Preface

Public schooling has changed since the first edition of this book was published in January 1999. Three years later, on January 8, 2002, President Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The idea that no child should be left behind is an excellent one. The impact on practice, particularly for schools serving large numbers of students from high-risk environments, has been mixed. On the positive side, NCLB has caused schools to look deeply at the learning needs of individual students. No longer can students of color and English language learning students be excused from high expectations. On the negative side, there are many schools at which students are making large achievement gains, but not large enough to meet the federal NCLB standards. In what way are students at these schools served when their schools are identified as "Program Improvement" and thereby as "failing" within their communities? Many teachers and administrators at these schools feel under siege; many leave the school and/or the profession.

A second change is the opening of charter schools in many communities. The distinction between public and private schooling has become less clear as a result. Charter schools, funded with public monies, are competing with neighborhood and magnet schools for families and for students. When charter schools enroll a student population that is reflective of the diversity in the community, including children of color, English language learners, and special education students, we may learn from these schools. When charter schools enroll a more select group of students or return students to the neighborhood school when they are not performing well or fitting in, the playing field is not level and public schooling is being undermined.

I opened the first edition with the following:

"How do you like my school?" asked María.
"I'm very impressed by how friendly everyone is," said I.
"More important, they really trust me here," said María.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that schools be places where students feel welcome and safe. Of equal importance, students need to feel valued, respected, and known by the adults at the school. Parents, teachers, and administrators need this also. After reading this book, I hope you will be motivated to seek out such schools in your community and work to support the deep commitment and hard work that it takes to sustain them. Truly believing in the potential of all students requires changes in daily practices that are deeply embedded in school culture. This book will encourage you to look at your own deeply held beliefs and offer you tools to examine and redesign the school's culture and practices. It will take considerable skill and courage to lead this effort. Be skillful! Be courageous!

SEEKING EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS

Initially, Corwin Press asked me to travel and to write about schools that best exemplify fostering resilience for their students. In March 1997 I visited New York City and observed three extraordinary, small, public high schools serving primarily students of color: Vanguard Academy, Urban Academy, and the acclaimed Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS). I also went to New Hampshire to visit Souhegan High School, a very innovative school serving middle- and upper-middle-class students. Several years earlier, on two separate occasions, I had visited Maria's school, South Pointe Elementary School in Dade County, Florida. These are wonderful schools from which we can learn a lot.

Why, however, should you or I have to look far from home to find schools that demonstrate a deep commitment to every student? Such schools should and do exist in every community. The leaders of these schools are courageous and need our voices and support. One of these leaders may be you! Given that school leadership comes from many sources—administrators, teachers,

classified staff, parents, students, and community members—reading this book may help you become such a leader.

When I wrote the first edition of *Fostering Resilience: Expecting All Students to Use Their Minds and Hearts Well*, I told the story of seven schools fighting for the hearts and souls of their students. The adults in these schools know their students and their students' work well. They also know their colleagues and their colleagues' work well. As professionals, they accept the responsibility to work with students, parents, the community, and colleagues to create a learning community in which every student is expected and supported to learn. And they come to school knowing how important their work is. All seven schools are within a forty-five-minute drive of my house.

In preparation to write the second edition of this book, I revisited each of the seven schools on several occasions. Some of the schools I was still in close contact with. I made several changes in how I approached the new case studies. First, and of great importance, I know through experience that the theory that school change happens one school at a time is faulty. It is very difficult to sustain change over time without district support. Oak Grove School District truly exemplifies what can happen when a district dedicates itself to closing the achievement gap. Their superintendent, Manny Barbara, is inspirational in his commitment to the education of every child. The new case study in Chapter 2 is about Oak Grove. Rather than update the case study of Stipe, one of the Oak Grove Schools, I have chosen to include case studies of two other Oak Grove schools and how they have been affected by this district commitment.

I wrote in the first edition about my belief in the importance of small schools. In my role as director of the Leading for Equity and Achievement Design Center (LEAD, www.lead-ces.com), a regional center affiliated with the Coalition of Essential Schools (www.essentialschools.org), I have supported the opening of four small schools in our region, all educating students from high-risk environments. The three described in Chapter 5 opened in 2004. The fourth opened in 2006. All are wonderful schools, operating as small schools of choice within existing school districts.

I have updated case studies on Anzar, Rosemary, Chavez, Homestead, and Mission Hill. Moss Land Middle School closed in 2004 and is not included in this edition.

POTENTIAL OF ALL STUDENTS

Fostering Resilience is much more about the passionate belief in the potential of all students and what it takes to foster that potential than it is about particular schools. More than any other single factor, the lack of a deeply held belief in every child's ability leads to students achieving at levels lower than their potential. Most teachers enter the profession believing that every student can be successful, but few experienced teachers hold onto that belief. I do not hold individual teachers or administrators accountable for this. Our society clearly does not believe in the potential of every individual. Our financial priorities as a nation demonstrate our lack of commitment.

At the same time, many of our school practices get in the way. Large schools, large classes, teacher isolation, lack of adequate instructional resources, poorly conceived professional development, inability to stay focused on what is most important . . . these lead to far too many compromises by teachers and administrators, and thereby to a lowering of expectations for students and for themselves. It is not possible for an elementary school teacher, responsible for teaching reading, writing, math, social studies, science, physical education, art, and music to thirty-three students, to demonstrate caring for each of the students. It is not possible for a high school or middle school teacher, responsible for 150 to 200 students, to know each student and the student's work well. It is even harder when multiple languages are spoken by the students, or the societal problems of poverty, drugs, racism, and struggling families impose on the lives of the children and adults in our schools. How can teachers in this situation value the participation of each student? In fact, most teachers welcome students being out sick or cutting classes because the number of bodies is reduced. Most teachers demand that students sit quietly and listen to the teacher talk, because the teacher is overwhelmed by the demands of the job. And yet, there are schools that are working to remove roadblocks to student success.

RESILIENCE

My vision for the community I want to live and work in is based on fostering resilience, the belief in the ability of every person to overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in that person's life. Resilience is founded on the proposition that if members of your family, community, and/or school care deeply about you, have high expectations and purposeful support for you, and value your participation, you will maintain a faith in the future and can overcome almost any adversity. When the school community works together to foster resilience, a large number of students can overcome great adversity and achieve bright futures.

THIS IS NOT A SIMPLE FIX!

As you read about the schools featured in this book, you will come to understand the depth of change in school practice and in school culture required to foster resilience for all students. Fostering resilience starts by challenging our underlying beliefs about student potential and how students learn. This strikes at the heart of not only who we are as educators but also who we are as people.

Thus, fostering resilience involves far more than altering the discipline policy, adding social service support to the school, adopting a new curriculum program, buying computers, or having teachers go through a new staff development program. As you read this book, you will come to understand that for a school to attempt to foster resilience for all its students honestly, school practices must be examined. What we teach, how we teach, and how we assess are all central to fostering resilience. How we organize the school and how we group students are central. Likewise, expecting and supporting all students to be literate and to demonstrate the habits of mind to think critically are directly related to fostering resilience.

Fostering resilience serves as a lens to guide school redesign. Look critically at school practices: How does this practice demonstrate caring for every student? How does this practice demonstrate high expectations for every student and support students' efforts to meet these expectations? How does this practice demonstrate valuing student participation?

Focusing my writing on schools is not meant to reduce the important role of family and community.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

As you read this book, it will be obvious that I have been heavily influenced by the research of Emmy Werner and the writing of Bonnie Benard. In 1963, Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith began to follow the lives of 614 eight-year-olds, all born in 1955 to plantation workers on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. Werner and Smith have followed these people's lives for over thirty years; one of these people tells her story in Chapter 4. Bonnie Benard has taken the research and translated it into a model that has great relevance for schooling and community development.

In Chapter 1, "What Is This Resilience Stuff?" I present the concept of resilience, summarize Benard's model and Werner and Smith's research, write about gangs as resilient communities, and present Anzar High School—a small, rural, public high school that is demonstrating what can happen when a community believes in the potential of every student—one can eliminate the achievement gap. Within Chapter 1 and continuing throughout the book, I include reflective questions. The influence of this book on your practice will be much greater if you take the time to write brief reflections to these questions as you read. I could have placed the questions at the end of each chapter rather than within; however, I feel that your reflections on these questions are important as you read.

In Chapter 2, "Becoming a Resilient School Community," I present the Oak Grove School District effort for moving schools toward becoming more resilient learning communities. The case study is written by Superintendent Manny Barbara.

In Chapter 3, "What's in It for Me?," I discuss the reasons why a school community should want to foster resilience for its students and staff and what gets in the way. I also present Edenvale and Parkview Schools, two of the schools in Oak Grove. The case studies are written by Ginny Maiwald and Robert Topf, administrators in Oak Grove.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I discuss the protective factors—caring, high expectations and purposeful support, and participation—at the core of fostering resilience. In Chapter 4, "I Care, You Care, We All Care," I update the case studies of Rosemary and Chavez schools. I place them together because their stories are similar, both serve almost entirely English language learners, students at both schools have demonstrated substantial achievement growth over

time, and both are identified under NCLB as Program Improvement schools. In Chapter 5, "Providing High Expectations and Purposeful Support," I present Adelante, LUCHA, and Renaissance, three new small schools of choice within the Alum Rock School District. In Chapter 6, "Valuing Meaningful Student Participation," I update the case study for Homestead High School. In each of these three chapters, I offer a brief list of what I look for when visiting a school to determine if the school culture, curriculum, instruction and assessment practices, and roles of teachers and administrators support the fostering of resilience. As you read this book, you will come to understand the depth of change in school practice and school culture required to foster resilience for all students.

The primary purpose of this book is to help school leaders understand and apply the concept of resilience as a guide for proactive, systemic school redesign. The first six chapters should give the reader a sense of how schools that are fostering resilience look, sound, feel, taste, and smell in practice. Systemic change is not exportable, however. Experience and research clearly tell us that one cannot take what one school or district is doing, bring it unchanged to another school or district, and see the concept implemented and sustained successfully. The writing of William Bridges (1991) has been a major influence on my thinking. Change is external; transition is the internal process every person goes through to adjust to the external change. Leading and managing school change is really about caring, high expectations and purposeful support, and valued participation that is carefully planned and orchestrated to help every individual transition. Chapter 7, "Managing Change," discusses how schools and people change and updates the story of Mission Hill Middle School.

You will have many questions about fostering resilience and implications for schooling. In Chapter 8, I present my top-ten list of commonly asked questions about resilience, along with my answers.

15,000 HOURS—DOES IT MATTER WHICH SCHOOL A CHILD ATTENDS?

Children spend approximately 15,000 hours in K–12 schooling. Michael Rutter (1979) asked whether a child's experiences at school have any effect. Does it matter which school the student

attends? These questions led Rutter to study twelve inner-city London secondary schools in depth. He used four measures of student outcomes: attendance, pupil behavior, examination success, and delinquency. His research indicates that the school attended does make a difference. He found that schools differ markedly in the behavior and attainment shown by their pupils, and schools that performed better on one of the four student outcomes generally performed better on the others.

CAUTION: RESILIENCE IS A RELATIVE TERM

Few people make it through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood without many ups and downs. Everyone experiences periods of serious suffering. As Weissbourd (1996) writes, "Children described as resilient are often simply children who have not yet encountered an environment that triggers their vulnerabilities" (p. 40). Nothing is fixed. Children who are in trouble at one point in their lives often right themselves at some later point. In fact, it is difficult to predict which children in high school will thrive as adults. Often, those selected as most popular or most likely to succeed in high school struggle as adults, whereas others who struggled socially as teenagers appear to adapt very successfully as adults.

A FINAL NOTE

It is November 8, 1996. I am sitting in a bakery in Berkeley, California, with Emmy Werner. We have not met before. I am telling her about my ideas for this book. She immediately offers two challenges:

1. "Beware of how you use the term *resiliency*. It is being abused by people seeking grant money. It has been used by both Clinton and Dole in the recent election campaign. The cover story for the most recent *U.S. News and World Report* (Shapiro, Friedman, Meyer, & Loftus, 1996) is on resilience. There is even a brand of panty hose and a face cream called Resilience."

2. "Please, please, please, do not write a testimonial to schools you like. Demonstrate that these schools are affecting student outcomes in positive ways."

This book is neither a longitudinal study like Emmy Werner's, nor a quantitative study like Michael Rutter's. In response to Emmy's challenge, however, I do include student achievement data at the end of each case study that indicates that these schools are having a positive influence on the learning of children.

When presenting this data, I use the Academic Performance Index (API): California's accountability requirements, reported in terms of API criteria, measure the academic success of a school on the basis of how much it improves annually. Schools have a minimum growth target for the school year, and the target varies according to the API score at the beginning of the year (API Base). The growth in a school's API reflects the progress that school made from one year to the next (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/documents/infoguide05g.pdf). I chose to not use the NCLB criteria Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as the primary achievement criteria. API indicates growth over time, value-added. AYP is criteria-based and has goals for all schools to reach that are raised over time such that all students should demonstrate proficiency by 2014.