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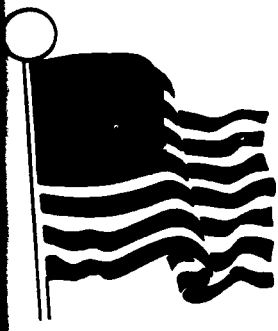
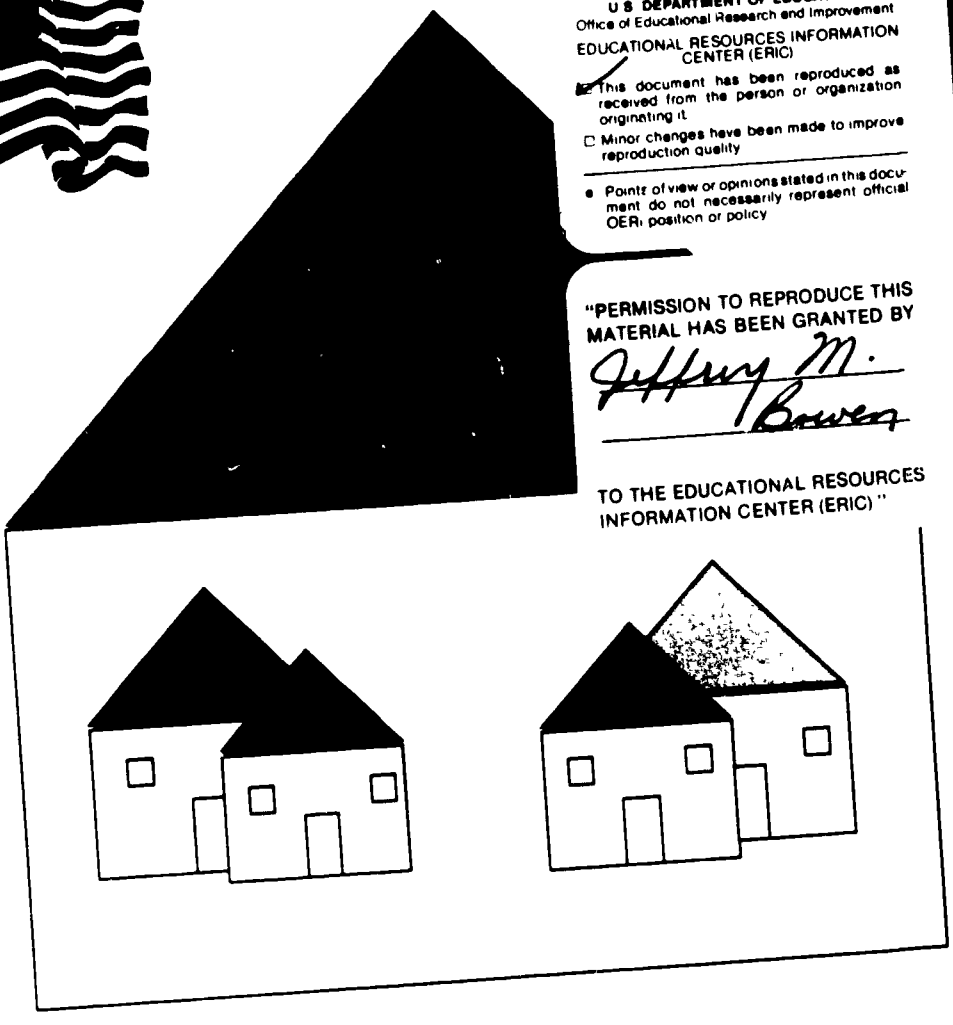
ABSTRACT

The concept of the school as community encompasses two distinct relationships: the school/extended community and the internal school community. As social needs and conditions change, so does the school role in the community. Topics covered in this book include benefits of collaboration between the external community and the school, the creation of internal school community, the role of the school board, and leadership. As a new source of social capital, the school as community offers mutual benefits: an enriched educational system, a coordinated and more efficient social support system, and a community strengthened through collaboration and cooperation. As a model of collective action, the school as community serves as a catalyst for changes at the state and national levels. Fifteen recommendations and two appendices of sample policies are included. (40 references) (LMI)

Schools as Community





A Position Paper of the
NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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Schools as Community

A Position Paper of the
New York State
School Boards Association

Contents

Summary of Recommendations

1 Comprehensive youth policies should be developed at both state and national levels to inspire coordinated action by all agencies that offer human services. Offices of youth service should be established to identify and link programs and services

2 National and state youth budgets should be created to consolidate the many existing funding streams and simplify the fiscal maze communities must follow to secure services for children and their families

3 Schools should engage in active outreach and networking of community resources with existing pupil-support services to help meet student and family needs In an era of budgetary constraints and increasing stress on social services and educational institutions, integrated communitywide responses will tap existing resources and use the community's human potential to its fullest.

4 Although schools cannot and should not be transformed into social-service agencies, they can and should adapt to the educational and social needs of their communities.

5 Schools should collaborate with business and industry to prepare students for employment In order to match the education and training of a decreasing pool of graduates to the needs of the workplace, an ongoing dialogue should help to identify and validate student competencies and skills.

areas where traditional community networks of social support have disintegrated, and families are in crisis, the internal community of the school should be strengthened to provide a haven and source of social stability for students and their families.

7 Schools should strengthen the sense of belonging among their students through activities that require collaboration and cooperation.

8 Although care must be taken that youth-service programs do not infringe on academic requirements, community-service experiences should be integrated into the curriculum to give students valuable lessons in citizenship

9 Districts should offer diversity of programming to meet the spectrum of students' educational and social needs. Consistency in student outcomes should be sought.

10 An expanded school day and year, adequately funded and geared to the needs and capabilities of the schools' internal and external communities, should be considered by districts interested in instructional reforms and community responsiveness

11 Leadership potential should be tapped among all members of the school community The leadership of school communities depends on group decision making and planning.

12 To facilitate community development, schools should convene face-to-face meetings among principal community leaders who have the power to enlist the human and fiscal resources necessary to ensure development of successful school-community partnerships

13 School boards should be aware of the critical importance of links with government and seek to strengthen them, particularly as schools increasingly cooperate with local government and serve as sites for human services and referrals

14 As community leaders, school board members should encourage citizen involvement in the schools School board members should use their collective knowledge of community resources to enrich school curriculum and activities

15 Districts should develop schools as community where diverse elements of a community can meet and together reap mutual benefits such as enriched educational system, a coordinated and more efficient social support system and a community strengthened through cooperation and collaboration

The Challenges

Great challenges face our nation, among them are the need to strengthen families and communities, to coordinate diverse and often disjointed social services, and to redesign education to prepare students to flourish in the next century. Together they demand basic changes in public policy and shared responsibility among all segments of society.

To surmount these challenges, school boards, leading other local, state and national policy-makers, should rethink the traditional role of the school and its place in the community. Both internal and external transformation of schools will be needed. Although academic instruction should remain the main mission of schools, increasingly they will serve as access points or resource and referral centers for a multitude of community services and activities. Schools will become catalysts *and* models for cooperative efforts to streamline funding and delivery of national, state and local services to youth and the community. The school will serve as a medium and inspiration for community change and, ultimately, will become synonymous with community.

The New Student

Although ours remains one of the wealthiest countries in the world, offering one of the highest standards of living to a large percentage of our population, we have a growing population of disadvantaged youth. Problems once viewed as limited to urban areas are now affecting suburban and rural communities as well. What puts our youth at risk of failing to complete school, to find adequate employment and to become contributing members of society? For many, it is poverty.

More often now than ever before, students live in poverty. Demographic trends show that although poverty is declining among the elderly, its rate is increasing among the young.[1] In New York State, demographers predict that soon the families of one in three children will live below the poverty line. For minority children, the current poverty rate is one in two.[2] The demographer Harold Hodgkinson predicts schools will serve decreasing total numbers of students. At the same time, these students will be increasingly poor and from minority backgrounds.[3]

Although some segments of the population are more prone to drop out than others, the total picture warrants concern for all children. Swift

and often disruptive societal changes increasingly have put all children at some risk. Children and youth are more likely to reside in households headed by a single parent. Of the 91,066,000 households in the United States in 1988, only 27 percent consisted of married couples with children. The average income for single-parent households (which nine out of 10 times are headed by the mother) is less than a third of that of married couples with children. There is an increasing incidence of the working poor. In 1988, over 4 million Americans worked full time yet were eligible for poverty benefits.[8]

Children and youth lack child care and adult supervision. Existing child care does not fulfill the needs of the increasing numbers of working parents. At present, over half of the labor force are parents of children under 18. According to the Children's Defense Fund, a minority of children receive quality child care.[9] In New York State, less than one-fifth of eligible families receive governmental child-care subsidies.[10] The latest available data indicates that latchkey children, who are children who care for themselves until their parents return home from work, comprise at least 13 percent of the five-to-13-year-old population in the United States. The actual number may be far greater because many instances of self-supervision go unreported by parents for fear of legal or social repercussions.[11]

Students are less likely to have lived in only one dwelling or one community. American families are increasingly transient. For many, this transience is not by choice. The lack of affordable housing for middle- and low-income families has contributed to homelessness. In 1988, families composed over 50 percent of the homeless population, which is currently estimated at 2.5 million.[12]

Today's student is often in need of health care and counseling services. Pervasive alcohol and drug abuse among the young is cause for concern. Many communities are faced with growing numbers of children and youth who are malnourished, lack adequate health care and are victims of child abuse and maltreatment. Active outreach and networking of community resources with existing pupil-support services within schools will help meet student and family needs.

A recent analysis of dropout rates in the United States produced evidence that *all* children are at some risk. As many previous studies have indicated, the National Center for Education Statistics found that dropout rates are higher for students who are minorities, teenage parents, impoverished, from single-parent families, from non-English-language-speaking backgrounds or who have repeated a grade. The report also found that of the total number of dropouts from the 1980 high school sophomore class, 66 percent were white, 86 percent had an English-language-speaking background, 68 percent came from two-parent families, 80 percent had neither children nor spouses and 71 percent had never repeated a grade.[13]

The scope of the problems and the broad nature of efforts at prevention and intervention demand collaboration of human-service organizations, businesses and all levels of government; in other words, a true communitywide response.

With the steady increase of families where both parents work outside the home, schools are replacing the home as a referral point for services, a center for recreational activities and a provider of child care. Students and their families, regardless of their backgrounds, are growing more dependent on schools for these features, *however, schools cannot meet these challenges alone. The scope of the problems and the broad nature of efforts at prevention and intervention demand collaboration of human-service organizations, businesses and all levels of government; in other words, a true communitywide response.* The future depends on our collective ability to meet the needs of youth.

The Need for State and Federal Youth Policies

Currently more than 200 funding streams in New York State provide services to children and their families. This method of addressing social needs has been called the "bandaid approach" by the Governor's Task Force on Children and Youth. In its 1989 report, entitled *There ARE Better Ways to Serve Children*, the task force noted that collaboration of service agencies appears frequently in the design of delivery systems but is rarely sustained in practice, thereby creating a patchwork of services that impedes accessibility. As a result, the report states, interventions are often episodic and lack coherence.[1] It has been said that the only coordinators of the myriad of social and health services are the clients themselves.

Because the conditions that create disadvantage are interrelated, the systems created to alleviate those conditions must mesh in a corresponding fashion. Often coordination is thwarted because each human-service provider views children and their families from a different perspective. Each service agency has its own structure, priorities, procedures for making decisions, funding sources and so on. Lack of coordination and collaboration is endemic from the local level to the state and federal levels of government. As human-service dollars are stretched, coordination of limited resources makes budgetary sense as well. Without collaboration of services and local, state, federal cooperation, children and their families will remain underserved.

Federal and state initiatives remain woefully fragmented. There is seldom a single point of access or document to describe an agency's programs and little coordination between agencies or state and federal government. Numerous state and national agencies have independently implemented programs and provide information on children and youth. A study by the William T. Grant Foundation in 1987 found that federal policy actually exacerbates rather than alleviates the dispersion of efforts.[12] Without coordination at the state and federal levels schools and their communities can do little to provide access to adequate services for students and their families

A sincere commitment to the nation's youth must be made at both state and federal levels, and this commitment should commence with the development of state and national youth policies. State and federal offices of youth services should be established to identify and coordinate programs and services An important function of these offices would be to disseminate information to local government, agencies and school districts.

The creation of national and state youth budgets will consolidate the many existing funding streams and simplify the fiscal maze communities must follow to secure services for children and their families The budgets would be administered by the state and national offices of youth services An important aspect of such budgets would be support for long-term demonstration programs that encourage collaboration among the national, state and local levels

An example of an initiative that combines funding streams and coordinates delivery of services to youth is the New York State Youth-at-Risk Community Partnership Program (YAR CPP) Although the program is aimed at youth at risk, the funding and delivery mechanisms can be replicated in community school models and other projects that benefit all children The YAR CPP awards competitive demonstration grants to school districts and boards of cooperative educational services to promote partnerships among schools, community organizations, businesses, social service providers and local governments Priority is given to those districts and BOCES that secure support from local, federal, private and other state funding. Plans must include the establishment of a local council that coordinates allocation of federal, state, local and private resources to meet the social and educational needs of disadvantaged youth The program must be coordinated with the state and federal grants serving youth at risk for which the schools within a district are eligible Currently, more than 100 districts and BOCES are participants The Youth-at-Risk Community Partnership Program provides a comprehensive funding model where numerous resources for youth are coordinated and brought to bear upon an identified problem [13]

The Workplace and World of the Next Century

Perhaps the schools' most critical challenge is to develop meaningful skills and work habits in students who will be contributors to the workplace and world of the next century. Workers who are literate and capable of problem solving and analytical thinking will be in demand. An understanding of ethics and values will be crucial as social, technological and environmental decisions have ever-widening impact. Formal education will not end after high school or college but will be a continuing endeavor that many adults will periodically engage in throughout their lives.

Students must be prepared for occupations in high technology and service industries, the two most rapidly growing job markets. In *Schools of the Future*, Marvin Cetron predicts that by the year 2000, service jobs will represent 90 percent of the economy, and that 95 percent of all jobs will involve largely computerized information processing.[14]

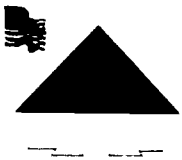
Recent efforts in New York State to prepare students adequately for work and lifelong learning reflect a desire to raise expectations of performance for all students. Clearly, business and industry must collaborate with schools to prepare students for employment. In order to match the

The adage Think Globally, Act Locally epitomizes the new consciousness that will be required of an informed citizenry.

education and training of a decreasing pool of graduates to the needs of the workplace, an ongoing dialogue should be fostered and desired student competencies and skills should be identified and validated cooperatively.

The emergence of a global marketplace and rapid technological advances will require a new emphasis on cooperation, ethics and values. As global interdependence increases, students will need to recognize the value of cooperative and collaborative actions and the often far-reaching implications of those actions. To be successful participants in the world market, students will need to understand the languages and cultures of other nations. The adage Think Globally, Act Locally epitomizes the new consciousness that will be required of an informed citizenry. Students must be prepared for the workplace and for *world* citizenship.

How can schools help meet the challenge of preparing a changing student population for the workplace and world? Already they have begun to adapt and a common theme is emerging. The School as Community.



The School as Community
An Answer to the Challenges

> We believe the vision of American education must be, above all, a *community* enterprise
>
> Allstate Forum on Public Issues, *Labor Force 2000*

> Schools are ideal sites for community renewal services because they are the centers of activity within each community
>
> NYS State Education Department, *Education and Community Renewal*

The concept of school as community encompasses two distinct relationships: one that exists between the school and the external community (local government, business, religious institutions, higher education and community organizations), and one that exists between the school and the internal community within its walls (students, parents, teachers, administrators and other staff). Recommendations to improve the effectiveness of public education often include an intertwining of the external and internal concepts of the school as community.

Why turn to schools to create a sense of community? James Coleman, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, believes the erosion of *social capital* is forcing us to rethink the roles of traditional institutions. He defines social capital as the "norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing up." Social capital has been lost as the influence of extended families, religious institutions and other community organizations has waned. The transience of families, the decreasing amount of time families spend together, and the increasing isolation of the individual have caused a loss of neighborhood and community. The impact of lost social capital, Coleman predicts, is felt most by children who are least advantaged, those who dwell in socially and economically impoverished cities and rural areas.[1]

Coleman discovered that schools surrounded by a community characterized by high social capital (which, in his study, are private, church-affiliated schools) experienced dramatically lower dropout rates than public schools. These findings have gained credibility among many educators who focus on public schools as the hub of endeavors to develop a strong community of support for students, particularly the ones who struggle with the greatest disadvantages. In the early years of American public education, the one-room school was often a focus of community

The role of the school is changing as social needs and conditions change.

activities. Following the great waves of immigrants at the turn of the century and during the baby boom years after World War II, the necessity to educate great numbers of children produced larger, more impersonal schools that became increasingly isolated from the communities they served. Education became the sole function of the school. Other social services and community activities were to be found elsewhere.

At present, out of necessity, schools are widening their range of services to students and their families. The role of the school is changing as social needs and conditions change. Guidance counselors are employed by virtually all districts. Social workers provide services to students and their families in an increasing number of districts, particularly in urban areas. Programs designed to foster prevention and provide intervention for problems such as drug abuse and poor nutrition are increasingly common in public schools. Members of the community are often an important part of these programs. For example, police officers may lead drug-awareness activities, cooperative extension personnel may offer nutrition education and local health organizations may supply specialized health educators.

Examples of expanded services now offered to students and their families can be found in many districts across the state. Although schools cannot and should not be transformed into social-service agencies, they can and should adapt to the educational and social needs of their communities.

New York's Community Schools Pilot Project

The State Education Department Community Schools Pilot Project, begun in 1986, exemplifies the changing nature of school. Schools in the project combine aspects of both the external and internal community relationships.[16]

Participating schools actively develop links with the external community, and the school becomes a center of collaborative community renewal. Relationships with community-based organizations, businesses, religious institutions, higher education, and cultural and social-service organizations are actively sought and promoted. Relationships with the community are symbiotic: the school actively strengthens the community and at the same time uses the community to strengthen education. School buildings, which are open for extended hours, serve as cultural and recreational activity sites for the students and their families and the com-

munity at large. Because of their central place in the community, schools are also sites for the delivery of health, nutritional and social services.

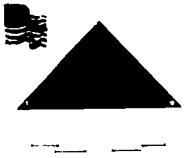
The internal community of the school is strengthened in a variety of ways by community schools. The program stresses parents' increased involvement in the education of their children, other children and themselves. Opportunities for intergenerational programs and activities are increased, generating social capital by bringing the oldest and youngest members of the community together.

The school program is planned and carried out by teams of educators. The term *educators* is used in a broad sense here to include teachers, administrators, assistants and aides, mentors and volunteers. Community school leadership demands the ability to successfully coordinate numerous services provided at the school site.

Pilot community schools set the stage for a variety of instructional reforms. Their instructional program uses a developmental curriculum that stresses challenge and enrichment. Flexible use of instructional time is encouraged to increase time on task and provide intensive instructional support. Schools are encouraged to explore innovative instructional grouping and grading procedures. The community schools program incorporates new learning technologies in the curriculum. Community school buildings are intended to be clean, safe and adequately equipped.

Cold Spring Harbor Schools

Many of the preceding features can be found at different schools now participating in the Community Schools Pilot Project. This project represents a conscious effort at the state level to encourage the development of a new concept of school as community. Although the program has won positive attention and increasing support, the actual number of participating schools is but a small proportion of those that qualify under current program guidelines. Limited funding has been directed to those schools serving the most impoverished and socially unstable communities in the state. This program has potential to create national models of multifaceted educational innovation. A number of other districts around the state are also in the process of strengthening both the external community of which the public school is a critical part and the internal community of the school. In the remainder of this paper we shall explore specific aspects of the development of school as community and describe how public schools are or should be redesigned to meet the changing needs of our children, families and society.



Building a Community School
Ingredients for Success

Involving the External Community

In 1988, the New York State School Boards Association conducted school board effectiveness surveys of a diverse sample of 20 districts as part of an Institute for Educational Leadership project. Although responding boards promoted community use of school facilities, the respondents reported a lack of partnerships with business and a lack of knowledge of community perceptions of school performance.[1] Educators whose schools are part of the community schools project also have noted the difficulty of developing working relationships with the external community

Developing ongoing collaborations with the community requires institutional change on the part of schools, organizations and agencies. Institutional change in most cases does not occur quickly, and therefore expectations for change are often unrealistic. Cooperative relationships are built over time, and similarly the benefits of those relationships are reaped over time. Dynamic leadership by school and community members is the key to successful community-school collaborations (see appendix A, *LAMPS* Sample Policy 1200, Community Involvement).

If developing links with the external community is so challenging and time-consuming, what will schools gain from it? The answer is new ways to meet the changing needs of a student population that is increasingly at risk and to prepare those students for a changing workplace

The Rewards of Community-School Collaboration

Children and youth will be served best through effective community collaboration Community partnerships establish broad ownership of the problems at hand Blaming the victims is less likely when partnerships include disadvantaged students and their families, and when all segments of the community are aware of the causes and effects of dropping out, teen pregnancy and unemployment.

Few of the services provided in successful community-school collaborations are new Rather, services already recognized as successful are expanded and reorganized to increase access and availability. For example, a teen parenting program that has had a limited clientele at a small community-based organization will serve a greater number of students if located at or near the community's high school Teen parents who are no

longer in school may be encouraged to drop in. Young parents and their children can receive or be referred to other services such as early childhood education programs, health services or career counseling.

Community collaboration brings the social-service resources of a community together. It also brings together the collective wisdom, expertise, services and social capital of other sectors of the community. Local government, business, religious institutions, higher education and other community-based service organizations and agencies can contribute to the development of an enriched school program that addresses the personal, social and educational needs of children and their families. Active collaboration results in a strengthened community from which everyone will benefit.

The following examples illustrate some of the benefits to be derived from school and community collaboration. Examples combine actual and suggested activities. Many are drawn from districts and communities across New York State and the nation. In New York State, many collaborations have been supported by the Community Schools Project and the Youth-at-Risk Community Partnership Program described earlier.

Collaboration with the Community Benefits Schools

Some of the benefits for schools from community collaboration include the following:

From local government:

- A broad view of the economy and educational needs
- Funding and legislative leadership
- Community development coordination
- Curriculum enrichment
- An advisory role in the curriculum
- A source of volunteers and mentors
- Opportunities for youth service
- A streamlining of existing directives and requirements

Examples: Data that reflects countywide trends are used to project future student demography and workplace needs. Local government offices provide a wealth of information and personnel who could contribute to a school's curriculum, particularly in civics and local history. A county office for the aging and a county youth bureau coordinate programs involving senior citizen mentors and youth peer tutors. Local government representatives carry the needs of community education to local and state legislatures. County and city planners identify neighborhoods in need of revitalization and coordinate programs that include housing renovation, targeted education and social services, and economic development.

From business,
- An advisory role in curriculum
- Financial and in-kind support
- An advisory role regarding management and organizational structures
- An identification of business and industry needs based on global, national and local marketplace indicators
- Planning, analysis and evaluation
- A source of volunteers and mentors

Examples A city's private industry council develops a curriculum to improve social skills and bolster the self-esteem of economically disadvantaged youth at risk of dropping out An alliance of local businesses provides mentors and career training for students. Business leaders offer advice during the development of a governing structure for a collaborative community effort A major industry uses its internal network to publicize and support a district's parent resource center. Concern for the shortage of American scientists and engineers leads an industry to underwrite the cost of teacher workshops, equipment and student projects promoting the study of science

From religious institutions,
- An increased multicultural awareness
- Social support for many students and families
- A source of volunteers, particularly among the elder members of the community
- Funding

Examples A religious institution shares the dance, food and decorative arts of its congregation with local students. A particularly depressed community benefits when local ministers team with school officials to strengthen families and the community Religious leaders identify retired community members who would like to become more involved Religious institutions rally supporters and raise funds for special programs. Contact with regional religious organizations enables schools to recruit minority teachers

From community-based organizations,
- A wide range of services
- A source of volunteers and mentors
- Planning and advice on community needs
- Opportunities for youth service

Examples. A community organization offers training in mediation for students and school staff. A child-care agency provides infant care at a satellite center in a high school. Senior citizens serve as foster grandparents for youth with special needs. A lead community agency provides advice to the school district and coordinates services available in the community in collaboration with school personnel. As part of an individualized experience during the senior year, students hold internships in public agencies and hospitals.

From institutions of higher education
- Enrichment of school curriculum
- Expanded academic opportunities for students
- In-service and professional development for teachers
- A source of volunteers and mentors

Examples. A local college, as part of a county task force on sexual abuse, develops a theater arts component for an abuse-prevention curriculum. In conjunction with a local chemical-manufacturing firm, a college offers professional laboratory experience to high school students. College students provide tutoring services and homework assistance to students in a nearby district. Faculty from a university's department of education offer technical assistance as a district redesigns its organization of instruction.

From foundations
- Funding
- Advisory and evaluative functions
- Source of volunteers and mentors

Examples. A local foundation provides supplemental funding for a state-funded program for youth at risk. The foundation's program officers offer advice on proposal development and evaluation techniques. In a major urban area, a large foundation has supported the creation of a citywide system of employment incentives, building a coalition involving schools, businesses, the United Way, labor, community organizations, other sources of funding, students and parents.

Collaboration with Schools Benefits the Community

The external community has much to gain from collaboration with schools, as well. The many benefits schools offer the community in a collaborative relationship include
- A physically and philosophically neutral center where diverse elements of the community can meet
- A forum for communitywide dialogue
- Learning opportunities for non-student community members
- Technological advice for business, government and community organizations

- Child care and or early childhood education for the community workforce
- Volunteer services provided by students and staff
- Tax benefits for contributors
- Graduates who are prepared for the workplace and responsible citizenship and the resulting economic benefits of decreased welfare rolls, decreased crime and increased health among community members

Examples In a New York City district, students from grade seven on perform a three-hour block of community service each week. Experiences include assisting with day care, volunteering at a hospital and working with Literacy Volunteers. In other districts, educational and recreational experiences for community members are enriched by school resources, including libraries, gyms, classrooms, labs, computers and video-technology equipment. School faculty help a community organization computerize client information. A school-based child-care facility offers students training opportunities in early childhood education and provides local families with child care. Numerous schools have implemented programs where children and adults with limited English proficiency learn together and teach each other. Learning opportunities in the schools for adult community members also include job retraining and parenting education.

Port Byron Schools

The Process of Collaboration

Successful community collaboration involves the sharing of ideas, human and financial resources, understanding and responsibility. According to *Labor Force 2000*, education as a community enterprise is a three-part process. (1) An educational vision must be established for the entire community that combines the perspective of community members, involves goal setting and long-range planning, rather than a response to singular issues or problems, and inspires commitment to common objectives. (2) This vision must be communicated to all members of the community so that everyone has a role, interest in and understanding of the process. (3) All relevant groups are part of the implementation phase, and commitment must continue through the planning, implementation, functioning and evaluation of the collaborative effort.[19]

The Importance of Leadership

Effective community collaboration requires effective leadership. The recommendations for business-school coalitions set forth in *Labor Force 2000* cite the active engagement of chief executive officers in the process as crucial to success.[20] In evaluations of the New York State Community Schools Project, the school principal's important role in initiating community outreach and sustaining collaborative efforts has been noted.[21] Some school districts have established a community-business liaison or liaison committee (see appendix B, *LAMPS* Sample Policy 1220, Relations with Community and Business Organizations). Community leaders, including school board members, clergy, government officials, CBO directors, higher education administrators and foundation executives, bring a wealth of experience and knowledge of community needs to the collaborative process. In order to facilitate community development, schools should draw in community leadership and convene face-to-face meetings among principal community leaders. These leaders have the power to enlist the human and fiscal resources necessary to ensure development of successful school-community partnerships. In the process, schools also will gain an increasing pool of advocates for educational improvement. The crucial role of school board leadership is detailed later in this paper.

Tailoring Programs to Community Needs

One of the notable characteristics of the community schools program is the encouragement of flexible responses to student and community needs. Every pilot community school must establish an advisory council that is representative of the community. The council conducts an assessment of needs, identifies community resources and plans objectives based on the community's particular needs and resources. Thus community schools are tailored to meet specific needs of students and families and

Community leaders bring a wealth of experience and knowledge of community needs to the collaborative process.

to draw on the available human and fiscal resources of the community. For example, one community school serving a large homeless population provides expanded services for all age levels, drawing adults as well as children into the schools. Another school benefits from the cultural richness of the community and has established an arts-enrichment program for its students.[22]

Clearly, schools and the external community have much to gain from establishing partnerships. In an era of budgetary constraints and increasing stress on social services and educational institutions, integrated communitywide responses will tap existing resources and use the community's human potential to its fullest.

Nurturing the Internal School Community

Numerous studies and reports have noted the importance of developing the sense of community within a school. The internal school community has an immediate and often profound effect on students. Efforts to develop the internal school community often involve a departure from traditional methods of educational delivery. Schools engaged in cultivating a healthy internal community often are sites of innovations in the organization of instruction, school leadership, programming and planning, and the use of instructional technology. Fostering an internal community requires new roles for students, teachers, administrators, school board members, parents and community members.

In *High Schools as Communities*, Gregory and Smith describe three fundamental characteristics of communities. First, there is a sense of identity, an awareness that the members of the community are distinctive in some way. Second, communities are characterized by a sense of common purpose. Finally, community members share a commitment to a set of core values and traditions.

As the internal communities of schools are strengthened, social support or capital is increased. Gregory and Smith found many positive results in their observations of high schools that had developed strong internal communities; these are

- A unifying force
- Increased commitment among students and teachers
- Lessened alienation

- Improved motivation
- Greater professional independence for teachers
- Recognition and better use of human potential of teachers and students
- Students with a greater stake in school and increased identification with it[23]

There is an urgent need for the development of a sense of community in urban schools especially. In areas where traditional community networks of social support have disintegrated and families are in crisis, the internal community of the school can provide a haven and source of social stability for students and their families. Describing the importance of the school as community in urban settings, Frank Macchiarola, a former chancellor of New York City schools, believes that "unless the school offers the students a sense of community, a place where they can feel their identity and establish personal relationships with their teachers and peers, the school is not serving the students in an appropriate way. Students are asking us to give meaning to their activities and lives. And the development of a school community is a very effective way to bring that into being."[24]

The same holds true for rural and suburban schools where social support systems may be limited. Some schools may be able to build on social capital traditionally found in small, close-knit communities.

A Sense of Belonging

The internal community of the school is nurtured by a sense of belonging and social bonding among the members of the school community. This is critically important for students at risk. School relationships between concerned adults and youth can help keep students in school. Although those adults may fill the traditional roles of teacher and counselor, the current development of mentoring programs for students at risk has pooled supportive adults from school staff, parents and non-parent community members.

Developing the internal school community also means encouraging a supportive group of peers. Numerous educational researchers have identified the impact of positive peer role models on students at risk. With appropriate training, student peers have been successful as tutors, counselors and mediators of disputes. The establishment of teacher peer groups and parent peer groups provides needed support while strengthening the internal school community.

It is not surprising that attempts to foster community also involve attention to teaching students to be members of groups. The Commissioner's Statewide Steering Committee on Employment and/or Postsecondary Education Policy recommended that more emphasis be placed on process skills, one of which is working as a team member.[25] Schools

Port Byron Schools

can strengthen the sense of belonging among their students through activities that require collaboration and cooperation. Developing these skills will help prepare students for a workplace and world that demands the ability to work together toward solutions of problems

Community Service

A growing number of school districts encourage a sense of community membership among students through youth-service programs. An important goal of the community schools project is to introduce students to the philosophy and practice of service to their communities. Thus, while students are an integral part of the internal school community, they are learning how to contribute to the external community, as well. Community-service programs prove particularly beneficial to students who are at risk of dropping out, enabling them to feel needed and successful in an academic setting. Successful programs often engage adolescents in the caring and nurturing of the youngest and oldest community members.

Very young children can take part in and benefit from community service. In a cooperative program between an early childhood center and a facility assisting adults with emotional problems, children and clients read to each other, building the self-esteem of both groups. The program is an example of a broad concept of community service where all participants contribute to the learning process.[26]

Although care must be taken that youth-service programs do not infringe on academic requirements, integration of voluntary experiences into the curriculum, particularly social studies, provides students with valuable

Community service can provide valuable career preparation and must be presented as a viable alternative to minimum-wage jobs that often require few skills and offer little opportunity for personal growth.

lessons in citizenship. Some schools around the state are implementing a youth-service component in the senior year of high school. Community service can provide valuable career preparation and must be presented as a viable alternative to minimum-wage jobs that often require few skills and offer little opportunity for personal growth (see appendix A).

Leadership within Schools

The leadership of school communities depends on group decision making and planning. In their study of high school communities, Gregory and Smith found that authority "emerges out of the interaction of individuals on a daily basis" and is less likely to be "top-down" in structure." Internal cohesion and authority established by the shared values of the internal school community reduce the need for external authority. As a result, leadership potential should be tapped from among all members of the school community.

School leadership can involve members of both the internal and external school communities. Some schools have established school-management teams led by principals and composed of teachers, special-project coordinators, personnel in pupil-support services, other staff, parents and students. Advisory groups representative of the external community are enlisted in many districts to help develop school goals and enrich the curriculum.

Changing Instructional Organization

Community schools are producing innovations in the organization of instruction, particularly how the class day and year are structured. Currently, many schools offer patterns of instruction that have remained unchanged for nearly a century. For example, the length of the school day and year have been based traditionally on the needs of an agrarian society that in most areas of the country no longer exists.

Changing student demography has prompted many districts to offer an expanding variety of individually tailored student services and instructional programs. These changes have necessitated the redesign of

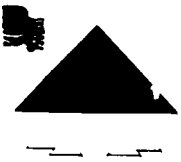
instructional and support service delivery. For example, many schools participating in the community schools project are open from early morning into the evening for at least five days a week on a year-round basis. Although the expanded hours are intended to enable schools to offer a number of services and activities to students, their families and the community, the central purpose is to provide a significantly increased amount of time for instruction.

A positive relationship has been shown between academic learning time and student achievement, particularly for students in need of instructional support. The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES), a six-year study of conditions that support student learning, found that the amount of time allocated to instruction and the proportion of time students perform reading and math tasks are positively associated with learning.[28] Some studies of remedial education methods have shown that extending the amount of time spent on a subject in the classroom can alleviate the need for remediation.[29] An expanded school day and year with a parallel emphasis on the enhancement of instructional quality and student engagement in the learning process represent promising directions for educational reforms, if adequately funded and geared to the needs and capabilities of the schools' internal and external communities.

Diversity in School Districts

Most would agree that inflexibility and lack of diversity within traditional instructional organization promote disengagement from the learning process. Lockstep methods of organizing class time have contributed to public education's inability to meet the needs of today's students. Ernest Boyer in his book *High School* warns that "the rigidity of the 50-minute class schedule often limits good instruction . . . the class is over just as learning has begun."

Successful programs for students at risk organize the school year and day in a variety of new ways. From a year based solely on individual progress to alternating blocks of several weeks for work and study. For example, some schools may allocate a portion of the year to community service programs and other experiential learning arrangements. Diversity of programming enables a district to meet the spectrum of students' educational and social needs. Consistency should be sought in student outcomes. In that way, equity is maintained and excellence is pursued districtwide.



The Role of the School Board

School boards are entrusted with the education of our children. Section 1709 of the Education Law states that boards of education have the power and duty to "make provisions for the instruction of pupils in all subjects in which instruction is required to be given"[1] Beyond state-mandated minimums, policies set by school boards determine the length of the school year, the school calendar and many other aspects of the organization of instruction. The development of school board policies ensures that district practices are consistent with district-wide philosophy and goals

Through policy-making, school boards play a significant role in the development of both the external and internal school community. In policies one finds the educational priorities, values and aspirations of the school district Development of policies is a means to unify internal and external school communities Goals and objectives that evolve as the many segments of the community come together to build a community school can be organized and made accessible to the public in a clear and coherent fashion when encoded in adopted policy Policies help prevent confusion and ambiguity They also help set responsibility within the district and protect the district against lawsuits and other threats to its assets Clarification of responsibility and protection from litigation are critical as schools provide an increasing range of services and activities to the community (see appendixes A and B)

Because school board members are also leaders of the community, they can be instrumental agents in the development of the school as community In a study of school boards nationwide the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) found that members have become more representative of the diversity in their communities " Thus, school boards are a rich resource as community schools are developed.

As community leaders, school board members should encourage citizen involvement in the schools Through the election process, school board members have a highly visible means of spurring commitment and involvement They should actively recruit volunteers for their schools and provide opportunities for the increased involvement of parents School board members should use their collective knowledge of community resources to enrich school curriculum and activities. They can be instrumental in bringing the community right into the classroom.

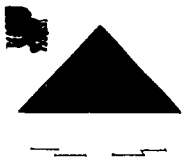
School boards can facilitate coordination and collaboration among

community agencies and institutions. The IEL study also revealed that local school boards have little interaction with general government and often are isolated from mainstream politics.[3] School boards should be aware of the critical importance of links with government and seek to strengthen them, particularly as schools increasingly cooperate with local county governments and serve as sites for human services and referrals.

School boards have the ability to build bridges between influential leaders and institutions in the community that can effectively improve education for children and youth. For example, some school boards work through membership in their local chambers of commerce and similar communitywide organizations. From advancing the use of school facilities by community members of all ages to promoting lifelong learning through intergenerational interagency programs, school board policies provide a framework for collective action.

Envisioning the School of the Future

The School as Community



The challenges facing American public education are many. Our student population is changing and schools must adapt in order to prepare students for a workplace and world that require new skills and competencies. A myriad of existing social and educational services and resources must be coordinated to maximize the productive capacity of our youth. Everyone has a vested interest in the successful outcome of our endeavors to meet these challenges. How we meet them will affect our society's future for generations to come. The challenges may exceed the resources of any single institution or organization, be it a school, service agency or corporation, so efforts must be communitywide. Because the school as community represents a symbiotic relationship between the communities outside and inside the school, it offers a viable solution to these challenges. As a new source of social capital, the school as community is where diverse elements of a community can meet and together reap mutual benefits: an enriched educational system, a coordinated and more efficient social support system, and a community strengthened through cooperation and collaboration.

As a model of collective action, the school as community serves as a catalyst for changes at the state and national levels. The need for coordination of services and funding streams is urgent. Local communities, governments and schools united in efforts to improve education and human services create a demand for unified youth policies and budgets at the state and national levels and at the same time provide models of coordination. Through active lobbying, school boards can further the development and implementation of national and state youth policies.

School board members, as community leaders entrusted with the education of children and youth, must play a critical role in the development of school as community. Through the school board, the external and internal communities of the school are joined. Board action can bring local government, agencies, and religious and education institutions together and spark the collaborative process. The school as community is a common ground where all members of the community can take on the challenges of the next century.

Appendix A

LAMPS Sample Policy 1200

Community Involvement

The Board of Education is devoted to the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, year-round community-relations program to assure a full appreciation of the educational program and to provide for the broadest participation of all—Board, staff, students and community—in seeking solutions to problems and in promoting the continuing improvement of the educational resources available to the school community.

To this end, the Board establishes the following goals for community involvement

1. to implement an active partnership between the school and the community, in which professional educators and community members work together toward improvement of the total educational program;
2. to develop arrangements among civic and community organizations for sharing of resources, especially in the creation of programs designed to benefit students;
3. to promote staff interest in community needs and encourage volunteer participation by students and staff to make the community a better place to live,
4. to foster public understanding of the need for constructive change and solicit public advice on how the district can best achieve its educational goals,
5. to involve citizens, business and community agencies in the work of the school,
6. to promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and the community, and to establish channels for sharing the leadership in improving community life

Note: This policy was developed by the Office of Policy and Risk Management Services of the New York State School Boards Association. For more information contact the Policy and Risk Management Services Department at (518) 465-3474 or 1-800-342-3360.

Appendix B

LAMPS Sample Policy 1220

Relations with Community and Business Organizations

The Board of Education recognizes the potential benefits of community and business partnerships with school districts. The Board and district staff shall therefore cooperate with those organizations which may provide support in improving the educational, vocational counseling and or extracurricular opportunities in the district. Board members shall seek to maintain regular interaction with community and business leadership, both on a formal and informal basis.

Partnerships with these organizations may include mentor and/or apprenticeship programs, pilot projects, grants, off-campus counseling services and volunteer services, in addition to or as part of the district curriculum.

The Board shall appoint a community-business liaison (or liaison committee) whose duties shall include the following:

1 to investigate all opportunities that may be available to the district through an association with such organizations.
2 to coordinate these organizations' efforts in order to serve the greatest number of district students.
3 to develop guidelines for the implementation of the school-community-business partnership and suggest curricular and extracurricular developments as a result of such partnership.
4 to attend appropriate meetings of such organizations to inform them about educational issues and needs of the schools, and to report back to the district about issues of concern to area business and the community.
5 to seek grants and gifts to the schools that will help improve education in the district

The liaison [committee] will report its findings to the Board on a semi-annual basis, and the Superintendent of Schools shall regularly inform the Board of the status of community-business programs in effect in district schools

Note: This policy was developed by the Office of Policy and Risk Management Services of the New York State School Boards Association. For more information, contact the Policy and Risk Management Services Department at (518) 465-3474 or 1-800-342-3360.

Notes

1 Harold L Hodgkinson, *The Same Client The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems* (Washington, D C Institute for Educational Leadership, 1989), p 3

2 Phil Schoggen and Maxine Schoggen, *New York's Children in 1989 Society at Risk—A Report of the New York State Project 2000* (Albany, N Y The Nelson A Rockefeller Institute of Government, 1989), p 10

3 Hodgkinson, *The Same Client* pp 17-18

4 Ibid , pp 3, 19

5 Schoggen and Schoggen, *New York's Children in 1989* p 16

6 Marian Wright Edelman, The Children's Time" foreword to *A Children's Defense Budget FY 1988 An Analysis of Our Nation's Investment in Children* (Washington, D C Children's Defense Fund, 1987), p 1

7 Schoggen and Schoggen, *New York's Children*, p 16

8 New York State Council on Children and Families, *State of the Child in New York State* (Albany, N Y New York State Council on Children and Families, 1988), pp 86-87

9 Hodgkinson, *The Same Client* p 7

10 National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States 1988* (Washington, D C U S Department of Education, 1989), p xiv

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13 New York State Education Department, *The Youth-at-Risk and Community Partnership Program Report to the Governor and the State Legislature* (Albany, N Y New York State Education Department, December 1989)

14 Marvin J Cetron *Schools of the Future* cited in Allstate Forum on Public Issues *Labor Force 2000 Corporate America Responds* (Chicago Allstate Forum 1989)

15 James S Coleman Families and Schools *Educational Researcher* 16 (Aug -Sept 1987) 36-37

16 Descriptions of the New York State Community Schools Program are drawn from the New York State Commissioner of Education's *Report to the Regents Community Schools Program* May and December 1988 and January 1990

17 Institute for Educational Leadership Inc School Board Effectiveness Program *New York School Board Effectiveness Profile* (Washington, D C Institute for Educational Leadership 1989) pp 6 7 38, 39

18 The examples of benefits derived from school-community collaboration and actual and suggested activities were culled from many different sources The principal sources are the New York State Education Department publications on the Community Schools Program the Youth-at-Risk Community Partnership Program and Allstate Forum on Public Issues *Labor Force 2000*

19 *Labor Force 2000* introduction

20 Ibid p 17

21 New York State Education Department *Report to the Regents Community Schools Program Report* (Albany N Y University of the State of New York January 1990) p 14

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23 Thomas B Gregory and G R Smith *High Schools As Communities The Small School Reconsidered* (Bloomington Ind Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation 1987), pp 51-57

24 Frank J Macchiarola, Where All Students Can Achieve A School Community Shapes Identities Values, *The School Administrator* 8 (September 1988) 12

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27 Gregory and Smith *High Schools as Communities* p 55

28 Cheryl M Chase and Michael B Kane *Increasing the Duration and Intensity of Academic Learning Time in Schools* (Denver Education Commission of the States, 1985), pp 5-6

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30 Ernest Boyer, *High School A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York Harper & Row, 1983), p 232

31 *N Y Educ L* Section 1709(5) (McKinneys 1988)

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