



# THE CHARLIE PROJECT

Coalition for the Future of Lutheran Urban Schools

A special initiative of Wheat Ridge Ministries whose mission is to seed  
new ministries of health and hope in the name of the healing Christ

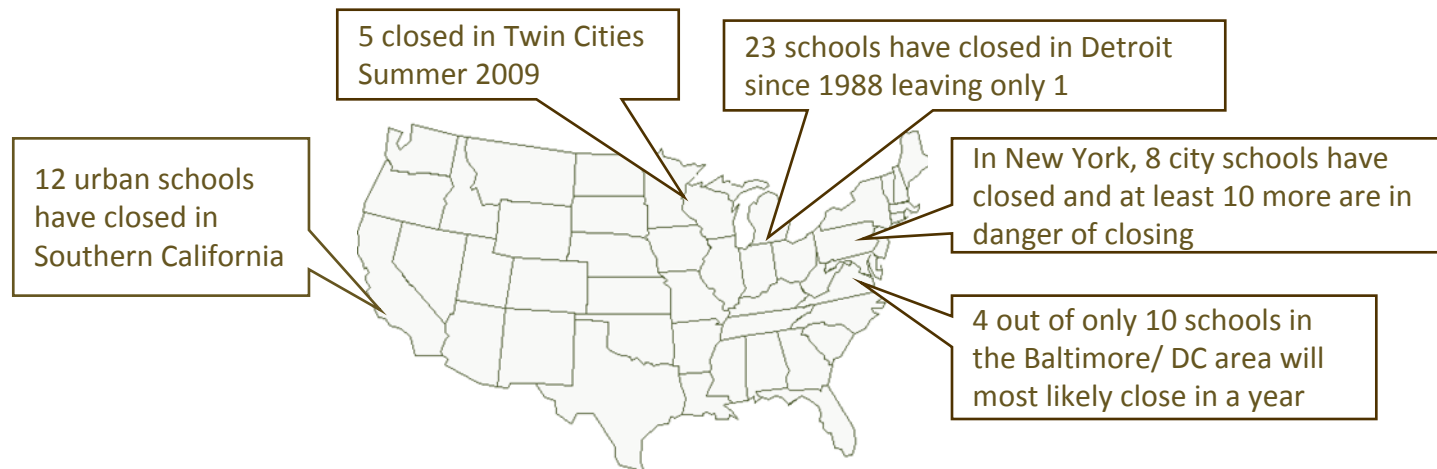
March 2010



CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES

## The Charlie Project Set Out To Transform Urban Lutheran Education – Fall 2008

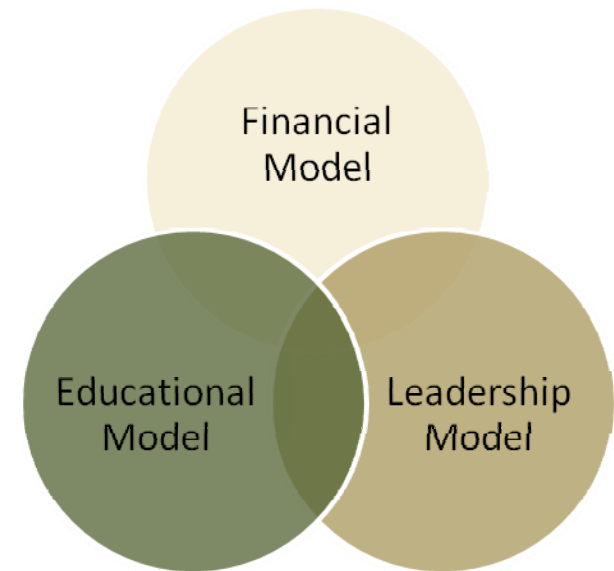
- If creating an excellent, sustainable model were easy, the thousands of faithful workers in urban Lutheran schools would have already done it
- Lutheran urban schools are in crisis, with their very existence in jeopardy
  - This is a national challenge – and cannot be addressed by any individual school or city or by incremental change



*“For the sake of the church we must have and maintain Christian schools” -- Martin Luther*

## Differing Regional Specifics, Urban Lutheran Schools Face Three Broad Challenges

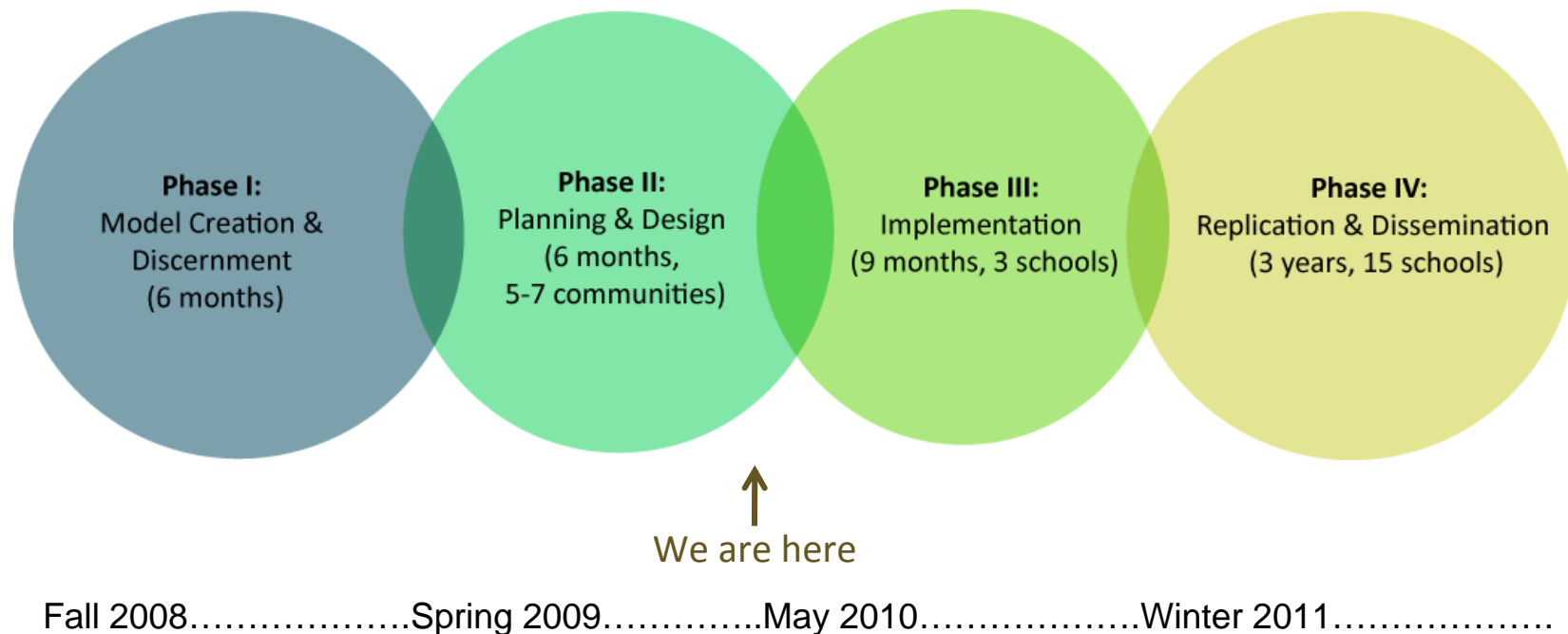
1. Defining a **financial model** that creates a viable school — and adhering to it
2. Developing a Christ-centered **educational model** that serves urban children well
3. Recruiting and retaining the **leadership** (board, pastoral, principals, educators, parents) to accomplish the implementation of these successful models



These schools **must compete** with new and emerging school options and provide health and hope in communities

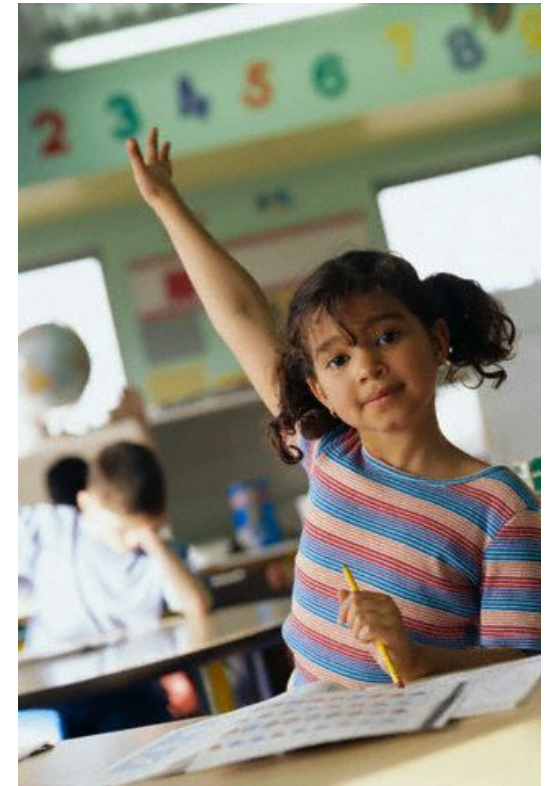
# Four Phases Will Bring Charlie From Concept Development To Replication

In Phase I, the Charlie Team engaged more than 170 individuals across 150 different organizations through interviews, meetings, site visits, and summits.

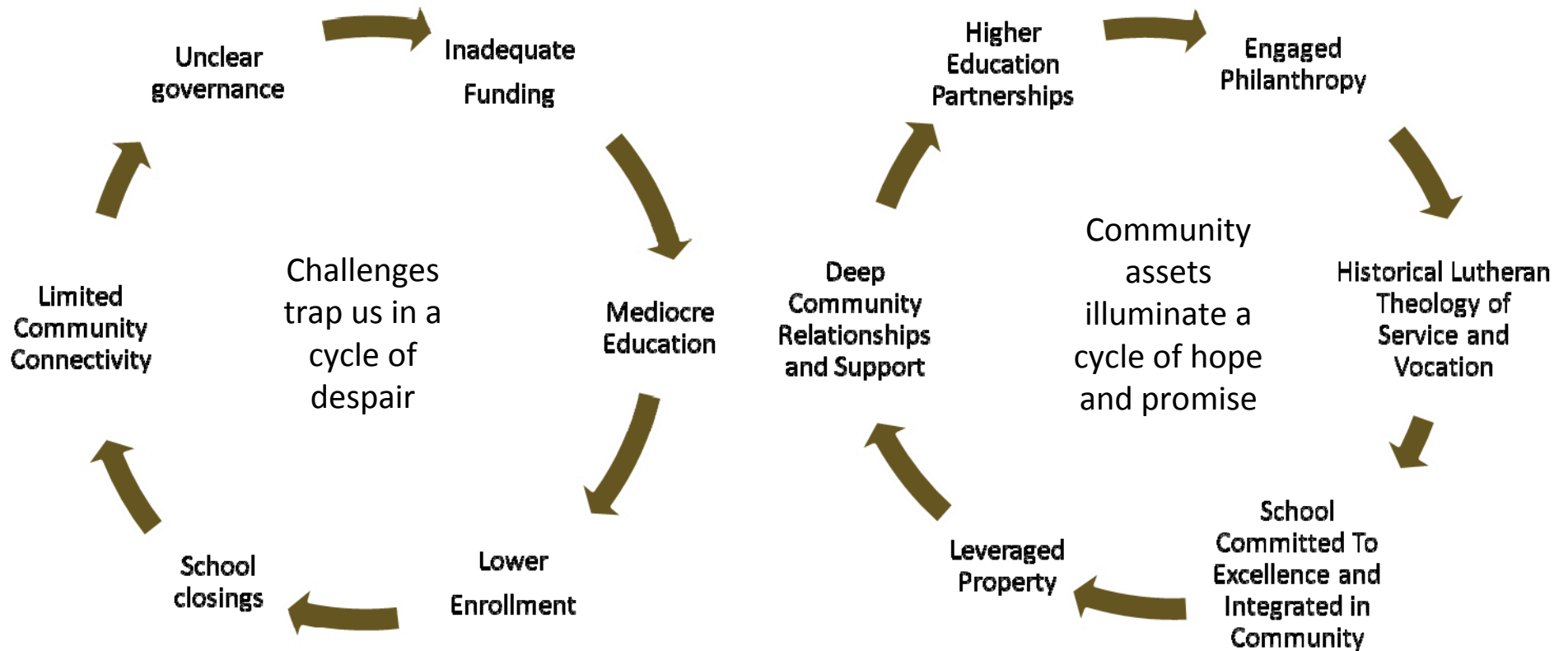


## The Path To A Compelling, Sustainable Model

- Generating **relationships** with a community of practitioners and thought leaders from across the country
- Developing a **model** with the overarching objective of providing a high quality choice for families seeking a Lutheran option based on three core elements
- **Seeding hope.** Through our multitude of conversations, Charlie continues to offer a beacon of hope for communities seeking a sustainable model of urban Lutheran education.
- Building **philanthropic and other resources** to support the schools
- Identifying **communities** where we can build Charlie schools



# Focusing On Community Assets Brings Forward Possibility



By illuminating the asset cycle in Phase I, a dream of better choices emerged.

**What if...**

## What If...We Started From A Clean Slate

- We emerged with a integrated model
- All pieces must be in place for success
- In existing schools, wholesale change in things such as leadership structure, governance, property ownership, tuition, and curriculum framework would require remarkable will, time investment and cost

**Charlie schools will** emerge from restarts or new starts grounded in a vibrant community of churches, parents, and organizations



We believe that Charlie's success over time will be more beneficial to Lutheran Schools than immediate incremental assistance

## What If...As A Ministry In The City, We Strengthened Relationships With Lutheran Churches

- New social ministry start
- Connected to denominations but not governed by them
- Relationships with other service organizations
- Rooted in the historical Lutheran understanding of vocation and service

Charlie schools will operate as new social ministries, aligned with the national church, but with separate governance



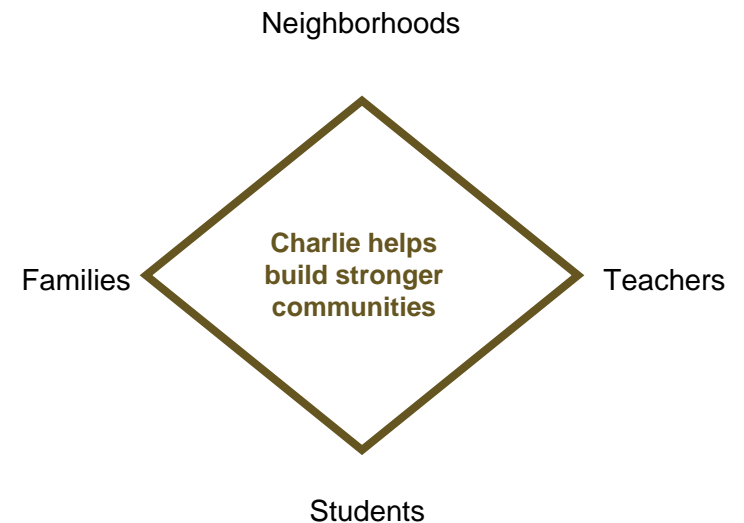
We believe that Charlie will build on and benefit from the historic strength of Lutheran Schools



## What If...Our Education Model Grew Out Of A Lutheran Understanding Of Service and Vocation

- Beginning with our calling – the sense of vocation and purpose for learning
- Integration and engagement with the community – not simply service
- Experiential learning
- A set of dispositions: caring, respectful, collaborative, responsible, fair, trustworthy
- All learning is based on a framework of identity formation for students, families and the broader community
- Successful graduates have an understanding of self in relationship to God and others, and a desire to serve

Charlie schools will be integrated into the fabric of the community giving all students a sense of their vocation and service to others



## What If...Our Schools Were Ranked Top For Value And Excellence

- Academic excellence for every child
- Personalized learning environment
- Using multiple funding sources – Philanthropy, Tuition, Government (including charter)
- Successful graduates demonstrate literacy and numeracy aptitude, and a set of skills
  - research, writing, presentation, technology, problem solving

Charlie schools will create the funding needed through development, tuition, innovative enterprise partners and charter models



## What If...An Integrated System Delivered Services From The Most Appropriate Point

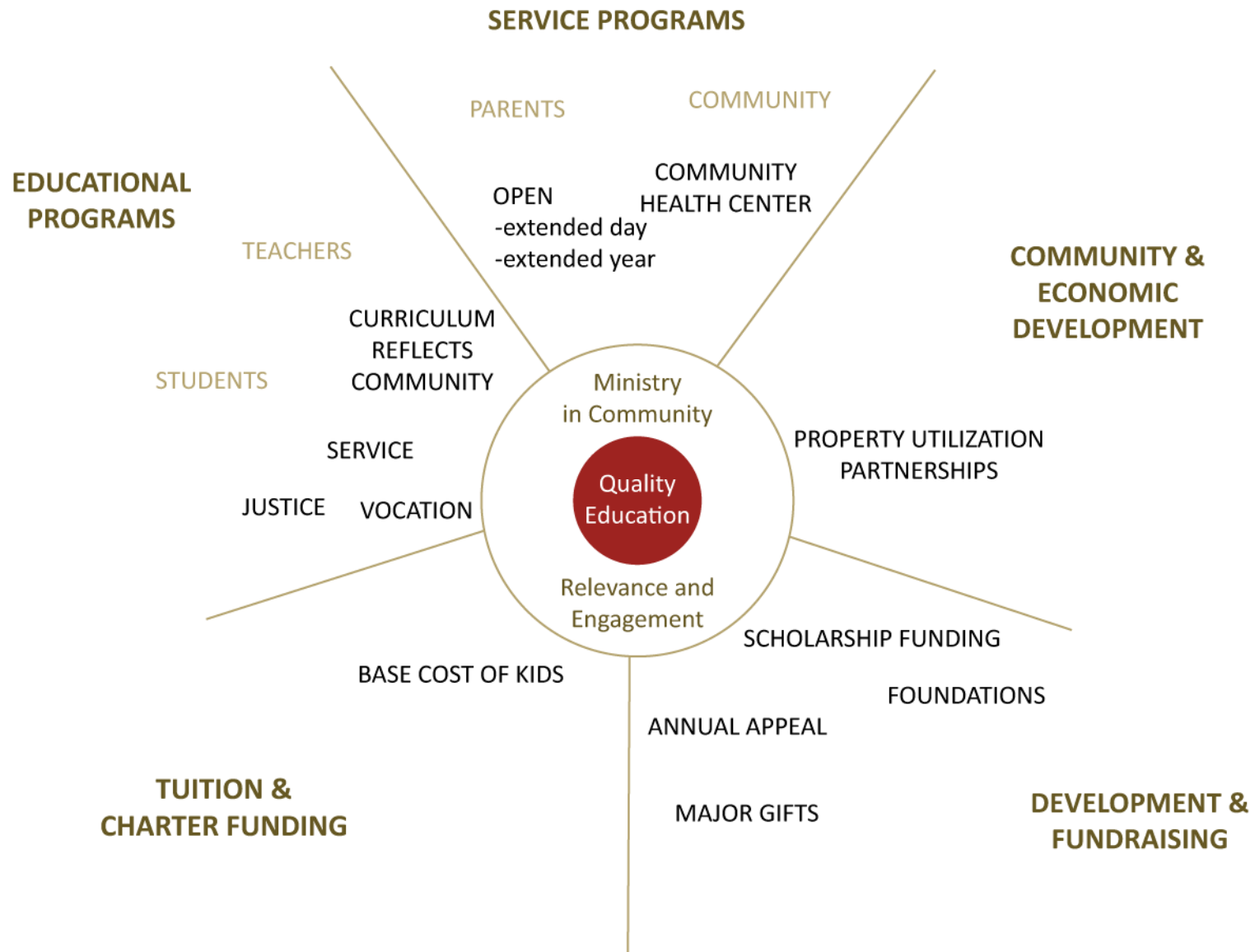
- Enable leverage of assets such as property through development expertise not available on the local level
- Allow for risk mitigation through scale
- Create a community for development of breakthrough curriculum
- Provide desperately needed financial and management services
- Provide an umbrella and national identity for development activities

Charlie schools will work together within a network to create excellence and efficiency

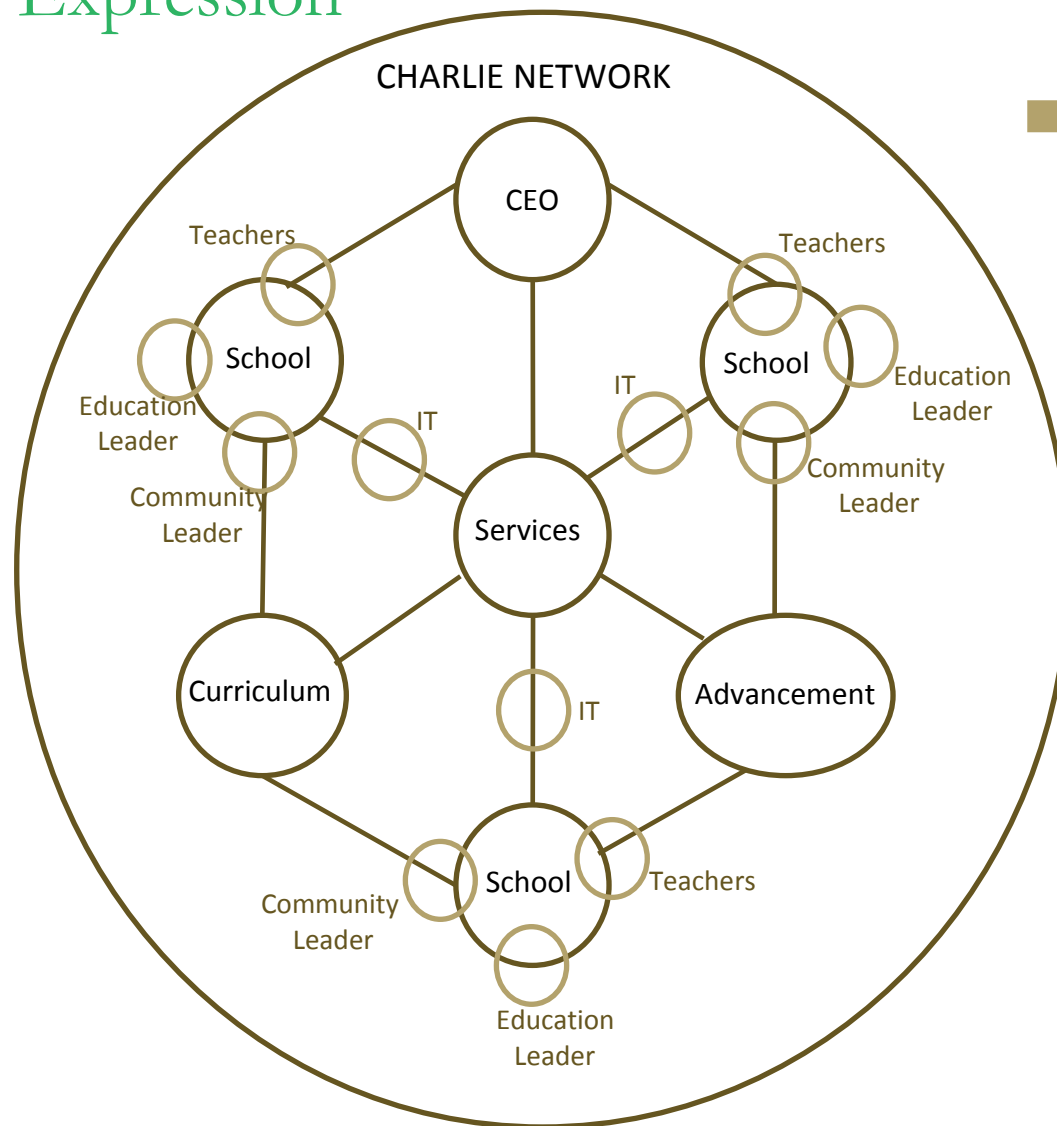


Creating a national expression enables changing the economics of schools and creating the possibility of sustainability

# What If...The Charlie Model



# The Charlie Model Will Have A Local and A National Expression



➔ The National expression manages the brand, the visibility, and the leadership support for a national Charlie schools ministry

Connected to the national denominations and local adjudicatory

Holds the risk and the governance

➔ Schools are grounded in the life of the city and the particular community it serves

Deep partnership with congregations and other community organizations

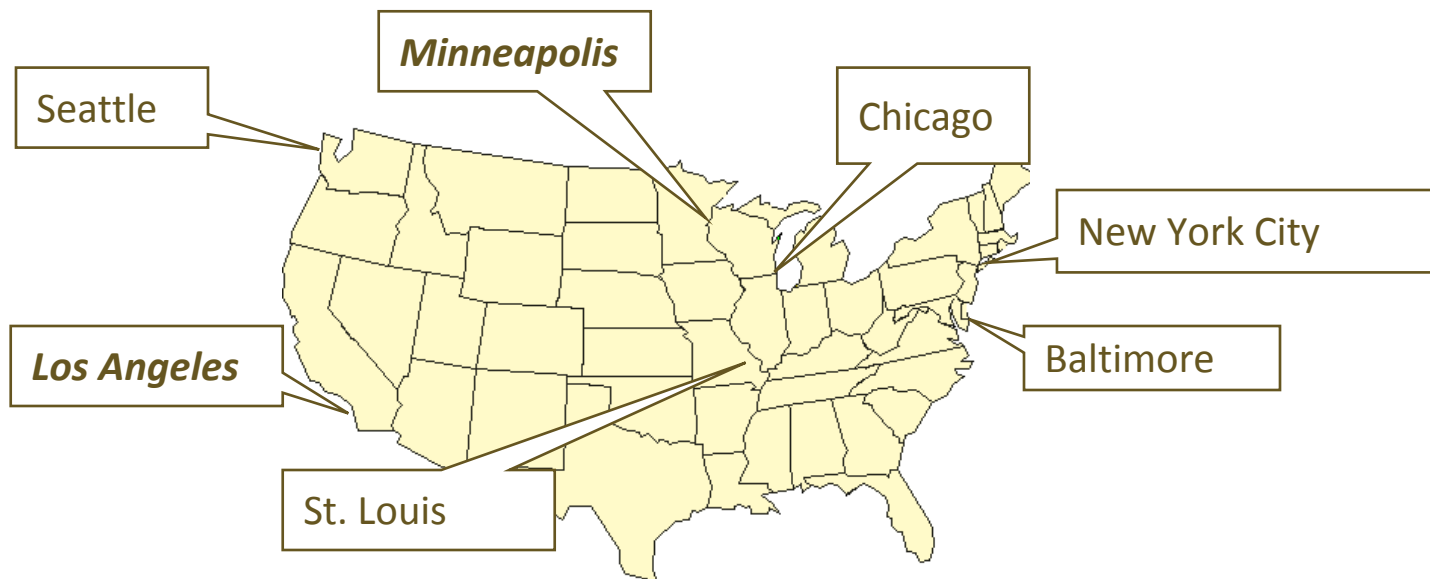
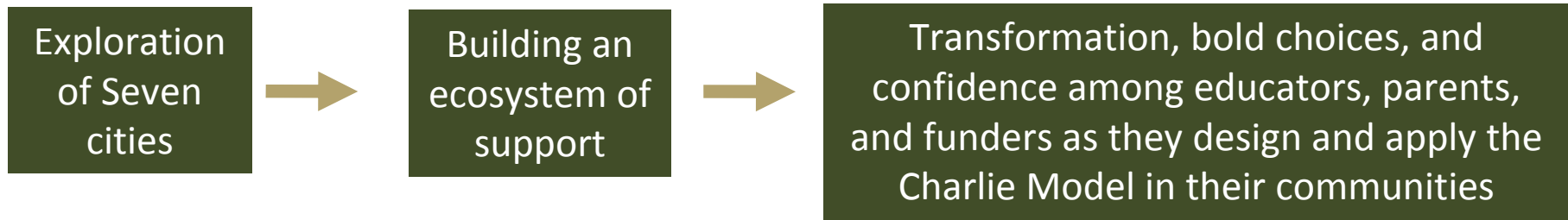
Leaders customize the educational model within broader parameters

## Overarching Charlie Principles Create A Reinforcing School Culture

- **Rooted in Lutheran Traditions:** witness to the love of Jesus Christ and grounded in Christian vocation and in service to the community
- Grounded in the **life of the church**
- **Operationally outstanding and financially sophisticated**
- **Educationally excellent,** focused on pre-K through 8th grade
- Existing as a **national brand** and developing governance to build broad support for Lutheran education
- **Being in the life of the city:** the school, its leadership, its parents, and the congregations that support it are fully present in the community, actively living out their call to serve in the city



## Community Work To Surface Pilot Charlie Sites



Two cities are showing great promise to implement Charlie schools, with several other communities assuming a longer planning process – February 2010

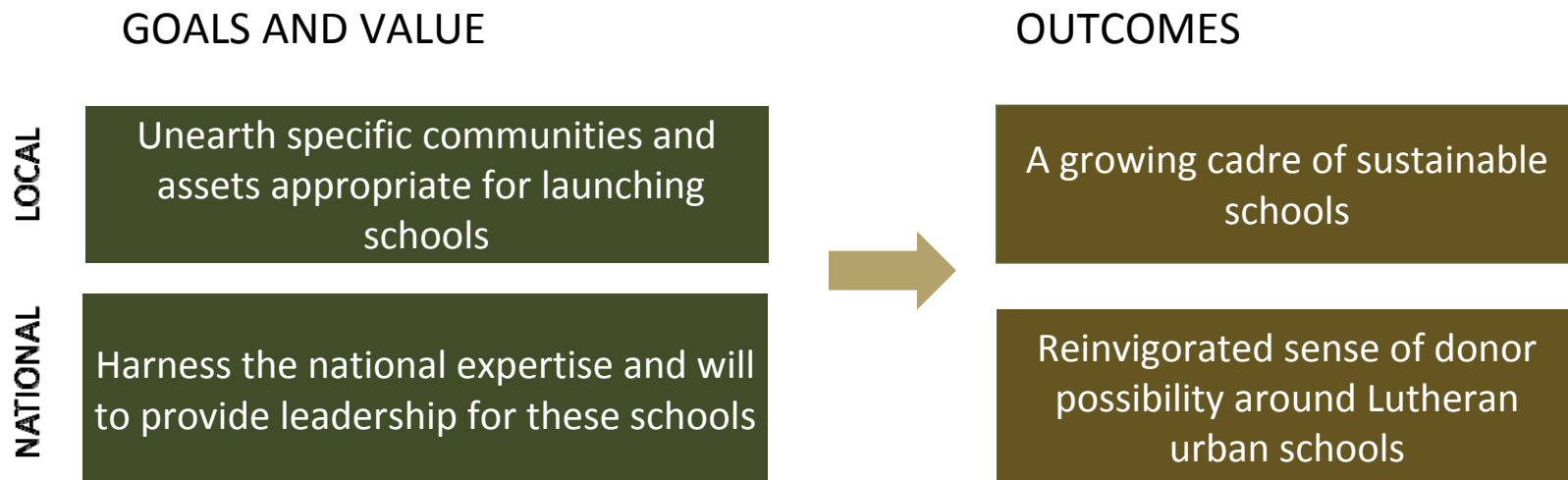
## Phase II Outcomes: Charlie Rooted in Communities with National Leadership

- **Two communities** ready to build pilot Charlie schools
  - In place will be **community teams** who share a commitment to Lutheran schools and a common vision towards the design of Charlie in their community, with sites property identified and planned for launch.
- **National expression** of Charlie will be fully designed with legal, financial, and operational structures planned and beginning to operate
  - Closely linked and supportive of the two pilot communities
- **Charlie brand** will be recognized as new, innovative, competitive, and deeply committed to Lutheran education in urban centers across the country
- **National advisory board** will be engaged in decisions and the strategic direction of Charlie





## We Need Support For Local Communities And A Bold Commitment To A National Strategy



Through the Charlie Project we can ensure the existence of Lutheran urban schools – and unleash significant support for them – funding that is waiting for compelling models and results

Jeremiah 29:7 - "Seek the welfare of the city to which I have sent you, pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find you welfare."