The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org

City Studies are CUP’s project-based in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city.

CUP
Teaching Artist: Aubrey Murdock
Project Lead: Jenn Anne Williams
Project Support: Christy Herbes

The Academy of Urban Planning (AUP) is a public school in Bushwick with an urban planning theme-based curriculum. To learn more, visit aupnyc.org

AUP
Classroom Teachers: Aisha Haynes-Harrison & Yolanda Iglesias
Students:
Carlos Alvarez, Carlos Arias, Stephen Campbell, Alexis Chavez, Carlos Chiqui, Jean Colon, Cindy Garcia, Jennifer Herrera, Kayla Lora Paredes, Alyssa Medina, Kathusca Mejia, Christopher Palacios, Nathaly Palchizaca, Alexis Perez Filpo, Alex Ramos, Lasann Rodriguez, Yesica Rodriguez, Danirda Rodriguez-Nivar, Deybi Rubio Padilla, Litzy Tapia Guerrero, Ahmad Thomas, Jose Torres, Moises Torres, Nicole Vasquez

Thanks to our interviewees: Rachel Bland, Natasha Capers, Valerie Vu

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In the Fall of 2015, CUP collaborated with teaching artist Aubrey Murdock and Aisha Haynes-Harrison’s 10th grade English class at the Academy of Urban Planning (QUP) in Bushwick, Brooklyn to figure out what it means to be labeled a “Renewal School.”

To investigate, students brainstormed ways they noticed the school had changed over the year, then interviewed a panel of experts from the school’s own administration, a representative of the New York Coalition for Educational Justice (NYCEJ), and a Community School Coordinator. This booklet is a guide to what they discovered.

"The school definitely wants the parents to come in. We have all kinds of events and celebrations for families to get involved in."
- Valerie Vu
QUP Administration

"The key thing is showing up and being engaged."
- Rachel Bland
Community School Coordinator

"The community and the parents are the greatest resource."
- Natasha Capers
NYCEJ

- To find and speak with the head of your school, visit http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolSearch/Maps.aspx
- To become a community partner with a school, contact the Office of School Programs and Partnerships at partners@schools.nyc.gov
- For other questions about the DOE, call 311
HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

What do YOU think about the Renewal School Program?

Students, parents, and community members can take part in open conversations about how they feel about their schools. What things do you want to stay the same or to change?

"Have you been hearing about Renewal Schools?
It’s alright, our school is a Renewal School and we can teach you all about it. You will notice changes you may not agree with, like longer school hours. Another thing added is a class that prepares you for college. Renewal Schools can also have more parent meetings and involvement.

Some things you’ll expect to find in this booklet include why a school becomes part of the Renewal School Program, what Renewal Schools and Community Schools are, images of some of the things we’d like to include in our school, and statements from interviews with people who work in Renewal Schools and Community Schools."

- Jose Torres
OLP Student

What different ingredients make up your school?
WHAT IS A RENEWAL SCHOOL?

In November of 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio released a School Renewal Program for 94 of the city’s lowest performing schools. The Academy of Urban Planning was one of those schools.

RENEWED AND IMPROVED?

"We didn’t think that so many schools would be becoming Community Schools in such a short amount of time. It’s going to be hard because it’s a lot to take on. It’s a lot to get schools ready for such an undertaking when resources are limited." - Natasha Capers

Some parents are concerned that the Renewal School Program is not dealing with the issue of class size.

More community supports for schools can be a major positive but can this plan increase academic performance?

Where will the funding come from after the 3 year program ends?

A RENEWAL SCHOOL meets all 3 criteria:

- the bottom 5% of lowest-performing schools or bottom 10% in school progress
- low academic achievement from 2012 to 2014
- poor review in school quality

The School Renewal Program works to help schools by offering lots of extra support.

Address Low School Performance with:

- Extended School Hours
- Guidance Counselors
- Teacher Training
WHAT’S NEXT?

Every successful Renewal School will become a Community School. What are similarities and differences between Renewal and Community Schools?

RENEWAL SCHOOL

- There are only 17 Renewal Schools right now.
- There are hundreds of different Community Schools around the country already.
- No 2 schools are the same.
- Both types of schools work with community partners.
- A school becomes this by being put on a Renewal School list.
- A school becomes this by assessing community needs and connecting them with community resources.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

- Community Schools:
  - Partner with organizations in the community
  - Meet social, emotional, and physical needs of students
  - Become a center for families
  - Take time, participation, and hard work

“Being on a Renewal School list, there are certain benchmarks that need to get met.”
- Natasha Capers
  NYCEJ

“QUP was struggling with our graduation rates and meeting the state criteria. They put us on a renewal school list in hopes that the support will bring us up.”
- Valerie Vu
  QUP Administration

Community schools partner with community organizations

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, VISIT www.childrensadsociety.org/community-schools
WHAT’S THE PLAN?

Once a school is identified as a Renewal School, a step by step plan is made specifically for that school. No two schools are alike.

Once identified as a Renewal School:
1. The Department of Education (DOE) identifies the school’s needs through an assessment, like a survey.
2. Based on the school’s needs, a school specific plan is created.
3. Community-based organizations partner with the school.
4. All schools increase the school day by 1 hour for extended learning time.
5. Schools have 3 years to complete the plan, with school specific consequences if their goals are not met.

AUP students identified their wants and needs for their school.
Students wanted better food and photography classes.

Students then brainstormed what resources in their neighborhood could meet those needs.
Could their favorite restaurants provide food for school events? Could local artists teach after-school programs?