capable in "collective decision-making, negotiation, and conflict resolution" (Rogers et al., 2012, p. 48).

Additional functions of the "leader-organizer" (Staples, 2004, as cited in Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 128) include "problem-solving, action research, strategic planning, direct action tactics…team building, media relations, lobbying, advocacy, administration, and management." Tackling racism requires a concerted approach and "racial justice competencies" (Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004, p. 8). Organizing enhances leadership skills and broadens educational horizons, including the ability to graduate (Mediratta, Shah, & McAlister, 2009; Saunders et al., 2013; Conner, 2011).

There are several hindrances to authentic and sustainable youth leadership, or "process integrity" (Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009, p. 3). "Participation quality" is influenced by how consistently organizational policies and practices embrace youth authority (Checkoway, 1998, p. 768). Several factors contribute to prioritizing service delivery instead: adultist staff perceptions, internalized oppression among youth, and a lack of youth knowledge about "technical community systems" (Checkoway, 1998, p.785).

Leadership Ladders and Pipelines

To promote sustainability and scaling, leadership development should groom leadership ladders and pipelines within organizations like PSU. Leadership pipelines are pivotal to the maintenance and growth of youth action groups and the field.

A structured pipeline hedges against transitions (LISTEN, Inc., 2003). Young leaders can climb a "'ladder of leadership'" by gaining experience and skills (Delgado & Staples, 2008)—such as those associated with media-making (Larson & Hansen, 2005)—and then exercising power (Zimmerman, 2004). Youth are granted significant authority and roles in projects and campaigns. They become peer trainers, or staff and board members. Other leadership opportunities are revolving committee chairs and meeting facilitators, as well as consensus decision-making (LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Leadership ladders should prepare youth for life beyond organizational commitments, or the "post-termination" phase (Pancer, 2001). Nonetheless, youth exits can deplete vital institutional memory (Weiss, 2003). Alumni are extensions of leadership ladders and primary resources for mentoring youth who leave and maintaining continuity (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Tracking and connecting with alumni is chief to growing the field (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015).

To extend ladders, youth should be alerted to potentials of making a livelihood in organizing (Mizrahi, 1993; Braxton et al., 2013). Connecting organizing to potential jobs and further education can alleviate transitions. Youth action should prepare youth for a variety of careers, including those not requiring college matriculation (Joselowsky, 2007).

A lack of organizing career pathways is a significant barrier to progressivism (Delgado & Staples, 2008). To remedy this, a "state-based, systematic" framework for realizing career arcs in organizing and non-youth organizations is ideal. Related strategies are city and state "youth leadership networks" with non-youth organizations as "trainers, facilitators, or presenters," and on-going planning and training in which youth and non-youth groups cross-pollinate. The divide between youth and non-youth exacerbates the dearth of a robust organizing pipeline (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015, p. 26). The pipeline must be more inclusive and address needs of low-income youth, youth of color, and female youth (Braxton et al., 2013).

Youth leadership ladders and pipelines are imperative, but youth action groups like PSU could not prosper without exemplary executive leadership. The next section briefly sketches key qualities of executive leaders involved in scaling change.

Executive Leadership Capacities and Transitions

Transcendent executive vision and facilities are also key to stability and scaling. An absence of apt leaders can cripple multiscalar change efforts; "commitment to the cause is not enough" (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 101). There must be a "broker and keeper of the vision"; proficient directors foreground mission, promote "alignment and fit" between goals and resources, and enable innovation. This role demands connecting organizations, resources, change agents, experts, community members, and funders (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 98).

Directors must be keen about systems, policies, and politics to "conceptualize and strategize for scale," including how to influence decision makers and satisfy stakeholders. They should have "place-based experience" or a robust policy background, strong local bonds, and advanced understanding of local dynamics. An outstanding leader uses networks to curry resources and affect change while keeping continuity (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 101). These qualities are essential within the context of SDP reform.

Executive turnover is inevitable and often taxing for youth groups (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Youth can grow attached to exceptional directors (Zimmerman, 2004), and must surpass distrust when engaging new adult leaders (Kirshner, 2009).

Staff Management and Organizational Capacity Building

In youth action, non-executive staff are also vital. Staff must be able to adapt and often fulfill multiple roles. Small staffs and spontaneous workgroups can thwart power accumulation and inertia (Delgado & Staples, 2008).

Challenges to staff development and scaling include identifying, paying, and developing proficient education organizers (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Staff retention is also difficult; the work is emotionally draining, exacting, and not lucrative, magnified by abundant youth needs and austerity (Pintado-Vertner, 2004). Constant sacrifice causes burnout (Pines & Maslach 1978; Harrison, 1980; Zimmerman, 2004), which can result in "organizational crisis" or dissolution (LISTEN, Inc., 2003, p. 20).

Selflessness “simply cannot form the basis for long-term sustainability and growth” (Pintado-Vertner, 2004, p. 20).

“Staff development and management” are also thorny due to decentralization and youth inexperience (Pintado-Vertner, 2004). Zimmerman (2004) urges creating “structures and guidelines” (p. 18); youth need training in “strategic planning” and “organizational development” (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 19; LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Staff capacities, resources, and preferences should match scope of missions and change strategies. A fundamental asset of lasting organizations is “adaptive capacity.” This enables responses to political, economic, and demographic change, and capitalizing on “‘surprises, accidents, and crises’” (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 107; Gold et al., 2013).

Financing Urban Youth Education Organizing

In addition to executive leadership and staff development, solvent financing is central to stability over time and to scaling. Fiscal health is significant to stability and growth, and to power and scale (Zimmerman, 2004; LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Staff devoted to fundraising and budgeting is instrumental; a national funding ombudsman is ideal. Sufficient funding demands extralocal linkages and advanced understanding of how to capitalize on opportunities (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Gold et al., 2013).

Multi-year general operating grants earmarked for youth organizing and directly granted to youth action groups can be a boon to sustainability and scale

(Parham & Pinzino, 2004; Gold et al., 2002). There are numerous avenues for diversification to fund youth action (Scheie, 2003), which is imperative (Fine & Jacobs, 2014). In-kind donations can be crucial, including space, supplies, transportation, and volunteers (Delgado & Staples, 2008).

Flexible funding is pivotal to improving capacity and technical acumen as needed. Distinct funding for capacity building and programs allows for realistic scaling. Financing should align with organizational processes and missions (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Gold et al., 2013).

To achieve "scope, scale, and sustainability," programs should not upstage community infrastructure and require a "vision." Financing should promote independence and accountability. Evaluation and data use should be funded; funding should respond to what evaluations reveal (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 100).

Challenges to funding include that youth-led groups lack funding networks and experience and training in financing (Pintado-Vertner, 2004; Soung, 2004). Most cannot hire a development director. A dearth of funding results in staff shortages and stalls long-term campaigns (Weiss, 2003; Mediratta et al., 2001a). Youth groups may not be able to harness the most advanced technologies and may have less chances to share knowledge (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000).

Urban youth action groups often operate in areas marked by rising living costs. This makes it difficult to attract organizers and limits availability of office spaces. For a youth action group, costs of travel alone can be onerous (Pintado-Vertner, 2004).

Financial Intermediaries as Levers for Sustainability and Scale

Financial intermediaries are linchpins for sustainability and scale for organizing groups. They support maintenance, capacity building, technical assistance, and evaluation (Mediratta, Fruchter, Gross, Keller, & Bonilla, 2001b; Trent & Chavis, 2009). Intermediaries sponsor travel, conferences, and "field infrastructure" (Wells, Anyon, & Oakes 2011; Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 3). Because funders are so essential to sustainability, Trent and Chavis (2009) recommend explicit communication with donors about stability.

The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing is a primary fiscal intermediary for youth action. It started in 2000 to address "long-term stability, sustainability and wider impact of youth organizing groups given their growth, maturation and challenges," and to grow resources "beyond philanthropic trends" (Mission, Vision, and History, n.d.).

In terms of education organizing, now-defunct Communities for Public Education Reform (CPER) leveraged investment from 76 local and national financial intermediaries, and granted almost $34 million to 140 grassroots and advocacy organizations. This galvanized more than ninety multilevel policy changes, including several campaigns PSU helped lead.

CPER's efficacy was tied to its glocalism. Yet the demise of CPER and Public Education Network show intermediaries' vulnerability.

Going forward, funders can underwrite progressive reform movements in several ways, including by financing diverse groups, approaches, and issues, nurturing

idea-sharing, and shaping policy. Grants for collaboration are urgent, including linking local and extralocal staff. Financing multi-tiered alliances with shared missions, or "ecosystem grantmaking," is critical. Funders can back multi-issue initiatives, including "co-funding" opportunities. As funding for face-to-face networking dwindles, financing "peer learning communities" and "cross-site visits" for intimate interaction is foundational (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 9, 17). These strategies dampen competition for funding; collaboration can then boost funding (Trent & Chavis, 2009).

Additionally, "special opportunity grants" should support organic groundswells for educational justice, and circumvent lethargy of grant cycles and poor awareness about local leadership (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 19; FCYO, 2015a). Intermediaries should help grassroots groups connect with "influentials." Within the context of progressive school reform, influentials include Pedro Noguera and Diane Ravitch. Funders must overcome siloes to pool resources for more legitimacy (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 19).

Though PSU and its allies can leverage resources from various intermediaries, many funders are leery of youth handling money (Zimmerman, 2004). Further, adultism compels youth action to consistently invest in persuading sponsors (Parham & Pinzino, 2004). Adultist fiscal "interference" is evident in legalese, giving youth less opportunities to garner resources, applying double standards, and steering youth initiatives (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 19).

Mission Congruence and Financing

As groups like PSU seek financing for sustainability and scaling, a primary fiscal hurdle is keeping integrity in competitive funding contexts that do not embrace youth action or long-term, structural change. Funders usually finance efforts that are single-issue, "beyond ideology," short-term, or direct service (Sherman, 2002, as cited in Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 157; Zimmerman, 2004). They may doubt sustainability of youth leadership, collective action, and community change (Zeller-Berkman, 2010), and are often reluctant to finance adversarial work (Warren, 2011). Meanwhile, non-discretionary and long-term funding is pivotal to sustainable and comprehensive initiatives (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Fine & Jacobs, 2014).

Because of these factors, backing for progressive youth mobilization is lacking relative to conservative youth investment (Young People For, 2006; Jonson & Van Ostern, 2012). Youth endowments pale compared to other sectors and are less secure (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004; Delgado & Staples, 2008). No youth action group budgeted over $400,000 in the late 1990s, while many youth development groups were flush with multi-million dollar budgets (Youth Organizing, 1998). In 2004, foundations dedicated just over 1 percent of grants to youth action, or $15.5 million (Ishihara, 2007). In 2013, 56 percent of FCYO's respondents had budgets under $500,000, most below $350,000 (Braxton et al., 2013).

Such tenuous investment incentivizes mission compromise. Some youth action groups avoid soliciting or accept funding that seeks to influence their missions, but they still depend on foundations (Braxton et al., 2013; LISTEN, Inc., 2003). Thus, it

is crucial to cultivate a mutual “frame of reference” with donors (Parham & Pinzino, 2004, p. 80).

PSU must navigate this reality and adverse funding climates while scaling radical reform. A typically lean funding environment for organizing is exacerbated by economic downturns like the Great Recession.

The Great Recession Diminishes Support for Youth Organizing

Except for individual donors, the Great Recession choked youth organizing funding. Many youth action grants were eliminated, especially long-term ones, and there were more strings attached. Multiple major youth action benefactors altered priorities since 2010. FCYO’s 2013 scan found 41 percent of groups received less foundation support in the two years prior (Braxton et al., 2013). Government support for youth action, never stable (Delgado & Staples, 2008), also dwindled. Staff, programs, and services suffered; many entities dissolved. Nascent, independent, and one-issue initiatives struggled (Braxton et al., 2013).

The field endured contraction via innovations like individual donors, coalitions, social enterprise, and government monies (Braxton et al., 2013). An individual donor base can serve as a rapid response funding mechanism (CPER, 2013b; Fine & Jacobs, 2014).

Still, regional funders and networks are needed to weather economic contractions and enhance stability, especially outside cities with a rich history of

supporting organizing (Braxton et al., 2013). PSU and allies must educate on impacts of vibrant public schools and grassroots change (Mediratta et al., 2001b).

Non-Fiduciary Intermediaries

Help obtaining ample financing is vital, but intermediaries also supply assistance in key non-fiduciary aspects essential for stability and scaling. Besides capacity building, they foster networking (Blank et al., 2003) and link to information, services, and power (HoSang, 2003; Trent & Chavis, 2009; Mediratta et al., 2001a). Intermediaries provide links to the public and policymakers, and offer legitimacy. Research outfits assist with data, policy analysis, and change theories (Wells et al., 2011). Philadelphia-based Research for Action (RFA) helped operationalize grassroots theories of educational change, and offered pivotal support to PSU (Gold et al., 2013). Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) has been focal to the growth of youth education organizing (Renée & McAlister, 2011). Finally, intermediaries supply litigation expertise (Fine & Jacobs, 2014) and support in combatting racism (Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004).

Recruitment and Retention

Another facet of sustainability for youth action is constant recruitment and retention (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Rogers et al., 2012). Time needed for consequential change can outlast tenure of youth organizers (Renée & McAlister, 2011), so outreach must be ongoing. A committee devoted to recruitment is prudent (Staples, 2004).

Outreach includes individual communication, harnessing social and family networks, tapping into schools and other institutions, and recruitment at arts and cultural happenings, community events, or local service projects. Recruitment hones communication skills, which are pivotal to scaling (LISTEN INC., 2003).

Recruitment efforts should acknowledge that youth may join organizing for a challenge, to socialize and network, and to take action (Sherwood & Dressner, 2004). Youth action also appeals to self-interest, limits barriers to entry, and assumes voluntary participation (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Rogers et al., 2012). It is inclusive and represents an "alternative space" for alienated youth (Perez, 2003, p. 2). Many who join are disengaged in school (Delgado & Staples, 2008); the least academically successful students often make the most long-term commitments (Sherwood & Dressner, 2004). PSU epitomizes these themes.

Campaigns should resonate with youth, reflect their lived experiences, and keep attention. Mobilization should appeal to youth affinity for "belonging," independence, and creativity, and provide growth experiences and supports. To sustain involvement, organizing groups should nurture indignation at social injustice, willingness to critique the status quo and take risks, and a conviction collective change is possible. Marginalized youth may need resocialization to overcome feelings of powerlessness (Rogers et al., 2012).

Socialization and fun are often overlooked but critical components to outreach and retention. They can enhance gratification and trigger long-term commitments. A supportive climate is important to maintain balance in lives of marginalized youth,

and to develop pro-social relationships with adults (Bhimji, 2007; Checkoway, 1996). A "'cultural space'" can fuse fun with mobilization (Weiss, 2003, as cited in Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 156).

Notwithstanding youth action groups embracing these strategies, turnover is inevitable. This is due in part to frequent leadership transitions and transience of vulnerable families (Fernández, 2002). Several other factors stymie recruitment, retention, and implementation, such as: internalized oppression (Stoneman, 2003), peer apathy (Larson & Hansen, 2005), family finances and obligations (Delgado & Staples, 2008), time and fiscal pressures, poor recognition or operating conditions, isolation, and an uninspiring vision (Karger 1981; Maslach, 1982).

Youth are susceptible to burnout because of: inexperience and immaturity; the complex issues they confront; a lack of resources; media ostracism; and scarce training and support. Therefore, youth organizers need to learn from adversity, appreciate short-term and small wins, and craft long-term visions. Youth action must plan for attrition while nurturing youth (Sherwood & Dressner, 2004).

Comprehensive, Holistic, and Ongoing Supports

Multi-faceted supports are indispensable to retention, especially for vulnerable youth. Training should begin upon recruitment and be youth-oriented (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Academic assistance, counseling, and access to health care can maintain momentum (Zimmerman et al., 2005; LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Group and team-building exercises are pivotal (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Relegated youth can benefit from "identity support practices" to combat trauma and oppression (Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004), including gender-based healing and help with family relations (Zimmerman et al., 2005). Legal help is another support aid (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Parental support is vital, especially for immigrant youth isolated from extra-curricular activity (Delgado & Staples, 2008).

Organizations should consider financial compensation or a small subsidy for youth organizers (Joselowsky, 2007; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Of respondents to FCYO's 2013 scan, 84 percent reported funding at least one paid or stipended position (Braxton et al., 2013). Most organizations provide salaried staff opportunities after extensive involvement (Delgado & Staples, 2008).

Planning, Evaluation, and Documentation

Groups like PSU must plan for recruitment and retention, as well as for other key sustainability and scaling processes (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Adult support in planning can be beneficial, but youth should be influential and are capable of sophisticated planning (Murphy & Cunningham, 2003; Larson & Hansen, 2005). Due to organizing's unpredictable nature, groups should engage in both "implementation and contingency planning" (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 153).

Evaluation is elemental to planning and mission integrity, fundraising, leadership development, internal improvement, and promoting successes (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Planning and evaluation are necessary to assess fit between processes

and desired outcomes (Trent & Chavis, 2009). Evaluation should contest "authority protocols," "rules of engagement," and assumptions (Joselowsky, 2007, p. 271). Ideal evaluation is a challenge for many youth organizing groups, due to lacking resources, experience, capacity, or time (Zimmerman, 2004; Fernández, 2002).

Evaluation is crucial to scaling school organizing. Benchmarks allow groups to assess progress, build momentum, and adapt (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Mediratta et al., 2001a). RFA and Cross City operationalized "indicator areas" of achievement in education organizing, including: leadership development; community power; social capital; accountability; equity; school/community connection; high quality instruction and curriculum; and positive school climate (Gold et al., 2002, p. 10).

Gold et al. (2002) also presented evidence-based theories of change, which could be used to assess scaling strategies. Like Trent and Chavis (2009), they contend grassroots empowerment enhances democratic participation and expands networks within school systems. Such synergy can foster public accountability essential to equity and contribute to enhanced climate and more relevant instruction. The cycle is reinforced as vibrant schools strengthen local assets. Philadelphia-based Alliance Organizing Project (AOP) exhibited how grassroots involvement can improve instruction and boost learning (Gold et al., 2002).

In 2013, CPER commissioned an update to this work. In *Getting to Outcomes*, Gold et al. (2013) offer a "transit map" of benchmarks and methods for getting to multiscalar education organizing victories and long-term capacity building. This conception indicates diverse, non-linear pathways to influence. Asset-building occurs

even if progress lags, and wins are never decisive. PSU participated in *Getting to Outcomes* training, but knowledge about this experience was limited among interviewees. This framework is crucial to operationalizing and replicating promising practices for scaling, but needs further testing via rigorous evaluations.

Youth organizing is at a point of maturation and in need of systematic tracking. Rogers et al. (2012) advise building on "scans" of groups like FCYO to construct a comprehensive, dynamic database. They endorse longitudinal studies, including about strategies and circumstances that produce "civic learning" capacity and policy transformation (p. 62). Robust studies displaying effectiveness of public engagement in reform are necessary for it to achieve meaningful scale of impact and be a focal point of research and philanthropy (Oakes & Puriefoy, 2011).

Documentation is essential to evaluation and organizational continuity over time. Some organizing groups capitalize on "institutional memory" by preserving material like manuals and curricula to smooth transitions and turnover (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 205).

These ingredients for sustainability supply the foundation for scaling. I now turn to literature germane to PSU's scaling strategies.

Theories of Change, Strategies, and Methods for Multiscalar Youth Education Organizing

Theories of change are apt lenses for analyzing PSU's scaling, as they encompass multi-faceted pathways for augmenting youth-led school reform. Educational change theories should aim for significant policy transformation, "capacity building, and empowerment" (Gold et al., 2013, p. 5). Collective theory-of-change planning can mobilize efforts of "sufficient scope to address the full range of factors contributing to poor outcomes" (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 103). Theory-of-change evaluation can increase engagement and equity in reform (Gold et al., 2002; 2013; McCartney & Weiss, 2005; Shah, 2005).

Change theories must be cognizant that education organizing unfolds dynamically. Campaign foci often alternate between presenting and core issues, and simultaneous campaigns happen with shifting strategies (Gold et al., 2002). Presenting issues are initial concerns about facilities, discipline, or safety; core issues involve instruction and learning. Addressing presenting issues can provide momentum and optimism for long-term campaigns (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Due to this dynamism, validity, utility, and feasibility of tactics should be gauged via "iterative" and collaborative assessment (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 103; Gold et al., 2002). The following sections probe aspects of literature most relevant to PSU's theories of and principles and methods for multiscalar change.

Urban Public Schools and Students as Centers of Change

A fundamental change theory pertinent to PSU is that urban public schools, students, and communities must be central to school change (Anyon, 2014; Joselowsky, 2007; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006). Equity-focused reform must explicitly address power imbalances and norms by prioritizing visions of those most affected (Oakes & Lipton, 2002). Grassroots ownership is key to sustainability of multiscalar, long-term change initiatives (Stahlhut, 2004; Trent & Chavis, 2009; Coburn, 2003), including educational justice movements (Anyon, 2014; HoSang, 2006a; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; 2006). I now discuss the processes that enable this shift in power to come to fruition.

Engaging Scale: Politicization, Praxis, and Empowerment

Empowerment is a requisite first step in youth action theories of change (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Soung, 2004). It begins with political education, or how organizing groups conceptualize the scale of problems they confront and possible solutions. Scaling requires knowing "what scale means and what it takes to get there," which can include a "fundamental paradigm shift" (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 104).

"Sociopolitical development" in youth education organizing involves deconstructing interconnecting oppressions, historical forces, and root factors molding reform, as well as visions and tactics for resisting these barriers (Watts et al., 2003; Potts, 2003; Zimmerman, 2004; Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004). A primary strategy for understanding scale is relating experiences in schools with broader structures,

policies, and trends. Students study roots of issues and structural remedies (Rogers et al., 2012).

Understanding power is integral to politicization, including how reform is shaped by "organized financial resources, human authority, and knowledge" (LISTEN, Inc., 2003, p. 5). "Psychopolitical validity" involves probing the multilevel power dynamics shaping reform (Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007; Shirley, 2011).

Youth "reexamine their lived experience through the lens of power" (Ginwright & James, 2002, as cited in Rogers et al., 2012, p. 56), such as how relationships with police or school officials are influenced by structures and relations beyond individual behaviors (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Renée & McAlister, 2011; Wells et al., 2011). Youth action helps "the public good" by exposing power relations and demanding inclusion (Rogers et al., 2012, p. 44).

Youth organizing leaders also learn about formal politics, how to engage in civics, and about historical movements (Rogers et al., 2012). Politicization includes exploring history and culture (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Anyon, 2014; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Since messaging is central to scaling, political education should dissect processes like "corporate commercialism" and "mainstream socialization" in media (LISTEN, Inc., 2003, p. 9; Giroux, 2009).

To achieve empowerment, political education must be activated through praxis. Once youth are politicized, they need skills to make demands and foster relationships (LISTEN, Inc., 2003). "Conscientization," a concept originated by Paulo

Freire, signifies how youth raise consciousness, undergo strategic analysis, and take action (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 117).

Ideally, youth evolve from pursuing self-interest to recognizing common interests to sustainable joint action. Disaffection transforms into "new civic identities" and a "more powerful understanding of self in the public realm." Politicization also can boost academic engagement (Rogers et al., 2012, p. 56; Joselowsky, 2007).

Anyon (2014) encapsulated the significance of praxis:

> Re-imagining economic change, institutions, and cultural forms as potentially oppositional does not by itself bring social change. Developing "critical consciousness" through information, readings, and discussion does not induce people to participate in transgressive politics—although it provides a crucial base of understanding. To activate people to create or join a social movement, it is important to involve them in protest activity of some kind (p. 205).

McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2010) also suggest people do not "become political" by acquiring knowledge. Rather, contestation creates "a change in consciousness from talking, walking, marching, singing, attempting to vote, 'sitting in,' or otherwise demonstrating." This "signifying work" facilitates individual and collective identity formations (as cited in Anyon, 2014, p. 205).

Youth action is distinct in both deconstructing power dynamics and granting political power through praxis (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Youth of color are more inclined to strive for equity (Scales, Roehlkepartian, & Benson, 2010), and bring singular perspectives to empowerment efforts (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001; Webster, 2007). Especially for low-income and immigrant youth, participation in politically charged voluntary organizations lends to a greater chance of voting, engaging in

community service, and political campaigning as adults (McFarland & Thomas, 2006).

However, personal or group empowerment does not always lead to political power. For organizations like PSU, it is imperative to develop and assess indicators and processes that measure how precious resources are contributing to power. Such political calculations are "at the heart of decision making," and can involve significant internal and external negotiation and conflict. In this light, all key organizational processes are political (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 178).

Bolman and Deal (2017) provide a useful model for considering how organizations approach resource allocation and build consensus among diverse interests as they build power. They also outline sources of power, including information and expertise, reputation, networks, and "ideological power." Political empowerment must be complemented by discursive power, which is discussed next.

Framing to Shape Narratives and Highlight Root Causes

Framing strategies must accompany empowerment (Gold et al., 2013). Youth education organizing has to decide priority issues and how to present them (Henig, 2011). Framing shapes "ideological struggles and symbolic conflicts" (HoSang, 2006a, p. 4-5). "Collective action frames" can unite struggles (Anyon, 2014, p. 191) and connect with targets (Gold et al., 2002). Well-coordinated alliances with coherent messaging can harness frames to realize alternative reform visions (Wells et al., 2011).

Framing is cardinal to keeping reform conversations centered on root causes and student experience (Dimitriadis, 2006; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2006). By rendering multidimensional problems comprehensible and ascribing significance to specific experiences (Gold et al., 2013), framing redirects narratives to pressing issues. “Frame sponsors” simplify concepts and put forth “narrative solutions” and “strategy that marries the social analysis to the communications analysis” (Bales, 2015).

Framing should “connect the dots” between strategies that target root causes. By contrast, incrementalist and small-scale tactics are narrowly or loosely defined, only pinpoint symptoms, and amount to “doing a lot of different things and hoping they add up” (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 102).

Fickle public perceptions drive policymaking (Pittman, 2000), so education organizing groups must stay aware of leading narratives. Indeed, the “controlling image” of criminal youth of color can be central in policymaking (Collins, 1989), as evidenced by the school-to-prison pipeline. Because of this reality and urban reform’s hyper-politicized nature, organizing groups must be consistently eloquent in articulating campaign goals, in outlining theories of change, and in elucidating how strategies are widely beneficial and representative (Gold et al., 2013). Organizations like PSU must not only determine how to frame issues, but through which means.

Communications, Documentation, and Digital Media as Framing Mechanisms

Sophisticated communications are integral to framing (Larson & Hansen, 2005). Youth "self-representations" can be spread by alternative media, youth acting as co-researchers, positive spaces serving as "subaltern counterpublics," and advocates actively promoting accurate, nuanced perspectives of youth (Fraser, 1990, as cited in Kelly, 2006, p. 41; Charmaraman, 2010).

Positive press can enhance credibility, recruitment, coalition-building, and fundraising for youth organizing. Alternatively, youth action and coalitions can leverage media to pressure decision-makers. The Youth Media Council (2002) championed bridging gaps with journalists to turn "media bias into media justice." To this end, youth organizing groups typically practice critical media analysis (LISTEN, Inc., 2003, p. 7; Delgado & Staples, 2008).

Digital media are essential to youth engagement and framing. As Conner and Slattery (2014) and Stornaiuolo and Elizabeth Thomas (2017) suggest, harnessing digital activism can help youth organizers "disrupt inequality" while improving academic performance and civic participation. Digital media enhance youth perceptions of "social status," facilitate reflection, and leverage resources (Valaitis, 2005, p. 2, as cited in Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 164).

For organizing groups, information technology aids coordination, research, communication, strategy, data analysis, mapping, advocacy, and fundraising (McNutt, 2000). Digital media enable "multi-locational organizing" (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 165), or framing "scaled down and out" (McDonald, Geigel, & Pinguel, 2011).

"Virtual office space" has been foundational to the youth-led Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ). AEJ formed a committee to harness social networking, and trained members in open source management and other web 2.0 skill. However, AEJ struggled to maintain its website, staff communications personnel, and train members. AEJ confirms virtual organizing should be complemented by face-to-face mobilization (McDonald et al., 2011, p. 42; James & Manilov, 2011).

As well, digital media face limits in tackling power structures (Stoecker, 2002; Spector, 1994). The "digital divide" and language barriers exclude the most marginalized from electronic spaces (Smith, 2004). Typically, privileged stakeholders better utilize digital media to build capital and propel reform campaigns (Oakes & Lipton, 2002).

Direct Action: Creative Expressions of Youth Organizing

Direct action is another primary tactic youth action uses to frame issues and enact change, including through civil disobedience, boycotts, public drama, and walkouts. Youth have long fused media and direct action to broadcast campaigns (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Delgado & Staples, 2008; HoSang, 2006a).

In recent years, students increasingly espoused walkouts and other civil disobedience as governance regimes become more depriving (Jilani, 2014; Rosenfeld, 2012; Rogers et al., 2012). Educational justice movements have been stimulated by "innovative action repertoires," such as test-ins, opt-outs, sickouts, hunger strikes, human chains, and occupations (Anyon, 2014, p. 240; Democracy Now! 2016; Riley,

2013; Associated Press, 2015). Students have joined with parents, teachers, faculty, clergy, workers, and immigrants in direct action (Wells et al., 2011; HoSang, 2006b).

Actions of youth education organizers can be less antagonistic by "bearing witness" (Della Porta & Diani, 1999, as cited in Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 15), such as releasing a report, testifying at a school board meeting, or conducting a press conference. Letter-writing initiatives and "accountability sessions" can showcase power and acquire credibility (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 18).

"Walk-ins" are a more recent addition to intergenerational action. Participants enter schools together, "a positive action that says these are our schools and communities." Walk-ins are designed to avoid arrest or retaliation, and used in contract and school closing negotiations (AROS, 2016a). In February 2016, 40,000 from 838 schools in over 30 cities led walk-ins (AROS, 2016b). However, restraint shown by walk-ins may not be possible. "Urban education is a big business," so economic boycotts may be needed to scale meaningful change (Anyon, 2014, p. 241).

Gaining Credibility as a Vehicle for Scale

As with other framing mechanisms, direct action's effectiveness is in part a matter of how much credibility it accrues for PSU and its allies. Likewise, the efficacy of fresh narratives, creative disruption, and scaling strategies is shaped by an organizing group's credibility (Gold et al., 2013; Conner et al., 2013). Legitimacy among institutional leaders can enable access to decision-making, networks, and data. Yet groups often co-opted by bureaucracies, such as the Parent-Teacher's Association

(PTA), are generally seen as community voices. Building a substantial base or latching on to established groups and coalitions can help secure legitimacy. If education organizing can facilitate progress on benchmarks that reflect well on district leaders, or offer training, knowledge, or services to students and parents, it can curry favor (Mediratta et al., 2001a). But if organizing agendas do not match those of policymakers, or if timing is not aligned, cooperation is difficult (Renée & McAlister, 2011; Trent & Chavis, 2009).

Data and Research as Bridges to Legitimacy

Data and research are key to credibility within school reform. The increased onus on accountability has resulted in an influx of data that can arm organizing groups with new information and reveal disparities. However, educational policymaking has transformed from prioritizing inputs like financing, demographics, and curriculum to foregrounding outputs like performance on high-stakes tests. The SDP's arc illuminates how undue attention on test scores can devalue community engagement and obscure school missions (Henig, 2011; Ravitch, 2013). Alternatively, peer outreach can be crucial to securing legitimacy among students (Perez, 2003).

At any rate, data analysis and research should inform theories of educational change. Organizing groups must learn how to "use" data, including to advance goals (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 110) and reveal an issue's "multiple dimensions" (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 17).

Trent and Chavis (2009) discovered that data serve five functions germane to stability and scaling: planning and adapting campaigns; germinating grassroots backing; raising public awareness; persuading decision makers; and measuring and articulating outcomes. Data can maximize "strategy design and problem solving," and assess efficacy and feasibility of distinct approaches to scale (p. 107). Research can frame policy dilemmas, further "political proposals," monitor legislation, and aid litigation (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 17; Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Intermediaries are crucial to access, process, and critique data (Renée & McAlister, 2011). More academic and research-based—or "grasstops"—information should be translated into colloquial, usable data (Balch-Gonzalez et al., 2010, p. 39). Positionality to influence policymakers with data is key (Trent & Chavis, 2009). An informed campaign can dispel "subterfuge" (Gold et al., 2002, p. 33). Capacity gaps in research are major snags to scaling (Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Data, credibility, and framing are crucial to scaling "deep" change within schools and to other schools and districts (Coburn, 2003, p. 4). As well, these foundational elements are imperative to influencing policy debates at higher levels of governance. The literature related to these aspects of scaling is explored next.

Scaling "Deep" Change Out and Up

Scaling must achieve depth, breadth, and scope. Determining at which scale to act requires advanced contextual understanding (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Multiscalar navigation necessitates ample resources, knowledge, and research, and

enactment of conflicting strategies simultaneously (Henig, 2011). Bolman and Deal (2017) characterize how an organization navigates these decisions with scarce resources and over time as organizational "politics," or the "political frame" of organizational change.

For youth education organizing groups, ideal scaling centers on schools. At the school level, "deep" change must surpass alterations in "materials, classroom organization," or activities. Most scaling consists primarily of breadth in terms of adding more stakeholders, replicating class programs, or "mutual adaptation" (Coburn, 2003, p. 4). Reform's typical "vortex of change" does not alter epistemology, pedagogy, or schooling structures (Elmore, 1996, p. 4). Instead, deep change inverts "beliefs, norms of interaction, and pedagogical principles," including knowledge production (Coburn, 2003, p. 4). Theories of deep change must tackle "how human beings learn to do things differently" (Elmore, 1996, p. 24).

Renée and McAlister (2011) highlight equity in transformational reform:

> The goal is to challenge the patterns of inequality that are built into the rules and laws that guide schools; the individual beliefs of many educators and administrators about who is capable of learning; and the relationships between stakeholders that dictate how a reform is adopted and implemented. (p. 3)

"Institutionalization" of grassroots leadership from such an approach fosters engagement and "self-efficacy" (Trent & Chavis, 2009, p. 106).

Adding to Coburn's emphases on pedagogy, institutionalization, spread, and ownership, Bishop, O'Sullivan, and Berryman (2010) propose three pillars for scaling progressive reform: fitting indicators of progress; decentralized, innovative, and

receptive leadership; and a deliberate vision for easing disparities. Over twelve years, fidelity to these elements reduced New Zealand's achievement gap (Carson, 2013).

For student-led deep change to be scaled, youth engagement must be inculcated in classes, districts, and communities, and linked to other school goals. Feist, Joselowsky, Raynor, and Nichols-Solomon (2007) enumerated several ways to scale youth involvement: ombudsmen; student leadership in school creation; a student government advising the superintendent; student school board eligibility; and integration of youth-focused instruction and learning in professional development.

To scale progressive reform, alignment is needed between principles, infrastructure, policies, and practice, with local modifications. District leadership must catalyze a progressive culture and nurture synergistic relationships (Glennan, Bodilly, Galegher, & Kerr, 2004; Sanders, 2012). Hopkins (2007) advises a "whole-system" approach focused on inclusion and social justice. Scaling must be to better education for all, not based on replication or choice (Sabelli & Harris, 2015; Bishop et al., 2010).

Sustained progress is reliant on funding for meaningful reform. Broader supports—such as staff, space, and "structural reforms"—are needed to sustain change (Joselowsky, 2007, p. 268; Cervone, 2002). Deeper or greater transformation is more difficult to sustain and spread (Elmore, 1996; Coburn, 2003). Beyond scaling deep, out, and up, Elmore (1996) indicates scaling "down" with smaller schools and classes can inculcate inclusive, collaborative, accountable, and autonomous school cultures.

Spreading deep change and affecting normative change at higher levels should integrate community-based organizing and localized frames. The significance of community and local perspectives in scaling strategies is outlined next.

Importance of Community and Local Lenses

School improvement has always been intertwined with wider community progress (Anyon, 2014; Gold et al., 2002; Warren, 2011; Shirley, 2011). Accordingly, scaling should involve links beyond school walls to achieve "power of numbers" (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 151).

Even when trying to shape policy at higher levels, local organizing is necessary for disenfranchised urban youth. It is more immediate than state or national mobilization, and more readily facilitates "bonding social capital" (Putnam, 2000, p. 150). Community organizing personalizes reform: "local youth have names, faces, and connections to community institutions; they are not hypothetical 'American youth' failing to 'meet standards'" (Deschenes, McLaughlin, & Newman, 2008, p. 17).

A grassroots approach is also critical since community groups are more likely to stress empowerment (Deschenes et al., 2008). Organizing seeks to dismantle power disparities and realize equity, and rejects primacy of markets (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 1). It offers benchmarks of public accountability (Gold et al., 2002).

Further, organizing links to families and neighborhoods, and acts upon shared values (Shirley, 2011; Warren, 2011). "Community capacity enhancement" can

enhance individual assets, bring local perspectives into reform, and better climates in and around schools (Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 147; Renée & McAlister, 2011). By enhancing community ownership, lasting school change is more likely (Anderson, 1998; McAlister, Mediratta, & Shah, 2009). Parent and staff participation is needed to sustain change (Renée & McAlister, 2011; Anderson, 1998). Community-building can include forging new educational institutions (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Anyon, 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2005).

"Glocalized" Scaling in the "New Political Grid"

Community organizing is insufficient alone, however. The contemporary "political grid" of school reform demands vertical scaling campaigns (Henig, 2011, p. 53). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top greatly expanded state and federal involvement in school reform (Ravitch, 2013). States are increasingly pushing standards, and have more control of education finances (Renée & McAlister, 2011).

Legislators beyond Philadelphia have had undue influence on the SDP. Harrisburg, which dictates school funding policy and has mostly been controlled by the GOP, has historically scoffed at stark funding disparities affecting districts like the SDP (Sturla, 2018). The state also seized control of the SDP at the turn of the century, which paved the way for privatization.

Corresponding with increasing state-based governance, mayors have also assumed extraordinary control over reform (Chambers, 2006). In some cities, mayors assumed total control for educational management. In many cities, mayors appoint

board members (Eichel, 2016). In addition, decisions about curriculum, staffing, extracurricular programs, and funding are made at the district level (Renée & McAlister, 2011).

Court strategies should also be in the arsenal of scaling education organizing (Shirley, 2011). State constitutions specifically can be interpreted as mandating the right to an education; in 2016, Pennsylvania was one of thirteen states in litigation over funding equity (Turner et al., 2016). Yet court-based strategies cannot substitute for mobilization, lack enforcement power, and can discourage organizing if they flounder (Henig, 2011; Shirley, 2011). Courts have been progressive and regressive in tackling desegregation and equitable school financing (Ravitch, 2013; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012).

Because of these various loci of educational governance—and the need to also maintain a community focus—"glocalized" urban resistance is urgent (Köhler & Wissen, 2003, p. 942; DeFilippis, 2004; Warren, 2011; Gold et al., 2002). Meanwhile, funding and expertise beyond communities are more likely to sustain change (Trent & Chavis, 2009). There should be national consensus on core, evidence-based principles (e.g., individualized learning, quality teaching, cooperation, and accountability) (Hopkins, 2007). Vertical scaling is essential, but the classroom should still be focal (Coburn, 2003).

Youth Education Organizing and Electoral Politics

As part of vertical scaling, youth action cannot elide electoral politics lest they are relegated "an afterthought in elections" (FCYO, 2015a; Shirley, 2011; Henig, 2011). Lack of electoral access and participation are compounded by limited funding and extralocal networks (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Yet some youth-based entities are leading the way with voter engagement, such as Inner-City Struggle in Los Angeles County (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015).

Coalitions: Building Blocks of Movements

Whether locally or extralocally, alliances are central to scaling. Over 80 percent of education organizing groups join coalitions (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Youth action has built nationwide networks (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; Braxton et al., 2013).

Alliances augment political capital (Delgado & Staples, 2008), geographic scope, credibility, power, and technical capacities (Warren, 2011). They allow groups to transcend small-scale, single-issue, and incremental reforms (HoSang, 2003; Larson & Hansen, 2005). A formalized coalition can transcend "an unconscious series of responses to a particular set of local circumstances" (Parham & Pinzino, 2004, p. 79).

Coalitions aid in accommodating shifting policy contexts (Wells et al., 2011), and handling target systems (Shah & Mediratta, 2008). After a collaborative campaign ends, "residue—saved or latent social capital" can be used to fortify movements (Wells et al., 2011, p. 188). Additionally, alliances help stability by

offering more avenues for base-building and exercising leadership (Zimmerman et al., 2005). Networks help surpass issues like a lack of program space, and provide training and planning (LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

Organizations like PSU should be prudent about partnering, a prime decision when scaling (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Fine & Jacobs, 2014). Partners should align in mission, financing, and assets. Youth action groups will consider a potential ally's theories of change, values, target population, track record, and services offered (Zimmerman et al., 2005). Allies may be coy about sharing knowledge and may not value youth inclusion, deconstruction of power and oppression, or conflict (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Quiroz-Martínez et al., 2004). Coalitions should permit organizational volition while being able to come together to build power (Henig, 2011).

Alliances are more likely to thrive when members are funded and stable and share leaders or a political community, and when resources exist for partnering. Geography shapes collaboration (Zimmerman et al., 2005; Henig, 2011); there is not always a critical mass of education organizing (Renée & McAlister, 2011).

Organizations are cautious and protect identities within alliances (Wells et al., 2011). Expectations and interests should be negotiated at the start of partnering (Trent & Chavis, 2009). Shared ground rules, outcome indicators, and evaluation plans are helpful. Flexible decision-making within alliances, such as via "rapid-response teams," enable adaptive choices (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 13).

Youth action groups must develop “shared strategy,” especially for higher-level change (FCYO, 2015a; LISTEN, Inc., 2003). Groups within organizing coalitions should prioritize social justice, be confident their interests are considered, and pursue concrete goals (Wells et al., 2011).

Schisms can materialize when scaling up; alliances may jeopardize organizing’s intimate bonds and vibrant bases (Warren, 2011). Lobbying approaches might cause concern for those used to direct action (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Moreover, fragmented national politics frustrate alliance-building (Academy for Educational Development, 2003).

Intergenerational alliances are instrumental to scaling (HoSang, 2006b; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Yet generational differences can thwart multigenerational organizing (Mediratta et al., 2001a), including divergence in learning styles, assumptions about data, and research goals (Fernández, 2002). Adultism within coalitions can dampen youth “creativity, drive, and energy” (Williams, 2003, as cited in Delgado & Staples, 2008, p. 195). Adults must undergo significant reeducation for intergenerational action to flourish (Zimmerman et al., 2005; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Collaboration should involve co-construction of youth roles and avoid tokenism of youth (Fernández, 2002).

Divisions between organizing and advocacy also complicate alliances. Organizing prioritizes empowerment and participation, while the latter stresses tangible, more immediate policy change. These approaches diverge in whom they consider experts (Fine & Jacobs, 2014).

Organizing and school reform groups also do not often collaborate (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Anyon, 2005). Divides between reform experts and grassroots youth mobilization exist in mission, process, and language (Cervone, 2002). Further, youth action groups can be reluctant to work with "traditional service providers" (Zimmerman et al., 2005, p. 21).

Long-term relationships with funders can be challenging; they may prioritize immediate, demonstrable gains (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Still, funders and evaluators can be instrumental in bridging organizing and research. Conferences and spaces for educators and organizers to collaborate can reduce boundaries (Gold et al., 2002).

With notable exceptions, education organizing has not coalesced with teachers unions (Warren, 2014). Organizing can conflict with the "professional culture" and sense of ownership of educators and administrators (Gold et al., 2002, p. 38). Teachers can be resistant to change (Larson & Hansen, 2005; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006). Educators might be censured for working with organizers, or be against mobilization seen as threatening (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Many teachers lack youth development capacities, and are molded by a culture incentivizing test performance over engagement (Cervone, 2002).

Bridging this gap with teachers is urgent (Warren, 2011). Students and teachers can seek mutual accountability from district leaders (Renée & McAlister, 2011), and can join in improving professional development or teaching conditions (Mediratta et al., 2001a). Some jurisdictions secure grants to promote teacher-student alliances (Cervone, 2002).

In essence, youth education organizers are increasingly realizing the impetus toward alliance-building. More research is needed on how youth action interacts with allies, teachers, academics, media, and funders (Rogers et al., 2012).

Engaging Dynamic Target Systems

Coalitions are formed at multiple scales and around myriad issues to engage dynamic target systems in reform processes. Theories and strategies for change must identify targets and make demands.

Youth action's main concerns are age-related about institutions like schools (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Urban reform targets are increasingly "symbolic," or ideological representations like charter chains (Henig, 2011, p. 72). Identifying targets is obtuse in a neoliberal era of "diffuse accountability," and in multilevel governance webs (Mediratta et al., 2001a, p. 50; Balch-Gonzalez et al., 2010). The SDP shows educational decision makers are loathe to accept responsibility and enter in "a chorus of blame." Philanthropy trends can shape targets (Mediratta et al., 2001a, p. 51).

In complex school governance webs, "sequential and contingent thinking" can identify shifting targets (Larson & Hansen, 2005, p. 338). "Power analysis" is also critical (Warren, 2011, p. 151).

Collaboration and Conflict in Engaging Targets

When approaching targets of education organizing, key decision points involve balancing collaboration and conflict. A chief challenge of change theories is

whether to pursue strategies within formal governance or to apply external pressure. Most education and youth organizing scholars suggest both approaches are necessary. Organizational change experts like Bolman and Deal (2017) also stress how political actors must assess governance contexts, navigate allies and adversaries, and bargain in coalitions.

Education organizing began by building outside pressure, but soon learned collaboration was necessary (Warren, 2011). It generally operates by the maxim of "no permanent friends, no permanent enemies" (Warren, 2001).

Most youth action groups engage in "institutional and extra-institutional" strategies. This includes collaboratively resolving dilemmas, influencing elections, and protest (Rogers et al., 2012, p. 45). Some youth action groups partner with institutions, such as by aiming to place community members on school boards. Pursuing internal change can increase access to policymakers, information, power, and legitimacy (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Rogers & Morrell, 2011). An "external accountability role" is also a bona fide tactic (Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Subordinate political status compels most youth groups to employ pressure (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Internal change mainly operates according to incremental, "technical," and "apolitical" logic. However, conflict-based strategies must be at the forefront given power dynamics and structural oppressions molding reform. Conflict and movement strategies align (Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 386-387).

Antagonism is a "hallmark of community organizing" (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 19). The Progressive Era was defined by community pressure shaping public

school reform agendas (Shirley, 2011). Students' "coercive power" is symbolized by their ability to sit in or walk out (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

An external orientation advances grassroots mobilization, ownership, and "collective self-efficacy" (Pecukonis & Wenocur, 1994), and can augment "depth, spread," equity, and access (Joselowsky, 2007, p. 268). In the right context, reform can be influenced more by coercion (Anyon, 1997; Fung & Wright, 2003).

Force can be applied through actions that nurture visibility, leverage, and solidarity. Education organizing should be willing to go to extremes, like embarrassing policymakers or removing principals (Renée & McAlister, 2011). Solely employing inside approaches can sap energy by entering into a revolving door of supportive relations, or a "relational black hole." Yet strictly acting externally can trap an organization in "rigidly defensive postures" (Mediratta et al., 2001a, p. 53-54). Purely adversarial relations also limit access to public and private funding opportunities (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Zimmerman, 2004).

In "demand-support" relations with targets, organizing unites compromise, consensus-building, and accountability campaigns. Initiatives nationwide have achieved "accountable collaboration" with administrators via "credibility, sustainability, and scalability" (Balch-Gonzalez et al., 2010, p. 38). Such arrangements prompt leaders to credit organizing groups with being "critical friends" (Renée & McAlister, 2011, p. 19).

Key challenges of engaging targets include externally-oriented organizing groups garnering sufficient legitimacy within schools and internal groups leveraging

outside help (Cervone, 2002). Contracts or memoranda of understanding can incubate such partnerships, though youth may need assistance with legal documents (Joselowsky, 2007). Tensions between collaboration and pressure permeate relationships between organizing and teachers (Warren, 2011).

Additional Challenges of Engaging Target Systems

There are challenges beyond negotiating between collaboration and conflict when engaging targets. Inside strategies may be perceived as inauthentic or be co-opted, as often happens with student governments. Outside agitation is often threatened by retaliation. Students' insider status and lack of power make them vulnerable to revanchism (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Some staff appreciate student mobilization and vouch for student participation. Some ally with or support youth action, and others provide information and space. Yet some educators are reactionary, and decline to engage organizing or act hostile. Others accuse staff of brainwashing youth, or take offense to campaigns highlighting poor conditions. Students can be punished for activism, including with bad grades and loss of privileges (Shah & Mediratta, 2008; Cervone, 2002). Diversionary and exclusionary tactics to stifle grassroots participation are a troubling legacy of reform (Orr & Rogers, 2011). Many school staff are indifferent about organizing (Shah & Mediratta, 2008; Cervone, 2002).

Low expectations and tokenism are also common barriers. Student engagement is typically narrowly focused, not oriented toward structural change, and

perceived as the purview of student government or extracurricular activities. These spheres are mostly reserved for well-behaved and academically thriving students, often from privileged class and race backgrounds. Myopic perceptions of urban youth of color can translate to incredulity when those in power are confronted by youth action (Cervone, 2002; Shah & Mediratta, 2008; Rogers et al., 2012).

There are also gulfs between bureaucracies' technical language and tactics and "participatory," demand-oriented approaches of students (Shah & Mediratta, 2008, p. 50; Zimmerman, 2004). "A complex web of rules, regulations, and relationships" (Shah & Mediratta, 2008, p. 51) and "bylaws and statutes" impede youth authority (Fernández, 2002, p. 4). Youth engagement is undermined by cultures not inured in treating students as co-creators of education (Joselowsky, 2007). Some administrators charge organizing with eliding governance complexities, and devaluing positives of schools; they seek "mutual accountability" (Shah & Mediratta, 2008, p. 51).

Inertia—when actors support youth initiatives but are limited by politics, finances, and time—obstructs organizing (Shah & Mediratta, 2008; Gold et al., 2002). "Policy feedback" and "political learning" distort belief in change; negative feedback loops can debilitate public mobilization (Orr & Rogers, 2011, p. 12).

Accountability and testing regimes also discourage innovation and organizing (Ravitch, 2013; Warren, 2011). Standardization contributes to discontinuity in school leadership and poor collaboration. "Professional learning communities" and organizing can still sustain progressivism, such as pushing for divergent standards.

Yet external pressure is limited in resisting inertia (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 3).

Monitoring policy wins is an incessant challenge. Hard-won education organizing policy commitments are not guaranteed to last (Fine & Jacobs, 2014). This dilemma is arguably more acute for student-led activism (Joselowsky, 2007).

Without earnest investment, inside tactics are prone to placation and weak implementation (Joselowsky, 2007). Toothless bodies for grassroots engagement are more common under neoliberal and state-based governance (Balch-Gonzalez et al., 2010). "Top and bottom" pressure is needed to ensure policymakers do not renege (Mediratta et al., 2001a, p. 62). Turnover also frustrates implementation; urban superintendents last three and a half years on average, and principals and teachers leave frequently (Council of the Great City Schools, 2008/2009).

Notwithstanding these hurdles, PSU and allies take on diverse target systems as they scale out and up. To build enough power to engage the most powerful target interests and stakeholders affecting urban reform, multiscalar movements are needed.

The Apex of Scaling: Glocalized Movements for Educational Change

Ultimately, glocalized movements are necessary to achieve enough power and change to maximize scaling and realize student-centered and equity-focused visions. Such agendas benefit more from movement approaches than "organizational change" paradigms (Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 383). The increasing federal role in education policy also demands movements to build scale of influence (Warren, 2014).

Movements empower dislocated communities to clamor for "recognition, voice, and participation" (Warren, 2014). Correspondingly, movement "logic" and tactics are more likely to alter "norms and politics" of educational inequality (Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 383). They are more likely to stimulate "transformational" reform that addresses enduring "power inequalities and oppressive structures." Movements spur attitudinal alterations across cultures, crucial to surpassing low expectations and "deficit thinking" that plague urban school reform. Movements can tackle structural problems that intersect with reform and educational inequality, such as poverty, racism, and economic exploitation (Warren, 2014; Oakes & Lipton, 2002).

Youth have been historical agents in leading movements for educational and social justice (Shirley, 2011). Also, organizing has a pivotal role in movements, which are built by "a network of communities" (Stall & Stoecker, 1997, as cited in Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 397). Organizing cultivates foundational elements of educational justice movements, including: leaders; understanding via Freirean "generative dialogue" and inquiry; and a shared goal (Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 399).

A focus on movement-building by education organizing is urgent because, as the choice movement illustrates, wealthier and connected groups often more effectively utilize movement strategies. These interests embrace arguments steeped in class- and race-based advantages. Marginalized groups must expose such contradictions and opt for movement approaches enabling politicization and conflict.

In so doing, movements can create "new meanings of equality and meritocracy" (Oakes & Lipton, 2002, p. 389) and enact new "ethics and politics"

(Gramsci, 1971, as cited in HoSang, 2006a, p. 42). This interpolation is pivotal to addressing the political and ideological dimensions of scaling, and to realizing alternative reform paradigms like PSU favors.

Promise and Challenges of Modern Movements

There are modern movement strains within and beyond education relevant to PSU and the SDP. Youth are leading movements taking on school safety and gun control, the school-to-prison pipeline, and neoliberal and state control of urban reform (Crunden, 2018; Nathanson, 2015).

Meanwhile, teachers across the country are spearheading clamor for a return to local control and against corporate, elitist reform and unfettered charterization (Anyon, 2014; Ravitch, 2013; Warren, 2014). Since 2015, the SDP witnessed an upsurge in teacher activism, including “work-to-rule” protests and radical splintering within the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) (Mezzacappa, 2015). There has been widespread opposition to high-stakes testing and standards, and to invasive data collection (Ravitch, 2013; Anyon, 2014).

These movements demonstrate promise for grassroots educational progressivism, but need more ways to cultivate symbiotic impact. Further, since school reform is linked to broader forces and trends, educational justice movements should account for economic and political conditions and connect to those groundswells (Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Warren, 2014). University and high school student activism should unite over common struggles against austerity (Anyon, 2014).

Attendant trends like mass incarceration must be addressed (Warren, 2014). Education organizing groups should seek cross-sectoral alliances with religious, labor, and political outfits like immigrants rights' coalitions (Wells et al., 2011).

Cross-cutting movements can be promoted by the "Momentum Model," (FCYO, 2015a), which is informed by past struggles and contemporary movements (Momentum Based Organizing, n.d.). Chief characteristics of the Momentum Model are leadership of youth of color, "emotional" messaging and actions, "turning moments into mass movements," and digital activism (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015, p. 6; FCYO, 2015a). Momentum-fueled organizing capitalizes on "flashpoints in current events" to energize youth-led movements. Youth spokespeople are needed to unite advanced communications, intense organizing, and voter turnout to form "a potent combination to communicate on a much larger and more persuasive scale" (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015, p. 22; Bales, 2015). In the US, recent youth action spurred a spike in mass mobilization to confront crises like police brutality, deportations, and climate change.

Within the Momentum Model, "sustainable organizations" are linchpins for strengthening new activism and linking to established networks (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015, p. 22; FCYO, 2015a). Thus, declining philanthropy supporting anchor organizations must be reversed.

Intermediaries are vital to nurturing the Momentum Model, and have delivered momentum-based trainings nationwide since 2014 (FCYO, 2015a). These trainings disseminated "theory and best practices of civil resistance" to hundreds, including

“how to activate the public and change political weather through civil disobedience, mass training, and popular demands” (Momentum Based Organizing, n.d.).

To achieve optimal coordination, “umbrella groups” will also be essential as they have been historically (Anyon, 2014). Accordingly, FCYO started Youth Community Organizing Resource Exchange (Youth CORE) in 2015 to support “moment-to-movement” organizing and the stability and power of youth action (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015, p. 22). Youth CORE is administered by FCYO and an “Action Team” of national youth action networks, including AEJ, and leading youth organizing groups. It grooms organizational capacities, develops leaders, and fosters convenings, national strategy meetings, webinars, peer-to-peer learning circles, and issue-focused strategy tables (Youth CORE, n.d.).

More such entities are needed to expand movements’ power and access to policymaking, and to nurture a “sustained movement.” Supports must bolster old and new youth action modes. Many inchoate groups “are not 501(c)(3)s and some will never be,” yet make invaluable contributions, especially during “crisis moments” (FCYO, 2015a).

Fine and Jacobs (2014) and FCYO appreciate the urgency of seizing the political moment and enriching cohesiveness and collective capacities of youth organizing. Population patterns and grassroots, youth-led movements showcase leadership potential of youth of color. Still, youth-led progressivism is far from certain (FCYO, 2015a).

In sum, for PSU and its partners to achieve their ambitious visions of radical reform, realizing the apex of scaling via combining multiscalar and intersectional movements is necessary. The next chapter describes the methodology by which PSU's strategies for sustainability and scaling—including movement-building—were investigated.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

Methodology Rationale

High school youth are an apt subgroup to study within urban education reform. They are most affected by degenerative education policy regimes, and are at an age at which they can understand and influence multiscalar urban reform (Larson & Hansen, 2005). Likewise, the organizational form is a prominent representation of youth action and education organizing, and thus an apt unit of analysis. Organizations are the foundation of alliances and movements (Delgado & Staples, 2008). The SDP governance context is also ripe for study because of the outsized influence of reform paradigms like austerity politics, charterization and choice, and the penal regime.

PSU's positionality, co-evolution, and impact vis-à-vis these frameworks and the recent arc of urban school reform make it an apposite subject. PSU has sustained for more than two decades, attempting to scale in different ways over this time.

Scaling strategies are imperative for realizing progressive reforms like envisioned by PSU and youth education organizers, yet are not widely studied. Organizational sustainability is an elemental component of scaling, and also not well understood. Moreover, most studies of scaling school reform neglect sustainability, eliding how reform unfolds unevenly and temporarily (Elmore, 1996; Coburn, 2003). This study helps fill these voids.

A historical case study suits the temporal and conceptual complexity of studying PSU's evolving strategies for sustainability and scaling. The case study approach entails "extensive and 'in-depth' analysis … to understand complex social phenomena" like theories of change around youth urban education organizing. Organizational processes are germane to case study analyses (Yin, 2009, p. 4).

Interviews, textual analysis, and observations enabled historical insights about PSU's stability and scaling strategies. Financing and 990 analyses buttressed data about PSU's fundraising evolution, spending priorities, and staffing.

Research Questions

Research questions pertained to two primary lenses: data related to PSU's organizational sustainability and evolution, and data related to PSU's theories, principles, and methods for scaling. These questions informed the literature review, data collection, and analysis:

1. What strategies has PSU implemented to promote internal stability, integrity, and growth over time?
2. What theories of change, principles, strategies, and methods has PSU adopted to attempt to influence the various dimensions of scale important to urban educational reform?

Data Collection Methods

Subjects

I interviewed fifteen individuals overall, in sixteen interviews. The study's subjects were those who served in positions or roles relevant to PSU's strategies for sustainability and scaling. See Table 2 for counts of subjects by type.

Subjects collectively spanned PSU's history from its beginning through 2017. This included PSU's three primary executive directors; former and recent staff involved in leadership and fundraising and development, evaluation, media and communications, and statewide organizing; PSU's Campaign for Nonviolent Schools (CNS) coordinator; and former student members, one of which was also a board member. Interviewee stakeholders who were not part of PSU were important to gaining external perspectives. These interviewees offered insight on scaling aspects like PSU's coalition-building, framing, credibility, and sway with policymakers, as well as on campaigns. They also touched on sustainability.

Table 2 Interviews by Type

Type	Number
Member	6
Staff	11
Member and Staff	5
External to PSU	3

Interviews through Purposive and Snowball Sampling

Research questions provided the foundation for purposive sampling of interviewees, culminating in sixteen semi-structured interviews. To learn more about potential interviewees, their contact information, and the propriety of setting up interviews, I met with another scholar whose dissertation investigated PSU. Her information, coupled with my prior knowledge about PSU and the Philadelphia school reform context, expedited purposive sampling and outreach to potential interviewees. Additionally, I employed snowball sampling by asking interviewees about other stakeholders who would be apt to interview.

In total, I contacted approximately 25 stakeholders for interviews. I reached out to potential interviewees primarily via e-mail or Facebook, and followed up with some by phone. I interviewed thirteen from the summer of 2012 through summer of 2013. In March 2015, I conducted three additional interviews to fill gaps in data. One of these interviews was with a previous interviewee, and two were new study participants. Positive interview responses, coupled with other data collection, enabled data saturation.

Interviewees included PSU's three primary executive directors. PSU's first director founded PSU, and its second salvaged it from brief dormancy. Each director has been instrumental to PSU's evolving approaches to sustainability and scaling, including fiscal innovation, balancing collaboration and conflict, and movement-building. I also interviewed former student members from throughout PSU's

evolution, and past and recent staff members. Former member interviewees attended both neighborhood and magnet schools.

One was a member in PSU's formative years, became a student staff member and editor of PSU's first *Youth Voice* newsletters, and served on PSU's board after graduating. Another interviewee was an active student and staff member during PSU's anti-privatization campaigns at the turn of the century, and served as director of development during PSU's transition toward individual donors. One participant was an active member before, during, and after PSU's restructuring, and another an integral student and staff member from PSU's revitalization period.

I interviewed PSU's school funding campaign organizer from 2007 through 2012, who also was youth media organizer when PSU intensified investment in communications. I spoke with CNS's coordinator, who provided much insight about that landmark campaign's impetus, structure, and implementation. I interviewed two more recent student and staff members, including one who attended West Philadelphia High School (West) during its historic transition to a new building. This interviewee also answered follow-up questions via e-mail in March 2015, supplying insight on life after PSU and alumni relationships.

While making revisions and looking to bridge slight gaps in data, I contacted a PSU staff media organizer. Also in March 2015, she helped answer questions about PSU's school-based chapters, its approach to evaluation, and its staffing and leadership ladder. She provided contemporary insight into PSU's media, research, communications, and social networking capacities.

I also interviewed three stakeholders external to PSU, key informants who have been intimately involved with SDP reform. They provided perspectives about topics like PSU's political education, the limits of youth-led organizing, and the benefits and challenges of alliance-building.

One interviewee began working at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in 2000 and has been a leading investigative education reporter in Philadelphia since 2007. She was a key contributor to the 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning story that exposed systemic under-reporting of violence within the SDP. Like CNS, this work was incited by beatings of Asian immigrant students at South Philadelphia High (Southern).

I also spoke with a long-time leading parent and journalistic voice within SDP reform, who allied with PSU during several momentous campaigns. She inserted perspectives about intergenerational and immigrant education organizing, and tackled nuances of the public-private debate and of taking on structural violence. In March 2015, I conversed with Philadelphia Cross City's coalition coordinator who served from 2006-2012.

Altogether, interviewees collectively engaged with each important dimension of sustainability and scaling identified by the literature. They also included leaders from each of PSU's major campaigns, which addressed multiple dimensions of scale. Analyzing interviewees' experiences, roles, and insights in connection and in contrast with each other enabled formation of themes, and identification of changes and tensions over time.

To preserve confidentiality, interviewees are not identified in my discussion. Instead, interviewee roles are described. Some interviewees requested anonymity on all or part of their interviews. Thus, in some cases, I do not attribute a date to personal communication.

Interviews: Instrumentation, Implementation, and Transcription

A few interviews took place at PSU's West Philadelphia office, some at local cafés or restaurants, and others by phone. The shortest interview was 25 minutes; the rest were 45 minutes or longer, with the longest lasting 90 minutes. Each interview was audiotaped and I took notes during interviews.

The interview protocol in Appendix B was used to prepare for and conduct each interview, but tailored based on interviewees' historical roles within PSU or the Philadelphia reform context. Additional questions germinated from interviews and other emergent data, such as about PSU's restructuring period. I asked specific questions based on how interviewees' roles and experiences may have related to facets of sustainability and scaling, and to particular aspects of PSU's evolution or campaigning. Composition and utilization of my interview protocol were initial efforts at discovering themes (Dey, 1993, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

If an interviewee discussed a theme from the literature or from another interview, I encouraged he or she to elaborate. Themes that emerged from interviews

informed subsequent conversations. Iterative data collection and analysis are tenets of grounded theory-building (Anastas, 2004).

I received some assistance with transcription from an independent contractor, ensuring anonymity in the process. Even with interviews initially transcribed for me, I listened to each interview multiple times and edited quotes to ensure as much accuracy as possible. I also listened to interviews and edited transcripts throughout coding and data analysis. Member checks with "expert informants" after transcription ensured accuracy and validity (Anastas, 2004, p. 63).

Interviews: Coding and Analysis of Patterns

Coding and analysis of interviews—like coding and analysis of newsletters—involved interaction between thematic (axial) coding and open coding, or grounded theory (Anastas, 2004). I systematically scanned each transcript for words, phrases, or ideas that reflected upon research questions. Through a deductive or a priori lens, I analyzed how interview data reflected on theoretical discussions in the literature. This contributed to validity of findings. Meanwhile, I highlighted ideas that emerged independently from interviews, and that expanded upon or problematized the literature. Open coding, or inductive analysis, allowed concepts to percolate organically from data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

As an example of iterative coding, funding strategies and challenges for youth organizing were underscored in the literature. Interviews revealed PSU's specific approaches to fiscal sustainability, such as a shift to individual donor-building. I later

came across literature directly exploring this tactic as a model of fiscal innovation in youth organizing (Braxton et al., 2013).

Similarly, ideas about addressing root causes in scaling, youth empowerment, the ideological dimension of scale, and tensions between collaboration and conflict were discussed in the literature. Even so, interviews compelled investigation of these themes further as they emerged as significant motifs. The literature and interview data operated symbiotically during analysis and synthesis.

Transcription accelerated coding and analysis. In my interview coding document, I made an outline distinguishing themes from the data that pertained to sustainability, and those more relevant to scaling. This outline was formed initially with deductive themes from the literature, and enriched by themes from interviews as analysis proceeded. This iterative document was a template for my analysis and findings. I also included in my coding document a running list of campaigns and accomplishments identified by interviewees, newsletters, and other data. My codebook for reviewing interviews and newsletters can be seen in Appendix C.

Transcription analysis involved word-by-word inspection and global document searches for words or phrases. For each transcribed interview, I highlighted phrases and made notes as to how statements related to etic (literature-related) or emic (grounded theory) themes. I then transferred quotes to my thematic coding document, placing them under the appropriate theme. Some ideas were placed under multiple coding themes, which helped in differentiating intensity of themes. This process exhibited the “cutting and sorting” expounded upon by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Salient themes emerged in various ways. “Root causes” was a commonly used linguistic phrase, in addition to exhibiting thematic redundancy within interviews and across interviewees. Framing issues around structural factors thus arose as an “indigenous typology” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 89).

I also discovered themes via the “constant comparison method,” or “systematic comparisons across units of data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 91). For example, divergent interviewee interpretations of the organizing mantra “no permanent friends, no permanent enemies” signaled PSU’s evolving orientation toward target systems.

Coding was iterative and involved much deliberation, resulting in “multiple levels of abstraction” (Creswell, 1998, as cited in Anastas, 2004, p. 62). For instance, it became evident through literature and data that leadership development for groups like PSU is essential to both stability and to building capacities for scaling. Coding illuminated the interdependent nature of sustainability and scale, and how themes overlapped between both concepts.

Textual Analysis of PSU’s Newsletters

Another primary data collection method involved verbatim textual analyses of PSU’s 21 newsletters produced between 1996 and summer 2015. Biannual newsletters were informative about PSU’s historical growth. They also relay modifications in campaigns and theories of change, including evolving political

education and framing. They helped uncover patterns and contrasts over time, and highlight the integral role of media and communications.

Newsletters were especially helpful for documenting and analyzing chapter campaigns and school-level relationships. Until later newsletters, PSU gave chapter updates. All newsletters convey school-based activity.

PSU's first newsletter is from spring of 1996 and was called *Youthvoice*. *Youthvoice* was published seven times, ending in 2002. PSU's period of reorganization contributed to a gap in newsletter production, until the first *The Union Rep* was published in 2008. Since then, PSU resumed consistent biannual publishing. In summer 2015, PSU published a twentieth anniversary issue. This issue encompassed the decisive roles of institutional memory, media, and expression in linking members past and present.

I transcribed each article in each newsletter into a single Word document, and then scanned articles for themes. I analyzed articles with the same questions and codes used for interviews. I used the same coding approach as well, in terms of identifying both theory-related and emergent themes pertaining to research questions. I conducted word-by-word analyses and keyword searches within articles.

I did not make a separate document for coding newsletters, but made detailed notes on each article that correlated with relevant themes. Having all articles and notes in one document facilitated convenient word and phrase searches about important codes and themes over time. I bolded, highlighted, or otherwise noted significant statements from articles, which helped incorporate them into findings.

Financial Document and Fiscal History Review

To trace PSU's fiscal evolution, I dissected its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990s, the annual non-profit tax information return. I analyzed thirteen in total, from 2001-2002—when the student group officially became Philadelphia Student Union—through 2013-2014. Form 990s provide specifics about PSU's budgetary health and priorities over time, including expenditures and revenues. These documents also furnished information about staffing and board numbers and roles over time, as well as about compensation. I made a detailed Excel spreadsheet documenting all indicators of expenses, income, and staffing over time.

I also used archival Internet searches to identify PSU's funding sources from across its history (see Appendix D). This research alerted me to the Capacity-Building Initiative launched by CPER in 2011, key to sustainability and scaling for PSU and the field.

Observations

Two covert, nonparticipant, public observations were mostly exploratory. They helped to become reacquainted with Philadelphia reform and PSU. Patrick Williams (2008) identified nonparticipant observation as appropriate when research is less concerned with subjective interpretation and more with patterns that such "social action" infer (p. 561). This aligns with a historical case study and my research questions. PSU's distinctly youth-based climates also coexist well with nonparticipant observation.

Observations were of a 2011 PSU-led march against austerity and economic exploitation—which also included college students and taxi workers—and a youth-led Superintendent Search Forum sponsored by the SDP and CNS in 2012. These events supplied information and access, including meeting and becoming more aware of some interviewees. They also prompted interview questions, and provided some primary data related to sustainability and scaling.

Additional Textual Analysis and Archival Research

Throughout analysis, I excavated much of PSU's data-rich website. Website media data included dozens of blog posts reflecting on campaigns and school reform developments, as well as podcasts, timelines, spoken word, and organizational data (e.g., staff roles). I closely followed PSU's social media, such as its Facebook and Twitter feeds. I dissected recent end-of-year fundraising appeal letters, which provided updates on programming, campaign strategies and foci, and trends in reform and urban governance. Following PSU's activity throughout analysis enabled me to learn about consequential internal developments like its efforts to stave off eviction, and about its timely viral campaigns around historic moments in the SDP.

I analyzed news articles related to SDP reform and broader urban school reform. *The Philadelphia Public School Notebook* was invaluable in understanding the evolution of SDP reform. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* were also helpful in gathering background information to paint a complete historical picture

about the SDP and PSU. I absorbed research about PSU, research produced by PSU allies like Journey for Justice (J4J), and research by education scholars and advocates.

To understand PSU's fiscal profile and other organizational background data, the nonprofit database GuideStar was handy, as were web searches regarding PSU's grants and grantors. Reports by and about CPER helped in understanding PSU's participation in capacity building and technical assistance. Swarthmore University's Global Nonviolent Action Database aided identification of PSU's specific activities, tactics, allies, and targets in anti -privatization and anti-takeover mobilization.

Additional Internet-based archival research supplied background information on each of PSU's executive directors, as well as more about campaigns like Project T.R.U.S.T. I also unearthed references to PSU and the SDP in local and national media outlets like *Newsworks*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Alternet*. Publications such as the *Nonprofit Quarterly Journal* provided crucial insights about approaches and challenges within the nonprofit sector regarding sustainability and scale.

Institutional Review Board Authorization

This study received ongoing authorization from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Delaware (see Appendix H). I completed a human subjects protocol; interviewees gave informed consent and received an informed consent form.

Methodological Limitations and Challenges

A historical case study approach has some limitations. Case studies are intentionally particularized, thus complicating generalizability and comparability (Stake, 1978; Rury, 2014). Still, PSU's story and the SDP governance milieu over the last 25 years are representative of urban districts that experienced the austerity, privatization, and zero tolerance regimes that dominated local, state, and national school governance. Thus, this case highlights issues related to education reform and youth urban education organizing in cities and non-urban areas nationwide.

I initially planned to conduct a comparative study of PSU and Youth United for Change (YUC), in terms of how they approached sustainability and scaling. YUC germinated in 1991 and also focused on education. PSU and YUC evolved as "sister" organizations—including by partnering on significant campaigns—and both tackle issues across the city and beyond (Conner et al, 2013). At the same time, YUC's base has primarily been Latinx students from North Philadelphia, whereas PSU has mostly operated outside of West Philadelphia and served Black students. Bhimji's (2007) study detected how PSU navigated cultural differences with YUC, such as whether to use slang in meetings together and distribution of effort during collaboration. Interviewees also hinted at times of tension, if the benefits of partnering were obvious. Another key difference is that YUC's first executive director lasted 16 years.

A few factors contributed to focusing solely on PSU, though YUC is referenced throughout the study. Early in my outreach and data collection, it was difficult to reach members or alumni of YUC. Most significantly, it soon became

apparent concentrating on PSU would yield more than enough data and more coherence. Data and thematic saturation were garnered through a single historical case study of PSU. Moreover, interviewees reflected upon convergence and divergence between PSU and YUC.

Nonetheless, like Rury (2014) suggests, it would be beneficial to conduct comparative case studies involving youth education organizing groups in Philadelphia and beyond. In addition to probing how different youth education organizing groups navigate sustainability and scaling, it would be instructive to understand how they traverse regional exogenous factors like political, leadership, and civic contexts. Analyses could help uncover how the scaling of youth-based mobilization is affected by district and state support for public education and grassroots input, or the extent of visionary leadership.

It is also critical to explore how other groups and jurisdictions intersect with intergenerational, cross-cutting movement-building. As suggested by Il Yong Lee and Wechsler (2015), social network analysis could help understand local and extralocal networks' resources, density, strength of connections, centrality, and leadership.

There were a few stakeholders I made connections with, but did not interview. One agreed to interview—a PSU board member at the time—but became unavailable due to a family member's death. I made contact with recently resigned *The Notebook* editor, but the newspaper was in the process of moving. I reached out to a local politician who has worked with PSU, but did not receive a response.

Despite these obstacles, I attained data, thematic, and temporal saturation, including for the extent of PSU's existence. I conducted multiple interviews during editing to fill remaining gaps in data—such as about evaluation, coalition-building, and chapter development—including a second interview with a previous interviewee. Altogether, I interviewed a critical mass of key stakeholders within and external to PSU. Combining interviews and analysis of many texts from across PSU's history, including 990s, ensured enough data to discern consistency and change over time in strategies for sustainability and scaling.

Policymakers' ideas and actions are a matter of public and scholarly record, as illustrated throughout this study. Still, interviewing them directly could provide important insights regarding issues like power, framing, and perceived credibility of education organizing. In their own study examining the power of PSU, Conner et al. (2013) cite Saul Alinsky (1987), who proclaimed "The first rule of power tactics" is that "power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have" (p. 126). Thus, Conner et al. (2013) recommend consulting with other targets of PSU's work in addition to legislators, such as academics and think tanks, funders, district administrators, and school leaders. This could further mitigate against concerns about selection bias, even if most interviewees were openly critical of PSU.

During interviews, there were a few minor instances of "missing data"—topics interviewees tried to evade (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 92). For example, a couple of interviewees refrained from expounding upon tensions in partnering. Nevertheless,

some interviewees were more open about such challenges. Thus, there was enough data available to make sound conclusions.

Despite interviewing with high-quality audio recording equipment, minor portions of audio were ambiguous. These snippets were not long or inscrutable enough to significantly impact data or findings. Multiple transcription efforts for each interview and member checks ensured accuracy, validity, and integrity of data.

Additionally, there was a temporal gap in PSU's newsletter production. Yet enough newsletters combined with other data to enable a historical outlook.

PSU's IRS form 990s were inconsistently completed over time, which is quite common (Gordon, Khumawala, Kraut, & Meade, 2007). Form 990 data can be inconsistent from year to year, but I analyzed PSU's 990s over time for broad trends and scrutinized well-defined data points, such as revenue, expenditures, assets, roles of staff members, and the number of employees. Further, especially when coupled with other data, 990s yield patterns and divergence over time.

Triangulation of data sources helps overcome limitations of each. Still, further research to address these constraints is warranted.

Chapter 5

FINDINGS

Data from interviews, organizational texts, archival research, and Form 990s indicate the following aspects have been central to PSU's sustainability:

- cultivating transformational leadership development and a leadership pipeline for internal growth and scaling;
- exemplary executive leadership and managing executive transitions and staff development;
- striving for fiscal stability with mission integrity;
- utilizing intermediaries for capacity building and scaling;
- multifaceted recruitment and retention efforts;
- multipronged and systemic supports;
- and planning, documentation, and evaluation.

Regarding scaling, data illuminated ten themes regarding PSU's theories, principles, strategies, and methods for change:

- vulnerable students and schools must be active agents of reform;
- politicization, praxis, and empowerment help understand and address the multidimensionality of school reform;
- campaigns and reform should be framed around root causes of problems in urban schools;
- digital media, documentation, and direct action are crucial tools for framing and expanding influence and credibility;
- legitimacy is needed among diverse stakeholders;

- depth, spread, and scope should be balanced in glocalized campaigns;
- community organizing and coalition-building optimize bottom-up, multilevel change;
- the balance between collaboration and pressure should be strategically adapted when engaging shifting target systems;
- vertical lobbying and horizontal scaling are imperative at the state level;
- and local and extralocal movements that defy spatial, cultural, and ideological barriers are urgent.

The following sections explain how data unearthed each of these primary themes, as well as how data resonates with the pertinent literature on sustainability and scaling. First, I investigate what data reveal about PSU's tactics and adaptations for stability. Then, I probe how data suggested theories, tenets, and methods for scaling.

All personal communications are from interviewees. Descriptors related to role(s) and/or timing are provided when relevant. Again, interviewees collectively were a part of PSU from its inception through 2017, spanning each of its primary campaigns and organizational developments. I also analyze the significance of divergence between interviewees.

PSU's Brand of Leadership Development Promotes Stability and Scaling

Leadership development is central to PSU's stability and scaling. Members lead each aspect of organizational and campaign development, such as by running a meeting, testifying in front of the School Reform Commission, organizing a rally, or speaking on a panel. PSU has trained thousands to lead, as found by Conner (2011) in her study of PSU.

Consistent, varied leadership activities mitigate turnover: "The biggest challenge [to expansion], beyond any capacity issues…is you only get four years with people…. You have to constantly do leadership development." Finding enough time to implement intensive leadership development is tricky, however, according to a former student and staff leader (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

PSU believes all youth can become leaders, which protects against turnover (personal communication, November 29, 2012). This strategy of promoting decentralization and servant leadership—in contrast to top-down, transactional leadership—was reinforced in a March 2015 *Rolling Stone* article featuring PSU as a veteran agitator in student movements for educational rights. The article pinpointed leadership development as essential to PSU's sustainability. A member asserted: "You don't want the organization to fail if you're not there. As I'm at my school, I'm helping politicize and develop other students so when I graduate they can take over" (Nathanson, 2015).

PSU's transformational approach to leadership is contagious. An ex-member realized his own leadership capacities after being treated like a leader, and recognized

"the value of encouraging new leaders" (personal communication, March 17, 2015). He reflected on leading more than 2,000 people in a march to City Hall: "It's not just me. Just because I've done these things doesn't mean I'm the only one. Because when we do things like that, it doesn't have to do with who can do it. It's just who wants to" (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

Servant leadership is further demonstrated by explicit efforts to provide chances for newer members to lead. A former staff and student leader stated:

> A big part of [leadership development] is being mindful about, "This person has spoken to the press three times. Can we work with that person to work with somebody who has never spoken to the press before, so that we have a new person that knows how to speak to the press?" That's throughout the culture of the organization: when we describe leadership, it isn't measured by how many people a leader can get to follow, but by how many people that leader inspires to be leaders. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

Transformational leadership also involves promoting socially conscious activists from all walks of life. An initial PSU blueprint for educational change proclaimed students should learn skills of "bakers, painters, farmers, librarians, city planners, etc. by helping them at work" (*Youthvoice,* Spring 1997, p. 4). This ethos persisted, as a recent staff leader explained:

> I would like to see foremost PSU continue to be…a place that develops as many young people [as possible]…. That it instills a love for the fight in everyone. Everyone doesn't have to be an organizer—find the struggle in whatever you do. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Leadership development spurs spread, yet maintains depth. A former executive director proclaimed:

> Some [groups] prioritize having the most numbers… Our model has been… focused on leadership development as a core component, in which students started to become organizers. They're not just the base, just members. In a lot of organizing groups…"leader" is a word people substitute for member, who gets trotted out when you need somebody to talk about personal experiences, or when you need bodies. But our organizing model was based around taking students through a process to where they're expert in the issue, strategy, recruitment, and organizing. (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Another ex-student and -staff leader argued growth should not be focused on spread or shaped by "high levels of funding," but by "committed" leadership:

> We always want our chapters and our organization to be as large as possible, without losing their depth. We recognize who brings in more members are leaders capable of talking about campaigns in a charismatic and agitational way…. It's never a question of bringing in new members at the expense of developing old, because those two processes in a lot of ways are the same…. The better your leaders are, the better your base-building is. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

The depth of PSU's leadership development is also evident by its orientation toward adversity, as explained by a former leader:

> When a crisis or activity breaks out, there's a tendency to retreat from leadership development and be like, "We don't have time for that because we've got to hit the streets." PSU recognized when you are in a crisis, dealing with a very sophisticated, powerful force, you need to redouble your efforts at leadership development…. We recognize our basic strength and our ability to influence that situation is going to come from our leadership base. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Yet, as put forth by a former student, staff, and board member, PSU's capacities for intensive leadership development are finite. This hinders internal expansion and capacity to develop coalitions (personal communication, October 20, 2012). PSU faced other challenges to maintaining and spreading deep leadership development, as I discuss throughout.

Other activities germane to sustainability and scaling for PSU promote leadership development. PSU's ex-development director and former student member stressed this regarding fundraising:

> Being a good leader also means you can organize resources and use them for a common cause…. Whether it's organizing a bake sale for their future Home and School Association, or trying to get supplies together to make signs at a protest, we want them to have fundraising as a skill in addition to all the other skills they need as leaders.

Members attend workshops about grassroots financing so they can "leave here and…be able to bring people together to solve problems their communities face" (personal communication, November 29, 2012). Newsletters revealed a variety of youth-led fundraising efforts over the years, including rallies, art and performance exhibits, and gatherings held by individual donors (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997/1998; *The Union Rep*, Spring 2011). Chapters conduct their own fundraising.

Especially since restructuring, PSU has coupled leadership and media work. An ex-director asserted, "If you're going to do a radio piece around some issue, you really have to understand it or you're not going to be able to record yourself talking about it" (personal communication, August 20, 2012). A former staff media

coordinator also reflected on how media-making requires critical thinking and hones research and interviewing skills (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

An ex-student and staff member explained how media production sharpens leadership abilities relevant to life after PSU:

> The discipline you need to be coming in extra times during the week to edit your piece to meet your deadline, the framing and messaging skills you need to cut an hour-long interview down to a five-minute piece—all of those apply in organizational contexts. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Another interviewee relayed how her experience and skills as co-editor of *Youthvoice* inspired her to become a college editor (personal communication, October 20, 2012). These comments reflect how leadership development within PSU nurtures a leadership pipeline extending beyond the organization.

A recent staff leader suggested leadership development and self-representation are mutually reinforcing:

> The only time [staff] speak to press is when [media] are calling and need a quote and it's 9:00 or 10:00 AM and students are in school…. You want someone to speak about what PSU is doing on a panel, we're going to send a young person to do it…. That again is this practice of youth voice and for them to take ownership of the organization. Not only the organization, but their issues—they are the ones most affected. They take ownership of these campaigns…and of their lives. They are advocating not only for themselves but for their families, their peers. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Skill-building is likewise constitutive of PSU's leadership development, including cultivating capacities essential for scaling. A former director conveyed how

prime skills for PSU leaders are assessing sociopolitical contexts and discerning root causes:

> We are a youth-led organization. That means we as adults have a responsibility to make sure we are giving the young people enough information, enough skills, to be able to make the right decisions. To be able to put their emotions—the struggles they are facing in their schools and communities—in its proper context, to then look at root causes, think hard about the changes they want to see, free of an emotional response…. And to really tackle the issue at its core. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Engaging targets and allies in scaling also cultivates interpersonal faculties central to leadership. One former student and staff leader attested "the most important skill" is the ability to "meet people where they are at." This is pivotal to organizing, to public speaking, to "address powerful people to their face with no fear," and to "support your allies" (personal communication, March 17, 2015).

PSU's summer institute—Building a Youth Movement program (BAYM)—is also structured around skill-building. BAYM has typically lasted two weeks. The first week nurtures technical and analytical skills, such as in audio, video, journalism, or public speaking; the second week instills political education (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2008).

Members also improve research skills through action research. For example, PSU partnered with Research for Action on a two-and-a-half year study about parental participation in urban high school reform (Fogle & Jones, 2006). During the small schools campaign, Research for Action tutored a dozen PSU and Youth United for Change (YUC) members, including via a one-week research camp (Lewis, 2005).

PSU's Leadership Ladder and Pipeline

Essentially, PSU's core activities contribute to creating well-rounded leaders poised to scale campaigns and to sustain a leadership ladder and pipeline. PSU has refined a leadership curriculum, ladder, and pipeline over time. An early staff leader explained how PSU learned soon after inception that it must institutionalize leadership processes: "We tried to organize some meetings and things like that, but it completely fell apart because we had no idea what we were doing…. We decided to start a leadership program based around that group of young people" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU's "leadership ladder" begins with its curriculum—as shown in Figure 1—which is designed so youth can articulate their grievances authoritatively (personal communication, August 16, 2013). Its curriculum has evolved and is primarily transmitted through workshops.

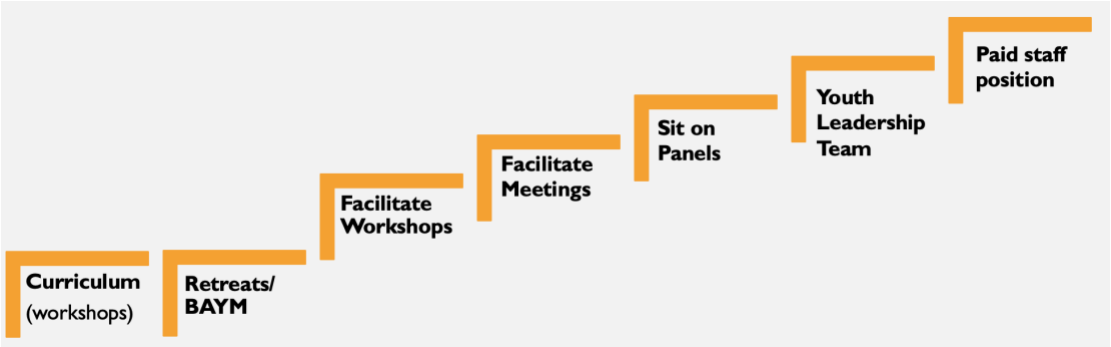

Figure 1 PSU's Leadership Ladder

Early on, PSU's "Community Outreach and Leadership Development" course helped students probe root causes and improve key scaling capacities (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996). Upon reorganizing, PSU's curriculum stressed communications and "media literacy and production" (GuideStar, 2016; personal communication, August 20, 2012). As of 2013, PSU had ten main workshops, which I outline later when discussing PSU's political education (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

PSU's curriculum promotes continuity crucial to sustainability and politicization needed for scaling. A recent staff leader remarked:

> The curriculum is important because it's that foundation, the base of our political education.… It changes, not to the point it's foreign to anyone who would have gone through it ten years ago. Because we want them to come back and share those experiences. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Retreats are another chief component of PSU's leadership "pipeline" (personal communication, August 20, 2012). About 40 students take part in biannual "'boot-camp'-like" retreats, which help students understand their learning potentials and roles in reform (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2013).

Once armed with enough knowledge and skills, youth facilitate workshops. The efficiency with which youth learn and lead workshops aids capacity building:

> What's also really important…was for us who were founding members who went through the first training—when we did the second training, we were leading that.… That is critical for people's development as leaders in terms of their own power and voice, and in their capacities as leaders to run a workshop and teach people things. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Facilitation and leadership are honed when students are trained to lead meetings. After simulating facilitation with staff, students guide chapter meetings (personal communication, March 20, 2015). Youth then sit on panels, which demand the ability to "think on your feet" and answer questions. Panels also require keen facility with reform talking points (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

PSU has always had a Youth Leadership Team, serving as a bridge to chapters. The final ladder rung is a paid staff position, which helps prepare youth for future responsibilities of college and employment (personal communication, August 16, 2013). Several interviewees were involved as students, garnered leadership experiences, and then earned staff or board roles.

PSU's alumni network extends its pipeline and links to institutional memory and resources. For instance, PSU added an alumni panel to BAYM; members and alumni share stories inspired by photographs and flyers from throughout PSU's history. This helps develop "rites of passage," according to a former director:

> That bond makes it easier for those young people who have left, graduated, and become alumni. The organization is not so foreign to them that they don't feel connected anymore. …. It's important the organization holds some things in its foundation to hold everyone together, to be able to pull students and alumni together. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Such pillars of cohesion are foundational to managing turnover:

> Those things are important because there's a constant. Regardless of who comes in staff-wise and who transitions out, there's this structure that is not so dogmatic it can't be altered and changed or adapted. That's good because you have some young people who have been through transitions, seen two different EDs, different staff members, which can be tough…. Meetings are

> going to be the same. You know in the summer, there's going to be the institute you look forward to (BAYM), that you went through, that for some of our members, your older siblings went through. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Leadership pipelines are imperative, but their potential can remain elusive.

The Difficulty of Maintaining a Leadership Pipeline

PSU exemplifies the complexities of maintaining decentralized leadership and of building a sustainable leadership pipeline within a youth-based group. When PSU germinated, there was scant youth organizing infrastructure (HoSang, 2003; Rogers et al., 2012). Also, PSU did not have training in community organizing until much later (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Thus, there were not many organizational or staff development models to emulate.

PSU weathered obstacles in developing staff leadership as it attempted to grow. PSU opened chapters and staffed each with paid organizers, which became costly and compelled it to rely on foundations. As well, nurturing skilled staff organizers was a major challenge, according to an early staff leader:

> We had a miserable track record finding people who had skills we needed as organizers. We ended up hiring a lot of former members. I was not very good at figuring how to support and train them to make the transition from students to organizers.... That became a real challenge to growth and sustainability, and it was a big part of when I left PSU…. That continued to be one of the challenges…. Staff training…is one of the real challenges.

PSU could have "created a more sustainable leadership pipeline" in its first decade (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

This conversation illustrates how staff development and management are critical, even in ostensibly youth-led organizations. It also elucidates the distinction between youth and staff development, and how these aspects should not be conflated.

Despite these trials with staff leadership development, an initial staff leader declared PSU's eventual second executive director as one of its best hires. She possessed superior ability in pinpointing and recruiting skilled organizers. PSU has since focused on institutionalizing leadership ladders. Also, the field of youth action has progressed in its capacity to support youth and staff leadership development (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU has yet to realize a student-to-executive director pipeline, which multiple leaders lamented and which some scholars recommend. However, youth action and movements' decentralized leadership indicates this aspiration need not be a priority. Creating a progressive leadership pipeline at large is the most urgent challenge.

To this end, PSU grooms leaders beyond its organization. Newsletters commented on leadership activities members engaged in within their chapters and across the SDP, such as peer mediation.

In October 2000, PSU convened over 400 students from 27 schools for the Student Convention on School Reform (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001). Students ratified an updated "Student's Platform on School Reform" (GuideStar, 2016). The platform called for a student government with an elected member from each high school, which would meet monthly and be trained in leadership development. The platform also proposed student-led professional development (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001).

Later, a PSU chapter created a student-led Art Expo that challenged stereotypes (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008). As part of the reopening of West Philadelphia High School in 2011, PSU was instrumental in creating the Urban Studies Academy. The academy featured an Urban Leadership track that involved problem-based learning to address community issues (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 7).

One example illustrates how youth leadership can scale safer learning environments and academic progress. In September 2008, "miscommunication" regarding a dress code sparked a violent conflict between security guards and students at Sayre High School (Sayre). The ordeal resulted in almost 20 student arrests, and climate and relations worsened. Sayre PSU members organized to train security guards on nonviolent practices, improve student-security relations by sharing grievances, and create a peer mentoring program (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 2).

Leadership exercises gave students and security guards a deeper mutual respect:

> We immediately noticed a difference in our security guards; they were acting more like role models and mentors. Instead of yelling at students, they asked us to do things and explain when we didn't understand. A lot of negative comments stopped. Students started to act more respectful of the guards' authority. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 3)

These events compelled PSU to bring trainings and restorative practices to scale, epitomized by the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools. A member explained how student-led safety initiatives can have multiplier effects:

> Expanding student-led solutions to climate and violence will benefit all schools in terms of attendance, grades, and test scores. Even more important, students and staff will be able to build their trust and communication, which will make everyone want to come to school. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 3)

Indispensable Adult Support: PSU's Executive Leadership

Groups like PSU cannot scale leadership development or maintain stability without competent executive leadership. Youth-based leadership is fundamental, but PSU would not have survived or prospered without its three primary adult executive directors. Before becoming director, each held essential ingredients of multiscalar change brokers.

Eric Braxton, PSU's founder and director for its first decade, has roots steeped in education and social change activism. This background helps explain PSU's radical mission, theories of change, and methods.

Mr. Braxton's parents grew up with Quaker change agents who settled in West Philadelphia in the 1970s and led the Movement for a New Society (MNS). MNS published *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* and other "tools for popular education," which served as PSU's early training materials (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Mr. Braxton also engaged in a "youth liberation workshop" by nine years old (Jeannechild, 1994). Coupled with Mr. Braxton's background in peer

counseling and “oppression theory,” these trainings and models gave PSU initial momentum and guidance (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

At a young age, Mr. Braxton also possessed key traits of leaders who scale change. He had keen knowledge of ineffectual reform lenses and key skills for organizing peers. An active student with allies from throughout the SDP, he had a wealth of localized knowledge. With ties to multigenerational activist networks across the city, he leveraged critical social capital.

These qualities equipped Mr. Braxton and eleven peers to launch a student union in fall 1995, with pivotal assistance from White Dog Café. After graduating, Mr. Braxton intended to defer college for a year and then return to school full-time while a cadre of students took over. But the group’s ideas and influence gained immediate renown. Seeing his formative ideas being realized, Mr. Braxton committed to expanding the group (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Over the next couple of years, the board of White Dog’s newly established nonprofit arm Urban Retrievers established the name Philadelphia Student Union (Scribe, 2019).

After ten years as PSU’s executive director, Mr. Braxton stepped down in 2005. He remained heavily involved in PSU’s small schools campaigns (PSU, 2007). PSU’s grassroots theory of school transformation was moving forward but “hit the bureaucracy and it fell apart.” After “it all blew up under [superintendent] Ackerman,” Mr. Braxton stopped organizing in the SDP (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

His decision to exit education organizing resembled his successor's experience. Burnout is a threat to sustainability in grassroots reform, and milieus like the SDP are draining. Still, Mr. Braxton is now FCYO's executive director, contributing to a progressive pipeline. Further, PSU's staying power is owed to Mr. Braxton's singular vision. PSU kept this vision alive, but also transformed itself with the emergence of Nijmie Dzurinko.

Ms. Dzurinko returned to the organization as executive director in 2006, after previously serving as chapter organizer and assistant director. She was convinced to do so by PSU's board and members with whom she had previously organized (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Like Mr. Braxton, Ms. Dzurinko has progressive roots. She was raised by her "steelworker grandparents" (PSU, 2011), which left an indelible impression:

> I remember at around the age of five asking myself, "What happened to my grandparents to make them so full of stress and strain? What happened to my family, battered and struggling to survive?" I knew it had to be something major, and I wanted to change it. I came to this work out of the need to get to root causes of forces swirling around us like a storm as our umbrella turned inside out. As I gained greater understanding of the causes, I realized the part I could play in creating solutions. (N. Dzurinko, "RoadMap," n.d.)

Ms. Dzurinko's upbringing contributed significantly to PSU's prioritization of addressing root causes.

Also like Mr. Braxton, Ms. Dzurinko realized youth power at a young age. She was an organizer in high school, and led anti-war and anti-racism efforts (PSU, 2011). In 2005, she co-founded Media Mobilizing Project (MMP), which merges

sensibilities from anti-poverty, human rights, and "communication organizing" (Media Mobilizing Project, n.d.)." MMP has been integral to PSU's media and movement work.

Ms. Dzurinko left PSU after her contract expired in January 2012, similarly jaded by an education sector that had become "so fucked up" and routinely elided root causes (personal communication, August 20, 2012). She soon founded Put People First! Pennsylvania, a statewide collective of human rights groups. Ms. Dzurinko later joined Mr. Braxton at FYCO, leading communications.

Ms. Dzurinko was succeeded by Hiram Rivera. Mr. Rivera was not directly involved with PSU prior, lacked extensive local organizing experience organizing, and was older at 35. Still, he was an apt match.

Like his predecessors, Mr. Rivera became involved in youth organizing by high school. With Youth Rights Media (YRM), he taught Black and Latino students video production and organizing skills to champion education and juvenile justice. Mr. Rivera later became YRM's youth organizing coordinator and centered on the school-to-prison pipeline. He led a victorious campaign to temporarily close the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (Sackey, 2012; PSU, 2017).

In 2008, Mr. Rivera left YRM to become youth organizing coordinator for the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) in New York City. He coordinated citywide campaigns around school funding, school closings, and excessive use of suspensions. He led an effective walkout to salvage free student transit (personal communication, August 16, 2013; *The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012).

This background overlaps well with PSU's evolving theories and tactics for change. Though Mr. Rivera did not mobilize in Philadelphia, he was cognizant of the reform context and well aware of PSU's achievements, in particular Student Success Centers (SSCs). He and other UYC staff visited SSCs in the SDP, learning from PSU about how to win and replicate them. Mr. Rivera also met PSU staff at conferences and networking events, where PSU made a positive impression (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Based on this synergy, PSU suggested to Mr. Rivera he would be an apt successor. He was compelled to accept the executive director role because of PSU's authenticity as a student-led change agent (Sackey, 2012).

Divergent Visions of Scaling

Each director has left a mark on PSU's theories of scaling. A former student and staff member who was with PSU under both Mr. Braxton and Ms. Dzurinko argued that the directors differed in tackling scale:

> Now the focus is more on building the network, whereas previously the focus was more on recruiting more and more students into PSU. [Mr. Braxton's] vision was PSU as more like a labor union all students in Philadelphia would feel some stake in. Now it's more so PSU is the student branch of a network of poor people's organizations that are all involved in a common political project. And PSU is how that project interfaces with youth in the SDP. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

Another ex-member agreed each director molded PSU's "agenda" and campaigns (personal communication, October 20, 2012). This reinforces how influential adult staff are in purportedly youth-led groups.

Transition and Turmoil: PSU's First Executive Succession

Despite PSU's proficient directors, executive turnover is unavoidable and often strenuous for youth groups. This was certainly the case during PSU's first executive succession.

A decade into PSU's existence, student members grew frustrated by a lack of authentic youth leadership. According to a member at the time, he and his peers felt PSU "hadn't been living up to its claims to be a youth-led organization. There was a feeling youth were ratifying decisions that had already been made." Moreover, several members wanted PSU to achieve financial independence to become an "openly revolutionary youth organization" (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

These sentiments combined with PSU's struggles cultivating a student-to-staff pipeline to foment a counterproductive culture divided along generational lines:

> The student staff became entrenched in this reactive mode where we felt like whenever things weren't getting done, or things weren't going the way we wanted, it was the fault of adult leadership. When Eric left, we just declared war on the next director. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

After Mr. Braxton stepped down, remaining staff debated how to restructure. As it sought to recreate its model, PSU consulted other youth organizations. Members

chose new directors and a new structure, but this structure and leadership immediately nose-dived for a few reasons:

> One thing was the students—myself included—who wanted to make PSU more youth-led, didn't really know how to run the organization. It was a nonprofit that did have to get grant money, did have to respond to whatever political things were happening in the District, and had to do administrative things to maintain itself.

In addition, student staff refused to organize alongside one of the new directors. The organization lacked processes to handle grievances or replace the maligned new director. Operations ceased and the board temporarily shut PSU down for several months (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

This chaos reveals challenges inherent in a group designed around youth leadership, with adults in designated leadership positions. If genuine youth leadership is lacking, or if productive connections between adults and students are absent, divisions between youth and adults can become toxic. One ex-member contended more youth influence could be "for good or for ill"; "it was [Mr. Braxton's] openness to youth leadership that ultimately was responsible for his ousting" (personal communication, September 13, 2012). As well, struggles during this transition in technical aspects of nonprofit management showed limits to youth leadership. Finally, this turbulence exhibits the dangers of becoming attached to a charismatic director.

Rebirth and Revitalization

Notwithstanding these tribulations, PSU emerged from its leadership void and incubated Mr. Braxton's successor internally. Before returning as executive director, Ms. Dzurinko led historic campaigns at Bartram High School, played a large role in PSU's initial anti-privatization struggles, and served as assistant director.

Still, her return was less a "transition"; "it was pretty much like starting from scratch" (personal communication, August 20, 2012). A few students stayed with PSU during the transition and offered support. Otherwise, Ms. Dzurinko "did the leg work and really recruited new students to be there," according to a member during the transition. Initially, the restructuring period was almost strictly internally focused. PSU lacked capacity to enact a citywide campaign or larger mobilization (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

In Ms. Dzurinko's first year as director, she stabilized the organization and traversed additional barriers:

> PSU was under a lot of scrutiny and had to prove itself for a while. It was really a lot to do that and put in place a lot of systems that hadn't been there…. It was run by a White man before, and not a White, middle-class man. There wasn't a lot of scrutiny…. It was a very uphill climb the first year. Then things started to even out and we started to rebuild our base and restart chapters, open new chapters, and hire. (personal communication, August 20, 2012)

PSU expanded, earned donor confidence, and grew its revenue even as foundations were beset by the Great Recession and philanthropic priorities were moving away from youth organizing (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

PSU recapturing its reputation as a principled student voice fueled its growth, according to a staff leader at the time:

> [PSU grew by] situating ourselves, being very visible in a way that brought us back into the spotlight quickly and made us a voice of students. We were able to take positions on things, to decide to do certain kinds of work. Mostly over that five-year period [2006-2011], we really didn't do our work based on funding streams. We would start doing work or expand and build it to the point where we could make a case for getting funding for it. But we weren't being reactive like, "Now there's funding for urban gardening, so we're gonna start doing urban gardening." (personal communication, August 20, 2012)

Other keys to growth were "a very hardworking, dedicated staff" and "really good leadership development processes for students…. They were able to take on leadership quickly." Ms. Dzurinko also codified PSU's leadership curriculum (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

PSU received outside assistance as well, including from Cross City. PSU's succession struggles were one of many "huge challenges" and "crises" endured by organizing groups in Cross City. Being in Cross City was "enormously helpful" for member groups, according to its coalition coordinator:

> Because of relationships around the table, there are all these other people who want you to succeed. At a point when the organization's capacity is low, it can still be part of campaigns, even if it doesn't have capacity to effectively lead. That's enormously important when it comes to fundraising, because otherwise you can have this cycle where the organization doesn't have capacity and isn't able to show recent impact. But if they can be part of a coalition and still showing joint impact, that can help them get to where their capacity is built up again for independent campaigns. (personal communication, March 5, 2015)

PSU ensured the transition from Ms. Dzurinko was much less disruptive. It instituted a five-year limit for executive directors and a Transition Committee to manage executive turnover. A year before Mr. Rivera replaced Ms. Dzurinko in February 2012, the committee began interviewing candidates and preparing for turnover. After a "very intense" vetting process—including student interviews—the committee made an offer to Mr. Rivera (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012, p. 15; personal communication, September 10, 2012).

Mr. Rivera shadowed Ms. Dzurinko for four months as "strategic director," minimizing turnover's impact on the "flow of the organization" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). During this "overlap" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012), Mr. Rivera absorbed all extant media about PSU, SDP history, and actors impacting the local milieu. This deep learning introduced him to PSU's history, administration, financing, programs, and relations; he better understood politics, decision-makers, and "structures" shaping the SDP (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

This immersion process epitomizes the invaluable role of institutional memory in easing turnover. Mr. Rivera also learned about state and national campaigns and extralocal forces (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Mr. Rivera then learned more about bookkeeping, grant writing, and fundraising. Towards the end of the overlap, Ms. Dzurinko retreated from her role. This enabled Mr. Rivera to assume more responsibility, and helped staff and students recognize him. Unlike PSU's first executive turnover, this transition was "gradual"

and “well thought out. There was a clear plan and it definitely helped prepare [Mr. Rivera] for the role.” Yet it was still demanding; there was much to learn and he had to support a chapter and campaigns (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Mr. Rivera also had to fill a major “void,” and nurture trust as “the new guy”; Ms. Dzurinko “rebuilt PSU to what we know it is today.” Youth take time to trust adults, especially when another adult leader moves on. Since PSU was Mr. Rivera’s first executive role, “growing pains” were natural. Yet he was confident due to PSU’s embedded transition practices and being able to learn on the job (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Investing in Executive and Management Stability and Professionalization

Mr. Rivera benefitted from PSU’s lessons learned about investing in executive transition and executive and management compensation. Table 3 shows annual salaries of PSU’s directors and total directorial compensation, from 2001-2002 through 2013-2014. Since restructuring, PSU markedly increased executive director salaries and total directorial compensation.

Table 3 Directorial Salaries, 2001-2002 – 2013-2014 (in dollars)

Year	Executive Director(s)	Other Directors	Total
2001-2002	31,000	31,000	62,000
2002-2003	33,160	6,731	39,891
2003-2004	34,000	31,962	65,962
2004-2005	35,000	31,460	66,460
2005-2006	47,675 (1 temporary Director and 2 Co-Directors)	22,679	70,354
2006-2007	32,192	24,000	56,192
2007-2008	45,229	0	45,229
2008-2009	49,998	0	49,998
2009-2010	49,998	65,950	115,948
2010-2011	54,230	89,285	143,515
2011-2012	90,012	72,387	162,399
2012-2013	60,000	74,000	134,000
2013-2014	60,000	39,929	99,929

Source: PSU's IRS Tax Form 990s.

PSU's 990s also revealed additional expenditures during executive transition, such as for shadowing. It spent measurably more on executive compensation in years of transition—2005-2006 and 2011-2012—than in the years before and after. Leadership transition can be costly.

PSU also shifted a greater portion of its budget to staffing over time, similar to many nonprofits. Table 4 delineates PSU's historical compensation to expenditures ratio. PSU's finances reflect its professionalization for internal stability, consistent with interviews. Yet investment in staff has not allowed PSU to escape frequent

turnover (Suess & Lewis, 2007). PSU's average compensation suggests turnover will remain a barrier.

Table 4 Total Compensation to Expenditures Ratio, 2001-2002 – 2013-2014

Year	Compensation to Expenditures Ratio
2001-2002	0.42
2002-2003	0.54
2003-2004	0.54
2004-2005	0.54
2005-2006	0.53
2006-2007	0.55
2007-2008	0.61
2008-2009	0.63
2009-2010	0.75
2010-2011	0.77
2011-2012	0.78
2012-2013	0.75
2013-2014	0.77

Source: PSU's Form 990s.

An interviewee who partnered with PSU conveyed the inordinate sacrifice and humility needed to work and cultivate youth leadership in regressive political contexts:

> Organizers are crazy. You have to be crazy to do that job; it is unbelievably hard. Not just in terms of hours and intellect, but emotionally because you are working directly with people who are fighting for things they shouldn't have to fight for. It's also really hard because as an organizer, you're not the one in front. Good organizers are not the ones talking into the mics. They're developing leaders, who are then the ones talking into the mics. That's just a whole other world of work. (personal communication, March 5, 2015)

Counting on benevolence of passionate individuals is not a foundation for sustainability. Regular staff turnover supports this caveat. To develop and retain exceptional executive leadership and staff, fiscal solvency is vital.

PSU's Fiscal Evolution: An Ongoing Quest for Stability and Alignment

Just as PSU refined its executive leadership and staff development capacities, PSU's fiscal strategies and capacities evolved since White Dog's initial sponsorship. Intrigued by the promise of Mr. Braxton and peers, the Bread and Roses Community Fund and a donor approached Mr. Braxton soon after PSU germinated. Their support enlarged PSU's budget to nearly $10,000. PSU then got foundation funding and its budget grew to $15,000 by its second year (personal communication, June 20, 2012). PSU's budget grew after gaining foundation funds, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5 Gifts, Grants, and Contributions (1997-2014)

Year	Gifts, Grants, and Contributions
1997-1998	89,140
1998-1999	183,576
1999-2000	52,778
2000-2001	245,383
2001-2002	278,479
2002-2003	444,233
2003-2004	312,284
2004-2005	241,030
2005-2006	134,571
2006-2007	183,378
2007-2008	286,518
2008-2009	215,013
2009-2010	443,675
2010-2011	565,628
2011-2012	428,463
2012-2013	480,554
2013-2014	394,710

Source: PSU's IRS Form 990s

Still, PSU mirrored the youth organizing field in not passing $400,000 in income before the turn of the century. PSU also contracted during its turbulent executive transition, underscoring how detrimental leadership struggles can be.

990s portray Ms. Dzurinko's leadership in restoring PSU to solvency and propelling it toward relative prosperity. From 2009-10 through 2012-13, PSU yielded over $400,000 a year, falling just below in 2013-14. PSU reached its historical intake peak of $565,628 in 2010-2011. Mr. Rivera built on Ms. Dzurinko's efforts. PSU's net assets stood at $455,496 in 2014, its zenith.

Figure 2 shows how PSU experienced a few bumps in its gifts, grants, and contributions, but also how it overcame its reorganization period.

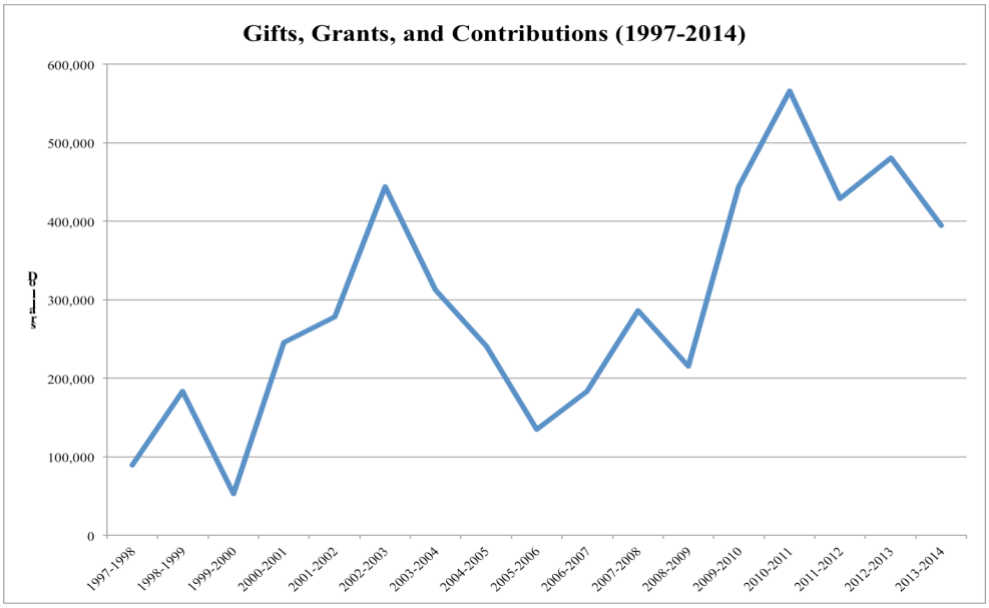

Figure 2 Gifts, Grants, and Contributions (1997-2014)

Mostly, PSU budgets have been in line with or more than other youth and education organizing groups.

According to 990s, PSU also invested $7,185 in professional fundraising in 2010-2011, $42,178 in 2011-2012, $46,649 in 2012-2013, and $56,791 in 2013-2014. PSU came to appreciate the prudence of devoting resources to development.

Even so, PSU has to navigate an income ceiling, which pales vis-à-vis most adult-based, intergenerational, and youth development nonprofits. PSU's assets are even more miniscule compared to many deep-pocketed reform actors, which makes

scaling progressive visions daunting. This disparity is magnified during macroeconomic contractions.

Still, PSU's post-restructuring financial revival is remarkable because youth action philanthropy waned during this time. The buzz phrase "youth organizing" was no longer fresh to funders, according to PSU's development director at the time (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

William Penn is one major foundation that altered priorities. In 2011, it hired Jeremy Nowak as chief executive, who promptly focused its education agenda on charterization. William Penn ceased support for PSU in 2012 after seventeen years of sponsorship (Ravitch, 2012); PSU did not fit its "new strategic plan" (Denvir, 2012b). CPER also dissolved around this time, resulting in a "double whammy" for PSU and its local allies (personal communication, March 5, 2015).

PSU responded decisively to this hurdle. Because of the "inconsistency," restrictions, and political influence associated with foundations, PSU sought new funding sources like individual donors after restructuring (personal communication, November 29, 2012; personal communication, August 16, 2013).

PSU has always sought individual patronage, such as through letter-writing campaigns. An early member recalled making direct phone calls to potential donors, and pinpointed newsletters as fundraising tools (personal communication, October 20, 2012). Yet individual donors became the focus of PSU's fundraising strategy when it hired an individual donor coordinator in 2009. In 2010, newsletters began including appeals to potential donors. PSU began a monthly "sustainer" donor program (*The*

Union Rep, Spring 2011), which included "sustainer parties" (personal communication, September 12, 2012).

PSU increased intake from individual donations each year since 2009 (FAQ, 2016). Individual fundraising blossomed from between $5,000 and $10,000 annually to averaging about $30,000 a year. Though PSU eclipsed $30,000 (personal communication, November 29, 2012), individual donations represent less than 10 percent of total revenue and are far from PSU's $100,000 goal (Braxton et al., 2013). Individual donors are not yet a viable pathway to solvency for PSU: "It's really hard to do without foundation fundraising. Those big grants—each replaces a lot, a lot, a lot of individual donors" (personal communication, March 5, 2015).

Still, an individual donor base enhances both fiscal stability and capacity for scaling, according to PSU's initial individual donor coordinator:

> The more individuals you depend on, the more you can call on to support our organizing work, which largely depends on having numbers and lots of people involved. It also means we're more sustainable since individuals tend to give for longer periods of time…. If one donor stops giving, we can more easily replace that one donor than if one large foundation decides they are unable or no longer willing to give. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

Youth and education organizing will be dependent on some philanthropy, but must capture varied sources of funding. An ex-leader stated:

> That's been a really big part about building our sustainability—continuing to build relationships with really great, passionate, and wonderful people in the foundation community. But also realizing the nature of a lot of these institutions makes it difficult for us to be funded for long periods of time. We need to continue to work with those folks, and also diversify how we get financial support. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

At various points, PSU has diversified through sources like dues, proceeds from a "workshop and tour" (IRS, 2003), "consulting" (IRS, 2014), and "social enterprise" like trainings (Braxton et al., 2013, p. 43).

Notwithstanding the "excellent insight, support, and resources" provided by foundations, PSU is conscientious about funding relationships: "We don't accept money from anyone interested in influencing campaigns we choose to engage in, or how we engage in those campaigns…. It's our responsibility as fundraising staff to identify foundations that our mission is in line with theirs" (personal communication, November, 29, 2012). Even if PSU cannot solely rely on individual donors, they are crucial to helping PSU "wean ourselves off the dependency of philanthropic organizations." Freedom from "strings attached" means autonomy in "what type of work you can do and actions you can take…. You can become bolder, you become more creative" (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

PSU's media is also integral to its fundraising. A former student and staff member stated: "A great media piece is one in which perceptions of young people are changed, it advances a campaign, and inspires people to give money" (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

Scaling consequential campaigns also promotes sustainable funding and youth development:

> Our campaigns affect our ability to fundraise in that the more effective we are in our work, the more positive changes we're able to make to schools. The more we're able to change policies and practices, the more young people are

> engaged…. The more their skills as leaders and organizers grow, the easier it is for us to raise money. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

PSU's Donor Base Helps it Weather Eviction

PSU's donor base does more than aid integrity and scaling; it proved critical to PSU's survival. After being evicted due to rising West Philadelphia rents in April 2015, PSU called on longtime supporters to help meet moving costs and maintain stability. PSU was in search of its sixth home (*The Union Rep*, Summer 2015). It is now more distant from downtown Philadelphia and its office less accessible by transit, evincing the challenges gentrification present to youth action.

Two months after eviction, PSU launched an Indiegogo campaign to request donations. The campaign featured a YouTube video describing PSU's impact, and "risks and challenges" associated with eviction (PSU Needs a Home, 2015).

The campaign was propelled by social media and e-mail. Less than a month after, PSU reached its $11,000 goal. Four months after eviction, PSU secured a new lease. PSU then eclipsed its stretch goal, gathering $15,921 in total (Updates, 2015).

This campaign exhibits how an individual donor base can furnish responsive funding during crises. It also illustrates positives of developing a mutual frame of reference with donors. One contributor expressed adulation and encouragement, and "a big middle finger for gentrification" (Comments, 2015). Though an ex-leader suggested social media is not a viable long-term mode of financing (personal communication, November 29, 2012), this campaign showed digital media can groom

fruitful bonds. Following is a discussion of the risks associated with mission-oriented fundraising.

Opportunity Costs of Conscientious Financing

Tradeoffs of PSU's resolute fundraising resonate with tensions in the literature about building relationships and expanding budgets while maintaining independence and integrity. An interviewee who served on PSU's board, in addition to being an early student member, implied PSU's identification as "being very grassroots" can be a barrier to expansion. PSU lacks a "fancy office downtown," has a small staff, and maintains autonomy from its board. This ethos restricts revenue-building relationships, and causes difficulty in mechanisms for stability like staffing a full board capable of specialized committees (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

Intermediaries as Linchpins to Sustainability and Scaling

Fiscal solvency is paramount, but other operational facets also require support in achieving sustainability and scaling. Foundations are some of many intermediaries that have given PSU assistance with stability and scaling.

Early on, PSU established a meeting and office space within the William Way LGBT Community Center, which it occupied until its restructuring. PSU's first newsletter reveals leading advocate Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth—now Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY)—served as a "special advisor"

(*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996). 990s show PCCY representatives served on PSU's board in formative years.

PSU continued to leverage local and extralocal linchpins to capital, information, and power. Members and staff received many trainings from intermediaries, such as the School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) youth organizing training (personal communication, August 16, 2013), and training on tracking impact, communications, and financing (CPER, 2013a). Based in Oakland, California, SOUL is an instrumental national intermediary for the field. PSU also secured grants from national technical assistance entities like the Community Training and Assistance Center.

CPER's National Capacity-Building Initiative and Learning Communities

Communities for Public Education Reform (CPER) was a consequential intermediary for PSU and allies. Through its national Capacity-Building Initiative (CBI), CPER helped fund and implement training to buttress stability and scaling of PSU and other education organizing groups.

CBI was established in 2011 due to concerns about education organizing's lack of expertise, resources, and national coordination. It supplied technical assistance, "reform knowledge, organizing and leadership skills," and networking "to build a more strategically coordinated field." PSU was one of 43 "Tier 1" grantees in six priority regions (CPER, 2013b, p. 2; CPER, 2013a).

Organizational technical assistance was offered through customized supports and "cohort-based sitewide" trainings about common growth areas (CPER, 2013b, p. 3). CBI addressed "(vulnerable-making) needs" of organizations, including executive coaching services for PSU (CPER, 2013b, p. 2). CPER also co-funded youth organizing training for PSU and YUC. CPER managed contracts and scope of work discussions, which can be prohibitive for youth groups.

In terms of promoting scaling, CPER was less interested in expediting one-to-one relationships; it intentionally fostered "a coordinated national effort to impact public education policy" and a "sustainable infrastructure" (CPER, 2013, p. 2). CBI institutionalized localized responsiveness to educational dilemmas, embracing mantras of "pull not push," "supplement not supplant," and "coordinate not duplicate" (CPER, 2013b, p. 3). Programmatic and impact evaluations were planned, including of change theories.

Cohort-based trainings incentivized participation and collaboration. They allowed "economy of scale" and offered support in: "power analysis, leadership development, campaign strategy, fundraising, policy and academic research, data analysis, social media, strategic communications, assessment and evaluation" (CPER, 2013b, p. 4). These aspects align with PSU's approaches to sustainability and scaling.

CPER trainers featured experts, consultants, and community members, enabling recipients to absorb grasstops and grassroots information. PSU and YUC facilitated a joint youth organizing training for Southeast Pennsylvania CPER organizations and partners (CPER, 2013b).

To further stimulate collaboration, CPER partnered with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) to implement three year-long, cross-site "learning communities" (CPER, 2013b, p. 2). Sixty-one representatives from CPER sites and the Alliance for Educational Justice participated. Learning communities analyzed pressing consensus issues, including school turn-around strategies and "Organizing in Portfolio Districts" (CPER, 2013b, p. 5). Due to the spontaneity of campaigns, learning communities prioritized "timely strategic opportunities" (CPER, 2013b, p. 4).

By responding to on-the-ground circumstances, learning communities evolved into a political effort. CPER and AISR acknowledged "an extraordinary difficult moment for education organizing" and the "well-funded, coordinated assault on the very existence of public schools." They united organizing groups and "scholar allies" from throughout the country to dissect the "big picture," including the "nature" of contemporary reform and "who is behind" prevailing agendas (CPER, 2013b, p. 8). These tactics match PSU's evolving political education.

CBI also shared best practices and provided peer-to-peer "rapid responses" (CPER, 2013b, p. 3). When grantees acknowledged a need, CPER convened "targeted exchanges." CPER supplied timely support with Special Opportunities grants. Such funding stimulated the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS)—which includes PSU—by sponsoring "collaboration, peer learning, operational expenses" and "strategic communications." CPER also financed PCAPS'

coalition coordinator, and AISR funded PCAPS campaign development and research (CPER, 2013b, p. 6; CPER, 2013a).

CPER's "ecosystem grantmaking" stimulated swift progress and solidarity (Fine & Jacobs, 2014, p. 9). Grantees were enthralled with targeted supports and expressed raised awareness about political agendas behind reform. They explored their own "design principles" for achieving access, equity, and accountability. Concretizing reform visions among disparate entities was demanding, but there were signs of active, planned resistance, including PCAPS. As well, *Getting to Outcomes* was informed by impact data from CBI and learning communities (CPER, 2013b).

In sum, CPER exhibited innovative funding approaches for scaling education organizing: "In this era of 'strategic philanthropy,' when focused, foundation-led agendas are increasingly seen as the surest route to achieving desired ends, CPER offered a very different, bottom-up, multi-issue alternative that proved effective" (NEO Philanthropy, 2014). Yet CPER dissolved by end of 2014 (Philanthropy New York, 2015). Support for CBI and learning communities vanished beyond the pilot year, when multi-year investments are pivotal. CPER's closing is a cautionary tale of how many intermediaries promoting grassroots reform are unstable. Entities like the Just and Fair Schools Fund and NEO Philanthropy filled some of the funding void left by CPER's termination.

Intermediary support supplies crucial tools and resources to promote sustainability and scaling, including regarding recruitment and retention. Next, I probe how PSU has strategized for these foundational processes.

Recruitment and Retention: Constantly Revitalizing the Base

Leadership development, fiscal stability, and capacity building must be complemented by recruitment and retention. Like leadership development, PSU's recruitment is ongoing and integrated with other core functions. Akin to most youth action groups, recruitment is a leadership opportunity and basic skill for PSU (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

PSU had a "Program/Organizing" committee early on, and devotes staff to recruitment (IRS, 2003). Yet all staff and student members are urged to recruit.

Recruitment and retention are necessary to combat transience (personal communication, September 18, 2012). According to a more recent staff member, turnover can especially impact chapters and demand intensive resources to sustain or rebuild membership and salvage institutional memory (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Several factors lead to youth turnover. Members often work and have academic and caretaking responsibilities (personal communication, September 18, 2012; personal communication, September 12, 2012). Due to the stress of organizing, interviewees underscored the importance of pursuing opportunities beyond PSU; PSU "taught" one ex-student and staff member to "step away" (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

PSU's Target Population Reflects its Theories of Change

PSU's recruitment is not only integral to sustaining spread; it also intimates how PSU has addressed scale. This study corroborated Bhimji (2007), who highlighted PSU's limited barriers to entry and welcoming atmosphere.

PSU casts a wide net, but is strategic about its target population. According to a former director, PSU inspires youth whom "might have been on a trajectory of dropping out" and are "not at all straight-A students" (personal communication, August 20, 2012). A former student and staff member conveyed PSU's orientation toward students from what are perceived as "terrible schools":

> A lot of our friends were students who acted out; some [members] acted out…. We never pushed any students out. We had students who had serious issues with behaving. But when they would come around us, it wouldn't be an issue because we engage them in our process…. We started to realize schools that are systemically bad create bad students. A "bad student" isn't a real thing. People are frustrated. (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

However, another ex-student and -staff member muddied PSU's record of inclusion: "Now there's more quiet, reserved, better students generally…. The students who used to be in PSU were often the most popular kids in their class. There were more who were thought by teachers to have behavioral problems" (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

Notwithstanding this divergence over time, PSU has long prioritized schools and neighborhoods of need. Before 1997, PSU primarily recruited from magnet schools. It was racially heterogeneous and held Saturday meetings downtown to offer

a central hub. Still, not many students from neighborhood schools attended these meetings. PSU also largely organized around citywide issues in its initial campaigns (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Since "neighborhood schools were where the real issues were," PSU began focusing there. YUC, which already prioritized students in under-resourced communities, served as a model. PSU opened its first two neighborhood chapters in 1997, in schools where members attended (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU continued to focus in schools and neighborhoods where need is greatest. Nevertheless, PSU has never excluded students from more privileged backgrounds. Some of its most dedicated students come from magnets.

Early on, magnet chapters were primarily White students from wealthier backgrounds. Most neighborhood chapters drew from Black, working-class, or low-income communities. Students had divergent experiences, epistemologies, and literacies, as a member in PSU's earlier years recalled. Managing differences was "complicated," if contributing to "very rich" experiences. Yet PSU knows social divisions must be deconstructed to affect deep change:

> [Socializing activities] were chosen to force kids to talk and interact, kids that normally wouldn't. Cliques could have kept folks separate, but these activities pull folks together. Then, the business of what we're doing in terms of planning actions and engaging in workshops, and having intellectual conversations—those happen across the social boundaries that formed informally. (personal communication, October 20, 2012)

An ex-magnet member agreed about PSU's dynamic but synergistic relations:

> It was very interesting being around people who lead very different lives, and listening to them talk about their experiences. Initially, it was difficult to find common ground. As I got to know people better, that stopped being the case; we became a tight-knit group. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

Multiple Pathways to Entry Centered on Expression and Youth Culture

For PSU, divergent youth come together via multiple recruitment avenues, such as: student summits; school dances; open mics; "classroom takeovers," or in-school education and recruitment sessions; meetings; and word of mouth. Media, art, and youth culture are pivotal to PSU outreach.

From 2008 to 2011, "Movement Music" was a multimedia recruitment tool. Songs and music videos connected with peers about issues like flash mobs and pushouts (Movement Music, 2016). PSU generated a soundtrack, *Pushed Out*, distributed to more than 1,000 students. The soundtrack interrogated root causes and offered resolutions to school problems (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010).

An ex-student and staff member described the multi-purpose, integrated functionality of art for PSU:

> Art in this organization serves a role of community-building. It's an opportunity for people to get together and do something they enjoy, which is really important. Because if people don't get along and don't like spending time with each other, it makes the work difficult. It also can be an organizing tool we use to spread our message and get people involved. It can also be a fundraising tool. It's one of those things, that when done well, it enhances all of our areas of work. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

PSU also attracts students via direct actions. A former staff member was drawn to PSU by one if its artful public protests (personal communication, September 11, 2012). Social media is a tool for recruitment and outreach, especially for mass mobilization. School chapters also conduct recruitment.

BAYM is scheduled in the summer so as many youth as possible can attend. This maintains interest as a supplement to other citywide summer programs (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

PSU offices and meeting spaces celebrate youth culture and foster socialization, which help with recruitment and retention. As a member at the time recalled, PSU's first office was "very cool" and "pretty radical," displaying "art exhibits on the walls with penises" (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

PSU also incorporates play, such as an end-of-school year cookout (PSU End of School Cookout, 2014). PSU's twentieth anniversary celebration was enlivened by hip hop, dancing, and a photo booth (personal observation, October 8, 2015).

Relevance Yields Retention

Youth are attracted because of PSU's youthful and expressive culture, but become devoted due to its potential for meaningful youth-led change. Particularly during its formative years, PSU's recruiting pitch centered on the potential benefits of equitable school funding. A leader at the time recalled an initial frame: "The average school in the suburbs gets $2,000 more per student. That's $60,000 a classroom. What

could you do with $60,000 for your classroom?" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Across its history, PSU's prioritization of youth voice and capacity for change have been transformative to many students. One elaborated in a newsletter article:

> Before I joined PSU, I hung out and loved the thrill of getting in trouble…. I went to school one day and my college access coordinator at my Student Success Center told me about PSU. She tried to bribe me with pizza, but I was more interested she said my voice could be heard and something could be done about things I wanted to change. I never felt I was heard before, so I took the risk.
>
> My next step was to come to PSU's summer program.… Before BAYM, I had no clue what I wanted to do when I grew up, but being part of it helped me figure some things out. Now, I have several goals: graduate college, pursue a military career, study health and fitness, and become a Physical Education teacher. Because of BAYM, I'm taking my PSU career further, and my grades are better. (*The Union Rep*, 2011, p. 13)

Throughout newsletters, PSU advocated for relevant instruction and an applied, holistic curriculum. PSU's resonant "content" and pedagogy inspires students to direct their learning (Conner, 2011).

An interviewee's sophomore year similarly marked a point when he "really needed to find something to do after school." PSU's classroom takeover was "very interesting." He then attended an after-school meeting, began visiting PSU's office, and joined its video team (personal communication, September 12, 2012).

Like another interviewee, his curiosity was piqued by spaces for expression and his involvement intensified when he started attending Saturday meetings. After absorbing PSU's political education by participating in analytical debates, he became

committed. He started advancing PSU's leadership ladder by facilitating meetings and media trainings (personal communication, September 12, 2012).

Interviewees also testified to how PSU's attractiveness is owed to being youth-friendly and participatory. Meetings encourage attendees to "speak their mind" (personal communication, September 12, 2012), which inspires youth to return:

> I came to the Saturday meeting and it was mind-blowing to be encouraged to talk about real issues, to be in a space where it's an open conversation. I haven't experienced that in school for as long as I could remember. Asking these broad and thought-provoking questions—it really got me engaged and I've been coming ever since. (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

In addition, PSU can be a beacon of hope, solidarity, and resilience in distressed climates. In Spring 2011, a Mauritanian immigrant wrote about PSU helping him navigate the troubled West Philadelphia High School before its redesign. His freshman year was marred by "chaos" of "fires, fights, and arrests." Regressive discipline, turnover, and a culture of anomie plagued the school (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 4).

He began internalizing low expectations when he was invited to a PSU meeting. He was "amazed by the idea" of a student-led action group, and was impressed PSU's staff organizer conversed in French. He strategized with other students about airing grievances at an upcoming School Reform Commission (SRC) meeting. At the meeting, members expressed concerns about pushouts and principal turnover. SRC members acted "flabbergasted," but student voices were heard and they felt empowered. This urged retention:

> Since that day, I wanted to be a part of PSU as it was a part of me…. I started to go to meetings and found we students have a strong connection. I said to myself, these are meetings that create inseparable bonds; we believe education is freedom. (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 4)

An ex-member valued PSU because of its earnest commitment to genuine issues impacting vulnerable youth, contrasting with "more established Left groups":

> PSU had many of the concerns I had. It was very different from any other group I encountered on the Left—people joined not because they have abstract, ideological motivations, but because PSU actually organized people affected by very real problems. That was very attractive. It felt more like the work that had to be done.

PSU was also enticing because it was led by high schoolers; other similar groups were led by college students or "geriatrics" (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

Another facet of PSU's retention is speaking truth to power. A recent staff leader remarked:

> A lot of times it's tapping into anger of youth—for young people to feel PSU is a place where, "You know what? I can be mad and I can say this and it's not gonna get shut down." You'll be challenged to think it through more and let's figure it out, but it's not gonna be shut down; let's go do it. Hopefully get to the practice where we can push for bolder, more direct actions—that's where young people are. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

School campaigns also generate momentum and satisfaction. They "lend themselves to victories and make moving towards victories" easier, which can "boost morale and self-esteem." A "legacy of victories" helps sustain motivation because

“larger issues can remain issues over generations of students that cycle through PSU” (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

PSU has many avenues for recruitment and retention. Nonetheless, multiple interviewees lamented that PSU has not been able to recruit more students.

Critiques of PSU’s Recruitment

One ex-member claimed PSU’s recruitment was “quite weak,” and that a cadre of “very involved” students “lead everything” (personal communication, September 13, 2012). This interviewee also panned PSU’s mass mobilization. He cited “pathetic” attendance of “a few dozen” students at a rally with YUC resisting mass school closings. He also critiqued PSU’s lack of “popular base,” which he attributed to insincerity about being a districtwide union. PSU cannot assume universal representation of students, he argued, and must “position themselves as leaders of the student body” through daily conversations with peers about campaigns. He also questioned PSU’s ability to organize a student strike like it did in its earlier years (personal communication, September 13, 2012). Yet in May 2013, PSU led over 5,000 students in the city’s largest walkout to protest another barrage of draconian cuts (Chris’s Speech [from PSU’s blog], June 3, 2013). Still, PSU should regularly evaluate its political education—including by considering merits of conflicting viewpoints—as well as its mobilization strategies.

Systemic, Holistic, and Institutionalized Supports

Recruitment and retention are also bolstered by structural, organizational, and individual supports. Consistent with favoring structural transformation, PSU's most notable contributions to student support have involved systemic change.

For example, PSU was responsible for establishment of Student Success Centers (SSCs)—"one-stop-shops for college, career, social, and emotional support" (Past Campaigns, 2016). The campaign for SSCs demonstrates PSU's knack for reframing regressive narratives to scale positive change.

It sprouted from organizing at Bartram High School (Bartram) at the turn of the century, which was plagued by a toxic climate and scant resources. In fall of 1999, tensions erupted when Bartram's assistant principal was shot while subduing an armed student (Gibbons, Bruch, & Snyder, 1999). The SDP responded by installing metal detectors in all high schools and assigning more school police. PSU recognized a double standard; this incident came soon after the Columbine massacre was met with greater investment in counselors. PSU shed light on how Bartram had 2,400 students and two counselors (Ishihara, 2007). It broadcasted student voice for "more support," "not just criminalization" (personal communication, June 20, 2012), and connected this atrocity with a districtwide dearth of basic resources.

In 2002, PSU surveyed more than one 1,000 SDP students to ascertain the most salient issues. Surveys stressed a lack of counselors. To tackle this void, PSU "visualized" a space where students could access holistic supports and services, which would become SSCs (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012, p. 5).

As part of Superintendent Vallas's high school restructuring plan, $9.5 million was invested and SSCs were instituted in fourteen neighborhood high schools in 2003. The SSC model called for a full-time social worker, social work interns, and students trained in service provision. Additionally, the number of counselors in the SDP doubled (personal communication, June 20, 2012; West Philadelphia High School, 2016; PSU, 2008).

SSCs assisted many students to prepare for school and careers, and supplied social work, computer access, conflict resolution, tutoring, mentoring, and nutrition counseling (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012). However, ensuring that SSCs operated faithfully was an uphill battle; none have been active since funding dried up in 2012.

Institutionalized developmental supports were also embedded in the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools (CNS). CNS demanded resources for "personalization" and strengthening student-staff linkages, and endorsed peer support (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 7).

PSU has furnished myriad other aid, such as tutoring, college access assistance, and mentoring (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008). In 2011, Media Mobilizing Project garnered an American Recovery and Reinvestment grant to enhance digital access through a "Young People's Computer Center" at PSU's office. The center featured a media lab, college prep workshops, and "work access training" (Computer Center, 2016). Middle and high schoolers used it and PSU's podcast *On Blast* was recorded there (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012).

PSU also provides emotional and identity support. At a 2007 retreat, members concluded gender-specific groups could interrogate gender dilemmas and fortify bonds. PSU's women's group "Soul Sisters" investigated ramifications of sexism and explored productive relationships with males (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008, p. 10). Additionally, males in PSU's "Brothers Respecting Ourselves" probed gender roles, masculinity, and treatment of females (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008, p. 10).

At Sayre High School, PSU created a peer mentoring program to provide support (*The Union Rep*, 2008). Newsletters showed PSU seeking ways to support immigrant and English-language learners, and those displaced by closings. PSU has always offered public transit tokens and snacks at meetings.

Support for employment and progressivism are vital aids. An ex-member confided PSU is "the sole reason" for his union job and communal housing. He deemed himself "a family member for life," and compared PSU to a "real safe/progressive version of a fraternity/sorority" and a "social network/security system/social justice/awareness bubble" (personal communication, March 17, 2015).

A recent leader proclaimed PSU will "foremost continue to be a space where young people feel they can come be themselves…. They're going to be supported" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). To gauge the extent of support PSU is providing—as well as measuring other facets of sustainability and scaling—evaluation should be integral.

Institutionalized Planning and Reflection

Chapter meetings are central to planning for PSU. Data revealed how these meetings help strategize for campaigns, and aid recruitment, political education, leadership development, and facilitation skills. They bridge to broader campaigns.

Citywide meetings gather students from across the city, including those without a chapter. These meetings plan for large-scale initiatives and help grow PSU's network. Chapter and citywide meetings facilitate cross-pollination among members and campaigns (personal communication, March 20, 2015). Meetings for the Youth Leadership Team and among staff are critical to planning and growth as well. PSU also utilizes contingency planning, vital to weathering turbulent reform.

Regarding evaluation, PSU mostly relies on informal self-assessment. A recent staff member conveyed how PSU's organizational "approach" is "rooted in a lot of conversation"; "we are always checking in about progress or institutional culture or whatever we need to evaluate." Assessment is fortified by "unique" interrelationships, which are cultivated by group study and becoming intensely involved in members' lives. This "can be emotional and hard," but is key to developing trust. The necessity of trust and high emotions of organizing compel internal dilemmas to be probed "in the moment" (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Debriefing happens through meetings, blog posts, and newsletters. PSU is "introspective": "We reflect a lot; we debrief a lot.… We talk about what our values are, why it's important to have our values." Members are encouraged to voice

concurrence or disagreement: “We have to listen to what people think.” (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

A common debriefing strategy is a “quite thorough” “plus-delta” (personal communication, March 20, 2015). Plus-delta explores positives and negatives of campaign actions and retreats. Activities like plus-delta are inviting to youth (personal communication, September 12, 2012), and contribute to a “transparent” culture (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

PSU has incorporated more formal feedback to assess its media programming. According to a recent staff member, radio training or newsletter production are ripe for assessment because they result in a finished product. Upon completion, members and staff “talk about what was good or what could have been different” (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU has participated in multiple external evaluations, including *Getting to Outcomes* and its explicit exploration of sustainability and scaling. Yet PSU can benefit from more rigorous internal and external assessment, which could help it operationalize and assess stability and scaling theories and methods.

A challenge to harnessing evaluation for long-term change is that staff transitions and short tenures limit institutional memory. One staff interviewee admitted lacking knowledge of PSU evaluation efforts prior to her employment.

In sum, PSU has shown leadership, innovation, and integrity in adapting strategies for sustainability, and in responding to internal and external threats to stability. However, organizational sustainability is just one requisite for optimal

scaling. The following sections explore PSU's principles, theories of change, and tactics for scaling its vision of reform.

Evolving Theories and Tactics for Scaling Change

Data indicated ten primary themes related to PSU's evolution in scaling. These themes encompass PSU's overarching principles, theories of change, strategies, and methods for expanding influence and addressing reform's multidimensionality:

1. "*Reclaiming education*": Urban public schools and students are central agents of democratic change.

2. *Politicization, praxis,* and *empowerment*: Understanding sociohistorical forces shaping reform is imperative to achieving equity and enacting collective, multiscalar change. There must be avenues to act on theories.

3. Educational issues and reform conversations must be *framed* around addressing *root causes* and *student needs*.

4. *Documentation, digital media,* and *creative actions* are pivotal tactics.

5. *Widespread credibility* is necessary. PSU has achieved legitimacy by serving as an *experienced, informed, principled, effective,* and *proactive* change agent, particularly during *critical moments* in reform.

6. A primary yet necessary challenge for PSU is balancing *depth, scope,* and *spread* in its scaling.

7. *Scaling up, out,* (and sometimes *down*) requires embracing *community organizing, coalition-building,* and *extralocal* strategies.

8. Confronting *target systems* requires *balancing collaboration* and *conflict,* yet *reform trends* can make *earnest cooperation virtually untenable* for organizing.

9. *State-based campaigning*: *Scaling out via statewide grassroots mobilization* can be more effective than *scaling vertically*.

10. The scale of inequities dominating urban school reform demands *multilevel*, *intergenerational*, *cross-cutting*, and *discursive movement-building*.

I now explore each of these themes in more depth.

Urban Public School Students and Schools Actively Shaping Reform

PSU's focal theory of change is vulnerable urban public schools and students should play a leading role in reform efforts that directly affect them. PSU's potential for self-representation was evident when its first walkout attracted many more youth than its leaders imagined (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 2). Students started and initially ran one of PSU's first chapters without any staff assistance (Masterman, 2016).

Students are the face of PSU. Upon requesting information about the Youth Superintendent Search Forum, I was encouraged by CNS's coordinator to attend, but only to observe as it was a youth-led event. During our interview, she stated she would talk to me about CNS. Yet she would not speak to the press because she did not experience the penal regime like students (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

PSU recognizes youth-led media production and documentation are central to accurately depicting student experience in urban public schools. A recent leader said:

> These stories have to be put out there, and hopefully [PSU is] an example for other people to put personal stories out there. That's what's going to resonate with people—a story from someone who's actually living it. That's why we do it—to hopefully shape and change this narrative. That these are not lazy students who don't care about their education. These are not just parents who don't care about their kids. Our public schools are not just dens of hallways

> with criminals and murderers walking through them…. Here is reality directly from people you are talking about. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

The education journalist interviewee concurred: "Adults do a lot of talking about what's good for kids and don't necessarily include student voice, so [the voice of PSU and allies] is very important" (personal communication, September 6, 2012).

Documenting school conditions from a youth lens is essential because there is scant on-the-ground reporting of austerity's impacts, such as "fewer and fewer nurses" and a 3,000:1 student to counselor ratio in the SDP (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2013). PSU's 2014-15 multimedia project *Yearbook Philadelphia* was pivotal to "self-documenting abuses of the state in a drastically underfunded district preparing very few students for college or careers, or even [providing] safe learning environments," according to its staff media organizer at the time (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU has also championed the vital role of public schools in social betterment. In its fourth newsletter, Mr. Braxton averred, "public schools have the potential to play a powerful role in preparing a generation to deal with the many problems we face" (p. 9, *Youthvoice*, Winter 1997/98). Another early student and staff member stated PSU's "mission and philosophy" revolves around a robust public education system to mitigate "all sorts of social inequity" (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

PSU's belief in democratic public education has hardened as assaults on public schools intensify. Multiple staff leaders mimicked scholars in speaking about PSU's role in resisting the "ongoing" "manufactured crisis" about urban public schools. According to an ex-director, public school reform has become a "lightning rod issue" because elites perceive public schools and grassroots engagement that tackles "roots of the problem" as threats to the economically inegalitarian status quo (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Yet achieving student-led grassroots change that favors public education is daunting in part because of neoliberal hegemony. Each of PSU's primary executive directors lamented this as "the context everyone is swimming in." Because "people have to figure out how to stay relevant in that context and speak that language," root causes and student interests are devalued (personal communication, August 20, 2012). One leader described it as "crazy" how "market-driven forces are controlling the common sense of what reform is about." Corporate reform sponsors have been "so effective that if you're against them, you're for the status quo" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU's foundational theory has constantly been tested. Up until recently, PSU's target population has been largely disempowered as privatization proponents gained bipartisan and widespread support., with the exception of notable victories such as those described in this case.

Still, political education can hedge against neoliberal dominance in reform, help inspire students to act, and empower youth. This scaling aspect is discussed next.

Politicization: Basis for Praxis and Empowerment

Faith in marginalized urban students leading change is distinct from realizing this promise. PSU strives to fulfill its basic assumption of student-led change through politicization, praxis, and empowerment.

First, members must have awareness, faculties, and self-esteem to confront issues and targets shaping urban reform. Equipped with raised awareness, members feel compelled to reject dominant discourses and stay engaged. One former student member who attended a magnet school elaborated:

> Before PSU, I was one of the kids who really thought, "I went to *this* school because I literally worked hard. And everybody else is at *that* school because they really don't care." After I came in to PSU, it was like, "That's not really the case." I live in the neighborhood where basically I'm around those same people that apparently went to those "bad" schools. I started to feel some type of way because these are people that grew up around me—my same age, my community members. Seeing me being in a good school, but them not getting the same things. "Why can't they get the same thing I get?" Maybe they just need some different attention. Maybe they just need better stuff, like what we're trying to fight for. It was a sense of responsibility, and you made it work into your schedule. (personal communication, September 12, 2012)

Another ex-member suggested the critical thinking skills he acquired from PSU were more valuable than the education he received at the exceptional Masterman magnet middle and high school (Moss-Coane, 2010).

Politicization also increases academic engagement among members, according to an ex-director. After joining PSU, students are "politicized now and really serious about things, and so they've taken on a completely different outlook" (personal

communication, August 20, 2012). Conner (2011) found that PSU molds students to perform better academically, be more engaged, and avoid conflict.

PSU begins processes of defining scale and sociopolitical development through workshops that explore intersectional oppressions and root causes of inequity. PSU has fine-tuned workshops to transmit "issues we definitely want young people to understand," such as youth empowerment and "school as a form of social control" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). Workshops also explore potential youth-led solutions.

Over time, PSU amends its political education and change theories based on pressing factors locally and in society: "We are organizing across issues that impact young people and are looking forward to seeing where it takes us, or where we take ourselves." PSU cited Audrey Lorde: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2014, p. 3). Intersectional political education is indispensable to movement-building and ameliorating root problems.

A cardinal workshop is "Organizing 101," which distinguishes between service, advocacy, and organizing. This workshop inculcates how managing crises is less effective than addressing root causes like PSU's scaling does.

BAYM dedicates a week to political education, and serves as a critical politicization crash course. BAYM in summer 2007 had workshops related to PSU's scaling, such as "how to build a campaign, media criticism, the history of social

movements, and power in the school district" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2008, p. 4).

According to a former director, politicization allows members to eloquently frame interlocking issues:

> We make these well-rounded individuals who can understand what's happening to them, their community, their peers. They're also able to articulate and name that, and not get caught up in emotional responses. They are armed with words to name what is happening to them, and clearly point out steps on how this is happening. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Perspicacity about structural influences is also a contributor to PSU's broad legitimacy (Conner et al., 2013).

Mapping Powers Behind Urban Education Privatization

To understand and enhance scaling in urban reform, members must appreciate the power dynamics that shape reform. Workshops help PSU dissect the multilevel power dynamics that influence reform, and shed light on symbolic targets. A student recalled studying power by assuming the lens of a policymaker (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2013).

PSU's power mapping has long examined networks and frames behind privatization. A spring 2012 retreat began by studying "portfolio management" reform. Workshops centered on players "using their money to push their national model to a local level," and tracked media bonds of elites pushing corporate reform (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 4). To appreciate corporate reform

"mindset" and "language," students role-played as foundations and policymakers. They learned how leading narratives "are not telling the public the whole story" regarding how "unproven" portfolio management elides structural factors perpetuating "under performing" schools (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 5). Reform is driven by framing, and reformers' language and narratives must be studied.

A third workshop dissected the local political economy via speed dating, exhibiting how "everyone with power is connected." Power players were linked to the Great Schools Compact, the School Reform Commission-designed community engagement entity. Those left "outside" decision-making networks were students, parents, and teachers (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 5).

It is clear to PSU that power and self-interest must be addressed in scaling progressive reform. A former student and staff leader asserted:

> Saving public education is a complex social issue, but it's simple to see how frequently people in power try and dismantle it for their personal gain. PSU taught me to look at how things and people are connected through motives and relationships to power. (personal communication, March 17, 2015)

Workshops also help spread knowledge to aid in scaling campaigns. For example, interviewees recalled intense political education during anti-privatization work. In addition to workshops, politicization happened through "many small rallies" and community forums (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002, p. 2), and by investigating "different power players" (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

Historicizing Political Education: Extending Human Rights' Struggles

PSU's excavation of history helps probe root causes for contemporary educational dilemmas: "the point of learning history is that it doesn't repeat itself" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2015, p. 14). A founding member relayed PSU was named for "the legacy of union organizing" and "similar to labor unions who joined together to gain worker rights, we wanted student rights" (*The Union Rep*, Summer 2015, p. 13).

PSU's politicization and scaling also connect modern and past educational justice struggles. PSU's analysis of past youth activism centers on the civil rights movement as a model for scaling progressive reform and as symbolic of enduring disparities. In 2001, an interviewee testified in front of the School Reform Commission (SRC), bewailing how urban schools have not drastically changed since the civil rights movement (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002). A decade later, a student compared "Little Rock Nine" heroism with PSU's resistance to mass closings. She pinpointed similarities between Governor Faubus in 1957 Arkansas and the SRC: "Youth are still being oppressed with small groups of people making decisions…. The biggest shared motivation" is organizing for "'our rights'" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2012, p. 13).

In 2014, PSU reflected on the sixtieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board*. PSU excoriated double segregation that traps schools in a "vicious cycle" prone to closure and the school-to-prison pipeline (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2014, p. 4; Orfield et al., 2012). That May, PSU and Journey for Justice (J4J) allies mimicked forebears

by marching in Washington to affirm belief in *Brown v. Board* (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2014).

The Campaign for Nonviolent Schools also studied non-violent civil unrest in developing its scaling tactics (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010). Modern threats against urban public education led a recent staff leader to proclaim, "There needs to be a movement the scale of the civil rights movement" to protect and invigorate public schools: "Now is the time to fight like we've never fought before, on a scale we've never fought before" (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Since restructuring, PSU has also enriched awareness about the nexus between the movement for quality public education and the poor people's movement. In 2008, members attended a symposium to reflect on Martin Luther King, learning about his leadership in the Poor People's Campaign (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008). The 2009 Poverty Initiative Leadership School included a "Poverty Scholars" weekend program. Members were inspired by a 1920 coal miners' strike in West Virginia:

> One thing I like about learning history is I can see many of the same tactics to discredit past organizers are being used today. Organizers successful at changing power relations are always attacked. Knowing this gives me strength in the face of those who claim to revere figures like King, but don't respect young people picking up where they left off. I'm proud to be building on work of those who went before. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 9)

PSU's change theories now incorporate "an undeniable link between our education system and poverty" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 14; Ravitch, 2013).

PSU also acknowledges "extreme crisis" like mass economic and educational inequity has historically led to "monumental revolutions" (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001, p.

11; Anyon, 2014). PSU recognizes that given the magnitude and interconnectedness of dilemmas influencing urban reform, history suggests movement-building must be part of scaling progressive reform.

Deconstructing State Violence

Recent history has also elevated the issue of state violence in urban reform. PSU has long critiqued student criminalization, but its political education has increasingly dissected "state violence" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2015). State violence impacting urban reform has been both direct through forceful disciplinary policies and police brutality in schools and neighborhoods, and indirect by state and local governments allowing unchecked privatization at the expense of vulnerable students.

PSU's interrogation of state violence was galvanized by Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) April 2012 downsizing plan. PSU knew then that "the storm of closings and never-ending cuts occurring on a national scale for years has landed in Philadelphia" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2012, p. 2). Meanwhile, state prison investment continued, including just outside Philadelphia.

The 2013-14 school year "was far worse than anyone could have imagined." Warnings about schools not opening on time—which have become perennial—were followed by further decimation of staff. After twelve-year-old Laporshia Massey's death—one of two in 2013-14 at SDP schools without full-time nurses—PSU deemed "schools" learning institutions in name only, lacking "resources necessary to serve the function of educating young people" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2013, p. 2).

PSU's involvement in Journey for Justice (J4J) sharpened its critique of state violence. J4J's *Death by a Thousand Cuts: Racism, School Closures, and Public School Sabotage* served to "document the harm" of "corporate education interventions" nationwide (J4J, 2014, p. ii). It found that closures assail "the core of community culture, history, and identity," and increase violence (J4J, 2014, p. 4). In Philadelphia, 10,000 students were displaced due to closures (Leach, 2014).

PSU and allies highlighted bipartisan "realignment of political forces" that set the stage for mass closings and charterization. The most severe rhetorical affront is the current framing of wholesale privatization as the "civil rights movement of our time": "It is appalling anyone would dare equate the billionaire-funded destruction of our most treasured public institutions with grassroots struggles for racial equality to which many of our elders and ancestors made heroic sacrifices" (J4J, 2014, p. 4).

PSU also responded to other state abuses gripping youth and communities of color nationwide. In 2013, PSU's political education integrated "the issue of incarcerated youth" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). PSU's inspection of state violence paralleled its espousing Black Lives Matter (BLM).

Before thousands at Independence Hall on MLK Day in 2015, a member equated "denial of resources" in schools and draconian policing with state violence (#ReclaimMLK March, 2015). PSU also orchestrated a "die-in," which included a student speech connecting the absence of school nurses, closures, and other state violence contributing to a Black person dying every 28 hours. Mr. Rivera trekked to Ferguson to teach capacities required "to strategize in this fight for life and dignity"

(*The Union Rep*, Winter 2015, p. 2). In addition, PSU joined a coalition that successfully rejected plans to construct a new Philadelphia prison and became a member of the #No215Jail working group (Our Current Work, 2015).

Scaling Political Education

PSU has also disseminated its political education to raise awareness and advance campaigns. Chapters lead sessions for peers on topics like "Organizing at Your School" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2008, p. 1), and about PSU's "theory of change" (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 5). In 2008-09, a chapter conducted yearlong political education (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 6).

A peer student credited PSU with helping her "connect issues from my school to other schools" and within the SDP (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 5). Following several PSU workshops, a school recruited PSU to continue workshops to spur student engagement (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010).

Workshops were integral to districtwide events and platforms PSU organized, such as 1997's "Students' Plan to Reform Our Schools" (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997). In 2008, PSU gathered more than 200 students from 40 high schools for a summit to investigate oppressions and practical matters within the SDP (GuideStar, 2016).

Workshopping was also crucial to shared comprehension of structural violence during CNS, both in the SDP and across Pennsylvania. Workshops have long been important to statewide organizing, including sessions on lobbying, legislation, and budgeting (personal communication, October 20, 2012). Members study state funding

“to understand why funding looks how it looks and they’re seeing the cuts they’re seeing” (personal communication, July 31, 2012). With AEJ, members engaged in workshops about the need for national organizing (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011).

Promoting “Political Irrationalism”? Challenges of Political Education

Some interviewees suggested PSU could be more inclusive in the range of perspectives its political education considers. One ex-student and -staff member advised PSU “adapt to a changing political climate” and “grapple with political realities” like charterization. This interviewee also warned support for prioritizing public over private schools “can’t be assumed.” PSU’s political education cannot be a “proxy for having to do serious political thinking about providing high-quality public education for young people.” Otherwise, PSU could become “more and more marginal”; funding will “dry up” (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

Aiming to “decouple PSU’s task of organizing all students in Philadelphia from some explicit political agenda” would allow more intellectual diversity and widen the pool of prospective members (personal communication, September 13, 2012). This could enlarge PSU’s target population for recruitment and allow for more flexibility in relationship-building and other scaling strategies.

The interviewee also lambasted PSU’s optimistic messaging after attending a rally organized to protest school closings. He decried this as false hope, “delusional,” and “political irrationalism” (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

These arguments have merit. Even if research in the SDP and elsewhere has demonstrated that mass charterization has contributed to more ills than benefits—and charters reputation as a panacea damaged—charters still carry significant support, including among vulnerable groups. Thus corporate reform's theories, frames, and proponents must be regularly interrogated.

Indeed, PSU has modified its political education over time. However, PSU has not acquiesced to discourses that promulgate charterization at the expense of public schools with scant justification. Nor does PSU accept public education as obsolete. PSU recognizes apolitical and ahistorical theories of change and framing will not achieve equity, and that public schools play as vital a role as ever.

Still, this testimony illuminates the challenging nature of political education, particularly about school reform. Other interviewees also suggested more openness to charterization would behoove PSU. Interviewees also supplied additional dimensions of political education PSU should ponder, such as how to respond to "violent offenders" and the limits of youth-led organizing (personal communication, September 19, 2012).

Divergence among interviewees about prudent political education exhibits urban reform's hyper-politicization, and distinct and evolving epistemologies among stakeholders. In this milieu, PSU must consistently articulate campaign visions, outline appropriate change theories, and explain how its strategies are broadly beneficial and representative. Taking stock of critiques is also important as PSU

decides which issues to target, which frames to craft, how to recruit, and how to develop students and fundraising relationships.

Unifying Identity Transformations and Empowerment through Praxis

Ultimately, while political education can be enlightening, it only can become empowering via praxis. Political education regarding urban reform may spur disagreement, and members arrive along a continuum of prior politicization. Still, praxis is a unifying thread as members are empowered through political contention and direct action.

After PSU's first walkout, a sense of collective efficacy was apparent:

> Young people have been told that we are to be seen and not heard for so long that most of us believe it in some way. It can be difficult to make young people believe that it really is possible to make a difference in this world, but we have started to be successful. (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997/98, p. 6)

Some members were raised with a political conscience, but involvement in PSU brought profundity to this background. An early member elaborated about how PSU took her advanced convictions to new levels:

> I did engage and have a level of analysis of politics and social inequality. I came from a politically, socially conscious family and household. But up until PSU, all we did was talk about it. PSU made me think I can do something about it. Through that experience I developed an ethic of activism and started to identify as an activist. (personal communication, October 20, 2012)

For another ex-member, PSU activism ignited a latent spark for social justice:

> PSU gave me my identity. It made me step outside of being a person in the system, and reflect on who I am as a human being. It helped me so personally, helped me understand things, helped me tap into resources in my city…. PSU gave me the tools, the theory, the skills to create whatever I want…. I've marched 2,000 and people down Broad Street. Who does that?... Being a part of all that…. It might have brought me to who I'm supposed to be. It's so deep to me. It's my heart. (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

Multiple data points displayed how public speaking and press relations are central to praxis and empowerment. A recent staff leader explained:

> [Public speaking] builds confidence. It's youth voice, having their voice out there. For the majority of them, it's the first time they've done that. It changes perceptions they have of themselves as being, "Only adults do that," "No one wants to hear from me," or "I can't do that." Then it changes, the power that comes from being able to speak publicly, including speaking to press and being trained how to speak to press. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

PSU's twentieth anniversary newsletter included an essay from an alumnus who reflected on how a public speaking training exercise in front of City Hall was "exhilarating" and showed that her "voice mattered" (*The Union Rep*, Summer 2015).

PSU trains on messaging, framing, and assertiveness. Upon coupling these skills with proficient reform knowledge, "the game changes," according to a recent staff leader. Decision makers no longer assume youth are "just acting out." When members present a "thought-out, critically analyzed set of demands," targets do not try to "poke holes" in their arguments or "say a bunch of things and brush over or confuse them" (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Another ex-leader affirmed the power and assurance media-making creates:

> The most important thing I saw coming out of [media-making] were feelings of empowerment and leadership. The look on people's faces when they could download a podcast of a radio segment they produced and hear their voice. Or when we were doing the live show at the local radio station—the pride people had operating the soundboard, their friends and family listening live to them talking about really critical issues.
>
> That gave people a sense of empowerment that's an important leadership prerequisite—something a lot of folks that come from the Philly public education system—it gets crushed out of them—a sense of pride to be able to take themselves seriously. It means it is that much harder to speak up. Besides the ways in which that helped us make our voices heard, it also made the young people more confident in their ability to make their voices heard outside of that context, like at an SRC meeting or another PSU meeting. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

As part of scaling its political education, PSU promoted vehicles for student empowerment. The 1997 citywide student forum—"How do We Want to Fix Our Schools?"—included a "Youth Empowerment" workshop exploring strategies for student voice, decision-making, and positive change (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997).

PSU has steadily presented empowerment as a remedy for scaling solutions to violence and noxious school cultures. For PSU, "the only way" to ameliorate violence "is empowering people to come together and take responsibility for solving this problem themselves" (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001, p. 9). After training Sayre High School (Sayre) police officers in 2010, members felt "a sense of leadership and power, and pride their voice could be heard to help solve these issues" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 2).

When the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission requested PSU to present at a fact-finding hearing on school violence in 2010, one student attested:

> Youth empowerment is one of the solutions to violence in schools…. If our voices are heard and we're actually counted as somebody in the district, everyone will have a positive result. When adults listen to us, trust develops between students, staff, and principals. This trust is a step towards ending violence inside schools. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 3)

PSU implemented student-led trainings of more than 50 school police officers from 2010 to 2011, changing perceptions and behaviors (Success, 2016).

At various junctures, articles championed scaling grassroots empowerment, turnaround, and collaboration instead of reform that features privatization, closings, competition, and "values" of "extreme individualism" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 9). Collective empowerment can be scaled with grassroots progressive reform.

Differentiating Empowerment and Political Power

Nonetheless, politicization and empowerment—even that which galvanizes significant change—should not be conflated with long-term political power, an ideal of scaling. Ideas of power varied; most interviewees implied PSU faces limits to political power.

One former director argued that forming alliances and pursuing root causes are primary avenues to political strength (personal communication, August 20, 2012). Other ex-leaders perceive PSU's power as an oppositional force.

One highlighted the impetus of contending for power at the urban scale to resist "national and international forces and trends." Still, chapter-based fortitude is needed for power at the urban scale (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

This interviewee acknowledged a ceiling in PSU's scale of resistance. He suggested the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools was strategic since education organizing had "not built enough power to contest" the national "corporate reform agenda head on." Campaigns regarding zero tolerance and the school-to-prison pipeline were "more winnable and possible to have successes around" (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

Other interviewees questioned if conceiving power as adversarial is prudent. An ex-director admitted internal change efforts like creating a student government may not be adequate to "building student power," but suggested internal approaches are also valuable.

Regardless, education organizing must find ways of building political capital, including by influencing elections:

> The biggest question facing organizing groups now is, "Can we actually contend for power?" A lot of organizing groups early on when I was in PSU—we were afraid to ask that because we knew we couldn't win. We'd stay away from electoral politics or anything like that because we knew we couldn't win. We just wanted to play at a level where we could win.
>
> Now we're at the stage where if we don't figure out how to address having real power, we're screwed. The cutting edge of organizing is around your question of scale and scope. What does it mean to build capacity to contend for power? What alliances do we need to build? The groups asking those questions and scaling up are the ones that are going to be effective and going to maintain. The ones that don't are going to disappear. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

Intergenerational coalitions are essential levers to electoral representation. Inner-City Struggle (ICS) was cited as a model of having "real power" through multigenerational grassroots alliances that have forged electoral influence in favor of public education. PSU and allies must develop similar bonds, "otherwise we're a joke" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Another ex-student and -staff member concurred PSU must make headway within the electoral system:

> It seems trends in education policy are going the way they're going; PSU hasn't been able to stem the tide or push things in the other direction…. Organizing groups like PSU are basically pressure groups…. PSU has no institutional way of entrenching its own political power; it doesn't run people for office…. There are no permanent victories in pressure politics. You might win something here or there—even small victories like Student Success Centers are few and far between and often get rolled back a few years later. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

Another ex-member doubted how much sway PSU has over decision makers:

> I wouldn't really say I feel empowered.… I always felt policymakers flip and flop; it takes a lot to corner them. It's easy to write a speech or testimony calling out a policy maker, but it's not easy to meet them where they are. (personal communication, March 17, 2015)

Other PSU interviewees agreed it must build more power. PSU has many "victories on paper," but "there are different kinds of power and we need to focus on building enough power to actually ensure the district meets the changes they agree to" (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

Multiple interviewees professed leadership development and base-building will always be the source of PSU's power. But internal strengthening must be complemented by coalitions that achieve spread, or "power in numbers" (Kirshner, 2009), according to CNS's coordinator:

> PSU and YUC in particular, as groups that do a lot of organizing with youth—when it comes to having power to make changes in the city, we don't have the money other people have. We don't have the influence or relationships. But what we have is people, what we have is numbers. We know a lot of our power comes through numbers, through how many people we have working together towards a common goal (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Achieving the many types of power interviewees explored is essential to optimal scaling. Data indicated PSU has been able to leverage diverse forms of power to expedite progress. However, like it does with addressing each dimension of scaling, PSU confronts resource and political limitations to consistently wielding sufficient multidimensional power.

Addressing Root Causes: Framing PSU's Most Salient Theory of Change

For PSU and allies, another consideration is that political power must be married with discursive force. Addressing root causes was the most consistently cited change theory by interviewees. In its political education and messaging, PSU consistently underscored structural inequities and student interests.

PSU's first newsletter described its "Community Outreach and Leadership Development" course, which helped participants "understand causes of social

problems such as racism, poverty, and sexism and what can be done about them" (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 12). A 2008 summit produced the following tenet: "Every student has the right to organize to address root causes of real issues that affect our education" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2008, p. 7).

By 2011, PSU's school-based "Organizing 101" platform included, "Get to the root cause and develop a strategy to solve the problem. Knowing the root of the problem helps you with demands and helps you stay on course and convey your message." In response to BCG's 2012 downsizing plan, PSU averred: "An unproven plan not rooted in what is best for students and communities, is not meaningful reform, it is a continuation of failure" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 2).

Peer surveys and listening campaigns are common tools to investigate root causes. To help amend caustic relations at Sayre, PSU members led a "root causes exercise" with school security (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009).

PSU's Evolving Argument Against Discriminatory Underfunding

Data unearthed multiple prominent framing constructs that have guided PSU campaigns in confronting structural flaws. PSU's most rudimentary reform frame regarding the root causes of SDP conditions has been that funding inequities best explain inegalitarian conditions. This construct has evolved.

PSU's first newsletter tied discrepancies in schools to Pennsylvania's "inefficient and unfair funding system." PSU promised pressure until SDP schools attain funding commensurate with suburban schools (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 3).

Two years later, PSU referred to such funding incongruities as “The Gap” (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1998, p. 7).

PSU also realized early on that radical change requires dismantling both economic and racial school segregation, as a Spring 1996 *Youthvoice* article asserted. PSU has also long linked poverty to educational inequalities. It connected Philadelphia’s deep poverty and meager tax base to the SDP’s fiscal woes (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001). In 2010, PSU contended poverty is a “related and root cause” of educational struggles (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 14).

By turn of the century, PSU recognized more commonalities with rural locales in financing struggles. In its 2000/2001 *Youthvoice*, PSU noted suburban districts spent $1,900 more than urban and rural districts per student. PSU also determined by turn of the century what Ushomirsky and Williams (2015) and Mosenkis (2014) confirmed more than a decade later: Pennsylvania school funding “discriminates against districts that have poor people, which directly correlates with race…the districts that have inadequate funding also have a larger percentage of people of color” (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001, p. 7). PSU’s evolving framing of root causes of inequities has been accompanied by refined political education and by new coalition-building efforts, including connecting with anti-poverty groups and groups across Pennsylvania.

Once privatization aggressively descended upon the SDP after the 2001 state takeover of the SDP, PSU modified its frame condemning discriminatory

underfunding. PSU began framing campaigns around targets that capitalize on austerity to facilitate unbridled school privatization.

Unchecked Privatization as Enabling Discriminatory Austerity and Segregations

Upon learning of the state takeover, PSU focused on "bridging that gap in communication" with Harrisburg. PSU hoped to have input into the SDP's transformation and an influx of school funding. It thought with enhanced oversight, the state would "finally understand the SDP's problems stem from the lack of adequate funding, which the state is responsible for providing" (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002, p. 1-2).

Instead, the state awarded Edison Schools Inc. $2.7 million to evaluate the SDP. The company "with such a bad track record" planned to manage all SDP high schools (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002, p. 2). PSU's framing exposed dubiousness of ceding control and precious resources to an unproven for-profit commodity:

> Why should our parents' money (and our money in a few years) that they pay in taxes go into wallets of fat cats while root problems of urban education are ignored?.... How is a private company going to compensate for the lack of resources our district faces? Are they going to make supplies and good teachers out of thin air?... If these companies run schools so well, why don't they hire them to run affluent suburban districts? Because suburban districts have enough resources to hire good teachers and counselors, and classes with only 20 kids. (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002, p. 8)

PSU's framing also underscored the central flaws of commodifying education by granting companies like Edison control. A newsletter article argued businesses are

forced to curb spending under certain economic conditions, and prioritize profits. PSU also attributed Edison's high staff turnover to instability of for-profit companies, while citing its plummeting stock as further evidence of risk put on Philadelphia youth (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002 p. 8-9).

Eight years later, as corporate reform continued to take hold, an interviewee wrote an article reverberating with multiple scholars in contending this model treats vulnerable stakeholders as passive actors in "a $600 billion industry." Corporate reform operates as if public education is the "education of poor and minority students," and equates it with "failure, opening the door for reforms lacking accountability and transparency" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 4).

In this environment, the scaling of grassroots engagement like that which PSU leads suffers:

> As students, poor people, and people of color on the ground in schools, we are discouraged from thinking about the national landscape of education, which ultimately makes us only objects (complete with potential dollar signs attached) to be acted upon as those with a financial stake battle it out at the policy level. Families on the ground are encouraged to think of ourselves as merely consumers of education, a belief which removes the basis for change through collective action. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 4)

As PSU continued to unpack neoliberal framing agendas, it interpreted the portfolio management model's "four main values." "Choice" signifies more charters and vouchers. "Competition" implies vying for higher test scores and school ownership. "Data-driven decisions" tie school trajectories to test scores. "Accountability" infers schools can face "harsh consequences." Wordsmithery like

"entrepreneurialism" and "modernization" is used to rationalize cost-cutting (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2012, p. 3).

In the same article, a member echoed an interviewee about the misguided allure of charters, which like Edison fill a void left by austerity. Like research and scholars suggest, charterization can be a component of urban reform, but "the proclivity the SDP has shown towards privatization is disturbing" (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2012, p. 3). This is an important nuanced frame.

Regarding large-scale charterization, an ex-director added how today's progressive frames must rebuff constructs depicting this as a strategy that will make vulnerable students safer. These efforts "tug on parents' heartstrings" (personal communication, August 16, 2013), but belie charters' "extreme disciplinary practices," lack of accountability, and disparities (Dean, 2015).

To scale progressive discourses effectively, linguistic composure is needed to counteract neoliberal interests seeking to manipulate anxieties. A recent staff leader proclaimed:

> The narrative is important because it has been co-opted by so-called reformers…. The framing of this is: "Look, this is intentional. This is a calculated assault on public education for…these austerity measures—for issues that go well beyond whether your child is safe in school or whether they have graduated…. This is what type of world these folks are trying to shape…. This is coordinated across the country. It's not just your school district, your city." (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Multiple interviewees echoed scholars in endorsing frames that pinpoint the elites pushing such narratives; “You can follow their money all over the world” (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

To refocus the conversation, this interviewee posed directing reform through a rights’ lens centered on “access to quality education” and employment (personal communication, August 16, 2013). A former staff leader concurred in championing rights’ frames that acknowledge “the quality of your education should not be determined by where you live, by your class background, and by the wealth of your neighborhood” (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

To summarize, PSU’s framing establishes that austerity and privatization paradigms often worsen fiscal inequities, participation gaps, and school climates and learning. In its counterarguments, PSU cited Research for Action (RFA), which found no evidence of portfolio management’s efficacy. Through its unpacking efforts, PSU presents viable and evidence-based alternatives as an alternative.

Notwithstanding PSU’s dogged efforts to reframe reform debates that enabled austerity, state takeover, and widespread privatization, PSU’s success at scale in this aspect was limited by overarching trends. However, recent debates more in favor of public education and wary of the ills of charters illustrate that leading frames are penetrable. Next, I explore PSU’s most coherent and successful effort to reframe debates around root causes.

Re-Casting Violence as Structural: A Legacy Climaxing in The Campaign for Nonviolent Schools

For PSU, shaping narratives and policies around safety and violence have been enduring projects. Protracted campaigns at Bartram and Sayre High Schools germinated a rich well of organizational knowledge.

But not until the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools (CNS) formed in 2010 did PSU so effectively redirect pernicious noise about violent youth toward structural analyses:

> Violence between students is a symptom of how youth are hurting on a much larger scale.… The fact every student is not receiving the resources they need for a quality education is a form of violence…. Interpersonal violence cannot be isolated from its institutional context. When students act out violently, it is often a reaction to isolation, anger, and frustration about conditions we face. (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010)

An-ex student and staff leader elaborated on PSU's idea of structural violence:

> One of the first things we would talk about is underfunding. If you look at the conditions a lot of these schools are in, the quality of teachers…[and] professional development, the supports students have, the removal of art and music courses…we think of those as violent and deriving from underfunding. Those are threatening students' lives and livelihoods.

Other factors contributing to structural violence are zero tolerance policies, "the security presence in schools…the psychological and emotional effects of metal detectors, [and] hall sweeps" (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

As CNS's coordinator relayed, the discourse about Philadelphia youth of color grew so virulent that PSU and other veteran youth groups felt obliged to act in the

toxic aftermath of December 2009 violence at South Philadelphia High School (Southern):

> There was all this negative press around young people, particularly poor, young Black students….“Here is this violent group”—students being referred to as “animals.” So PSU and YUC…these are groups that have been working for years trying to develop young people as leaders, and change perceptions of young people in the city. To see something that went so completely against everything groups like this have been working on for years, it was like, “Now is the time to respond!” (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

PSU immediately engaged groups working at Southern. Stakeholders were on the same page in promoting solutions like restorative practices (personal communication, September 18, 2012). PSU took the helm in spearheading CNS because it possessed a unique blend of historical knowledge, messaging and coalition-building abilities, and leadership. PSU was able to “scale in that way” because of its “constant leadership development” and “core of really competent and sophisticated leaders” (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

PSU and allies were determined to shed light on root causes of school violence by directly examining their experiences through discussion. Conversations between Southern members and students from Asian Americans United (AAU) revealed institutional neglect, including segregation of students by race on different floors. Some students were benefitting from more resources. Students acknowledged problems were structural and likely happening across the SDP (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

With CNS, PSU seized on a crisis to generate student-led solutions through a multi-year, inclusive process. This culminated in a 2010 "Youth Power Summit," where the consensus conceived violence as "power that hurts students' chances to be successful." This poignant frame helped foment historic multi-ethnic unity and a safety collaborative. By 2012, the school was taken off the "persistently dangerous" list (South Philadelphia High School, 2016).

CNS's momentum brought in youth beyond Southern, including the SDP student government and the Philadelphia Youth Commission. By building power through a broad coalition, CNS transformed a hegemonic frame. CNS's coordinator professed that CNS shined a light on "the root of it, a system setup in the district that was unequal and that was segregating and dividing students. We wanted to focus attention on the district and the city, and the ways in which they were pitting students against each other" (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

CNS also connected violence with cuts to youth services, libraries, and recreation (Moss-Coane, 2010). Additionally, CNS included public actions that rejected perceptions of violent youth, such as a nonviolent flash mob of 100 youth in April 2010 at a popular Center City park (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer, 2010). After the event, Conner et al. (2013) pinpointed PSU's flash mob orchestration as eliciting favorable impressions in key Philadelphia civic stakeholders. One influential child advocate and lawyer praised PSU's "really important message." A reporter's story brought national attention (Conner et al., 2013, p. 577).

Strategic and discursive unity spurred popular support, media coverage, and backing of key decision makers. A student leader at the time explicated: “The way we talked about structural violence through interpersonal violence made the campaign and language much more accessible. Everyone from higher-ups in [Mayor] Nutter’s administration to Superintendent Arlene Ackerman and folks on the SRC couldn’t really not support this campaign” (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

PSU merged framing efforts with a student pledge to nonviolence, encouraged by districtwide trainings. Members also created a curriculum around pushout factors, disseminated in Philadelphia schools and community centers. PSU engaged Harrisburg youth in a workshop scrutinizing root causes of school and community violence. After citing conditions like high teacher turnover, a dearth of textbooks, and “prison-like” environments, students concurred underfunding is a main cause (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 3).

By combining framing and broad-based organizing, CNS contributed to radical changes in awareness, practice, discourse, and policy at multiple scales, including a new code of conduct in the SDP. Strong coalitions with consistent and articulate messaging can leverage frames to forge fresh reform narratives.

PSU has engaged in other hegemonic contestations, such as around high-stakes testing. Since inception of No Child Left Behind, PSU used its communications and campaigns to lambast the individualism, rote learning, and conformity urged by standardization and high-stakes testing.

PSU contended standardized tests fail to measure learning and hurt teacher morale, and schools are not assessed validly. PSU recognized a multilevel system of downward pressure driving the high-stakes testing framework (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2010, p. 4), and underscored how profit motivates the testing industry (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010). PSU lobbied for performance-based assessments more in tune with student interests and more likely to be valid (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012).

PSU's framing of standardization and high-stakes testing came to a head in 2015, when it participated in a "test-in" and began its "More Than a Test" campaign. Months of planning culminated in the "More Than a Test" website; hundreds of students expressed why standardized tests cannot gauge learning. The campaign asserted schools should receive "full and fair" funding, independent of test scores (Members at SLA Launch, 2015). It expanded to include teachers, administrators, and community members nationwide (Student Post: #MoreThanATest, 2015).

Beyond specific framing campaigns, PSU has held citywide student forums to highlight root causes and craft solutions. PSU appears ripe to continue in this pivotal role: "We are entering our twentieth year as an organization, [and] come to 2015 in nearly the same way PSU began: with the unapologetic conviction to force conversations around root causes of inequity" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2015, p. 2).

Primary Framing Tactics: Documentation, Media, and Direct Action

Documentation, media, and direct action have been primary framing tactics. Documentation is critical to framing debates around realities in under-resourced urban public schools.

PSU's second newsletter included a plea to all SDP students for assistance in crafting "a well-rounded book of evidence showing how many repairs are desperately needed" (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997, p. 10). In 2009, students at Overbrook High learned documentation to "tell our stories" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 7). In 2011-12, West Philadelphia High School students grew weary of "unhealthy" conditions and documented root causes by surveying peers (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 10).

School-based documentation also helps students reflect about significant changes. After closings were announced in March 2013 that would bring new students to Southern, members conducted "A Big Listen" for students to express feelings about the transition (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2013).

Media are chief to PSU documentation. Beyond its *Pushed Out* soundtrack, PSU created its first video documentary in 2000, "Fighting for Our Schools." In 2009, PSU formed a Video Squad and crafted a new video, "A Day in the Life." It depicted members' experiences in school and at home, their relationships with PSU, and activity like testimony at SRC hearings (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009). In 2014, volunteer filmmakers aided PSU in documenting the school-to-prison pipeline, closures, and standardized testing (personal communication, March 20, 2015). In

summer 2015, PSU expanded its storytelling arsenal with documentary comics (Comics That Can Change the World, 2015).

PSU also documents evidence of progress, which boosts its credibility. For example, PSU amplified stories about benefits of more equitable funding under Governor Rendell. PSU joined with Philadelphia Cross City to gather "Community Account" data from students, parents, teachers, and school staff, including from surrounding districts (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

This interval of positive documentation was quickly subdued when Governor Corbett assumed office in 2011 and recommitted to austerity. PSU then led efforts to document the wreckage through its "Worst of #Philly1stDay" campaign. Before the 2013-14 year and the SDP prepared for its "worst school funding crisis in history," *The Notebook* encouraged students, staff, and parents to tweet about school's first day (Limm, 2013). PSU's blog compiled screenshots of various tweets (Worst of #Philly1stDay, 2013). The post garnered over 300,000 Reddit views, and brought significant attention to "full and fair funding." It also induced shame and embarrassment in the national eye for district and city leaders (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Yearbook Philadelphia was another recent online documentation project. Students explored effects of unending austerity and closings via photography and personal story recordings. The campaign took off and was shared widely.

Independent media enables members to "push back" and to produce frames that "represent themselves accurately," according to an ex-staff media organizer

(personal communication, September 11, 2012). Media work also refines key framing faculties, according to an ex-staff leader: “That includes being trained how to speak to press…[and] develop talking points…. Sticking to message—media can twist your words up” (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

A former director justified independent media production:

> We create and use our own media because…the corporate media…has been bought out and is a tool of the system. You cannot depend on them to give the right story, to highlight what needs to be highlighted and address issues that need to be discussed. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

An ex-staff member agreed youth media is vital to resist “divisive” and “reductive” narratives. Such distortion molds “what the public is willing to go along with,” including zero tolerance (personal communication, September 11, 2012). Another leader echoed these convictions when discussing *On Blast*’s (PSU’s podcast) rationale: “If we don’t tell our own stories, then folks who have interests counter to ours are going to frame our stories in a way that preserves their interests” (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

Evolution and Integration of PSU’s Media

PSU’s independent media has evolved and become increasingly integrated as a chief element of PSU’s framing and scaling efforts. In its first newsletter, PSU’s reporting on the 1996 walkout chastised portrayals of students as “truants” squandering taxpayer money. Also, an article in that newsletter—“False Images of

‘True Sistas’”—relayed successes of Black female members (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 2).

Since, PSU’s media apparatus has become prolific. PSU has mailed approximately 1,500 newsletters nationwide biannually. *On Blast*’s audience has ranged from 1,200 regular subscribers to “several thousand” (personal communication, August 16, 2013; personal communication, September 11, 2012). PSU also hosted its own show at West Philadelphia’s community radio station; the station was picked up nationally and most listeners live outside Philadelphia (personal communication, September 18, 2012). Media-making and communications have always been crucial to PSU, yet were emphasized post-restructuring and codified into its curriculum and leadership development (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Media furthers campaigns. For instance, during its initial anti-privatization campaign from 2001 to 2002, PSU composed op-eds, testified before government bodies, and spoke publicly at rallies (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

PSU also maintains relations with press to secure legitimacy and advance its campaigns (personal communication, July 31, 2012). To prepare for these interactions, PSU conducts media relations’ role-playing. When interfacing with press, PSU is cognizant of which students have been involved in campaigns, are trained in public speaking, and have “a full understanding” of germane issues (personal communications, March 20, 2015).

In addition, PSU scales media instruction and leverages media to bolster statewide and national organizing. Discursive unity at scale was a recent project: "Regardless of what state you are in, you're going to hear the same messages as to what's happening to public education" (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

PSU's case also indicated the promise and limits of digital and social media. Though PSU launched without a website or podcast, multiple student and staff leaders acknowledged "young people of our generation are so media-oriented…if we want to get students involved, we should be doing media stuff" (personal communication, September 10, 2012). PSU now employs a "conscious" social networking strategy (personal communication, August 20, 2012), in addition to a "quite outspoken" blog (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Youth facility with digital and social media enhances communication, direct action, outreach, and political education (personal communication, March 20, 2015; personal communication, September 18, 2012). An ex-leader detailed how low-intensity social media investment helped gain momentum for a 2011 march and rally energizing CNS that more than 2,000 attended (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012).

Nonetheless, an ex-staff leader stressed PSU "can't just run a media campaign; that wouldn't be organizing" (personal communication, March 20, 2015). Social media is most useful as a complement to an organizing campaign, though viral media can be a significant boost.

Altogether, PSU has crafted a veritable "youth media model," evidenced by local and distant groups requesting advice about how to exploit media for organizing. PSU has shared its model at several conferences (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 7).

PSU has accrued substantial national media exposure. In April 2010, members appeared on WHYY's *Radio Times with Marty Moss-Coane* to discuss CNS. Members made several 2013 appearances to explain how students respond to ceaseless budget cuts, including on *Huffington Post Live*. A member served on an MSNBC student panel, as well as on *The Stream* on Al Jazeera America. PSU garnered 2013 features in *The Nation* and *COLORLINES* (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2013). In March 2015, *Rolling Stone* spotlighted PSU. PSU has helped forge the "public idea" that students should be decisive in educational decision-making (Pittman, 2000, p. 21).

PSU's media is intimately linked to its direct action. PSU strives to craft media "convincingly so people are moved to think and act" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 7).

PSU Embraces Direct Action

Despite being energized by youthful spontaneity, PSU's direct actions are informed by decades of organizing and require intensive planning (Cersonsky & StudentNation, 2013). Members have been trained on street speaking, pamphlet distribution, and rally logistics (personal communication, October 20, 2012). PSU also recently fortified its action techniques with silkscreen resistance, which combines

screen printing and protest posters and was instrumental to the Anti-Apartheid movement (personal communication, March 20, 2015; Our Week of BAYM! 2014).

Since its emergence, walkouts have been key direct actions for PSU and its collaborators. Walkouts symbolize PSU's primary role as an external agitator.

PSU's first walkout in spring 1996 placed it "on the map"; over 2,000 students marched to City Hall, a staff leader at the time recalled (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Fifteen gave speeches resisting budget cuts and supporting a city council bill to repeal tax reductions and reorient funding to schools. Speeches were followed by a "funeral" for expiring art and music classes. Members were also determined to confront Mayor Rendell about the personal effects of austerity. A small delegation engaged the mayor, who referenced "false figures," yelled, and slammed the table. A student left Rendell's office in tears and relayed the mayor's revanchist response to the crowd and press by blow horn (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 2).

PSU seized on this unflattering moment: "We had an impact in helping to convince them [to redirect money]. That was the first bad press for Rendell. He was still the 'golden boy' mayor" (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Rendell agreed to divert $15 million for schools annually going forward (Success, 2016).

PSU's first walkout was not only prosperous in furthering equity, but also evinced its youthful creativity. The centrality of youth in PSU's actions is auspicious for media attention, as a recent staff media organizer explained: "Because young people are designing our actions and they're so creative, the creativity of actions lends itself really well to media." Performances like a "zombie *Thriller* flash mob" that

portray calamitous closings and austerity are "captured well on film or photography, and end up going viral on the Internet" (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU typically complements actions with public speaking and press conferences as its "biggest way of making a presence." Early on, annual Harrisburg trips included a rally outside legislative offices; press were invited (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

As a more recent wave of privatization and austerity strangled the SDP, PSU's third sponsored mass walkout in 2013 symbolized a crest of Philadelphia-based opposition. Resistance included School Reform Commission (SRC) meeting disturbances, traffic blockades, marches, and a YUC-led human chain around a school slated for closure (Cersonsky & StudentNation, 2013; The Notebook, 2013).

A Persistent Agitational Force Against Privatization

PSU has always been on the front lines of vociferous opposition to heavy-handed privatizing of the SDP. Direct action has been integral to this resistance.

The state takeover in 2001 was immediately followed by Edison gaining control of 60 schools and the SDP central office (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002; Denvir, 2012a). PSU quickly learned of Edison's lackluster record and launched forceful responses. In October 2001, members slept outside the state office building at City Hall that served as Edison's temporary headquarters. Over the next several weeks, PSU and allies staged multiple forums and rallies. Foment climaxed on November 20; more than 1,000 expressed opposition in Harrisburg. Pressure caused Mayor Street

and Governor Schweiker to postpone the takeover, and Edison would not manage the whole district (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002; Sigmond, 2011).

For the next five months, PSU engaged in escalating actions. On November 29, 2001, hundreds of students walked out, rallied outside City Hall, and marched to SDP headquarters, disrupting traffic. Students formed a human chain around the building. That night, a group of students slept at the mayor's office. The takeover was delayed again (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002; Sigmond, 2011).

Before the new deadline, PSU and YUC orchestrated another walkout of 2,500 peers. Street and Schweiker agreed not to cede central authority to Edison and to lessen the amount of schools it would control. Philadelphia received $75 million in aid and was granted two SRC appointments, rather than one. Still, on December 21, 2001, Philadelphia's Board of Education was extinguished and the SRC established (Sigmond, 2011; *Youthvoice*, 2001/2002; Denvir, 2012a).

PSU did not stop spearheading antagonism. In February 2002, it joined a federal lawsuit seeking to reverse the takeover. On the eve of the April 2002 SRC meeting to announce which schools would be privatized, PSU mobilized a rally.

About 25 students remained at headquarters afterwards, led a candlelight vigil, and stayed overnight. Some were "dragged out." At dawn, members barricaded SDP headquarter entrances; others completed a human chain on the steps. The SRC won an injunction to thwart the blockade, but hoped to avert mass student arrests so it attempted to bus employees to a separate location. PSU blocked the buses, and

impeded SRC Chairman James Nevels as he tried to drive off. Employees were given the day off (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002, p. 10; Sigmond, 2011).

Because of PSU's actions, the announcement meeting was moved to a nearby museum. PSU shuffled to the new location, and were told only media were allowed to enter. Some made it inside, while other members blocked traffic a few blocks away. An interviewee was arrested. Yet the meeting ensued and mass privatization commenced. Edison was awarded 20 low-performing schools. Other private entities were put in charge of 22; an additional 28 "partnership" schools faced charterization or gutting staff. A day later, many students were served with court papers. The SRC threatened to sue PSU for financial damages, and secured a restraining order (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002; Sigmond, 2011).

PSU's activism was far from futile, however. All high schools remained public. Because Edison was only endowed with 20 schools, shareholders balked, its stock nosedived, and it faced financial turmoil (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002). Eleven years later, two other interviewees were arrested with seventeen other conscientious objectors at an SRC announcement of 27 closings (PSU newsletter, personal communication, December 21, 2013).

Not Backing Down: PSU Unearths Perspectives Shaping the SRC

In 2014, PSU again showcased facility in reframing reform with direct action. For "Parent Appreciation Night," the SDP showed *Won't Back Down*. The film mirrors *Waiting for Superman* in blaming teachers for struggling public schools to

drum up support for controversial parent trigger laws that enable drastic change, such as closures or charterization. It also has ties to neoliberal and conservative backers who funded *Waiting for Superman* (Strauss, 2012).

About 20 PSU members disrupted the screening (Won't Back Down Screening, 2014), demanding full funding and the SRC's abolishment (PSU Won't Back Down Action, 2014). Then-SRC commissioner Sylvia Simms, the event's host, rallied her own supporters in screeching, "Lock them up!" Simms yelled at the students repeatedly, "Ya'll probably go to failing schools!" and "You belong in jail!" (PSU Won't Back Down Action, 2014). PSU then demonstrated for fifteen minutes. PSU got national coverage for its action and subsequent analysis (Won't Back Down Screening, 2014).

Direct action can certainly help stem the tide of domineering trends, but is often reactionary and insufficient alone to shape reform. Nonetheless, direct action is an essential tool for scaling progressive reform and refocusing toxic narratives.

Influences of PSU's Framing Tactics

Several interviewees, including non-members, discussed how PSU's framing activities influenced perceptions of youth locally and beyond. One ex-student and staff leader is confident PSU assisted the youth organizing field in communications, a sore need:

> There's framing against the Right, and the folks who want to criminalize youth. But also, so many youth organizing groups are so bad at framing and talking. Even the influences we were able to have on those groups had an

> impact on the way they were framing and messaging, and that rippled out. The effect we had in that community of organizers—through pumping out this media—that was really important in terms of public perception. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

CNS's coordinator explicated how CNS raised awareness and forged alternative solutions: "A couple of successes we've had are raising awareness about structural violence and issues students face publicly. We've been able to broaden the conversation about restorative practices in the city. We've done some open-to-the-public, citywide workshops." Scaling political education helped alter the SDP's code of conduct (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

Likewise, the education reporter credited PSU and YUC with "pushing back on what they say is the media perception of students as violent, and really trying to portray kids as positive and showing they want to help in their schools." She cited youth's ability to frame discourse around pushouts rather than dropouts (personal communication, September 6, 2012).

Philadelphia Cross City's ex-coordinator posited youth have had an "enormous impact" on national perceptions and debates around climate and discipline: "It's the youth voices that have been particularly powerful." She attributed the former US Education Secretary's transformed stance on these issues to youth framing and activism (personal communication, March 5, 2015).

In 2014, the Departments of Justice and Education co-published the first federal guidance package on climate and discipline. It demands non-discriminatory

compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Fine, Jacobs, & Nguyen, 2014), and advises on substituting restorative practices and comprehensive supports for suspensions and expulsions (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Other interviewees were not as sanguine about PSU's discursive contestation. One ex-student, staff, and board member suggested PSU's suasion was limited to "the education community" (personal communication, October 20, 2012). An ex-director stated PSU's "media apparatus is pretty great" and it "got good coverage, and we got a lot of coverage." Still, members were stereotyped as "hippies" or the "'good' students … students that care" (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Another ex-member was unimpressed by CNS's framing actions:

> I was always very skeptical of those kinds of actions that don't have any explicit political goal, and are just sort of media events for their own sake. I don't really think they change public perception of youth. They might feel good for youth involved. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

As with PSU's political education, he suggested its framing could be more nuanced:

> It's a mistake to think education policy is driven by people hating or fearing youth…. The public perception of youth campaign stuff could be seen as bad political education—insofar as members think, "We're not getting an education because people are discriminating against us because we're youth."…. "If only we showed people we're not violent criminals, that would save public education." No! (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

He further contended the work of groups like Media Mobilizing Project is insufficient: "I don't think poor people telling their story is enough." Framing

strategies must be complemented by electoral mobilization lest they project false hope (personal communication, September 13, 2012).

This conflicting testimony underlines how discursive progress cannot be taken for granted. PSU must consistently hone and evaluate messaging, and ensure narratives align with campaigns and are cogent. Nevertheless, PSU's ideological contention has combined with other factors to harvest credibility among diverse stakeholders. These levers for legitimacy and scaling are explored next.

Integrity, Reliability, Efficacy, and Awareness Yield Credibility

PSU has built broad credibility through the following: proactive, successful campaigns at pivotal moments; integrity among turmoil; advanced knowledge of issues; and coalitions. PSU has been conspicuous at significant points in the SDP's arc.

In PSU's fourth newsletter, Mr. Braxton reflected on how its 1996 walkout and subsequent growth "was in large part due to picking the right issue at the right time" (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997/98, p. 6). Similarly, PSU was compelled to establish CNS when existing trends became untenable. A member then said, "We felt like it would be irresponsible for us to not articulate a response to that" (personal communication, September 18, 2012). When the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) contract was set to expire in 2010, PSU spotlighted the lack of qualified teachers in needy schools through a multi-year campaign (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008). As mass closings arrived, PSU knew it and the SDP were "at a critical

juncture" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2012), and responded accordingly. A recent staff member argued PSU is one of few groups "willing to put their neck out there" (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU strives to stay forward-looking throughout turbulence. During the takeover and first wave of privatization, PSU was on the "defensive" and itching "to do something proactive." After the takeover, Vallas became superintendent, there was a new leader of high schools, and the administration planned a high school redesign process. PSU "decided we were going to involve students," and placed students on the redesign task force (personal communication, June 20, 2012). By taking these steps—and following up with long-term research- and community-based organizing as I discuss in more detail later—PSU leveraged the SDP's $1.6 billion Capital Improvement Program to spark the small schools campaign (Suess & Lewis, 2007).

Notwithstanding constant crises in the SDP and that most reform is "scare tactic-based," PSU sticks to its principles. An ex-member relayed:

> One of the most valuable things I learned from PSU…is if your organization doesn't have values, it won't be able to move forward and will probably get lost in the sauce. Always stick to your values…. PSU did a really good job of teaching students what our values are, and of always checking with students—our base—about values. (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

A former staff leader underscored the importance of mission integrity despite constant administrative reshuffling. She stressed "staying focused on what we're trying to accomplish; it can be really easy to react and respond to everything." She argued centralization and decentralization of SDP governance is "cyclical"; "every

reform" can be perceived as "the end of the world." Yet due to turnover within PSU, "paying attention to the history of where we've been in this city can be hard"; students "only know their one school for four years" (personal communication, July 31, 2012). Despite trying to remain proactive and principled, PSU often finds itself responding to broader struggles.

Data and Research Help Gain Legitimacy

PSU's data and research have also been levers to credibility. PSU embraces data to contextualize reform, champion remedies, and frame campaigns.

PSU media often include statistics, policy "fact boxes," and citations. PSU also conducts peer outreach to garner credible data, such as about impacts of closings (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011). As interviewees relayed, PSU embarked on research trips nationwide to study models of organizations and schools, including during restructuring and West Philadelphia High School's redesign.

PSU's blend of political awareness and research acumen earned it greater prestige in summer 2015. Superintendent Hite presented yet more administrative reshuffling, and announced multiple hires. There was paltry media coverage or public discussion. PSU filled this void and linked five of Hite's ten new appointees to very influential neoconservative groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council, and to champions of charterization like Teach for America and the CAN network. PSU spotlighted evidence of the new hires' graft, and documented how their backgrounds and connections showed this reorganization was another ripple of

Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) downsizing plan. PSU divulged how BCG promoted similar plans in other cities (The Network Plan, 2015). Several prominent education bloggers acknowledged PSU for its sleuthing.

PSU's credibility is also owed to it promoting bona fide reform alternatives, grounded in evidence and student input. PSU regularly outlines research-based tactics for fairer funding, such as "weighted student funding" and including teacher salaries in funding mechanisms to promote teacher quality (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2008).

Since 2001, PSU newsletters articulated veritable alternatives to wholesale privatization and school closures, and researched potential issues from these trends like discord due to merging student bodies (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011; Herold (2013). As a member of the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools, PSU helped put forth a research-based, grassroots supplement to BCG's downsizing plan. PCAPS surveyed almost 1,600 parents, students, and community members; held 26 "listening sessions" with about 750 youth; and collected data from a conference and two town halls. Academic research undergirded the report (PCAPS, 2013b).

Newsletters reliably provided readers guidance on methods of civic engagement to gain progressive financing. PSU's first newsletter included advice for students, citizens, and lawmakers on how to forge fiscal equity (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996). In 2008, PSU furnished talking points for discussing school funding with representatives. In the same issue, PSU advised on providing testimony at an SRC

meeting (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2008, p. 5). The Alliance for Educational Justice also raised research-based policy proposals (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010).

PSU has also built credibility by partnering with established research entities and coalitions. PSU came to appreciate the bearing of research capacity when it joined Philadelphia Cross City:

> Cross City was a great model…. It was a coalition of education organizing groups…with emphasis that organizing groups led, and advocacy and research groups were there to support…. Organizing groups were able to provide the demand, but through collaborating with groups like the Education Law Center, Research for Action, and *The Notebook*—they were able to support us to do better research, know what we were talking about, add legitimacy, help give us access. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

PSU benefitted from Cross City's assistance in long-term impactful campaigns like the Effective Teaching Campaign, which is discussed later.

During small schools organizing, PSU collaborated with Research for Action on a multi-year action research effort to devise an evidence-based plan. Members conveyed their blueprint before 200 peers, parents, administrators, and community leaders. Not long after, the SDP's Chief Academic Officer pledged to turn three large neighborhood schools into small schools (Lewis, 2005). These research-backed achievements contribute to PSU's earned respectability, which is discussed further next.

A “Coherent Student Voice”

Altogether, PSU has earned a singular reputation within the SDP. PSU’s chapter foundation maintains its credibility as a knowledgeable stakeholder and genuine student outlet. An ex-director asserted, “You have to be grounded in that level because you have to know what’s going on.” PSU was confident joining coalitions because “we spent enough time in schools” (personal communication, June 20, 2012). PSU’s self-assurance was justified by policymakers, like Bhimji (2007) and Conner et al. (2013) found. At a meeting with decision makers and reform experts, a district leader declared to an ex-director, “You and I are the only people in this room that understand what’s going on at the school” (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

This respect helps ensure students are at least engaged: “Youth organizing groups have established themselves and have enough of a reputation, power, and allies that anybody in SDP leadership...had to address us in some way or find ways to neutralize us” (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Other ex -student and -staff members agreed. One stated:

> Some policymakers tolerated us, others didn’t want to bother talking or dealing with us at all, and others genuinely respected what we did. Some who really didn’t want to deal with us were forced to over time, because of the power we wielded. (personal communication, October 20, 2012)

Administrators have recognized that student groups must be at “the table” or an initiative “won’t be successful” (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

An ex-student and staff leader submitted youth voice within the SDP is distinct in its cachet. He referenced the [2012] Chicago Teachers Union strike. Mayor Rahm Emanuel and others "sold to the press this idea teachers are hurting students and putting their interests before students." There was not an organized student voice to resist this narrative, in contrast to the "coherent student voice" in the SDP:

> In the correlation of decision-making forces in Philly, it's recognized students—through these organized groups—are going to have a say. Students are an organized stakeholder in a way you don't see in a place like Chicago, even though they have a rich history of student organizing and a couple of great groups. When you're talking about reform in Philly, you're talking about students as agents, not passive recipients of policies teachers, parents, and the administration hash out; that's a unique situation and the result of work we've done. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Another ex-staff leader concurred "there have been key moments where PSU played a crucial role in the direction of the SDP" (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

Non-PSU interviewees agreed that PSU and allies emerged as viable policy influencers. The journalist credited PSU and YUC with consistently presenting an "organized response." She included PSU in the "watchdog community" influential since pushing back against Edison. Mobilization by PSU and youth allies has fostered credibility: "Folks admire there are organized groups of students giving a serious voice to what's going on in schools" (personal communication, September 6, 2012).

However, several interviewees insinuated other power brokers still drive most reform debates. One ex-leader elaborated:

> The politics of education at the school district and state level are so contentious—especially within the larger context of what is going on in education—and pretty vicious. I don't know to what extent students have or ever had meaningful influence. As a former educator and someone who works in education, my perception is decisions are made in stone long before before any outsiders, including PSU, get involved. (personal communication, October 20, 2012)

This perspective shows how, like personal empowerment, credibility does not necessarily equate to sufficient political power to realize progressive visions. PSU has earned a seat at the table, but this does not guarantee consequential influence.

Glocalizing Reform: Balancing Depth, Spread, and Scope

PSU's legitimacy and broad support is owed in part to its efforts to achieve change that is not only deep within schools, but also change spread to many schools and that transforms policy, practice, and norms at higher levels of governance. Though political trends shape PSU's scaling strategies—"We set the scale we're operating in" depending on where best to "contest for power at that moment" (personal communication, September 18, 2012)—PSU has mostly adopted a glocalized scaling strategy due to reform's complexity.

In its first few years, PSU grappled with how to approach reform's multidimensionality. PSU initially planned to institutionalize its model in all schools, according to an early staff leader:

> We were thinking from the very beginning, "Our goal is to eventually have a chapter at every school in the city"…. "We're going to start with these two, we're going to add more, and eventually we'll have a chapter everywhere." (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

An early member was idealistic about PSU's potential influence beyond the SDP: "I was really passionate about PSU and what we were doing and thinking…'We have to build this to scale! There should be Student Unions in every city!" Yet PSU became cognizant early on regarding limits to its spread. This interviewee's enthusiasm prompted a staff leader to tell her to "slow down." She has always been frustrated PSU "isn't bigger, isn't growing" (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

Though growing (and maintaining) chapters proved thorny then and now, PSU still tapped into youth indignation beyond its estimation. When alerting police about its first walkout, PSU predicted a few hundred students might join. The walkout "took off" and over 2,000 students attended. PSU had "no business organizing anything that large at that point" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU balanced this potential and constraints by focusing in a few schools while developing citywide campaigns. By 1998, this glocalized design enabled scaling:

> By working locally while keeping up on citywide issues, we have a very complete strategy for social change. Because we have 102 well-trained student leaders…we now have an opportunity to have a huge impact on the quality of education in Philadelphia.

This structure enables citywide contestation for more resources and chapter-level oversight (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997/1998, p. 7). PSU has maintained both a school-level presence and a systemic orientation.

School-based initiatives were "a good entry point…in terms of working on an issue that was winnable, tangible," such as regarding textbooks and building

conditions (personal communication, June 20, 2012). In addition, chapter campaigns are vital to fostering relationships essential to change and credibility. An ex-student and -staff member remarked:

> It's a pathway to building relationships with principals, teachers, students—to be working in the school. It's hard to help students advocate for improvements without physically having a presence in the schools, interacting with actors in the schools, the adult actors. (personal communication, October 20, 2012)

CNS's coordinator also stressed the significance of interim objectives in schools, especially during a protracted multiscalar effort like CNS: "You have to think of short-term and long-term wins" (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

Yet PSU's focus has mostly been urban, where "international and national trends" are "manifesting … and where we're able to fight" (personal communication, September 18, 2012). Citywide campaigns tackle systemic issues like school funding. An early staff leader expounded on how citywide initiatives promote scaling through political education, outreach, and movement-building:

> It was a much bigger thing. It wasn't necessarily winnable in the short-term, but was a way to connect people to a bigger understanding of structural dynamics of what was going on in their schools.
>
> It was also a way to mobilize people. The school campaigns tended to be very focused on negotiating and meeting, talking to principals, and making rapport, not mobilizing large [groups]. School funding gave us the opportunity to organize big rallies, walkouts, and marches. If you were just doing the relational organizing and meetings, that doesn't build the movement sensibility we wanted. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

Still, PSU knew it could not lose sight of school-based organizing:

> In terms of the problems of expanding, [one was] recognizing our base is—though a lot of our campaign focus is citywide—our base came from chapters. Our citywide organization was only as strong as individual chapters were. That was the school for identifying leaders for citywide work. We started realizing the necessity of putting chapter work further at the center, in terms of the space for leadership identification and base-building. That's where outreach is going to happen, where we're going to grow—in the schools where students are.… PSU's focus—a lot of the time, maybe too much—was on citywide campaigns because that was the immediate force we were up against. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

PSU does not sacrifice depth as it scales.

This former staff and member proposed PSU's ideal multilevel organizing structure:

> The important thing for us, though, was figuring out how to run effective campaigns at the school level that would be great schools for our organizers, and great opportunities to be galvanizing, agitating, and organizing students. Then linking those struggles to an organization capable of contesting for power at the citywide level.… Those are the two things we needed to be dealing with—building power in the schools, and leveraging that power. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

PSU built upon several school-based campaigns for change at the district scale, as I explore throughout.

Though school-based organizing is necessary for deep change and scaling, it is not sufficient alone. A former director elaborated:

> The victories you can win solely organizing at individual schools are going to be so limited by school funding and the power structure above.… We have to increase scale and scope. We have to increase it districtwide…statewide…we have to do it nationally because federal education policy is having a huge impact. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

In modern reform, youth action groups must develop intersectional alliances that transcend the local level. A former director explained:

> If youth organizing groups remain isolated—boutique organizations in just one neighborhood, a few schools—I don't think they're going to have the impact they need to. That's generally true around organizing these days. Folks have to be able to ramp up and build coalitions to address larger dynamics. If they remain isolated and not working together—the challenges facing them, the direction of capitalism, pressures of privatization, and everything else that's coming down on folks—[will win]. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

Fifteen years in, PSU asserted: "While [we] focus in Philadelphia, we can only be effective if we understand trends in education policy on a national level" (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer, 2009, p. 4). Two years later, a student pondered progress of Youth Justice Corps, the Alliance for Education Justice's leadership wing to "connect local work to national work":

> There is only so much you can change around education in one city. If you want something like more extracurricular activities, better lunch, cleaner facilities, you go to the Principal. You want more resources—books, incentives for more qualified teachers, and guidance counselors—you go to the District. Anything larger—like funding for schools—that's taken up with legislatures in Harrisburg. (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 3)

School campaigning may not be enough alone, but these initiatives are still the linchpin of PSU's sustainability and scaling. Next, I discuss the determinants of the extent of PSU's chapter organizing.

Internal and External Determinants of School-Based Organizing

Several factors shape PSU's spread, in terms of the schools it engages, how it allocates resources, and its level of access. PSU's ability to access schools also influences how much deep change it can facilitate.

An ex-leader was frank about the dynamism and limits of PSU's growth:

> It fluctuates because we don't always want to build our scale. We don't want to get lost in that. At times we have thought, "We need more students or we need more this,"—not realizing that's harder. We can't really sustain that many students because we need a certain amount of staff and funding to chapter a school. (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

However, limits on chapter "core membership" do not preclude non-members from attending citywide meetings or engaging in campaigns (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

Staff capacities also influence the amount of schools PSU can organize, and the degree of mobilization within a school. A more recent staff leader remarked:

> Some chapters might be more active because there's a strong organizer in the building who is hustling, relating to students, getting a lot of one-on-one conversations in.… If they are there every day handing out flyers and trying to talk to students, that chapter is going to grow. So it also is what you put into it that is going to make it grow. (personal communication, March 20, 2015)

To enable growth, chapter organizers must be deliberate about mitigating inevitable turnover:

> [Growth] has to do with a lot of consciousness paid toward leaders you are developing, and when they graduate. If we are working in a chapter that has all seniors and working with them a lot, next year there's not going to be anybody

> in the chapter…. Recruitment has to start over again and the chapter has to be built up all over again. (personal communication, March 20, 2015)

PSU's ability to hedge against turnover also molds the extent of youth leadership within a chapter. "Some chapters are completely student-led," while others rely more on staff (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU is tactical about in which schools it organizes. A former leader submitted: "When we realized we had a really great opening in a strategic spot, we would open up a chapter." Two chapter openings were "where we had developed really good relationships with those principals…and those were really critical schools citywide" (personal communication, September 18, 2012). Direct actions also attract new members and help ignite chapters, as occurred after 2014 die-ins at two schools.

External variables affect chapter activity and growth. For example, PSU weighs "geographical" and transit proximity to gauge chapter viability. Students may approach PSU about starting a new chapter, but a principal and at least one staff member must permit access. PSU's longevity in schools is mostly due to "historical" relationships (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

PSU has experienced a range of responses from school leaders. Some "principals really liked" PSU: "We were able to do some good things at an individual school level where we had a good relationship with the principal" (personal communication, June 20, 2012). PSU cultivated relationships with several principals during CNS, critical to implementation (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

In other schools, “principals wouldn’t let us in and kicked us out” (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Thus, PSU must be circumspect in posturing toward administrations without losing its edge: “We always tried to build a constructive relationship with principals, but it’s always a tricky line to walk” (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Adverse contexts prompt PSU to close chapters (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

School-level instability is out of PSU’s control. PSU can easily lose sponsors, and some chapters have been threatened by closure. Lasting deep change is obstructed by “leadership and staff turnover in schools, combined with a tumultuous district context of recurring budget shortfalls, state takeover, and privatization” (McAlister et al., 2009, p. 28; Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Notwithstanding these potential constraints, PSU has made many efforts at deep school-level change. Appendix E details PSU’s chapter histories, including key campaigns and successes. Following is further exploration of PSU’s strategies for deep school-level change.

Striving for Deep School-Level Change

Once a critical mass of chapter members attain sufficient leadership faculties, students formulate a school-specific campaign. Members take a workshop on “learning theory,” then envision their ideal school. Chapter leaders gain a sense of pressing issues and consult the broader school community (GuideStar, 2016).

Then, the chapter convenes "like-minded people" (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 2). To permit chapter meetings, teacher sponsors commit to remaining in their room after school for an hour each week. They are aligned with PSU and "chime in," but usually "lay low" (personal communication, March 20, 2015). Next, students meet with "who has decision-making power." Members are to make demands and reach agreements. Yet when scheduling a meeting becomes a chore, students can distribute a petition, mobilize parents, or stage a rally. Members are urged to attend a PSU meeting to gain feedback on nascent campaigns (*The Union Rep*, Spring 2011, p. 2).

"School improvement campaigns" include "getting doors put on bathroom stalls, unlocking bathroom doors, and getting walls painted" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). More often, PSU has aimed to spur radical change by impacting school norms and interactions. PSU has strived for deep change in each of its chapters, but facilitated the most significant change at Bartram and West Philadelphia High Schools (West).

At Bartram—one of the SDP's largest high schools—PSU was able to repair toxic student-teacher relations and a "punitive" climate (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Bartram organizing (2000-2006) was most defined by the multi-year Project T.R.U.S.T. (Trustworthy Relationships Uniting Students and Teachers), which utilized mediated team-building and dialogue to "step out of conventional authority structure roles" and "build a more positive school culture" (Project T.R.U.S.T, n.d.; personal communication, June 20, 2012). Bartram mobilization also included: a

listening campaign to highlight root causes; a platform amplified by media coverage; a student-teacher coordinated basketball tournament; and a student ombudsman policy. PSU was able to realize some of its vision because it had good will of both the principal and the SDP's deputy chief academic officer of high school. Also, there was more district funding available to aid innovation, according to a staff leader at the time (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

At West, PSU seized on the SDP's 2003 commitment to high school investment and redesign to stimulate grassroots whole-school transformation. PSU's West organizing marked a pivotal development in its evolving strategies for scaling:

> Students said, "We don't want just new buildings; we want to use this to redesign the whole way education happens…. We've been doing individual school campaigns and operating on the theory of change saying, 'If we improve bathrooms this year, improve curriculum this year… hopefully small changes are going to add up to create change we believe in.'"
>
> The small schools campaign was a step to say—we were talking about Freire's idea, "Schools serve to liberate or domesticate; they're never neutral." If you want to create a liberatory school…You can't reform it. You need to transform it from the base." (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

West's redesign also helped PSU internalize how scaling must involve engaging partners outside of schools:

> That was when we started understanding schools are deeply connected to their communities. We couldn't just organize students; we had to connect students to churches, community groups, parents, etc.... We just started going out, meeting with all these folks, and trying to organize the whole community to fundamentally redesign the school from the ground up (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

PSU facilitated inclusion and financing of collaborative planning for the new West. Over 180 participants studied the neighborhood's needs and assets and produced "The New West Philadelphia High School Community Plan," involving a Sustainability Circle to enable lasting grassroots monitoring and input (Concordia, 2006; *The Union Rep*, Spring 2008). In 2009, PSU proposed a "whole school transformation platform," which included full site selection; school-based budgeting, curricula, and security; and structures for involvement (i.e., local school councils) (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009, p. 5).

Mr. Braxton heralded the West campaign as "PSU's "genesis of thinking about scale and scope" and "the ultimate direction of where we were trying to go," including a "theory of change around schools—the relationships between community organizing and school reform." PSU's grassroots, whole-school change theory helped realize: a popular new principal instrumental in forging a concordant climate and embracing restorative practices; plummeting violence and suspensions; more advanced courses and teacher diversity; and an Urban Leadership Academy featuring service learning (Socolar, 2010; Braxton, 2016; Herold, 2011; Success, 2008).

Progress came to a halt, however, upon Ackerman's 2008 appointment. Small schools momentum was squashed in favor of "one of the most aggressive intense, top-down turnaround efforts in the country." In addition to leadership and staff disruptions were a boilerplate curriculum, no local autonomy, and a "complete repudiation of the former reform vision guiding the school." Teachers, parents, and the community were effectively shut out from giving input regarding turnaround

(Herold, 2011). The popular principal and favored teachers were forced out (Mezzacappa, 2014), and the Urban Leadership Academy disbanded (Herold, 2011; Braxton, 2016). In 2016, West was now part of yet another top-down turnaround initiative (Mitman, 2016).

There is a new West building, but PSU's theory of student-led, whole-school change remains unrealized: "We came within two minutes of an SRC vote to develop a model of community transformation of a neighborhood high school…. Then we ran into Ackerman… and it all got blown up." Powerful local councilwoman Jannie Blackwell also helped stall the grassroots transition (Herold, 2010).

Bartram and West demonstrated that deep, normative, and grassroots change can be scaled. However, these schools also symbolize more ceilings to PSU's scaling and its ability to effectuate and sustain significant school-level change. Over time, both schools succumbed to austerity, regular turnover, and pernicious cultures (Herold, 2011; McCorry, 2014; Hangley, 2014; Graham, 2015). Elites were able to manipulate dichotomies within the community coalition, and the alliance did not cultivate enough parent or staff participation to sustain change (Braxton, 2016; personal communication, June 20, 2012).

The Forced Narrowing of PSU's Districtwide Vision

Like school-based organizing, districtwide contestation is essential for PSU. Over time, PSU was compelled to dampen idealism for radical change in the SDP.

In summer 1995, members took part in "Youth Dialogue: Building Bridges to Create Change." The event resulted in an educational blueprint for how the SDP could engage students, including quality education that prepared youth to tackle oppressions and four voting members on the Board of Education. A representative students' organization should channel student interest around curriculum, teacher performance, and extracurriculars (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997).

Two years later, PSU congregated 50 students to expand the platform. Planks included student government districtwide and in schools (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997, p. 3); student-led curriculum development (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997, p. 5); and a discipline appeal process, independent arbitrator, and continuous teacher training on discipline (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997, p. 8). Schools should be "community centers" for all ages and walks of life, and aggregate local assets (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1997, p. 4).

A few years later, when the SDP was about to lose local control, PSU still urged systemic change. PSU planned its first student convention in 2000, and produced another youth-led reform blueprint. The agenda intensified insistence on student governance, and called for student-led professional development. PSU championed ombudsmen picked by the community and checked by a student board. Information about students' rights should be conspicuous and reinforced. The platform resisted metal detectors, uniforms, and more security (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001).

After the convention, PSU set up meetings with key district and city leaders and won the chief academic officer's support for ombudsmen. A districtwide student government was created, and the CEO endorsed student participation in school improvement plans (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001; personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Yet sustaining these commitments became untenable as the SDP was soon subsumed by Harrisburg and private contractors. A year after the convention, PSU articulated an alternative plan to privatization. Core guidelines remained, but guidance was more limited and pragmatic (*Youthvoice*, 2000/2001).

As forces molding the SDP grew more antithetical to PSU's vision, it reined in hopes for institutional change. Exclusive decision making—epitomized by an "unelected school board" (personal communication, August 16, 2013)—and austerity nullified SDP structures, leadership, and relationships essential to progressive continuity. Ombudsmen have not been on the table for several years (DiFranco, 2014). The state budget barely funds a full-time nurse and counselor (Demele, 2016).

If less ambitious, PSU persevered in posing districtwide change platforms. After restructuring, PSU convened hundreds of students for a fall 2008 summit. Structural explorations were balanced with practical strategizing about equity demands in teachers' contract renewal negotiations and school turnaround. Deliberations were again translated into a platform. The agenda continued PSU's support for needs-based and egalitarian funding; for teacher quality and equity; and for "grassroots control and "real power" of students (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter

2008, p. 7). Still, this platform did not exhort specific student governance plans or curricular reform.

Since, PSU has not led creation of a student-centered platform. Yet PSU has proposed detailed plans on teacher quality, school transformation, climate, and federal education priorities, and has contributed to significant policy change in these facets.

All the same, PSU and allies have not stimulated sustained change in core areas like governance, curricula, or pedagogy. The sustainable transfer of ownership to students is not realistic within the SDP's contemporary political economy. According to an ex-director, significant normative progress must happen for authentic student governance to be scaled and thrive in the SDP:

> There were isolated examples where inside strategies were effective, but it was where there were adults who really understood youth empowerment and how to work with students. Otherwise, demanding the SDP do it—they would do it badly; doing that well requires a whole culture shift.

Small learning communities were most conducive to student voice in the SDP. Coordinators developed positive relationships with students and a student advisory council cultivated meaningful input. But even these communities were dependent on exceptional relationships with adults (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Another ex-staff leader stressed both authentic grassroots vehicles and adequate investment is needed for radical change:

> At a school and a district level, there has to be a real shift in the way people understand schools [and] school governance. There have to be structures put in place that allow students to have decision-making power. Students and parents and teachers all need to be part of budgeting. They need to be part of building a core of qualified, well-supported teachers. All this is predicated on

> resources…. For students to have the supports they need, you need a lot of resources. (personal communication, September 11, 2012)

Churn within the SDP can inhibit long-term change. However, CNS's coordinator hinted PSU transcends this flux because of its credibility and connections:

> A lot of [implementing CNS] is about relationship-building, which takes time…. There were people we cultivated relationships with at the SDP who are no longer there. We sort of have to start over. But, part of the reason we don't have to start completely over, is because CNS is ongoing work to build a reputation. Whoever comes in next is going to know who we are and what we're trying to do, because we've established that with the people who are leaving or with SDP staff who stay. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Coalitions: Necessary Levers for Addressing Core Issues

Alliances are compulsory to moving beyond presenting issues. Appendix F lists all PSU campaigns involving coalitions.

PSU first substantially tapped into local social capital during anti -takeover and -privatization resistance. PSU and YUC worked "very closely" to coordinate large rallies and other events, which influenced negotiations between Mayor Street and Governor Schweiker. SDP governance being in the balance also compelled PSU to strengthen bonds with adult education organizing, unions, and advocates (personal communication, June 20, 2012). A former member contemplated how these alliances highlighted interlocking relationships between schools, neighborhoods, and cities:

> It was really encouraging to see so many people representing so many different organizations, interests, neighborhoods, and communities coming together around a common issue. Until that point, a lot of our work and my experience in PSU was just working with peers from different schools in the city. To start to see the connection between what we were experiencing and

> how that would affect workers, parents, teachers and community members…was inspiring and encouraging. And illuminated for me the connectedness of all the issues people face in the city. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

Cooperation between PSU and YUC reached another level during small schools' mobilization; they "talked strategy together a lot" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

A Model Scaling Intermediary: The Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform

After mobilizing around the SDP takeover, PSU joined Cross City, a model for scaling education organizing through a national urban coalition. Cross City formed in 1990 out of Chicago, and grew to nine sites nationwide. It was designed to convene youth, adults, teachers, business owners, and administrators, but evolved to focus on youth and parents (personal communication, March 5, 2015). Philadelphia Cross City started in 1995, building on work of Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project (McAlister et al., 2009).

An interviewee came on as coordinator of Philadelphia Cross City in 2006. Upon her hiring, funding dried up for the national organization and it collapsed. But William Penn "was committed to supporting" Philadelphia Cross City, allowing for a "really smooth transition" (personal communication, March 5, 2015).

After small schools campaigns led by PSU and YUC, Cross City developed "shared goals" that gave more input to adult allies, began to carve a wider agenda, and became "very active" and unified regarding school turnaround reform. Cross City's

growth was accelerated when members coordinated an April 2007 mayoral forum on education. The forum stimulated cohesion because of the outcome, but also the process: “The groups really worked together, and got a sense of how much more power they would have that way.” Networking for the forum enabled the coalition’s long-term efficacy:

> It wasn’t so much me bringing groups together as groups coming together…. That’s one of the really important things. It can be very tempting for funders to say, “Groups are going to have more impact if they work together, so we are going to require them to collaborate.” That *really* does not work all that well; it has to come from the groups. (personal communication, March 5, 2015)

Philadelphia Cross City’s membership transformed over time, but PSU and YUC remained core groups until Cross City ceased activity in 2014. Cross City accomplished much while PSU was a core member.

Beyond small schools organizing, Cross City’s work regarding school turnaround policy was most impactful (personal communication, March 5, 2015). In 2010, the SDP followed NCLB precedent by starting its Renaissance Schools Initiative. The program sought to significantly improve student achievement in the lowest performing schools through major restructuring. From 2010-2014, 15 Renaissance schools remained District-operated Promise Academies, while 20 others turned over management to charters. Three Promise Academies closed in that period (Stratos, Wolford, & Reitano, 2015). Notwithstanding the dramatic effects of this initiative, Cross City ensured that charters remained neighborhood schools:

> [Ackerman] did not envision those schools still being neighborhood schools…. It was very clear charters would be able to select students. They might take over what had been a neighborhood school, but it wouldn't continue to be a neighborhood school. That's one of the biggest things we fought for, and we won. By the time the Renaissance Schools plan was implemented, any charter operator taking over a formerly SDP-run school had to keep the same catchment area. That was a hugely important precedent to set. (personal communication, March 5, 2015)

Cross City also helped gather community input in turnaround, and enhanced SDP data transparency (Fine et al., 2014).

In addition, Cross City launched the Effective Teaching Campaign. This campaign was influential in PFT contract negotiations, and helped win site selection in all high-needs schools and enhanced training and supports for new teachers.

Yet progress facilitated by Cross City was undercut by austerity, an "era of layoffs," and a lack of community representation (anonymous, personal communication, March 11, 2015). After the Effective Teaching Campaign, SDP teachers effectively worked without a contract or raise for four years. There were more than 150 teacher vacancies in 2016, "a virtually unprecedented situation" (Mezzacappa, 2016).

Cross City members also joined forces on statewide campaigns, mostly around school funding (personal communication, March 5, 2015). Cross City mobilized a statewide "No Vouchers Tour" in June 2012 (State-Wide Campaigns, 2016).

While in Cross City, PSU also joined informal alliances as part of anti-poverty movements. PSU's relationship with Media Mobilizing Project helped it network

citywide: “We understand to move and shift power in the city, you have to be connected to the city” (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

Over time, PSU valued coalitions that can tackle broad concerns:

> When I was a student, [PSU] was more internally focused. When I came back as an intern, there were more attempts to build ties to other organizations.… We [took] students to rallies unions were having, or other groups we wanted to build alliances with.… None of that was really in the context of a campaign. It was more an effort to build ties with other groups with similar long-term goals for purposes of strengthening the organization long term. If we go to their rallies, they'll go to ours. We'll have more people at our rallies, and hopefully rallies will be enough. (personal communication, September 13, 2012)

Yet as this interviewee inferred, tenuous connections between kindred movements are insufficient to building lasting power for progressive reform. Next is discussion of PSU's most genuinely youth-led grassroots coalition, the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools.

The Campaign for Nonviolent Schools: An Arduous Journey toward Collective Empowerment

CNS incorporated adult-based allies, yet was led by as many as eleven youth-based groups. The status quo compelled PSU and peer groups to surpass isolated, small-scale, and incremental change in favor of a formal coalition:

> We decided to do [CNS] as a coalition and not just a campaign.… The theory was…we needed to build more power…to start working in ways where it wasn't, "My organization is working on this, your organization is working on that. Maybe our organizations are working on similar things, but not together."
>
> How can we develop more unity, more strategic clarity?.... How do we not just be doing work in our own corner, but bringing other people into conversations and then collective action?

CNS also made sense "because it's just a big issue; it's going to take a great amount of power to challenge dominant ideas about young people. It needs to be coming from lots of different places, communities, and people saying something similar" (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Another rationale was overcoming provincial activism:

> How do we not be just a pocket of South Philly, a pocket of West Philly, and a pocket of North Philly? How do we make sure we are doing citywide work? Even getting to that kind of scale would be big for us. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

PSU founded CNS, served as its fiscal sponsor, and shaped its strategy, but incorporated CNS to protect its autonomy. CNS's coordinator explained:

> It is important [CNS is] separate, but connected…. It allows PSU to maintain control over what they stand for and what they work on—because in coalition, we all have come to a consensus. We all have to decide to do things together. That process is slower. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Such flexibility can slow campaign advancement, however:

> Every organization does work full-time. CNS is connected to their work, but a little bit separate. So making sure we can keep making progress on our campaign goals when groups have stuff that comes up. If we're working with an immigrant rights group and there's immigration reform happening at a national level that's moving fast, they're going to step to do that and step away from school discipline. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Despite group autonomy within CNS, consensus spurred much greater impact:

> Where our work overlaps, we have more power…. It's easy for the district to say, "That's just PSU again." But it's a lot harder if we go to them and say,

> "No! It's PSU, YUC, AAU, Boat People SOS, and Freedom Schools…." Once you start adding up who is asking for change, it is much easier to get respect and have people take us seriously. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Another hurdle was strategic clarity within CNS—or tackling root causes and creating "real power"—did not come easy (personal communication, August 20, 2012). Once a slew of groups signed on to CNS, some clamored for decentralized leadership; that transition also took much time (personal communication, July 31, 2012). CNS overcame other barriers endemic to nonprofit partnerships: "People for the most part work in their individual organizations. The nonprofit funding structure is set up that way. There are challenges around developing a collective process" (personal communication, August 20, 2012).

Yet PSU and collaborators overcame major challenges by focusing on "student experience," according to its coordinator: "What allowed relationships to develop was letting students in a lot of ways take the lead on what the campaign was going to be about" (personal communication, July 31, 2012). CNS also "started with concrete work, as opposed to sitting around a table and trying to figure out principles of unity and bylaws and things like that." Pragmatism presented benefits and disadvantages:

> That's a good thing and a challenge. If you start with concrete work, that proves we can work together. But you still have to take up questions of governance, decision-making, and leadership. CNS did a good job getting stuff going, but taking a step back and trying to implement a series of protocols on how to work together. (personal communication, August 20, 2012)

CNS's consensus-building was also "diligent." This was necessary since alliance members often favor disparate assumptions and change theories:

> Any time you are in coalition, you have groups that operate differently, even organizing groups. Some do a lot of research, some don't. Some do a lot of relationship-building meetings, some don't. Some do a lot of actions, some don't…. We spent two years navigating those relationships. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

CNS is no longer formally active and its coordinator no longer with PSU. Despite significant multiscalar accomplishments, CNS's vision has yet to come to fruition. Yet its residual social capital can be harnessed by movements:

> Some coalitions come together around a specific issue, fight and work on that until they win, and they're done. CNS—we've come together around the premise of building long-term relationships between organizations in this city that continue to do work. Whether or not we'll all end up doing work as CNS remains to be seen…. Organizations would come together around different issues, based on what is happening. But our goal is we're building these long-term understandings… between groups that haven't historically worked together. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Beyond CNS, PSU's experience with coalitions shed light on relational obstacles within alliances. Like Bhimji (2007) found, PSU and YUC navigated different "styles," personalities, organizing approaches, organizational cultures, and framing strategies. They also competed for "funding and attention." These dynamics at times led to "more tension," according to a former staff leader (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Intergenerational organizing barriers are more trenchant than divergence between youth groups, as was the case with Cross City: “Young people tended to hate those meetings…. I don’t think we ever worked that out well in terms of how to make that space very youth-friendly.” Still, PSU assumed a legitimate leadership role during the teacher quality campaign: “It was really set that the youth groups, the students, were leading this…. That was an isolated example of where we had a coalition where students would facilitate it with the adults there, and that worked really well” (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Bonds with adult groups must be strengthened locally and extralocally. Otherwise, adults are absolved from helping to resolve issues like school violence, as one non-PSU interviewee explained: “If we’re going to find solutions together, it’s not going to be just young people…. It goes beyond them. It goes into training issues, into whole sets of problems that go from leadership all the way down” (personal communication, September 19, 2012).

With or without adults, scaling must engage targets. Next is analysis of PSU’s evolution in strategies for confronting targets.

Collaborate or Agitate? Engaging Increasingly Adversarial Target Systems

PSU weighs demands and tactics when assessing targets. As part of a CNS retreat workshop, students learned “you need a demand, to know your targets and how far you are willing to go to get what you want” (*The Union Rep*, Fall/Winter 2013). PSU’s relationships with targets are outlined in Appendix G.

Particularly at the school level, PSU has to be circumspect in espousing conflictual approaches toward targets:

> There were some targets we had more adversarial relationships with, and some it was much more relational and collaborative. The state and school funding was always where we could be really adversarial…. The District and individual principals is where we needed to be more savvy. If we just railed at them, we would lose access. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

At the district level, misaligned leaders and targets shaping the SDP led PSU to test the limits of foregrounding cooperation. PSU has always prioritized coercion, but strives to engage targets on good terms. PSU acts on the assumption "they're not bad people," as an ex-student and staff member explained:

> They just have their motives, influences, and working conditions. Understanding that has been really important to PSU…. Not judging people, but understanding we're all part of a larger system…. At the end of the day, we want to work with these people. We know what power is.

Most decision makers "want to get their spot and we understand that. It's a relationship, not a best friend situation" (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

CNS's coordinator summed up this strategy with the organizing adage "no permanent enemies, no permanent allies." Gradual negotiation with administrators is endemic to internal change. "Bargaining" with SDP leaders was crucial when advancing a new code of conduct; it took two years for any changes to occur (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

Early on, PSU aimed to create internal avenues for student voice. An early staff leader explained how PSU embraced "inside" and "outside" mobilization: "We never took a stand. There's a role for both of those things. We were doing the outside strategy and certainly believed that was paramount, but we also wanted schools to design ways internally to engage students" (personal communication June 20, 2012).

However, internal campaigns "to develop structures that would empower students in better ways" were rarely successful. Progressive student governments within the SDP were quickly foiled, as a former leader recalled:

> We had this whole idea around what a really active student government would look like in a school…but it never worked. Citywide, we thought about having an elected body where the president from each school had to be elected…. We ran a whole campaign. But the history of this stuff…is student governments get co-opted; they're run through the bureaucracy….
>
> PSU [does] political education. We train people to analyze the situation; there's support to take on challenging issues. Student governments have never had that. (personal communication June 20, 2012)

PSU's shift to prioritizing external organizing is also due to how superintendents since Hornbeck valued education organizing. Early in its tenure, PSU harnessed a relatively compatible relationship with Hornbeck:

> He really liked us. We were organizing around school funding, his big issue; he was trying to force the state to [give] more funding. Then he left and started a statewide school funding organization…. We had a very positive relationship with the central administration…. [He] bought in to the importance of youth voice…. He said his greatest mistake was not figuring out more ways to engage voices of young people" (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

McAlister et al. (2009) likewise found collaboration between Hornbeck and EPOP.

Each post-Hornbeck leader has been a graduate of the Broad Academy, which trains superintendents to drastically change urban districts and has become synonymous with market-based, top-down reform (Bunch, 2013). Vallas followed Hornbeck in 2002. Despite his dubious record and not being as aligned as Hornbeck, PSU maintained cooperation. It engaged Vallas and Creg Williams—then deputy chief academic officer for high schools—with a transactional lens: "We didn't love [their] pedagogy…. We had a relationship based on negotiation." Coupled with flusher SDP finances, this led to several substantial commitments from Vallas, according to a staff leader (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Yet the Vallas administration's strategy was also to placate:

> The reason we were able to win all the Student Success Centers, Project T.R.U.S.T., and all that stuff is Williams and Vallas came in after privatization. We had been organizing 2,000 student walkouts…. Their idea was, "We'll give them these little things as long as they're not doing that"…. We had done those big mobilizations, we were then able to turn those into the District being wary of us. But then there was a real difficulty of, "Were we being co-opted?" Some students started to feel we got too much into meeting and negotiating with them, and we lost our edge. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

Compromise was not even an option under Vallas's successor. Vallas left the SDP in 2006; Ackerman officially took over in 2008. A former director explained Ackerman's orientation toward students and organizing:

> She said to students at one point, "I'm the doctor, you are the patients. You come to me with a problem and I'll find the solution"…. Her administration wanted youth voice when they could control it and it benefitted them. They weren't interested in partnering; she hated organizing groups and saw it as rabble-rousers creating problems. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

A non-member concurred Ackerman “hated organizing groups with venom, particularly youth organizing” (anonymous, personal communication, March 11, 2015). Ackerman embodied adultism that often stifles youth organizing in Philadelphia and beyond (Gold et al., 2007). She was removed as superintendent in 2011 while facing widespread vitriol for multiple heavy-handed and improper actions, including allegations of facilitating cheating that led to abnormally high districtwide test scores and victim-blaming aimed at South Philadelphia High School’s Asian students (Denvir, 2012a).

The SDP’s current superintendent, William Hite, assumed leadership in October 2012. Hite has not been overtly antagonistic to education organizing, but has not put up vociferous resistance to dominant trends either. He occasionally becomes embroiled in the “chorus of blame” about funding (Mediratta et al., 2001a, p. 51).

While acknowledging Harrisburg’s underfunding as the prime culprit in the SDP’s demise, Denvir (2012a) attributed fault to district and city leaders. He contended they have not loudly contested austerity and privatization since 2002, when Mayor Street withdrew a Hornbeck-initiated federal lawsuit defining the state’s underfunding as race-based discrimination. Hornbeck avowed that “the biggest indictment that can be brought against folks in the city is the lack of advocacy, aggressiveness, on behalf of kids” (as cited in Denvir, 2012a).

Facing these constraints, PSU heeded limits to change within the SDP and increasingly adopted coercive stances. Still, engaging with SDP officials has been

integral to facilitating restorative practices, security officer trainings, and site selection.

An ex-staff leader described an ideal demand-support dynamic:

> Where we'd like to be headed is [an SDP] where there's a strong coalition that engages young people, but also includes parents, [teachers], and community members—that's able to hold the SDP accountable. The SDP recognizes they need to partner and include—that was the other thing about the small schools campaign; it was predicated around community control…. From the inside, let the SDP develop authentic ways of including and hearing those voices. Local school Councils (LSCs) in Chicago are…some of the best models for how to do that on a school level. (personal communication, June 20, 2012)

LSCs help with budgeting, school improvement, and principal evaluation and hiring (Chicago Public Schools, 2016). The SDP mandated similar "school advisory councils," but they are unevenly implemented and thwarted by top-down governance.

A History of Coercion and Barriers to Progress

Internal efforts are crucial, but external pressure is chief to PSU's arsenal. PSU has long leveraged media to spotlight administrative transgressions and pressure politicians. In Spring 1998, a member contemplated meeting with state legislators, and exposed "the ugly face of politics in Harrisburg." He assailed representatives for their myopic perceptions of students, evasive reactions to fair funding pleas, and caving to Harrisburg. PSU invited press to the meetings, which led to more negative attention for the politicians (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1998, p. 4).

During SDP takeover negotiations between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PSU and YUC compelled Mayor Street to advocate for students' best interests:

> Part of our strategy was to really push the mayor to fight for us, which later Street said was effective. He could go into the meetings with the governor and be like, "Look, they're kicking my butt. I can't agree to that." He admitted to that. (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

An ex-member imagined the absence of PSU's assertiveness, which could have meant the SDP was fully privatized. Coercion was also instrumental to the new West Philadelphia High School building, and is critical to state funding organizing. Likewise, PSU's state funding coordinator credited the seminal 2007 costing-out study to "years of advocacy" from the ground up (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

The SDP's regressive trajectory in governance and equity bolstered PSU's convictions in external force. Beyond milquetoast leadership, there have been several barriers to equitable reform, including: uneven implementation; turnover; incremental change; deception; adultism; revanchism; and top-down governance.

Mediratta et al. (2001b) noted the likelihood of backtracking on pledges, including in the SDP. Constant flux and attrition frustrate implementation. There were almost 200 teaching vacancies in the SDP in 2000 (Mediratta et al., 2001b); this hollowing out is again a major concern (Mezzacappa, 2016).

The history of Student Success Centers exemplifies struggle for implementation fidelity. PSU regularly organized to sustain funding for SSCs and retain social workers. Schools "constantly" threatened their removal and PSU could only ensure SSC fidelity in schools where it maintained chapters. Needing to

incessantly supervise policy gains can hamstring organizing from pursuing other aims: “It was this lesson, a big issue in organizing. Once you win something, how do you monitor it?....You can’t take on new issues because you have to constantly defend the thing you won five years ago” (personal communication, June 20, 2012; PSU, 2008).

The number of SSCs fluctuated. SSCs expanded under Ackerman, but became casualties of austerity; there is no SSC funding after Department of Labor funding expired (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012). Yet the SDP’s student-to-counselor ratio was nearly 30,000:1 in 2015 (personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Another former staff leader commented on how policy changes stimulated by PSU are often “undone” (personal communication, September 11, 2012). PSU had to keep applying pressure during small schools mobilization, lest commitments unravel.

A related challenge is overcoming incrementalism. Interviewees bemoaned how some policymakers and partners only scratch the surface of issues. Corporate reform symbolizes a desire for “quick fixes,” according to an ex-member (personal communication, September 12, 2012).

Turnover has also been a persistent thorn in ensuring long-term implementation. A former student and staff leader explicated:

> It’s definitely hard when we have contacts who can provide us information, support, or who believe in the work we’re doing and want to collaborate—two years later…or a year later they’re gone…. [Staff are] building relationships with district officials and administrators so we can connect them with members. It gets harder to do that when people are leaving. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

Administrative deception and lip service are more malicious barriers to PSU and collaborators. SDP leadership has long been resistant to grassroots input, even when Hornbeck was at the helm. Duplicity often involves hollow "grassroots" bodies like Home and School Associations in SDP schools (Mediratta et al., 2001b, p. 32). During anti-privatization campaigns at the turn of the century, PSU lambasted the SRC for scheduling major meetings during the day (*Youthvoice*, 2001/2002), a common diversionary tactic.

One ex-member interviewee was pessimistic of policymakers' sincerity, and characterized meetings with them as "varying levels of success of the policy makers in placating students" (personal communication, September 13, 2012). Similarly, CNS's coordinator relayed inauthenticity of the ostensibly youth-led Superintendent Search Forum sponsored by the SDP:

> I don't think youth are part of decision-making at the district, even for stuff like that. This can be said of any stakeholder group—parents, teachers, students, and other school staff. One of the problems we've all had with is this idea community engagement is a sham. The SDP is really just saying, "We made up our mind, but we want you to think we're listening to you. We're going to pull together this forum, and let you say whatever you think. Then we'll be like, 'We heard you, but we're going to go ahead with this anyway.'" (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Another ex-student and staff member stated that "community engagement is like a marketing tool" for SDP leadership (personal communication, September 10, 2012). As well, the journalist interviewee submitted that a "sector" of stakeholders

will listen to students or allow them on a committee, but "not take them as seriously" (personal communication, September 6, 2012).

PSU has also endured a wealth of straightforward adultism. In its first newsletter, reported on members defending youth rights in PSU's first visit to Harrisburg. During meetings with state legislators, some were respectful, but others "simply rude." Lawmakers interrupted and ignored PSU members, provided specious information, and would not meet students (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 10).

Mistreatment by high-level policymakers remained a pattern. In Spring 1998, PSU again reflected upon a Harrisburg visit and lamented blatant disrespect by Philadelphia-based state representatives. Their behavior justified PSU opposition to state takeover of the SDP: "If [these legislators] can't respect their city's young people, why should we let them mold lives of our young people by taking over our district?" (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1998, p. 4).

Interviews also exposed adultism. An ex-director stated, "Young people are really in a different kind of class." This common sentiment allows policymakers to rationalize PSU campaigns as distortions of student desires (personal communication, August 20, 2012). It also underpins accusations of adult staff being manipulative. A former staff leader argued: "Folks say, 'It's the adults driving the work and using young people'…. It's hard for young people to get respect and be taken seriously when adults out there are like, 'You're just a puppet for this organization'" (personal communication, July 31, 2012).

A former student member reflected on this dilemma:

> One thing that's really difficult about being in a youth organization is some policymakers don't take us seriously because we're youth. It's this stereotype we're kind of brainwashed and the adults are telling us all what to do, when that's not the case. Or they'll get irritated because it seems we actually know what we're talking about.

This interviewee added decision makers often repress youth by diluting their messages and evading concerns with mealy-mouthed responses (personal communication, September 12, 2012). Youth action groups must navigate these perceptions and reactionary behaviors, while also regularly assessing the extent of authentic youth voice within their organizations.

An interviewee also contended many parents engaged in reform harbor a deficit orientation toward youth. During a 2009 citywide meeting to discuss an SDP restructuring plan, students were "backed against a wall, just trying to defend ourselves." Like Bhimji's study of PSU (2007), this interviewee also identified adultist behavior by press (personal communication, September 12, 2012).

Despite many obstacles to progressivism within the SDP, PSU must take part in district-sponsored activities lest student voice be deemed grandstanding (personal communication, July 31, 2012). A former student and staff member also stressed PSU must hold targets accountable regardless of the context:

> It's always our responsibility to hold the district accountable and make sure they [include students] in a responsible way. Even when they do it well, that doesn't mean we won…. Depending on the issue, time, people working there—it's a constant calibration of how they're doing and our role. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

"Permanent Enemies" as a Viable Long-Term Strategy?

Due to this confluence of barriers, PSU has become more oppositional. An ex-leader stressed external activism is now pivotal to power and movements:

> It puts us in a tough opposition, but we recognize our power in decision-making is only going to come from our power as an organization. We don't want a student on the SRC or school board…. Our job is to build a powerful student movement…as a relevant social and political force.
>
> Our power is [not] going to come from changes we make about how the SDP is structured, at least over the long haul. There are things that can happen in reform processes in terms of how schools get turned around…. But we're not going to get students plugged in to those decision-making processes if we don't have a powerful, well-organized, sophisticated group outside and above all of that. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

PSU's adversarial evolution was most prominent in a recent staff leader's testimony. Like another interviewee, he implicated leaders at all levels in enacting neoliberal reform, including "Broad Academy" superintendents, city council, and mayors. PSU now rejects any façade of partnering with leaders it sees as complicit:

> We—in this time right now—do not seek to have strong relationships with district [and] City Hall officials. We work to hold those people accountable. But we do not work to have amicable relationships with people who know exactly what they're doing…. They are agents in this big plan, actively and knowingly destroying our public school system…. They are here to do this and move to the next city. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

This leader further elucidated PSU's modern approach, contrasting with interviewees suggesting there is room for deep internal change:

> We've gotten to a point where we have no interest in developing relationships with the enemy. At least for this period, we see the superintendent, the district, as permanent enemies. Organizing has this mantra, "There are no permanent

> enemies, there are no permanent allies."… In education, these people are permanent enemies. The gloves are off, and the type of organizing we hope to engage in continues to expose that. When we talk about media and the frame, part of the frame is exposing people. Let's call it what it is. These policies come from the White House down….
>
> Stop running to them for answers. Now what are we gonna do? Once people are ready to abandon those relationships and sever those ties, is when we can move up and cause the groundswell we need…. You have to create that political will, make it on a scale so disruptive, have elections decided on where politicians stand on education for them to start playing a more active role. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Prioritizing cooperation and institutional change is not rational for PSU until there is marked normative shift at all scales of educational governance. However, it still must leave room for institutional engagement that drives the levers of school-based change.

Pennsylvania politics drove PSU toward adversarial and bottom-up approaches. This evolution is explored next.

Scaling Out to Scale Up: The Evolution of PSU's Statewide Organizing

State politics have been a rallying point for PSU and allies, and a firm ceiling to PSU's ambitions. PSU always knew Harrisburg held the power and purse strings most influential to the SDP. Over time, PSU altered shifted its statewide strategy.

In early years, PSU descended upon Harrisburg, held rallies, and met with legislators. Some years, PSU visited the capital several times (personal communication, June 20, 2012). Thousands of members journeyed to Harrisburg since PSU first visited in 1995 (State-Wide Campaigns, 2016). PSU's lobbying

foregrounded equitable financing, but also critiqued charterization and vouchers (personal communication, October 20, 2012).

As seen in Appendix G, multiple state legislators with local ties backed PSU or sponsored auspicious legislation during its formative years. In addition to supporting bills like a "Students' Bill," these lawmakers encouraged PSU to visit Harrisburg (*Youthvoice*, Winter 1997; personal communication, June 20, 2012). PSU also had support from Philadelphia politicians and local representatives for these sojourns. In 2004, Mayor Street joined PSU and over 1,000 on a Walk for Educational Justice to Harrisburg (State-Wide Campaigns, 2016), which accrued attention for bills PSU supported (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

However, this was one of the last significant overtures of collaboration between city leadership and Philadelphia education organizing (Denvir, 2012a). PSU also only garnered tenuous support from state representatives. An early staff leader admitted, "The only people that listened to us were our local reps, most of whom were on our side…We never really had a relationship with Harrisburg." Grassroots organizing was a minor influence even when funding increased under Rendell, which "had more to do with forces bigger than us." Ultimately, PSU did not achieve "power developed to the scale and scope to have that much of an effect on school funding" or on Harrisburg politics (personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Harrisburg's historical divergence with interests of PSU and the SDP intensified with the rise of neoconservative obstructionism and austerity politics. This gap widened virtually to the point of no return once Corbett was elected. Some

austerity under Corbett can be attributed to the Great Recession, PSU's ex-state funding organizer acknowledged. But PSU placed blame directly on Corbett and the Republican-dominated state legislature, who "made it clear public education funding is not a top priority" and stalled progress on equity: "What we saw in the last two budgets were huge ideological shifts and a big step backward" (State-Wide Campaigns, 2016; personal communication, September 11, 2012).

In sum, Republican governors and a GOP-controlled legislature facilitated the SDP's takeover, haphazard privatization, and emaciation of resources and personnel. A recent staff leader submitted the state legislature "would much rather [Philadelphia] didn't even exist," which is a "huge, huge mountain to climb" and requires mobilization beyond Philadelphia (personal communication, August 16, 2013). Though Governor Wolf rode political momentum for greater education funding into office, the Pennsylvania legislature clings to anti-tax ideology.

These realities prompted PSU to nurture statewide grassroots movements, rather than focus all of its energies engaging recalcitrant Harrisburg legislators. CNS's coordinator encapsulated PSU's realization of constraints in Philadelphia-based grassroots lobbying to influence state politics:

> People in Harrisburg are tired of hearing from Philly. Unless we have the capacity—which we don't—to run a state-wide funding campaign, winning on funding is really hard…. It's really about who has power to make decisions, and our capacity to influence them. To influence Harrisburg will take more than Philly students. (personal communication, July 31, 2012)

Since the mid-2000s, PSU has been cognizant of the need to organize across the state. A landmark 2006 costing-out study helped PSU internalize this need. The Pennsylvania General Assembly commissioned an audit of the state's school funding. Nearly 94 percent of 501 districts were underfunded, depriving youth of $4.38 billion (Pennsylvania Board of Education, 2007).

The audit confirmed what many advocates long identified as the root cause of school struggles. PSU and others appreciated "hard data that would be seen as unbiased." PSU's state funding coordinator at the time deemed the audit's findings ammunition against "a lot of people…particularly a lot of Republicans saying, 'There's no proof these schools are underfunded. Money doesn't matter'" (personal communication, September 11, 2012). The costing-out study also vindicated PSU's arguments against local property taxation as a financing mechanism. State and local tax revenues in Pennsylvania dwarf those of six bordering states, explaining its lack of aggregate funding (PA Board of Education, 2007).

The study motivated PSU to ratchet up its fight for a needs-based funding formula. PSU united with YUC and many advocates to make "a big push." A new formula passed in 2008, a landmark accomplishment:

> The reason why the formula to us was and remains the most important element of that victory is if you don't have a formula that takes into account—How many people are learning English in a district? What's the poverty level? How many students have special needs?—you can argue every year to have the dollar amount increased or decreased, but you're never going to close that adequacy gap. (personal communication, September 11, 2012)

Just as important, the audit illuminated how austerity devastates all types of locales:

> What it meant to us…was there are places that were more underfunded than Philadelphia. A lot are very rural. But a whole lot of the state—particularly Philadelphia, our first suburbs, and a lot of rural parts—was experiencing the same condition. That was the beginning of internally starting to talk, think, and study this issue—How can we connect to students in other parts of the state that don't even typically get looked at as being similar to Philadelphia, or in alliance with Philadelphia? (personal communication, September 11, 2012)

PSU wrote "Not Just a Philly Thing" in 2010, arguing an urban emphasis is no longer tenable due to poverty's suburbanization and spread to "smaller, post-industrial towns" (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010; Blad, 2014).

This shift was also ignited by fruitless vertical lobbying. An interviewee was a member when PSU mostly conducted vertical lobbying, and on staff when it emphasized horizontal scaling:

> When I was a member, our strategy was, "How do we get everybody in Philadelphia to go to Harrisburg and make a lot of noise?".... There was also a court case…that went all the way to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, saying the current school funding formula was violating our state civil rights by not providing us with a "thorough and efficient" education. That got shot down…the legal strategy didn't work. This kind of lobbying wasn't really working because all of our legislators were supportive, but they didn't have a majority so it was hard to get other folks involved. The strategy evolved into one where we're working towards the ability to organize young people in different parts of the state. (personal communication, November 29, 2012)

Despite the daunting nature of court strategies, in summer 2018 a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's funding system was allowed to move to trial.

Starting in 2007, PSU strived to build a statewide "student-to-student network" capable of sustaining funding equity ("State-Wide Campaigns," 2016). PSU stressed "more useful connections" with youth groups statewide, as recalled by then-state funding coordinator. PSU nurtured bonds with students in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Chester, and Reading by starting "from where [groups] were" and forging common understandings about root causes (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

In 2011-12, PSU amplified preoccupations and actions of student allies from Reading and Chester regarding austerity. That November, PSU gathered students from Chester and Reading for a youth-led workshop on school funding and building student voice in budget negotiations (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2011/2012).

Steady networking culminated in students from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Chester planning a direct action to follow Governor Corbett's 2012 budget announcement. On Valentine's Day, the coalition descended on Harrisburg to reject persistent budget cuts (personal communication, November 29, 2012). Students orchestrated the entire action, except for one parent speaker. Participants met with the head of the House Education Committee and the Secretary of Education's office (personal communication, September 11, 2012; State-Wide Campaigns, 2016).

The event energized each city's bases, and showcased the state's youth action potential (personal communication, September 11, 2012). Planning and implementing the rally enabled youth "to see how issues they're facing are connected to a larger

problem" (personal communication, November 29, 2012). Statewide mobilization also involved churches, school officials, and parents (*The Union Rep*, Winter, 2010).

Nevertheless, funding under Corbett was a "disaster…which is why we have 19 districts in crisis mode" (personal communication, August 16, 2013). In 2014, another commission revealed results of the 2006 costing-out study were still valid.

Still, this period ushered in a novel approach to building grassroots state power. A fair funding formula under Rendell exemplified how movement-building can spur subsequent consequential change. Moreover, decades of spade work paid off when Wolf seized on public sentiment for more school spending and when a fair funding formula passed in 2016. Nonetheless, this new formula does not influence aggregate spending and only applies to future investments (McCorry, 2016).

At any rate, another former leader described how transcending "urban isolationism" is crucial for adapting to a changing development climate:

> Youth organizing in urban areas was hot because of funding from big foundations. That funding has moved on, taken sides with the corporate reform agenda, and isn't going to fund groups like PSU fighting against that agenda. We have to start working towards models that aren't relying on foundation funding, which opens up space to move out of urban areas…. There's space to be thinking about more sustainable grassroots fundraising-based models with a statewide effort. That's the direction folks have to be and are moving in. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

"Urban centrism" is also inadequate as a national strategy:

> When people talk about national coalitions, they're talking about organizers in Philly, New York, Chicago, LA, the Bay Area, a couple of cities in the South if you're lucky, and Detroit. We'll keep getting our asses beat if we do that.…

> We can't win in capitals unless we have statewide organizations. (personal communication, September 18, 2012).

To achieve this, PSU must rise above internal and external obstacles.

Internal and External Constraints to Statewide Organizing

PSU's staff statewide organizing facilitator from 2007 through 2012 relayed how it did not invest significant assets into robust statewide linkages until 2011-12, due to resource constraints. Even when PSU focused on expanding statewide mobilization, it could not fully embark on this since it had to expend much energy on the Community Account to justify additional funding.

There were also challenges planning the 2012 rally:

> Talking about scale and sustainability, it was a huge expense of staff time and funds. That much travel and getting 100 people on buses, it stretched our capacity…. Other groups also felt their capacity was stretched. They've never done anything like that. (personal communication, September 11, 2012)

The coordinator suggested PSU needs at least one full-time statewide organizer to attain sufficient representation; it only managed to fund one organizer focusing half her obligations on statewide organizing. Moreover, it would require five years to "build a base of students connected across the state powerful enough to really make changes in the way school funding happens." This daunting task became even more ambitious as threats like mass privatization and closings forced statewide organizing to "the backburner" (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

A recent staff leader lamented limits to statewide organizing:

> The challenge is, foremost, capacity. We run different programs…we have six chapters. We're fighting closings…an unelected school board…getting them to do anything is almost impossible. Fighting crisis after crisis here in the city makes it very hard. When the next city comparable is seven hours away, that makes it more challenging. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Internal limits are significant, but less a hindrance to scaling than the lack of a state youth action infrastructure. When PSU first sought to connect with other Pennsylvania youth action, it struggled to find groups aligned with "long-term work. A lot were like after-school programs." When PSU did pique student interest, "adults directing those programs didn't see this as core to what they were trying to do. They weren't organizing groups at all" (personal communication, September 11, 2012). These comments reflect how divergence between youth development and youth action complicates scaling.

PSU eventually formed a strong bond with Reading High's Project Peace., which promoted nonviolence. PSU helped Project Peace explore the link between interpersonal and structural violence by "talking about underfunding and going down that road" (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

PSU was also invited to conduct workshops for Chester Youth Court (CYC), and sought new relationships. CYC was reluctant to partner with PSU on school funding since "some who fund their program would feel it was too political." This echoed another interviewee who highlighted funding constraints for "Lefty"

organizing (personal communication, September 13, 2012). Still, PSU involved many individual students (personal communication, September 11, 2012).

PSU's most compatible match was Teen Bloc, which formed in 2008 to give voice to Pittsburgh Public School students. It was "figuring out its structure" when engaged by PSU, but "ready to jump in." Pittsburgh is a hotbed of youth education organizing, in response to common threats (personal communication, September 11, 2012). The Heinz Foundation invested in youth action there, and SOUL has helped with capacity building (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Yet youth action is still solidifying in Pittsburgh; there is "very little organizing happening anywhere else" in the state. PSU shouldered much of the capacity-building for statewide organizing, including training for political education, leadership development, branding, communications, negotiation and logistics:

> It's a level of direct organizing that is really resource- and time-intensive. It was one of our biggest challenges, why we need more resources than we currently have to continue it fully. That type of organizing needs to be incubated around the state. (personal communication, September 11, 2012)

PSU's ex-state funding coordinator asserted these obstacles are especially relevant to youth action. Adult- or labor-based mobilization can leverage existing networks and support systems to expand. She even contemplated if PSU should be a statewide scaling intermediary (personal communication, September 11, 2012). Another challenge is augmenting intergenerational statewide organizing, based on

testimony of an ex-student and staff leader (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

According to a recent staff leader, PSU responded to these hurdles by: amplifying its rationale for statewide mobilization; planning events that broadcast youth voice and convene youth; and utilizing media and social networking (personal communication, August 16, 2013). PSU also formed links with several initiatives conducive to statewide, cross-cutting scaling, such as Put People First and Education Voters Pennsylvania. Yet there was little evidence of strong or lasting ties with these entities.

Indeed, PSU's period of intensive statewide organizing from 2007-2012 seems to be an outlier. PSU must not only bolster state organizing, but state-based movements must be complemented by national mass mobilization. Following is discussion of how PSU has approached movement-building over time.

Climax of Scaling: Creating Local and Extralocal Cross-Cutting Movements

PSU has long recognized its role in movement-building (Bhimji, 2007). About its first walkout, Mr. Braxton proclaimed it "the beginning of a youth movement for the hip-hop generation" (*Youthvoice*, Spring 1996, p. 2). Two years later, he echoed the same sentiment about PSU's explosive early growth (Winter 1997/1998).

Yet PSU did not actively make statewide or national connections until after restructuring. The increasingly robust, well-heeled, and bipartisan consensus around corporate reform prompted PSU to focus extralocally. When the SDP's *Imagine 2014*

restructuring plan was announced in 2009—and it mimicked Chicago's *Renaissance 2010*—PSU knew it was involved in a national struggle. PSU probed the "national education landscape" more, and strengthened links with activism in Chicago and other urban districts (*The Union Rep*, Spring/Summer 2009). PSU realized closings were part of "a national agenda" (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

As well—after eight years of NCLB and federal government's undeniable role in schooling—youth education organizing groups realized "we needed to be building nationally," as a student leader at the time recollected (personal communication, September 18, 2012). Thus, PSU helped establish the Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ) in December 2008. Obama's election also motivated youth groups to form AEJ (McDonald et al., 2011). AEJ was first explored conceptually in 2004 as a national movement catalyst, and germinated as veteran youth organizing groups met at conferences and actions. PSU served as an AEJ anchor organization from 2010-2012 (National, 2016). AEJ has consisted of about 20 groups, and focused on ending the school-to-prison pipeline.

AEJ took time to discover its identity and surpass loose connections, but evolved to wield strength. It spurred federal policy changes and relationships between students and federal lawmakers. AEJ contributed to the Department of Education (DOE) and DOJ forming the Supportive School Discipline Initiative in 2011 to analyze policy's role in tackling the pushout crisis. The DOE's civil rights division credited AEJ for efforts to broaden data collection around discipline (National, 2016). In 2015, Congress introduced the Supportive School Climate Act.

AEJ shaped other policy conversations through lobbying and testifying at congressional hearings (personal communication, September 18, 2012). In 2009, AEJ held its first meeting in Washington, DC. At a DOE panel, AEJ voiced primary policy proposals, including "quality education for all youth regardless of immigration status, adequate federal funding…[and] rigorous and relevant curriculum." Youth also explored linking regional and national work (*The Union Rep*, Winter 2010, p. 9).

On tax day in 2010, AEJ staged rallies in thirteen cities and demanded more education investment (Rogers et al., 2012). That May, AEJ attended the National Campaign for Quality Education's second gathering. AEJ strategized demands and envisioned the Youth Justice Corps (YJC) to bridge local and national efforts (*The Union Rep*, Fall 2011).

In 2011, PSU brought 100 to the capital for the National Rally and March for Youth Investment. Thousands marched from DOE to the Department of Labor, backing establishment of a National Congressional Youth Caucus and expanded investment in youth employment. Soon after, the Caucus on Engaging, Educating, and Employing America's Youth formed (National, 2016). AEJ returned that September to disseminate its concept paper for the Youth S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Striving for Unity, College, and Careers through Equitable Schools and Supports) Act, an alternative template for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It demanded universal access to quality education and to sustaining careers and repudiated penal and high-stakes testing regimes. The ultimate goal was a student Bill of Rights proposed in Congress (*The Union Rep*, Fall 2011; Freeman, 2011).

In May 2012, PSU helped plan another AEJ gathering in Washington, DC. This mobilization led to the birth of the intergenerational Journey for Justice (J4J) in September 2012. J4J is another movement-building linchpin, and PSU and AEJ are on J4J's Coordinating Committee. Right after its founding, J4J met with DOE, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Office of Civil Rights. J4J stimulated Title VI civil rights complaints about discriminatory consequences of school closings, and DOE pledged to conduct an "impact tour" of devastated districts (National, 2016).

AEJ also sparked political education about the impetus for national mobilization, and promoted media production and skill-building. AEJ supplied funding through collaborative grants. AEJ's YJC enabled PSU and other groups to hire students, as a recent staff leader said (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Still, AEJ was initially met with guarded enthusiasm by its members, including PSU. Partnering was hindered by the nonprofit funding culture:

> AEJ was never very tight as a coalition, because each group had its own history. Each had histories with each other, not the least of which was between PSU and YUC. There's a lot of competition historically between groups because of the way foundation funding is set up. You have folks working in the same field with the same interests competing for money and survival, a bad basis for collaboration. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Another former leader hinted at frictions within AEJ. At time of interview, AEJ was not a decade old and an "enormous undertaking…. A long-term coalition…without an end date is a little different." Yet members are aligned and coalesce when necessary: "We all have similar goals. There are times we collaborate,

and times we are more autonomous…. There's definitely communication and collaboration and a shared vision" (personal communication, November 29, 2012).

Moreover, groups like PSU benefit from national cross-pollination. Financing from AEJ and J4J helped members "learn from each other, share lessons learned, difficulties, and obstacles." Denver's Jovenes Unidos achieving a new discipline code "informed" PSU's fruitful efforts to craft a new code of conduct. PSU victories, such as Student Success Centers, inspired similar grassroots wins in other cities (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

AEJ has also contributed to political and tactical synergy, fueling collective action across the country. According to a recent staff leader, this unity must be accelerated as "one fight…to create movement, try to build up to scale, keep this in the national media spotlight." This interviewee also highlighted solidarity with the Dream Defenders—a Miami- and youth-based group striving to end the school-to-prison pipeline and private prisons—which accentuates the intersectionality of modern youth organizing. He suggested youth action is extending beyond traditional hot spots. The degree to which PSU and distant likenesses collaborate is "very different" from five years ago. Still, opportunities to link are infrequent due to the paucity of youth action groups and their limited capacity (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

Nevertheless, national mobilization is also a vehicle to scale discursive unity:

> We are also getting on the same message…. Regardless of what state you are in, you're going to hear the same messages as to what is happening to public education…. That's been really helpful. It also helps you get national attention

> for the work you are doing locally because you are connected to these other folks. (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

AEJ has helped PSU and collaborators honor Bales's (2015) suggestion to combine ideological and political contention. AEJ has also propelled framing of the struggle to salvage American public education as a movement that must attain the magnitude of the civil rights movement. Modern threats demand unprecedented commitment, collaboration, and coordination (personal communication, August 16, 2013).

AEJ also allies with adult mobilization. Nonetheless, generational divides and adultism are chief limiting factors to optimal scaling: "How do we get parents involved to [fight]? How do we get the adults to do that? In a way where they see young people and students as peers, equals, not people whom they can control" (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Addressing this and other challenges will be pivotal to maximizing movements' power. Next is discussion of PSU's role in sparking movements.

A National Model: PSU's Influence Spreads

PSU's longevity at the forefront of movements for educational rights and social justice has made it a model in several facets, from media to fundraising (Bhimji, 2007; Conner et al., 2013; Braxton et al., 2013). A recent staff leader and a 2015 *Rolling Stone* feature cited the spread of student unions in cities like Newark,

New Jersey and Providence, Rhode Island as proof of a budding student-led movement for community control in lieu of neoliberal and state-led reform. Likewise, Chicago youth education organizers changed their name to Chicago Student Union and coordinated because they realized they lacked voice. PSU has helped students in other cities resist closings, mass charterization, and high-stakes testing. PSU's leadership development and political education have been integral to burgeoning national youth mobilization (personal communication, August 16, 2013; Nathanson, 2015).

Yet a recent staff leader stressed PSU's role in movement-building involves much more than replicating its namesake:

> I want us to be a leader and a movement-builder…. Not so much out in front, but modeling a behavior that this is about movement-building, not organization-building…. This is about: How can we help other groups build capacity, understanding, and knowledge of what needs to be done to win this fight? (personal communication, August 16, 2013)

To achieve maximal collaboration, intermediaries like SOUL will be instrumental. SOUL sponsors the National Youth Organizing Training Institute, which teaches youth action tenets and explores how to build a base, campaigns, leaders, organizations, and movements (SOUL, 2015).

Interviewees had varying conceptions of PSU's role in movement-building. Some conceived school-based movement-building as linked with fights for economic and social justice. In 2014, AEJ and J4J joined with the Community Justice Network for Youth to coordinate a National Youth Action Against State Violence (FCYO,

2015a). Connections with groups like Media Mobilizing Project involve PSU in "a movement dedicated to uniting the poor and dispossessed" (personal communication, September 18, 2012). Another ex-leader agreed PSU intersects with mobilization for economic human rights (personal communication, September 12, 2012). PSU allies with other mobilization to lower historical barriers when scaling. An ex-leader stated:

> PSU is linked in to national movements not specifically about education—but focus on uniting people across sectors of work, and some of the identity lines that have been drawn in past decades and centuries— in terms of race and the urban-rural divide. (personal communication, September 18, 2012)

Though expanding movement-building is imperative, PSU and partners must weigh the benefits and challenges of combining seemingly distinct groundswells.

Several interviewees conveyed PSU's movement-building as a discursive project. A more recent staff media expert discussed how blogging and messaging "elevate…a different narrative besides the one we hear in the mainstream media…to a national platform" (personal communication, March 20, 2015). An ex-student and staff member characterized PSU as "part of a global shift…in consciousness," as evidenced by its radio show being "picked up all over the world" (personal communication, September 10, 2012).

CNS's coordinator reflected upon the dynamism of movements. She suggested sociohistorical developments mold how movements unfold: "Organizing happens in a specific context…. The Arab Spring… Occupy Wall Street…. It's all about: What is the context we're working in? How angry are people? When do people say, "I've had enough. I'm drawing the line" (personal communication, July 31, 2012). She and

another interviewee suggested political momentum dictated youth action's focus around privatization in the early 2000s, and around discipline at the end of the decade.

Another interviewee advanced a historical and nuanced outlook. She submitted PSU and allies are engaged in movements. However, "*movement-building*" is typically measured by a "level of success" like a policy victory. "The exact same work" involving "the exact same tasks" could not "reach the same point" and not be deemed a movement. Even so, "the tasks people talk about as part of a movement are really important" (anonymous, personal communication, March 11, 2015).

Movements are "more fluid than often recognized," as shown by historical relationships within groundswells in the SDP. During state takeover negotiations, organizing groups bonded with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT). A few years later, the grassroots Effective Teaching Campaign made PFT "furious." Tensions simmered until emergence of Boston Consulting Group's downsizing agenda in 2012. This "birthed a whole different level of collaboration" between organizing groups, the PFT, SEIU, and more (personal communication, March 5, 2015).

Local movements are evidently dynamic, but still accumulated much power since the 2001 takeover:

> Things shifted a lot, but it's these ongoing relationships. There were periods of the groups building power in one context, then there's a shift and they're building power but with a different set of relationships. But it all scaffolds as long as they keep building power. Now the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools is a sign of a whole different level. (personal communication, March 5, 2015)

Diverse ideas of movements spotlight movement-building's multifaceted nature, similar to scaling. PSU must consider each of these dimensions as it engages in movement-building. This complexity also underscores a need for scholars to further investigate these diverse movement-building aspects and their interrelationships.

Notwithstanding this ambiguity, PSU will be integral to mass mobilization due to its leadership ability, cross-cutting organizing expertise, media-making acumen, and networks. Moreover, Cross City and the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools demonstrate potential for scaling movements at the national and local levels. However, PSU and these movements have experienced multiple significant challenges that threaten the ceiling and sustainability of maximal scaling. Even at their zenith, these movements were not dominant forces in educational policymaking. PSU and partners locally and beyond must tackle trenchant resource gaps that limit its scaling, and also must intensify mobilization at the state level.

Chapter 6

SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pillars of Sustainability and Organizational Refinement

PSU has outlasted many peer groups, adult organizing groups, and intermediaries, while maintaining mission integrity and scaling influence. However, it has faced and will continue to confront significant constraints to stability and growth. Following is synthesis of findings related to PSU's strategies for sustainability, with emphasis on features that are potentially distinctive for PSU and on what PSU's case signifies for youth action at large and its potential for sufficient movement-building.

PSU's Leadership Development Promotes Sustainability and Scaling

PSU's multifaceted, transformational leadership development is a prime contributor to its perseverance and scaling. PSU reflects Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) by conceiving leadership as constitutive of base-building and inspiring new leaders, rather than developing acquiescent followers like many groups. This ethos coupled with intensive sociopolitical development enables members to become leader-organizers and reform experts (Staples, 2004), as well as communications and policy specialists (Bhimji, 2007). Thus, PSU cultivates both spread and depth of leaders who have the potential to scale campaigns, build power, and propel movements.

PSU's adaptive capacity has also been a defining organizational leadership trait (Trent & Chavis, 2009). It institutionalizes a culture conducive to responding

effectively to crises. PSU seizes on the SDP's many tumultuous developments to nurture leaders and facilitate change, rather than retreating from leadership during trying times. This singular quality is essential to both stability and scaling.

PSU is also exceptional in conducting leadership development at multiple scales, and campaigns engage peers in leadership development. Some of these efforts have resulted in new structures and processes for youth leadership. Positive results of these vehicles corroborate Joselowsky (2007) and Shah and Mediratta (2008) regarding the importance of student involvement in policymaking and accountability.

Data suggest PSU's brand of leadership development should be expanded. Developmental and service-oriented youth engagement could benefit from investing in civic engagement (Saunders et al., 2013). At the same time, the intensity of PSU's leadership development demands significant resources.

The Promise and Challenges of Building a Leadership Pipeline

PSU's unique leadership ladder revolves around its evolving curriculum, which has come to prioritize political education, media, and communications. The curriculum provides crucial institutional memory, exemplifying advice of Delgado and Staples (2008) and Deschenes et al. (2008). PSU's institutional memory also connects new members with alumni, a point of emphasis and necessary linchpin for sustainability and scaling (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015).

PSU learned from cracks in its leadership pipeline, which showcase the difficulty of maintaining intensive decentralized leadership development and staff

development. Shortcomings in bona fide progressive leadership ladders and staff development are major vulnerabilities within youth and multiscalar organizing (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015; Trent & Chavis, 2009). Groups like PSU must not only invest in leadership development for members and staff, but also must institutionalize assessment and checks on centralization and the degree of youth leadership to ensure the authenticity and quality of leadership development processes and structures (Checkoway, 1998; Halpern, 2005; Pittman, 2000; LISTEN, Inc., 2003).

The Significance of Executive Directors and Transitions

PSU's primary executive directors were vital to developing its approaches sustainability and scaling. Adults are central to the destiny of youth-based groups.

PSU's case also exhibits that youth organizing groups must prepare for leadership succession (Zimmerman, 2004). PSU's institutionalized mechanisms to guard against leadership concentration and smooth turnover could behoove other youth action groups. Further research should probe the benefits and challenges of longer executive tenures—as was the case with YUC—vis-à-vis shorter term limits. Regardless, there is risk of losing continuity when leaders exit, a challenge given the long-term complexity of multiscalar campaigns and necessity of a unified vision (Trent & Chavis, 2009). Investment in and research on executive coaching and succession are imperative to the viability and scaling of youth action.

Striving for Fiscal Stability with Integrity

PSU also evolved in how it approached fiscal stability and independence, particularly by being a national model in individual donor fundraising among youth action groups (Braxton et al., 2013). PSU illustrated how fiscal innovation is vital for youth organizing groups to weather internal struggles, maintain mission integrity, and transcend external shocks like fickle foundation investment and economic downturns. Nevertheless, PSU still relies on foundations for the majority of its budget. Resource constraints will always be a challenge for youth action organizations, signaling the necessity of collaboration (Fine & Jacobs, 2014).

PSU's financing also exemplifies tension between expansion and mission integrity. PSU's radical roots restrict it from significant enlargement, echoing Warren (2011). All the same, PSU's principled evolution is central to its following and credibility, which undergird its sustainability and scaling (Parham & Pinzino, 2004). More financial investment in nurturing youth-led progressivism is fundamental to match the largesse behind neoliberal reform agendas (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015).

Indispensability of Intermediaries

From PSU's introductory meetings, fiscal and other intermediaries have been indispensable. They offer essential funding, and expedite maturation in capacities essential to stability and scaling (Trent & Chavis, 2009). The linchpin role of Communities for Public Education Reform's (CPER)—which supplied glocalized expert assistance with an ally sensibility—is much needed to maximize scaling of

equity-minded reform (Fine & Jacobs, 2014; Wells et al., 2011; Anyon, 2014). However, CPER displayed how intermediaries are also liable to implosion.

PSU's Target Population Allows it to Attack Injustices at Their Cores

PSU's target population influences its growth and reflects a primary and unique theory of change. PSU decided early on its primary focus of catchment would be struggling neighborhood schools. This aligns with its motif of radical structural change, and invokes Anyon's (2014) exploration of the distinct niche occupied by urban high school students in movements and deconstruction of social contradictions. Though this prioritization restricts PSU's potential for spread, sacrificing it would significantly jeopardize PSU's integrity and credibility.

Retention through Inclusion, Youth Culture, Transformation, and Holistic Supports

PSU shows how constant and inclusive recruitment aid in breadth and movement-building. PSU also confirms the pivotal role of youth culture, art, and digital media in recruitment and retention (LISTEN, Inc., 2003; McDonald et al., 2011). For PSU, art also builds community, spreads messaging, and helps raise funds.

PSU's political education helps retention as members nurture latent activism, creativity, and aspirations. PSU's politicization also compels members of divergent backgrounds to join long-term struggles, as suggested by Rogers et al. (2012).

PSU's case confirms that when taking on the heavy lifting of scaling, local campaigns and short-term victories are crucial to satisfaction (Deschenes et al., 2008).

It also proves compensation, access to future employment, and financial literacy can be instrumental supports, especially for vulnerable youth (Braxton et al., 2013).

PSU's most consequential impact on student supports has been the structural change it has precipitated, epitomized by Student Success Centers. At the state level and within the SDP, PSU has redirected monies to students and supports. Yet recruitment and retention are limited by PSU's insufficient assets and attrition of staff and youth. Spread is also complicated by PSU's resource-intensive engagement and preference for intimate relationships. School and district instability—perpetuated by austerity—frustrate PSU's outreach and the sustainability of institutionalized supports.

Institutionalizing Planning, Documentation, and Self-Evaluation

PSU has institutionalized cultures of planning, documentation, and self-critique, each central to sustainability. As suggested by Delgado and Staples (2008), documentation enables PSU to accumulate robust institutional memory.

PSU's informal modes of self-assessment and close bonds are vital to reflecting on values, gauging progress, and resolving challenges. Group study and plus-delta debriefings—which invite dissent—are special features that stimulate introspection. These practices could be adopted widely, and show informal communication is significant to maximal functioning (Pulakos & O'Leary, 2011).

Still, PSU can benefit from more formal and external evaluations. Process and outcome evaluations could be highly beneficial, especially to assess scaling activities

and objectives. PSU can help operationalize benchmarks associated with theories and methods of change, such as indicators and processes of building power, growing alliances, and shifting discourses. Rigorous evaluations can enhance youth action's funding outlook, academic imprimatur, and external legitimacy (Oakes & Puriefoy, 2011; Rogers et al., 2012). Comparative studies are needed, including about how different youth groups approach sustainability and scale.

Sustainability is a necessary, but not sufficient element of scaling. Next is a synthesis of findings related to how PSU approached scaling. Again, emphasis is placed on PSU's particular approaches and implications for the field and for progressive reform.

PSU's Evolving Theories, Principles, and Methods for Change

Self-Representation: Essential to Reclaiming Education

PSU's foremost scaling approach inverts dominant paradigms of urban education reform by emphasizing deep, radical change that transfers ownership. Data affirmed educational change must meaningfully involve those schools and stakeholders most impacted to be effective, equitable, inclusive, and participatory (Scheie, 2003; Joselowsky, 2007; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). PSU knows American public schools have long been bastions of democracy, innovation, and economic growth (Ravitch, 2013). Multiple pieces of data indicate reform should be more concerned with student experience and social justice, and less so on test scores.

PSU's media apparatus is uniquely prolific, politicized, and central to self-representation. Students telling stories and broadcasting school conditions is fundamental to altering degenerative cultural narratives and governance systems (Kelly, 2006), and to combatting victim-blaming and the manufactured crisis in public education (Fine, 2013). PSU's eyes and ears on the ground in schools have been pivotal to its longevity and credibility, as Conner et al. (2013) found. Still, PSU must be vigilant in ensuring it earnestly represents the will of all students.

Addressing Scale in Urban School Reform: Politicization, Praxis, and Empowerment

Once PSU's target population is directly inserted into reform debates, students must possess knowledge and skills to meaningfully confront forces molding schooling (Trent & Chavis, 2009). They then must take action on newfound awareness and convictions. Collective empowerment should follow politicization and praxis. PSU's model integrates politicization, praxis, and individual empowerment, but also displays how building true power within the webs shaping urban reform is far from guaranteed.

Political education is the first rung of PSU's leadership ladder and the basis of its scaling. In contrast to most SDP-sponsored bodies and most youth groups, PSU gives members the political and policy knowledge and communications faculties to eloquently project grievances about equity and social justice. PSU instills how an organizing mentality is principal to cultivating change agent capacities and long-term transformation (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Rogers et al., 2012; Oakes & Lipton, 2002).

PSU's politicization centers on interrogating root causes, a feature of its model. If reform does not address the crux of dilemmas, it will remain superficial and triage-oriented (Elmore, 1996). Within PSU and most of youth action, studying root causes amounts to probing power, historical oppressions, and structural forces affecting schooling (Rogers et al., 2012; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007). PSU emphasizes how modern frameworks and conditions cannot be separated from regressive legacies like de jure segregation. PSU also links its struggles to past progressivism.

PSU stresses urban schooling and reform's cross-issue natures, which affects the universe of issues scaling must address (Anyon, 2014; Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Warren, 2014). Issues like segregation, mass incarceration, and police brutality are intertwined with urban reform and the lives of PSU's target population (Hannah-Jones, 2014; Wacquant, 2013; Perez & Cannella, 2011; Sellers, 2013). A broad scope is essential to radical and sustainable change, but threatens overextension and dilution.

PSU's political education also evolved in response to wider developments and priorities of its leaders. Politicization was integral to campaigns at the district, city, state, and national scales, and provides a foundation for movements by taking on oppressions and facilitating shared knowledge and narratives (Oakes & Lipton, 2002).

PSU's enlightenment about intersectional movements and involvement in them is symbiotic. PSU has played instrumental roles in the evolution of the Alliance for Education Justice and Black Lives Matter. PSU therefore molds national political

education and policymaking while enriching its own perspectives. Raised awareness and networking provide motivation, power, and strategies to scale alternative reform visions (Cuban, 1989; Rogers & Morrell 2011).

However, PSU's case displays the challenge of scaling progressive political education. Even many allies do not share PSU's operating assumptions and political views. This dynamic creates frictions within coalitions and demands significant investment to achieve intellectual solidarity. Movement-building partners must be prepared to spend much time aligning political education and other scaling tactics.

A distinct element of PSU and youth organizing is tapping into political education via direct action. Praxis is chief to PSU's scaling since urgency and agency are imperative to overcoming inequalities (Warren, 2014; HoSang, 2006a; Trent & Chavis, 2009). This study confirmed impetus to action is essential to significant individual politicization and to movements (Anyon, 2014). PSU also demonstrates how praxis can trigger a sense of efficacy and mold public identities (HoSang, 2003; Rogers et al., 2012).

Politicization and praxis should lead to student empowerment, which PSU promotes as a vehicle for multiscalar change. Yet data highlighted an urgent need for PSU to operationalize and expand power. PSU made a more concerted attempt over time to understand and develop power, but gaps remain. Interviewees cast doubt on PSU's political power, particularly at higher levels of governance. Despite noteworthy grassroots victories and current constitutional challenges, Harrisburg presents severe

limits to PSU's aspirations. Others remarked on obstacles increasingly wrought by neoliberalism and corporate reform (Ravitch, 2013; Lipman, 2015; Henig, 2011).

In this brave new world of educational governance, PSU needs electoral sway. As data supported, PSU and partners should strive to elect equity-minded lawmakers through intergenerational coalitions; establish a progressive political party; and mobilize voters (Rogers & Morrell, 2011; Il Yong Lee and Wechsler, 2015; HoSang, 2006b). PSU must outline and assess approaches to power, and make theories, methods, and goals for power-building explicit.

The Power of Framing

In addition to political power, discursive power is essential to scaling grassroots reform. PSU's framing amplifies root causes and student experience, enabling it to succinctly portray multifaceted problems and give meaning to lived experiences (Gold et al., 2013). PSU demonstrates how messaging connects dots between linked struggles (Trent & Chavis, 2009), relating educational quandaries to adultism, racism, individualism, and greed. These connections are backed by literature regarding local and national trends, and intersectional frames are crucial (J4J, 2014; Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011; Mele, 2013; The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2015a; Forbiger, 2015; Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015; Mosenkis, 2014).

Coinciding with its maturing political education, PSU's framing has evolved. In deconstructing privatization, PSU exemplified how framing can elucidate abstract policy concepts (Gold et al., 2013). Ultimately, the language and values of leading

frameworks are averse to the scaling ideals of PSU and unproven in forging equitable change. In contrast, PSU has framed its reform blueprint around increased investment, restorative practices, and college- and career-oriented curricula.

Consistent with Lipman (2015), PSU's framing also exhibits it is critical to point out elites and entities promoting and benefitting from corporate reform. Organizing must resist ideological sway of policy entrepreneurs. PSU's case underscores how recapturing civil rights discourse related to public schools is imperative (J4J, 2014).

PSU has most successful reframing school violence. Through leading the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools, PSU obviated how framing can break down rifts between organizing and targets (Gold et al., 2002). CNS persuasively redefined school and community violence as structural, and drew bonds between neoliberalism and violence (Gregory, 2006; Springer, 2015; Sellers, 2013; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2006). Along with extraordinary leadership and collaboration, CNS illustrated framing can galvanize multilevel structural change, and forge collective identities and viable alternative reform blueprints (Anyon, 2014; Wells et al., 2011). As well, PSU's framing efforts around high-stakes testing can expedite cross-cutting alliances, given opt-out movements are propelled by wealthier, White groups (Pondiscio, 2015).

PSU exhibited how grassroots framing initiatives can shape perception and policy at scale, and help scale campaigns vertically. PSU's yeoman's work as a purveyor of "narrative solutions" is pivotal to movement-building and to claims seeking to expand rights (Bales, 2015; J4J, 2014; Bhimji, 2007; HoSang, 2006a). PSU

and allies must craft frames that link across sectors (Gold et al., 2013). Distribution of best expressive practices is also pivotal to discursive contention. A primary challenge of framing at scale is how to link multiple movements without diluting messaging.

PSU's primary tactics for realizing its theories of change—documentation, media, and direct action—lend well to framing. PSU has balanced wielding documentation to create searing exposés of structural problems with using it to celebrate progressivism. This balance is key to promoting accountability and to PSU's credibility. Similar to Della Porta and Diani (1999) and Renée and McAlister (2011), PSU appreciates the utility of establishing a public record of reform outcomes.

PSU documentation also helps with support and healing when students endure traumas. More recent PSU campaigns symbolize the might of fusing documentation with digital media. "Worst of #Philly1stDay" proved electronic documentation can provoke public shaming at a national scale, and spawned support for funding equity. Virtual documentation is a novel lever for accountability.

Independent media production is also an integral tool for PSU, as it is for many marginalized youth (Charmaraman, 2010). PSU's media-making boosts stability while advancing campaigns and influence. Media production instills knowledge, political education, and communication facilities at scale. Included in PSU's advanced media skill-building is how to frame arguments and maintain consistent messaging, pivotal to prosperous organizing and movement-building (Gold et al., 2013; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). PSU has helped many youth groups in framing, a desperate need for the field.

Digital media was a lifeboat for PSU's 2015 Indiegogo campaign to secure a new home; youth-led social media can accrue resources (Valaitis, 2005). Yet PSU's case reinforced how digital media are no cure-all. Virtual mobilization and emergent media cannot replace in-person organizing (McDonald et al., 2011), or circumvent structural inequalities or complacency (van Dijk & Hacker, 2000; Smith, 2004). More privileged interests continue to harness digital activism (Spector, 1994).

Direct action augments PSU's framing efforts. PSU balances extreme displays of will with playful skits and traditional expression like testimony. Such versatility is backed by Mediratta et al. (2001a). PSU's actions are packed with concise, poignant messaging that includes credible solutions. Actions and communications strategies are often coordinated to great effect, and cogently reveal dubious assumptions and contradictions buoying dominant trends. They also showcase PSU's unique proclivity for humiliating and inciting public officials, an essential weapon of education organizers (Renée & McAlister, 2011).

Direct action in education has increasingly emerged as a multigenerational, cross-cutting affair (StudentNation, 2013; Riley, 2013; AROS, 2016b). Framing and direct action must unite with electoral activism and other people power (Bales, 2015).

A Credible Watchdog: A Linchpin for Gaining Influence

PSU's framing tactics helped aggrandize its legitimacy with diverse stakeholders. In addition to framing, other factors bolstered PSU's reputation.

For more than 20 years, PSU has been a moral and political compass during the most critical developments in the SDP. PSU turned turbulence and degenerative regimes into policy and base-building gains, displaying the role of timing in progress (Trent & Chavis, 2009). Despite constant crises and distractions, PSU maintains focus on its mission and campaign goals. A long-term perspective is vital to surviving the tumultuous and dynamic nature of reform. Consistent introspection of organizational values is integral to composure and persistence (Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009).

PSU also accrued credibility and influenced frames by leveraging data and research. Heeding advice of Rogers et al. (2012), Perez (2003), and Renée and McAlister (2011), PSU conducts peer outreach throughout the SDP, Pennsylvania, and country to interrogate root causes. PSU also researches and broadcasts politics driving reform, which often escape mainstream media.

PSU employs data and research to design policy proposals and to encourage initiating or continuing constructive reforms. Its proposals align with platforms posited by scholars like Ravitch (2013) and Orfield et al. (2012), and are viable alternatives to privatization and austerity. As a counterweight to top-down governance and research, PSU shares stories, data, and information related to policy concerns, and urges followers to engage policymakers. PSU has strengthened research capacities and standing by partnering with advocacy and expert groups, as advised by Mediratta et al. (2001a) and Balch-Gonzalez et al. (2010). Philadelphia Cross City evinced how youth and grassroots organizing can be at the forefront of multigenerational alliances with expert and advocacy entities.

In sum, there is a broad expectation among policymakers and journalists that PSU must be consulted during reform negotiations or that it will interject a powerful response. PSU's role as longtime supplier of a reputable student voice is distinct from similar contexts like Chicago. Still, PSU's exceptionalism does not mean students will be included in key decisions. Credibility is needed, but insufficient to political power.

Depth, Spread, and Scope: The Necessity and Complexity of Multiscalar Reform

Nonetheless, PSU's legitimacy is owed in part to audacious efforts to influence policies on multiple levels. PSU has historically emphasized glocalized scaling.

PSU believes chapters are a primary source of its power and credibility. Echoing Henig (2011), data revealed PSU must not lose sight of this understanding as it contests at higher levels. Data also reinforced how short-term campaigns furnish critical organizational momentum and efficacy (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Trent & Chavis, 2009). School-level campaigns can also serve as microcosms of resistance against structural problems. Ultimately, as data proved, PSU must mobilize beyond schools to defend against districtwide crises and adequately represent students at higher levels where most key decisions are made.

PSU initially had grander ideas of its possible spread, but adapted to limits over time. PSU's budget and staffing foreclose it from exponential growth. Finding and retaining proficient organizers are enduring challenges, especially given limited pay for many obligations (Zimmerman, 2004; Pintado-Vertner, 2004).

PSU has not had more than ten chapters at once, and conducts intense organizing at only a few schools per school year. Several variables dictate where PSU opens a chapter, such as historical relationships with schools. Such cooperation is far from guaranteed, however (Shah & Mediratta, 2008). Numerous variables external to PSU also shape extent of student and staff involvement.

These realities reflect Trent and Chavis's (2009) study regarding the imperative of fit between scaling goals and resources. PSU realizes growth must be aligned with human and financial resources, and that it can tarnish program quality (Duttweiler & Dayton, 2009). Not only must youth groups navigate these tensions, but they must try to maintain integrity while scaling.

Is Deep Change Possible Within PSU's Chapters?

Despite these obstacles, PSU has strived to affect normative school-based change, like theorized by Coburn (2003) and Elmore (1996). PSU institutionalized a school-based campaign planning blueprint, faithfully starting with probing root causes.

PSU waged effective chapter campaigns around presenting and core issues, where it balanced conflict and collaboration. Organizing that grew from these campaigns also demonstrated potential for scaling deep change beyond school walls.

Yet PSU's school-based intervention can only do so much to counteract the reigns of austerity, privatization, and top-down governance impacting the SDP. Bartram High School's return to chaos and regular leadership turnover—despite

PSU's long-term campaigning there—symbolizes this reality. Numerous scholars noted structural barriers to the longevity of organizing wins in the SDP, including Suess and Lewis (2007) and McAlister et al. (2009). These hurdles have intensified; closings threaten to prevent PSU from even having the option to organize in some schools.

Despite these caveats, PSU's chapter mobilization is a model for consequential school change. PSU's healing and trust-building practices like listening campaigns, intensive off-site retreats, student-staff events, and restorative practices can be instrumental to repairing venomous school cultures, as can ombudsmen that PSU championed. Student-led professional development, evaluations, and hiring should be focal to school improvement. For districts with more support and progressive leadership, these pillars could be foundational to forward-thinking reform.

At West Philadelphia High School, PSU's community-based whole-school transformation organizing illuminated the potential and necessity of uniting with neighborhood groups and other local allies to scale equity-minded reform (Warren, 2011; Shirley, 2011; Anyon, 2014; Gold et al., 2002). Again, however, efficacious grassroots mobilization was thwarted by structural constraints, privileged interests, and shortsighted reform trends.

Limits to Normative Change Within a Beleaguered SDP

PSU must campaign at district and urban scales to address core educational dilemmas, particularly as mayors and urban economic development become more involved in school reform (Henig, 2011). Due to the district central administration's focal locus within educational governance, PSU has aimed most campaigns there.

PSU tried to galvanize normative districtwide change. Through the years, it modified platforms with peer input. PSU gradually convinced district and city leaders of its plans' merits. Yet as austerity and privatization continued to impose, PSU's aspirations for districtwide transformation narrowed. In such contexts, Shah and Mediratta (2008) support realistic assessments of bureaucratic constraints.

Upon being restructured, PSU continued to demand core changes, but absent were radical plans for student decision-making and progressive curricula. Since, PSU has generally opted for issue-specific platforms rather than plans for revolutionary districtwide transformation. This strategy has coincided with policy victories, and Trent and Chavis (2009) support such practicality.

Nevertheless, PSU did spur consequential change within the SDP. Successful campaigns for SSCs, small schools, and a new code of conduct all inverted norms in concrete ways. Grassroots processes led to progressivism at scale.

All the same, long-term progress at the district level has been at the mercy of larger historical trends. A lack of authentic grassroots engagement, inadequate investment in community-based reform, and inertia—chief dilemmas lamented by Elmore (1996) and Joselowsky (2007)—continue to thwart deep change in

governance, pedagogy, and curriculum. Austerity, privatization, and standardization intensify structural barriers (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Fine, 2013).

For PSU's districtwide change goals to come to fruition, there must be a cultural shift among adult actors toward youth and grassroots empowerment. Small learning communities—with dedicated coordinators and a student advisory body—can be favorable to authentic bottom-up governance as they were with PSU.

However, this case and much of the literature stress how structures to support grassroots engagement are necessary but not sufficient for reform to be equitable and student-centered. Funding matters (Baker, 2016), and progressive leadership not beholden to neoliberal and neoconservative think tanks is needed (Sanders, 2012; Glennan et al., 2004; Joselowsky, 2007; Bishop et al., 2010; Sabelli & Harris, 2015).

Coalitions as Building Blocks of Power and Movements

To achieve such transformation, PSU can only build sufficient power through joining with like-minded groups at multiple levels of policymaking. PSU's case showcased how partnering can also be instrumental to sustainability and adaptive capacity (Zimmerman et al., 2005; Trent & Chavis, 2009; Wells et al., 2011).

PSU has joined alliances on multiple scales, as is needed. PSU first recognized the unique potential of intergenerational, cross-cutting coalitions during anti-privatization battles at the turn of the century. Grassroots education organizing united with labor and advocacy to limit the SDP's takeover. PSU realized the shared destinies of schools and cities (Lipman, 2015; Warren, 2011; & Shirley, 2011).

Cross City expanded PSU's power and the impact of intergenerational grassroots coalitions nationwide. Philadelphia Cross City precipitated consequential districtwide change in teacher quality and grassroots school turnaround, despite SDP leaders being more and more hostile to community-based intervention. Cross City members appreciated how students and teachers must collaborate (Joselowsky, 2007).

Cross City proved the value of forming coalitions to achieve collective power. Yet it also demonstrated how partnering must be authentic to sustain. Creating meeting environments inviting to youth was elusive, concurring with other research (Bhimji, 2007; Shirley, 2011; Cervone, 2002). Further, transformational change stimulated by Cross City requires prolonged district investment in grassroots engagement, not funding cutbacks (Joselowsky, 2007; Coburn, 2003). As well, Cross City's dissolution demonstrates the inherent instability of the education organizing infrastructure, though its void has been partially filled by other intermediaries and funders like the Communities for Just Schools Fund.

While PSU was pursuing multilevel intergenerational alliances, the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools united pockets of smaller-scale youth action. CNS negotiated internal differences differently from Cross City.

Rather than first agreeing on ground rules, CNS prioritized concrete tasks. This honors Wells et al.'s (2011) advice, and reflects the unique unfolding of youth action (Williams, 2003; Fernández, 2002; Shah & Mediratta, 2008). CNS also subdued frictions by revolving around student experience and youth-led dialogue and planning. Similar to Cross City, CNS preserved organizational independence by

operating as a coalition, but enabling member groups to take on other causes. Organizational autonomy during alliances is crucial (Zimmerman et al., 2005; Wells et al., 2011).

CNS showed how uniting youth action, youth development, and service provision entities can lead to formidable power (Delgado & Staples, 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2005). CNS also transcended competition inherent to nonprofit funding. However, the sway generated by CNS was fragile, its members face capacity limits, and the coalition is no longer active. Still, the networks and understandings CNS generated continue to propel movements addressing structural violence. Leftover social capital from alliances can drive movements (Wells et al., 2011).

Data also stressed the urgency of intergenerational alliances to cultivating sufficient power. The connectedness between adult and youth problems requires both to be intimately involved in their solutions (HoSang, 2006b). PSU's case proves youth leadership and youth-friendly spaces are pivotal to effective multiscalar reform (Joselowsky, 2007). Yet it also reinforced how there must be coalitions and spaces where intergenerational gaps are mitigated for the sake of movements (Mediratta et al., 2001a; Warren, 2014), as exemplified by Journey for Justice.

To Collaborate or Agitate? Evolving Antagonism Toward Policymakers

Collaboration must be balanced by pressure, and PSU demonstrates how engaging evolving target systems involves regular assessment of shifting power dynamics (Coburn, 2003; Larson & Hansen, 2005; Warren, 2011; Rogers et al.,

2012). PSU's experience also highlights how the arcs of urban political economies and school districts can prevent an even balance between inside and outside strategies.

When PSU aligned with school leadership, these relationships helped incubate deep change. At the district level, collaboration with SDP leadership proved more difficult because leaders have mostly been misaligned with PSU's mission. As well, power imbalances intensified due to external forces undermining local leadership and grassroots engagement (Bunch, 2013; Conner et al., 2013).

PSU efforts to forge pathways for student and grassroots governance were not fruitful in the long term. Common barriers surfaced, including SDP and school leaders' penchant for control and inertia, a lack of institutional political education and critical analysis, co-optation, and creaming (Joselowsky, 2007; Rogers et al., 2012).

Altogether, this case suggests a veritable student governance body may not be possible within the SDP. However, data pointed to other models of demand-support student entities, such as Boston's Youth on Board (YOB). YOB is external to Boston Public Schools but coordinates the citywide student government and provides training to students. Chicago's local school councils are known for engendering community-based decision-making (Lipman & Haines, 2007), and the SDP's School Advisory Councils could. PSU's activism surrounding the new West displayed potential of local autonomy. However, such grassroots mobilization has not superseded ruling trends.

While attempting change from within, PSU has prioritized coercive theories and tactics essential to an equity focus (Joselowsky, 2007). This approach is distinctive, and robust pressure has led to victories at all levels of policymaking.

Yet coercion has also been strategic since good faith with delegated leaders has been more and more evasive, due to: needing to constantly monitor commitments; turnover; incrementalism; deception; adultism; revanchism; and top-down governance. These obstacles are prevalent locally and beyond (Mezzacappa, 2016; Conner & Rosen, 2013; McAlister et al., 2009; Lipman & Haines, 2007; HoSang, 2003). In this milieu, a posture of prioritizing cooperation jeopardizes PSU's integrity. Thus, PSU came to embrace an antagonistic modus operandi towards institutional change avenues. This shift is rational when reform becomes excessively regressive toward grassroots input (Fung & Wright, 2003; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). Further, unprincipled collaboration is averse to lasting change (Trent & Chavis, 2009).

Cutting ties with backwards regimes and reform lenses may also be needed to develop apt political sensibilities. PSU's strength is as an adversarial force, not as a facilitator of incrementalism in a weakened public education system. Nonetheless, PSU should not forsake collaboration. To foment systemic change and accountability, it must maintain access to institutional levers and gain cooperation and participation of internal stakeholders (Hopkins, 2007; Joselowsky, 2007; Mediratta et al., 2001a).

Scaling Out to Take on State Politics

State politics are a primary driver behind PSU's growing distaste for cooperation with policymakers. Yet PSU's case makes it clear theories of educational change must engage state politics (Henig, 2011; Ravitch, 2013). If PSU's small

schools mobilization illuminated the significance of scaling down in education organizing, statewide organizing highlighted the prudence of scaling out.

PSU developed robust connections across the state, including links with intergenerational organizing and school officials. PSU navigated resource restrictions by amplifying political education, building on extant bonds, coordinating unifying events, and harnessing digital youth activism. These strategies should serve as templates for fortifying youth organizing networks at all levels.

Still, PSU's statewide organizing exposed internal capacity limits, especially in staffing required to facilitate long-term state-based mobilization pivotal to equity. PSU's capacity struggles in linking with youth across the state align with findings of Pintado-Vertner (2004). Even moreso, statewide mobilization underscored crucial capacity shortcomings in Pennsylvania's youth action infrastructure. The field's immaturity matches findings of Delgado and Staples (2008) and Il Yong Lee and Wechsler (2015).

Sustaining Cross-Cutting, Powerful, and Flexible Movements

PSU's case revealed that for equity-based reform to be sustained, movements are needed at the state, national, and local levels (Köhler & Wissen, 2003; Deschenes et al., 2008). PSU's case also confirmed movements must build power across demography, geography, and issue (Warren, 2014; Anyon, 2014); both political and discursive strategies must be central (Bales, 2015; Offe, 1985; Touraine, 1995). Conflict must be chief to movements, and should be tactically aimed at shaping

elections, discourses, and institutional change (Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Shirley, 2011). Movements must both connect with historical struggles that recognized major roles for students and youth (HoSang, 2003; Speth & Thompson, 2016), and harness contemporary foment (FCYO, 2015a). Due to PSU's track record of successfully engaging each of these dimensions, it should continue to be a movement catalyst.

PSU's Evolving Approaches to Movement-Building

PSU has long recognized its role in movement-building. Yet the need for extralocal movements became apparent as regressive national education trends and corporate reform models continued to rear their heads in Philadelphia. By 2009, PSU knew localized messaging and movements had to be taken nationally with unforeseen coordination (Parham & Pinzino, 2004).

The Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ) provided unprecedented opportunity for PSU and likenesses across the country to cross-pollinate and craft collective visions. These elements are cardinal to robust movements (Wells et al., 2011; Academy for Educational Development, 2003; LISTEN, Inc., 2003). AEJ also spurred multigenerational mobilization and lobbying. Still, there are caveats about AEJ's potential to challenge dominant regimes, such as a lack of resources and power.

In addition to its leading role in AEJ, PSU's informal alliance-building with youth groups in Chicago and other urban districts resisting existential threats stimulated solidarity, unified awareness, and common messaging. PSU's influence

also contributed to growth of student unions in other affected cities. Such landmark unity is requisite given the relatively meager capacity of youth organizing.

While PSU was helping build a national youth action infrastructure, it enhanced movement-building in other ways. PSU linked with the Media Mobilizing Project and other activist groups to buttress its political and ideological movement-building, and enriched its conceptualization of the connection between educational problems and poverty. In recent years, PSU's longtime work regarding structural and state violence coalesced with Black Lives Matter (BLM). BLM is a natural fit for PSU's evolving movement mentalities, from its radical theories of change deliberately addressing interlocking systemic oppressions to its bold direct action tactics. PSU passionately inserted itself into BLM—such as by contributing to platforms and local organizing—while energizing its own resolve, strategies, and capacity for mass mobilization. This exemplifies potential when momentum-based movements align with assets of anchor organizations like PSU (FCYO, 2015a; Anyon, 2014). PSU's nexus with BLM, and more recently with burgeoning youth activism around school safety, also illustrates how intersectional movements can be synergistic.

Next Steps for Progressive Movement-Building

Like PSU, youth organizing has reached a point of maturity with more room for growth in power. BLM, for example, is a byproduct of strategies and lessons from youth action over the last few decades, reverberating with Anyon's (2014) view of movements as long-term phenomena. BLM and Occupy spotlight the unique potential

of youth-based movements. However, the relatively limited sustained political influence of these upsurges signifies the impetus for even greater movement-building.

There are many examples of cooperation within the education sector and with other strains of mobilization, including in Philadelphia (Wells et al., 2011). PSU's case provided evidence of the grassroots power when student and teachers unite, on both a local and national scale. Recent potent teacher-led groundswells across the country represent an opportunity for greater bottom-up power if student movements are harnessed. Yet the extent of cross-sectoral collaboration is insufficient and must be scaled up with urgency (Warren, 2014).

Data and some scholars indicate maximal concordance should include seemingly disparate movements, such as both urban and rural communities, high schoolers and college matriculates, and Black and Brown populations. Social toxins that could spur collective resistance span across subgroups, from segregation to student debt to a scarcity of quality educational and job opportunities (Speth & Thompson, 2016; Anyon, 2014; Hannah-Jones, 2014; Orfield et al., 2012). Correspondingly, there are progressive policy ideas that could have universal benefits for students and potential allies, like the green economy and affordable college. Gaps should also be bridged between organizing and both expert and donor networks (Shirley, 2011; Wells et al., 2011; Fine & Jacobs, 2014).

Modern mobilization also must draw inspiration from the New Deal and achieve broad alliances that incorporate government intervention. As data revealed, neoconservative retrenchment from government over the last few decades is tethered

to the emasculation of public education (Zimmerman et al., 2005; Ravitch, 2013). The centrality of urban public schools and their stakeholders to American democracy and economic competitiveness must be elevated (Ravitch, 2013; Anyon, 2014).

Like data also showed, artificial binaries and subgroup identities and interests must be sacrificed for distinct movements to achieve common understandings and strategies (Anyon, 2014; Cervone, 2002). There will be different theaters and methods, but there must be a shared commitment and vision. Organizational independence can be maintained, but collective mobilization and clarity in messaging must be a priority (Henig, 2011; FCYO, 2015a; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). A core challenge is formulating cross-cutting movements while empowering the multiplicity of groundswells and identities that percolate from local and regional activism.

Meeting these ideals will be as much a framing effort as it will be political. The era of governing without governing has manipulated narratives that devalue youth and public investment (Olssen, 1996; Perez & Cannella, 2011; Köhler & Wissen, 2003; Tilton, 2010; Wacquant, 2013). Correcting this hegemony will involve considerable reeducation (Delgado & Staples, 2008). To facilitate synergy among distinct mobilization, PSU's political education and framing will be key to expanding other progressive movements' understanding about rationales behind a radical educational justice platform.

In the political arena, youth-based and education justice movements must prioritize mobilizing voters (FCYO, 2015a; Shirley, 2011). PSU can use help in this

aspect, and there are peer exemplars like Inner-City Struggle to emulate (Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015).

PSU's case showed concrete reform proposals when scaling can also be beneficial. In this vein, building off the BLM education platform should be focal to movement-building. Displaying PSU's imprint, the multilevel platform frames education as a human right and charges the federal government with protecting public education. All states should have "full funding formulas." Locally, it champions community control and democratically elected school boards. Like Ravitch (2013) and Dean (2015), the platform demands a moratorium on charters and closures. BLM also aligns with PSU by offering suggestions to end the school-to-prison pipeline. The platform outlines steps towards these goals at the federal, state, and local levels. The blueprint is also intersectional, which can help in merging with movements related to criminal, racial, and economic justice. Still, the platform's tenets need to be further defined and tied to action steps for organizations like PSU to pursue (The Movement for Black Lives, 2016).

Umbrella groups will be indispensable to this operationalization, as well as to cross-fertilization between and within movements, capacity building, and accessing change pathways (Anyon, 2014; Il Yong Lee & Wechsler, 2015). Yet intermediaries are also vulnerable and must be strengthened and expanded for grassroots movements to flourish.

Like other theories of scaling, rigorous evaluation should also accompany and inform movement-building (Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Rogers et al., 2012). Movement

demands can be concretized through logic models with short- and long-term indicators of impact. Evaluators also should be creative in helping this endeavor, following models of Gold et al. (2013).

Academia also has a role in educational justice movements. There must be greater understanding into how contemporary groundswells and their targets are relate to civil rights foment, and into how modern student mobilization compares with international youth movements and progressivism. Research should investigate linkages and distinctions between local, state, and national movements, and probe how cross-cutting movements intersect and diverge. Finally, there should be further analysis of how groups like PSU interface with movements.

PSU's Role in Modern Movements

The future of educational justice movements is uncertain, but PSU is poised to be an integral liaison between local and extralocal movement-building. This was recognized by *Rolling Stone* (Nathanson, 2015) and confirmed by data. PSU has recently played this pivotal role with BLM and with activism around the nexus between school safety, gun control, and state violence.

Nevertheless, PSU is acutely aware scaling progressivism cannot be about any one organization. Organizing more youth with adequate political education and a sense of collective efficacy is more significant than organizational branding or fundraising. This mentality and concomitant strategies are the only way to approach outpouring like in the 1960s or in other countries, which is critical to reinvigorating

American public education and realizing PSU's equity-based reform visions. PSU has expressed explicit deference to BLM, demonstrating it practices what it preaches regarding putting movements ahead of organizational development.

Conclusion

PSU has sustained over multiple decades—a feat particularly for a youth action group—due to: developing a youth servant leadership pipeline; superlative executive leadership; adaptations for executive succession; diversification and integrity in fundraising; relevance, retention, and integrity through tapping into youth culture and empowering oppressed youth to address the most trenchant and pressing educational challenges; and institutionalized supports and introspection.

Yet due to inherent internal limitations—such as its size and budget, turnover, and its youth, activist, and grassroots orientations—PSU will remain vulnerable to threats to sustainability. Still, PSU's strategies for stability can be adopted by youth organizing and other youth engagement groups. They have withstood the test of time and allowed PSU to maintain a consistent influence, including through internal executive turmoil, a recession, and philanthropic trends.

PSU has also addressed the multidimensional issue of scale in urban reform through various means, and evolved in direct opposition to leading reform paradigms. Ultimately, PSU's case shows that for it and its allies to achieve requisite political and discursive power to realize equity-based structures, values, and norms in reform,

movement-building is urgent. Education policy encompasses immensely powerful interests, networks, and ideologies that transcend schools and districts.

PSU has embraced movement-building since its inception and in multiple ways over time, including through large-scale mobilization at the local, state, and national levels; aiding ideological movements with strategic messaging; and engaging intersectional allies and framing. These and other scaling tactics have led to deep educational change on multiple scales.

However, the educational justice movements PSU has been involved with heretofore have been insufficient in power to sustain radical and multiscalar change that aligns with PSU's vision and mission. This shortcoming is owed to the relative lack of resources and political influence possessed by PSU and allies, but also to the interests averse to PSU growing more bipartisan and hegemonic. Therefore, PSU and allies must devise strategies to build political power and discursive clarity through coordinating both like-minded and disparate movements that can shape policies, elections, and narratives, while maintaining subgroup identities, independence, and strategies.

Demonstrating awareness of this core challenge, the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing combined with AEJ and other youth-based coalitions to launch a Youth Power Lab in 2020. Youth Power Lab is operating under the assumption established by this study: "We need power not just empowerment." The Lab recognizes the imperative to "build bases at scale, develop strategic alliances, and shift public narratives," including by assessing strengths and crafting a "clear

framework" for how youth action can spur radical movements and build power across "geographies, issues, and constituencies." To join the Lab, groups must have a history of "base building" and executing grassroots campaigns; have youth of color and/or working class young people making "critical" decisions; and pledge to probe "effective power building strategies and the scale needed to shift conditions at the local, state, and national level" (FCYO, 2019).

Such deliberate multiscalar coalitions must synergize with other emergent large-scale mobilization. Recent impactful teacher strikes show dominant paradigms are not impenetrable, and represent momentum that can be leveraged to build potent grassroots movements in favor of progressive reform and earnest investment in equitable American public education. The extent to which these groundswells synergize will have significant implications for the future of equity-based urban school reform and the realization of PSU's vision.

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Appendix A TIMELINE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

School-level:

- **1997**: PSU opens its first chapters at *Simon Gratz* and *West Philadelphia* High Schools.

- **1998**: Influenced *West Philadelphia* High School leaders to complete long-awaited building repairs.

- **1999**: Pressured principal at *Simon Gratz* High School to make sure all students had access to textbooks in all primary subjects, amounting to an $8,000 commitment.

- **2000**: At *Gratz*, members conducted professional development for teachers and collaborated with teachers to transform PD.

- **2000** – **2002**: Campaigned to better student-staff relations and instruction at *Bartram* High School, including through winning a student ombudsman and coordinating school-wide basketball tournaments involving teachers and students.

- **2003**: *Bartram* students conceptualized Student Success Centers (SSCs), which were established in fourteen schools, including *West Philadelphia* High School.

- **2003** – **2009**: Led a grassroots, research-based coalition to redesign *West Philadelphia* High School as a community-based school reflecting the small schools framework. In 2006, PSU ensured that West Philadelphia was not removed from the SDP's capital budget, and that $81 million was restored for West. In 2007, PSU conducted student surveys to guide the creation of four themed academies. Construction on the new facility began in 2009.

- **2004** – **2006**: Pressured the SDP to contract Fellowship Farm—a relationship-building intermediary—to help students and teachers from *Bartram* High School come together, voice their differences, and strengthen relations.

- **2007** – **2010**: United with *West Philadelphia* school leaders to develop and implement restorative practices, which contributed to a 70 percent lessening of violent incidents across three years.

- **2008**: At *Masterman* High School, won a campaign to establish an ombudsman responsible for advising students regarding tensions with teachers and other staff.

- **2008** – **2009**: Earned right at *Sayre* High School to lead trainings of school security. Productive trainings led to PSU conducting citywide trainings of school police officers, and also served as a national model for cultivating relationships, trust, and awareness between students and school police.

- **2008** – **2009**: The *Overbrook* High School chapter ended a late room policy where students would have to stand within a box on the floor made from masking tape; Students at Overbrook coalesced with politicians and community members to formulate an education platform.

- **2010** – **2012**: Following brutal violence at *South Philadelphia* High School in December 2009, PSU was asked to help cultivate leadership capacity for cross-cultural understanding at the school. PSU facilitated monthly, multi-lingual meetings between Black, White, and Asian immigrant students. Unprecedented multi-ethnic relationships and collaborative problem-solving led to a vastly improved climate, and the school was removed from the "persistently dangerous" schools list in fall 2012.

- **2010** – **2012**: At *Furness* High School, members united with the principal to increase attendance and enhance the climate. Attendance increased by five percent, serious incidents were halved, and there was a thirty-point and ten-point increase in math and reading proficiency, respectively; Even with these marked improvements, Furness was still slated for closure in 2011. PSU was instrumental in mobilizing students to meet with the principal and to voice their desires for keeping Furness open at School Reform Commission (SRC) meetings. Furness was taken off the school closings list; PSU also met with local congressmen to champion federal investment in schools like Furness.

- **2012**: PSU was pivotal in ensuring that the new *West Philadelphia* High School's building opened in fall 2012.

- **2014:** Staged die-ins at *Masterman* and Science Leadership Academy (SLA).

- **2015**: *SLA* conducted a "More Than a Test" campaign, which included a test-in, forum, and website highlighting the ills of high-stakes testing and standardization, as well as growing grassroots opposition to these regimes.

***District-level*:**

- **1996**: Mobilized more than 2,000 students to walk out and rally at City Hall, which compelled City Council to redirect $15 million to schools.

- **2001** – **2002**: PSU was a chief player in effective resistance to wholesale privatization of the SDP, which prevented the privatization of high schools and the SDP's central offices, secured a second mayoral appointment to the SRC, and reduced the total number of schools handed over to for-profit providers.

- **2002** – **2004**: PSU-led research and organizing compelled the SDP to double the amount of counselors in Philadelphia public high schools. PSU also designed the SSC model, which has provided districtwide student supports and served as a blueprint for other urban districts. In 2004, PSU successfully fought against social workers being axed from SSCs. It has since had to regularly safeguard SSCs.

- **2003:** PSU joined Cross City.

- **2003 – 2009:** PSU and YUC led small schools mobilization.

- **2004** – **2007**: In 2004, PSU embarked on a long-term campaign to highlight the inegalitarian distribution of qualified and experienced educators across the SDP. After conducting school-based surveys and analyzing member experiences, PSU linked with the Education First Compact to develop a Teacher Quality/Equity Platform. The platform included convening a public hearing at City Council, administered by Congressman Chaka Fattah. Also, PSU galvanized support for teacher incentive grants. PSU also surveyed teachers in diverse schools, implemented public actions, spoke at an SRC meeting, and produced a video about the cause.

- **2007**: Influenced the SDP to remove its deadline for military opt-out forms and to showcase opt-out forms on the SDP website's front page.

- **2008** – **2010**: PSU was the primary student voice in Cross City's Effective Teaching Campaign. PSU utilized public actions and collected five hundred signed postcards as part of broader organizing demanding that the mayor, the SDP, and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) prioritize the needs of youth during contract negotiations. Throughout PSU's teacher quality-oriented campaigns, PSU clamored that state and city leaders—including the PFT—were obligated to invest in teachers and schools facing the toughest circumstances. Ultimately, the contract included site selection in all high-needs schools, and

enhanced training and supports for new teachers. Since 2009, PSU has played a role in the growth of the Teacher Action Group.

- **2009** – **2014**: Envisioned and developed the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools.

- **2010**: SSCs and common planning time expanded to all neighborhood high schools by Superintendent Ackerman.

- **2010** – **2011**: Incubated a formal partnership with the Office of School Safety to nurture student leadership in engaging school police in two neighborhood high schools with conspicuous climate dilemmas. Districtwide student-led trainings of more than 50 school police officers led to consequential change: 85 percent of officers concurred that their appreciation of youth improved; 85 percent reported training will positively influence their interactions with youth; 92 percent affirmed that the workshop combatted negative perceptions of youth.

- **2012 – 2013**: CNS stimulated alterations to the SDP's code of conduct. In November 2012, CNS secured student involvement in the SDP's Safety and Engagement committee, which is designed to enhance the code of conduct. In 2013, CNS won the piloting of restorative justice in ten SDP high schools.

- **2012**: Responding to Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) downsizing plan for the SDP, PSU and YUC combine with teachers, parents, labor, and community activists to form the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS). PCAPS crafted an evidence-based grassroots alternative to BCG's plan, and led vociferous protests against school closings and privatization. Due to staunch community opposition, the SRC postponed voting on BCG's blueprint. By January 2013, the SDP cut its ties with BCG.

- **2013**: Again organized a walkout of thousands of SDP students, in protest of intensifying austerity.

- **2014**: Helped coordinate a die-in protesting structural violence at SDP headquarters, in support of Black Lives Matter and a national day of action facilitated by the Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ).

- **2016**: After mobilizing around a PSU member being assaulted by a school police officer, Superintendent Hite agrees to five PSU demands addressing brutality and climate.

***State-level*:**

- **2007** – **2009**: Pennsylvania's costing-out study is released, due to years of grassroots pressure. In 2008, funding is expanded throughout Pennsylvania and a needs-based formula is agreed upon. PSU documents the positive impacts of more funding and initiates a statewide movement-building effort in reaction to internalizing the widespread and diverse nature of underfunding.

- **2012**: Building a statewide youth network culminates in a February 2012 mass rally in Harrisburg to resist damaging budget cuts under Corbett. PSU led all facets of coordination, including leadership development, political education, communications, tactical strategies, and engaging lawmakers.

- **2012**: In conjunction with ACTION United, conducted a No Vouchers tour to state lawmakers' offices in opposition to a Pennsylvania House Bill that would redirect money from public to private schools. The action prompted Senator Farnese to announce his rejection of vouchers.

- **2016**: After another official audit of Pennsylvania's school funding mechanism underscores deep inequities, a fair funding formula is passed in May 2016.

National:

- **2008 - present**: PSU helped establish AEJ, which it anchored from 2010 – 2012. AEJ has contributed to significant progress toward deconstructing the school-to-prison pipeline, including spurring the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice to establish the Supportive School Discipline in July 2011. AEJ mobilized multiple intergenerational rallies in Washington, DC, which helped in forming the Congressional Caucus on Engaging, Educating and Employing America's Youth in 2011.

- **2012-present:** Co-founded Journey for Justice (J4J), a national grassroots multigenerational force against school closings and privatization in poor communities of color. J4J engaged the DOE, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Office of Civil Rights to investigate the civil rights violations caused by these trends.

- **2014 – 2015**: Contributed to significant change in federal school discipline and climate policy, progressing toward restorative practices and away from pushing students out.

Sources: PSU's website, GuideStar profile, and newsletters

Appendix B INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Note: Some of these questions were also used to analyze newsletter articles.

1. What was/were your role(s) with PSU, or your interaction with PSU?
2. How did you learn about and become involved with PSU?
3. What was your timeframe of involvement with PSU?
    a. Are you still connected?
4. How did PSU influence you?
5. To what extent did you progress or assume leadership roles within PSU?
    a. Were there distinctions between student and staff roles?
6. Can you explain the significance of leadership development to PSU?
7. Can you explain the importance of political education to PSU?
8. What skills did you learn from PSU, and how did you learn and use them?
9. How and why does PSU incorporate youth culture and expression?
10. How did PSU approach sustainability, particularly given frequent turnover of students and staff?
    a. How are staff recruited and developed?
11. How does PSU handle executive succession?
    a. How have different directors shaped PSU?
12. How does PSU maintain continuity over time?
    a. What are the roles of institutional memory and alumni?
13. How have PSU's fundraising strategies changed over time?
    a. Describe the purpose and progress of PSU's individual donor campaign.
14. Describe PSU's approach to evaluation.
15. Which campaigns were you involved in?
    a. What issues were addressed by these campaigns?

b. Please describe any partnering associated with this campaign.

c. What targets were engaged by these campaigns?

16. Describe how PSU's chapters grow or stagnate.

17. What is the relationship between chapter and citywide campaigns?

18. What was your experience partnering with other groups and/or coalitions?

    a. With youth-based groups?

    b. With adult-based groups?

    c. Within and beyond Philadelphia?

19. What was your experience engaging policymakers?

    a. What strategies did you utilize?

    b. What were differences at the school, district, city, and state levels?

    c. Did policymakers engage you and PSU sincerely?

    d. What was your experience under different SDP administrations?

20. Describe how PSU approaches internal and external pathways to change?

    a. How has this evolved over time?

21. What challenges arise regarding implementation and sustaining change (e.g., cooptation)?

22. How does PSU approach framing?

23. What is the role of media for PSU?

    a. How impactful are social media and networking?

24. What is the role of direct action for PSU?

25. How does PSU utilize data and research?

26. Has the work of PSU and its allies had any influence on public perceptions of youth?

27. How has PSU engaged Harrisburg and state politics over time?

28. What is PSU's role in movement-building?

    a. Across Pennsylvania? The nation?
    b. How does PSU negotiate dominant trends, cultural narratives, and constant crises in reform?

29. What are some of PSU's primary lasting impacts?

    a. On youth inclusion?

30. What would ideal governance and education look like within the SDP, and what will it take to get there?

Appendix C CODEBOOK FOR REVIEWING INTERVIEWS AND NEWSLETTERS

Sustainability

1. Leadership pipeline
    a. Leadership development
        i. No training early on
        ii. Must be constant due to turnover
        iii. Integrated, cyclical, and deliberate processes (facilitate continuity and alignment)
            1. Workshops, retreats, Building a Youth Movement
        iv. Curriculum
            1. Media and communications stressed post-restructuring
        v. Advanced skill-building
            1. Facilitation, public speaking, research, communications, media, tactical
            2. Empowerment and efficacy
        vi. Politicization and scaling
        vii. Leaders as experts, organizers, and activists
        viii. Transformational and individualized
        ix. Capitalize on adversity (adaptive capacity)
    b. Leadership ladder
        i. Roles/positions
        ii. Lifelong critical citizens
    c. Challenges to authenticity, decentralization, and staff development
    d. Sayre student-led trainings of school police as evidence of impacts of PSU's leadership development at scale
    e. Executive directors and transitions
        i. Prove the necessity of adults to youth-based groups
        ii. Backgrounds and competence for multiscalar youth organizing
        iii. Transitions can be costly (financially and to organizational morale and stability)
        iv. Institutionalization of transition mechanisms over time (e.g., shadowing and transition committee)
        v. Directors mold organization and theories of change
2. Staff
    a. Commitment and diverse skills
    b. Recruitment and development a challenge, but PSU improved
    c. Professionalization over time
3. Fundraising
    a. Funding for youth action fragile
    b. Investment in accounting, fundraising over time

    c. Integrity
        i. No sponsor influences
        ii. Individual donor campaign
            1. Successful, but still reliant on foundations
            2. Large base of followers helped PSU stave off eviction (as did social media)
    d. Integral to leadership development and media-making
    e. Budget priorities over time
4. Non-fiduciary intermediaries
    a. Research for Action
    b. Communities for Public Education Reform as a prototype scale-building intermediary, but dissolved
5. Recruitment and outreach
    a. Various methods and impacts
        i. Youth culture and expression
        ii. Inclusive, open entry, no creaming
            1. Youth overcome differences
        iii. Funding inequities as recruiting pitch
    b. Focus in neighborhood schools where issues are most felt symbolizes pursuit of root causes and radical change
    c. Retention
        i. Relevance and politicization (sense of obligation), particularly in relation to school
6. Supports
    a. Academic, emotional, social, political; access to resources
    b. Student Success Centers as systemic supports
7. Planning, documentation, and evaluation
    a. Consistent structured and strategic meetings, as well as campaign planning
    b. Documentation critical to institutional memory, continuity
    c. Institutionalized introspection and communication
        i. Ongoing self-assessment of values, processes, campaigns
    d. *Getting to Outcomes*

Scaling

1. Self-representation
    a. Urban youth of color and urban public schools as agents and sites of contestation
    b. Youth as face of organization and all activities (e.g., communications and engaging policymakers)
2. Politicization, praxis, and empowerment
    a. Awareness, skills, and confidence to engage policymaking processes
    b. Political education workshops: Anti-oppression, power dynamics, history, schooling as social control, organizing versus service provision

        i. Evolving: from Poor People's Movement to Black Lives Matter
    c. Meaningful opportunities to act
    d. Individual empowerment to collective action
    e. Empowerment does not equal power
        i. Must form intergenerational coalitions and influence elections
3. Framing around root causes (commonly and consistently emphasized)
    a. Reform is largely ideological, therefore framing essential
        i. Neoliberal, corporate reformers control status quo
    b. Root causes: Austerity, elitism, power, exploitation, racism, media myopia
        i. These forces undergird corporate reform and regressive regimes like privatization, the school-to-prison pipeline, and high-stakes testing
4. Documentation, media, and direct action
    a. Documentation and media key to self-representation, to exposing true conditions and effects of reform (both positive and negative)
    b. Prolific and diverse media over time, with global audience
    c. Youth media model: Empowering organizing and framing tool
    d. Media and direct action align, especially with digital activism
        i. Social media a significant youth asset, but must be complemented by in-person organizing
    e. Direct action aligns with youth creativity and audacity
    f. PSU has demonstrated influence on public perceptions, but prevailing narratives are trenchant
5. Credibility and legitimacy ("Coherent student voice")
    a. Proactive, effective, and reliable, particularly during crises
        i. Consistently offers evidence-based solutions
    b. Adhering to values and integrity key to legitimacy among diverse stakeholders
    c. Research and data
        i. Surveys, field visits, immersion trips
    d. Legitimacy through coalitions
    e. Policymakers know that they must consider PSU
    f. PSU's standing unique compared to other cities like Chicago
6. Depth, spread, and scope
    a. Glocalized resistance
        i. Local campaigns more winnable, tangible, maintain presence and relationships in schools
            1. Chapters as base
        ii. Broader campaigns vital given the loci of educational decision-making, important for structural awareness/movement-building
        iii. School and city campaigns a consistent feature
    b. Challenge of growth with quality and integrity

    c. Chapter growth factors: Capacity; access and historical relationships; context and strategy; organizing acumen; student turnover; significant direct actions; geographic accessibility; school instability
    d. Bartram: With school leadership buy-in and district investment, unproductive relations can be transformed
        i. However, cannot be sustained due to structural failures
    e. West: Striving for PSU's theory of grassroots school turnaround, yet being stymied by decision makers
    f. Lasting progressive, normative change virtually untenable given state of SDP
7. Coalitions
    a. Necessary for mobilizing beyond schools, power, movements
    b. PSU often played leadership role due to its institutionalization of leadership development, political education, and organizing, and its credibility
    c. Anti -privatization and -takeover: Realized connections beyond schools
    d. Cross City
        i. Paragon: Organizing in lead, experts and advocates support/provide legitimacy, access, and information
        ii. Effective campaigns for teacher quality/equity, inclusion in turnaround
        iii. Also disbanded
    e. Campaign for Nonviolent Schools
        i. Violence as structural and toxic narratives against urban youth of color require a youth-led coordinated and collective effort
        ii. Formalized and coordinated years of school-based work
        iii. Flexibility enabled independence, but could dampen collective capacity
        iv. Effective at multiple scales, including new code of conduct and shaping federal discipline policy
    f. Challenges
        i. Capacity
        ii. Addressing root causes difficult due to varying theories of change
        iii. Intergenerational barriers
        iv. Funding and nonprofit cultures promote competition, short-term campaigns
        v. Consensus-building slow and difficult due to organizational differences
8. Target systems
    a. Internal or external change?
        i. Always prioritized external pressure, but has also tried to leave room for collaboration

            1. Could be more adversarial with state politics, but had to be careful at school and district level not to alienate and lose access
            2. Under different superintendents, adopted unique strategies
                a. Overall, has been more and more difficult to negotiate or cooperate
        ii. Made some internal progress, but over time student governance and efforts to change curricula largely unsuccessful
            1. Internal bodies lack political education, are bureaucratic
        iii. Continuous degradation of SDP's civic infrastructure and dominance of virulent forces at all scales have led PSU to abandon good faith cooperative efforts ("no permanent enemies")
        iv. Still must hold policymakers accountable and be open to aligned collaboration
    b. Increasingly, symbolic targets are more relevant
    c. Numerous obstacles to lasting change
        i. Cooptation, monitoring implementation, incrementalism, adultism, top-down governance, placation, accusations of grandstanding/brainwashing, inertia
9. State politics
    a. Vertical to horizontal
        i. Lobbying ineffective due to "open disdain" from Harrisburg (despite multiple funding formulas being passed)
        ii. Statewide youth movement launched post-restructuring
            1. Costing out study confirms inequity, but also shows how underfunding is widespread and highlights need to overcome urban-rural divisions
        iii. Corbett and incessant austerity frustrate grassroots efforts
    b. Movement-building effective over time, but capacity limitations surface
        i. Staff constraints and overextension, especially when taking on SDP crises
        ii. State youth organizing infrastructure considerably underdeveloped
            1. PSU as intermediary?
10. Movement-building
    a. Essential to PSU's vision given the arc and power dynamics of urban school reform, particularly those shaping the SDP
    b. Must be political and discursive
    c. Fluidity: movements are multi-pronged, interconnected, dynamic, and infinite
        i. Shaped by political momentum and historical developments ("Momentum Model")
            1. PSU is well-suited to spark and energize movements
    d. Embraced multiple movements over time

    i. Citywide, statewide, nationwide
    ii. Connected to historical struggles
    iii. Anti-poverty, anti-exploitation
    iv. Alliance for Educational Justice and Journey for Justice
    v. Black Lives Matter
e. Movement-building at all scales spurred by prevailing education policy trends (bipartisan corporate reform at federal, state, urban levels)
f. Spreading model nationwide (other student unions)
g. About movement-building, not organization-building
    i. Share and replicate successes, come to mutual aid, don't "sell each other out"
h. Must be cross-cutting (across space, issue, and social constructs), intergenerational, yet recognize individual movements and identities

Appendix D DONORS

William Penn Foundation

Philadelphia Foundation

White Dog Enterprises/Urban Retrievers

Bread and Roses Community Fund

Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia (Youth are Resources)

Union Benevolent Association

Samuel S. Fels Fund

United Way Southeastern Pennsylvania

CoreStates Financial Corporation (now Wells Fargo)

Seybert Foundation

Alfred & Mary Douty Foundation

Allen Hilles Fund

1957 Charity Trust

Alexis Rosenberg Foundation (now part of the Albert M. Greenfield Foundation)

Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing

The Atlantic Philanthropies, Just and Fair Schools Fund

Schott Foundation for Public Education

Open Society Foundations (Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Criminal Justice Fund)

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Edward W. Hazen Foundation (Youth Development)

The Surdna Foundation (Effective Citizenry)

Alliance for Educational Justice

Movement Strategy Center

Public Interest Projects

Cahn Fund for Social Change

Appendix E SCHOOL-BASED CHAPTERS and CAMPAIGNS

School	Profile
West Philadelphia High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: West Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 1997 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • Poor facilities and maintenance • Student-teacher relations, learning • Discipline and zero tolerance • Small schools and grassroots turnaround • School closings
	Primary Accomplishments: • Building repairs • Held student forum on the ideal school and funding priorities • Bottom-up school design and transformation • Student-centered academies • Restorative practices
Simon Gratz High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood (operated as charter since 2011)
	Location: North Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 1997 – 2005
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • Student-teacher relations and pedagogy • Teacher training and professional development • Student-student relations • Student-security relations • External and media perceptions • Overcrowding • Poor facilities and maintenance • Lack of textbooks • Climate and school spirit • Student voice in district governance

School	Profile
	Primary Accomplishments: • Held student forum on the ideal school and funding priorities • Secured textbooks for all students • Peer mediation • Led and designed teacher trainings and professional development
Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School *(Grades 5-12)*	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: Center City
	Years of Involvement: 2002 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • Student governance and support • Student-teacher relations and learning • Teacher quality
	Primary Accomplishments: • Held student forum on the ideal school and funding priorities • Student classroom evaluations • Ombudsman for student-staff tensions • Die-in
Central High School	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: North Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 1997-2005
	Active (as of 2017): No
	Campaigns/Issues: • Student-teacher relations • Administrative mishandling of racial tensions • Student-student race relations • Multicultural curriculum • Student rights (freedom of speech, discipline procedures, student searches)
	Primary Accomplishments: • Held student forum on the ideal school and funding priorities • Student classroom evaluations • Mobilized interracial meeting to address racism • Hiring of Asian faculty member and addition of Asian American Studies course
Bartram High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: West Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 1997-2006
	Active (as of 2017): No

School	Profile
	Campaigns/Issues: • Student-staff relations • Zero tolerance, discipline, and school police • Access to counselors • Student resource spaces and supports
	Primary Accomplishments: • Organized student-teacher basketball tournament • Compelled SDP to contract Fellowship Farm for students and teachers to express grievances in a healing environment • Student resource spaces inspired Student Success Centers • Led campaigns to double counselors in SDP • Instituted ombudsman
Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: South Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 1997 – 2004; 2007 – 2010
	Active (as of 2017): No
	Campaigns/Issues: • Cuts to arts and music classes • Student-teacher relations and classroom climate • College preparation and application • Student collaboration and interaction • Political education • Pushout crisis
	Primary Accomplishments: • Teacher evaluation surveys • Art exposition and open mic to showcase student work, increase student interaction, and break down stereotypes • Schoolwide workshops on racism and sexism
Philadelphia High School for Girls	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: North Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2005
	Active (as of 2017): No
	No data available
	No data available
Sayre High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: West Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2005 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes

School	Profile
	Campaigns/Issues: • Support for ninth graders • Access to library and textbooks • Student-staff relations and climate • Discipline and zero tolerance • Teacher planning time • Opposing school vouchers
	Primary Accomplishments: • Created peer mentoring program • Won the opening of a library • Trained school police officers, which became a district and national model • Galvanized districtwide book audit, which unearthed thousands of unused books that were distributed
Overbrook High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: West Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2008 – 2012
	Active (as of 2017): No
	Campaigns/Issues: • Teacher-student relations • Draconian discipline • Community- and student-centered schooling • Lack of materials • Teacher quality • Equitable funding
	Primary Accomplishments: • Ended late policy of forcing students to stand inside a box on the floor made of masking tape • Developed education platform with community members and elected officials • Testified at SRC meeting about student-led change • Invited on legislative tour of region as experts on funding and reform
Bodine High School	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: Kensington
	Years of Involvement: 2008 – 2013
	Active (as of 2017): No

School	Profile
	Campaigns/Issues: • Academic pressures • Budget cuts • Student-teacher relations • Library, computer, and Internet access • Outdated textbooks and materials • Dilapidated facilities • Poor school lunches
	Primary Accomplishments: • Freshman-sophomore dance won after circulating petition and negotiating with principal
South Philadelphia High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: South Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2010 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • Student-student relations and structural violence • Multicultural understanding, communication, and collaboration • Leadership neglect and structural segregation • School closings • Student governance • Restorative practices
	Primary Accomplishments: • Helped transform school climate, cross-cultural relationships, and remove school from "persistently dangerous" list • Coordinated Big Listen to manage influx of students from neighboring school that closed
Furness High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: South Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2010 – 2012
	Active (as of 2017): No (school in transition)

School	Profile
	Campaigns/Issues: • School climate • Attendance • Academic performance • School closures • Federal investment in schools
	Primary Accomplishments: • United with principal to increase attendance, reduce serious incidents by 50%, and significantly improve test scores • Prevented school closing • Met with local congressman to advocate for more funding for schools like Furness
Benjamin Franklin High School	**School Type:** Neighborhood
	Location: North Philadelphia
	Years of Involvement: 2010 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • Survival of Student Success Centers • Climate and discipline • Restorative practices • School closures • School police abuse
	Primary Accomplishments: • Won a teacher's reassignment after he was removed from his course • Organized Big Listen
Science Leadership Academy	**School Type:** Magnet
	Location: Center City
	Years of Involvement: 2014 – present
	Active (as of 2017): Yes
	Campaigns/Issues: • High-stakes testing • Standardization • Austerity
	Primary Accomplishments: • "More Than a Test" campaign/Test-in • Die-in

Sources: PSU website and newsletters; Interview

Appendix F PRIMARY CAMPAIGN COALITIONS

Campaign/Coalition	Timeframe	Coalition Members/Allies
Funding - SDP	1995 – present	• Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) • Principals • Maintenance union • Teacher Action Group (TAG)
Funding - State	1995 – present	• Youth United for Change (YUC) • Pennsylvania School Reform Network • Campaign for Public Education • PFT • Greater Philadelphia First • Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children • Education Law Center • ACTION United
Anti- privatization and state takeover	2001 – present	• YUC • PFT • Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project (EPOP) • Alliance Organizing Project (AOP) • Philadelphians United to Support Public Schools • Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) • Pennsylvania ACORN • Labor unions • Principals
Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform	2003 – 2014	• YUC • EPOP • AOP • Pennsylvania ACORN • Good Schools Pennsylvania • PCCY • Philadelphia Education Fund • Education Law Center • Juntos • ACTION United • Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition

Campaign/Coalition	Timeframe	Coalition Members/Allies
Small schools	2003 – 2009	• YUC • Cross City • Philadelphia Education Fund • Research for Action • West Philadelphia Community Partners
Teacher quality/equity and Effective Teaching Campaign	2004 – 2010	• PFT • Cross City • Education First Compact • TAG • One Voice (national alliance) • More than 25 groups endorsed the Teacher Equity Platform
Dignity in Schools (National anti-pushout coalition)	2006 – present	Over 100 members (http://dignityinschools.org/about-us/current-members/)
Statewide youth movement-building	2007 – present	• Reading (Project Peace) • Pittsburgh (Teen Bloc) • Harrisburg students • Chester Youth Court and students
Alliance for Educational Justice (National youth-based coalition)	2008 – present	20 groups (http://schottfoundation.org/content/spotlight-alliance-educational-justice)

Campaign/Coalition	Timeframe	Coalition Members/Allies
Campaign for Nonviolent Schools (CNS)	2009 – 2014	*Steering Committee:* • Asian Students Association • Attic Youth Center • Boat People SOS • Citywide Student Government • Juntos • Mazzoni Center • Philadelphia Freedom Schools • Philadelphia Student Union • Philadelphia Youth Commission • Temple Youth Voices • University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia • The Youth Art and Self-Empowerment Project • Youth United for Change *CNS Allies:* • Advancement Project • American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania • Education Law Center • Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation • Research for Action
Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS)	2012 –present	• ACTION United • American Federation of Teachers PA • Fight For Philly • Boat People SOS • Jewish Labor Committee • Jobs With Justice • Juntos • Media Mobilizing Project • Neighborhood Networks • Occupy Philadelphia Labor Work Group • Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO • Pennsylvania Working Families Organization • Philadelphians Allied for a Responsible Economy • PFT • Philadelphia Home and School Council • SEIU 32BJ • UNITE HERE • Working America • YUC

Campaign/Coalition	Timeframe	Coalition Members/Allies
Journey for Justice (Intergenerational national coalition fighting against privatization and school closings)	2012 – present	36 organizations in 21 cities (http://www.j4jalliance.com/members/)

Sources: Newsletters, Websites

Appendix G TARGETS

DISTRICT			
Tenure	**Name**	**Position**	**Relationship** (Cooperative, Adversarial, or Dynamic)
1995 – 2001	David Hornbeck	Superintendent	Dynamic
2001 – present	School Reform Commission	Governing body of the SDP	Adversarial
2002 – 2007	Paul Vallas	Superintendent	Dynamic
2002 – 2005	Creg Williams	Deputy Chief Academic Officer for High Schools	Dynamic
2008 – 2011	Arlene Ackerman	Superintendent	Adversarial
2012	Thomas Knudsen	Interim Chief Recovery Officer	Adversarial
2012 – present	William Hite	Superintendent	Adversarial

Note: "Tenure" begins with 1995, the year of PSU's founding.

CITY			
Tenure	**Name**	**Position**	**Relationship**
1995 – 2003	Angel Ortiz	City Council member	Cooperative
1995 – 2004	David Cohen	City Council member	Cooperative
1995 – 2000	Ed Rendell	Mayor	Dynamic
1995 – 1998; 2000 – 2008	John Street	City Council President; Mayor	Dynamic
2008 – 2016	Michael Nutter	Mayor	Adversarial
2008 – present	Curtis Jones, Jr.	City Council member	Cooperative
2008 – present	Bill Green	City Council member; School Reform Commission chair and member	Dynamic (mostly adversarial)
2012 – present	Kenyatta Johnson	City Council member	Dynamic
2012 – present	Bobby Henon	City Council member	Dynamic
2016 – present	Helen Gym	City Council member	Cooperative

STATE			
Tenure	**Name**	**Position**	**Relationship**
1995 – 2015	Allyson Schwartz	State senator; U.S. House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – present	James Roebuck, Jr.	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – present	Vincent Hughes	Pennsylvania House of Representatives; State Senator (D)	Cooperative
1995 – present	Dwight Evans	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Adversarial (Initially cooperative)
1995 – present	Anthony Williams	Pennsylvania House of Representatives; State senator (D)	Adversarial (Initially cooperative)
1995 – 2001	Tom Ridge	Governor (R)	Adversarial
1995 – present	Curtis Thomas	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – 2006	Marie Lederer	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Adversarial
1995 – 2000	Ben Ramos	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – 2008	Harold James	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – present	John Taylor	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (R)	Adversarial

STATE			
Tenure	**Name**	**Position**	**Relationship**
1995 – 2005	Alan Butkovitz	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Dynamic
1995 – 2015	LeAnna Washington	Pennsylvania House of Representatives; State senator (D)	Cooperative
1995 – 2006	William Rieger	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1999 – 2015	Ronald Waters	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – present	Thaddeus Kirkland	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
2001 – 2003	Mark Schweiker	Governor (R)	Adversarial
2003 – 2011	Ed Rendell	Governor (D)	Dynamic
2009 – present	Vanessa Lowery Brown	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
2009 – 2012	Kenyatta Johnson	Pennsylvania House of Representatives (D)	Dynamic
2011 – 2015	Tom Corbett	Governor (R)	Adversarial
2015 – present	Tom Wolf	Governor (R)	Dynamic

SYMBOLIC (All stances toward symbolic targets have been adversarial)	
Timeframe	**Entity**
2001 – 2010	Edison
2002 – present	Broad Foundation, Academy, and Center
2007 – present	Teach for America
2010 – present	Philadelphia Schools Partnership
2010 – present	The Gates Foundation
2010 – present	Walton Family Foundation
2011 – 2014	Great Schools Compact
2012 – 2013	Boston Consulting Group
2012 – present	PennCAN (Pennsylvania Campaign for Achievement Now)

NATIONAL			
Tenure	**Name**	**Position**	**Relationship**
1995 – present	Chaka Fattah	U.S. House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
1995 – 2001	Bill Clinton	President	Adversarial
1998 – present	Bob Brady	U.S. House of Representatives (D)	Cooperative
2001 – 2009	George W. Bush	President	Adversarial
2009 – 2017	Barack Obama	President	Adversarial
2009 – 2017	Arne Duncan	U.S. Secretary of Education	Adversarial
2017 – present	Donald Trump	President	Adversarial
2017 - present	Betsy DeVos	U.S. Secretary of Education	Adversarial

Appendix H INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROJECT APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE:	February 7, 2012
TO:	Aaron Searson, PhD
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE:	[300336-1] Youth action in Philadelphia: Philadelphia Student Union and Youth United for Change organize to influence urban education reform
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	February 7, 2012
EXPIRATION DATE:	February 6, 2013
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

Appendix I CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY: Sustainability and scaling in youth urban education organizing: A case study of the Philadelphia Student Union

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Aaron Searson
School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Delaware

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH: You are being invited to participate in an interview as part of a research study. The purpose of this study is to better understand the potentials and challenges of sustainability and scaling in student-led urban school reform, through a case study of Philadelphia Student Union (PSU). You are being invited to interview based on your experience as a student and/or staff member or partner of PSU, and/or your knowledge of school reform in the School District of Philadelphia. You will be one of about fifteen interviewees on this topic, and interviews should last one to two hours.

CONDITIONS OF SUBJECT PARTICIPATION: Participants must be 18 years or older and participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time or decline to answer any interview questions. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality (unless you desire identification), including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all researcher notes and documents.
- Data will be stored in secure electronic format, and kept until 3 years after the completion of the study.

- Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study.
- Any final publication will contain the names of the public figures that have consented to participate in this study (unless a public figure participant has requested anonymity). A public figure may be a school district official, a current or former district teacher, or a city or state lawmaker. All other participants involved in this study will not be identified and their anonymity will be maintained, unless they desire identification.

Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a transcribed copy of their interview. Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no inherent risks for participating in this study. Possible current or future benefits include opportunities to reflect on involvement or interaction with student-led education reform, and enhanced knowledge about potentials and challenges of student-led education reform.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: There will be no compensation. There are no expected costs of participation, but any costs incurred (such as transportation to interview site) will be covered.

CONTACTS: If you have questions about this study, please contact Aaron Searson, PhD Candidate, School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Delaware, (908) 770-8207, asearson@udel.edu. If you have question or concerns regarding the rights of individuals who agree to participate in research, contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board, University of Delaware, 302-831-2137.

SUBJECT'S ASSURANCES: Participation will be considered voluntary (refusal to participate or discontinuation results in no loss of benefits to which subject is otherwise entitled).

AGREEMENT: I have read the study description described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study and I have received a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature of participant Date

I agree to be audio-taped.

_____ _____

Signature of participant Date

I give permission to disclose my identity.

_____ _____

Signature of participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of principal investigator Date