Introduction

Standards for School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Today, standards for professional educational practice are propelling school, family, and community partnerships into the educational mainstream. These standards are being set forth by a variety of organizations that work with and for teachers, teacher educators, and, importantly, principals and those responsible for their preparation. These organizations (see Box 1) understand the complexity of teaching and learning and the importance of schools, families, and communities working collaboratively to ensure that all students have access to excellent instruction in nurturing responsive educational environments.

As indicated in Box 1, some of the organizations (e.g., INTASC and NBPTS) focus on classroom teachers, recognizing the important role teachers play in students' learning and in the success of home-school partnerships. Caspe (2001) observed:

> Over the next 10 years, an estimated 2.2 million new educators are expected to enter the teaching force. In the current climate of high standards and accountability these teachers bear the responsibility for the success of all students. Research clearly shows that teacher qualifications are related to student achievement. . . . Standards for the teaching profession have integrated family and community relations as areas where teachers need to demonstrate competency. Families and local communities are crucial partners to improve student achievement and teachers are expected in new professional and state standards to engage them to a much greater extent. (p. 3)

Box 1   Educational Organizations and Standards for Parent and Community Involvement

Early Childhood Learning Communities Standards (http://web.naesp.org)

Standard 2: Engage Families and Communities: Effective principals work with families and community organizations to support children at home, in the community, and in pre-K and kindergarten programs.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (http://www.ccsso.org)

Principle #10: The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (http://www.ccsso.org)

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (http://www.nbpts.org)

Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities; they know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (http://www.ncate.org)

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions (1g. Professional Dispositions for all Candidates)

Target: Candidates work with students, families, colleagues, and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.

National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (http://www.nsdc.org)

Content Standards: Staff development that improves the learning of all students and provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Other organizations setting professional standards for family and community involvement focus on school administrators, recognizing that principals significantly impact teachers' family and community involvement practices as well as the quality of schoolwide family and community outreach (Decker, Decker, & Brown, 2007; Epstein, 2001; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). For example, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC) standards for school administrators were adopted by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 1996. These six standards are aligned with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) curriculum guidelines for school administrators and reflect the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed for leaders of twenty-first-century schools (CCSSO, 2008).

While the ISLLC standards generally guide school leaders to engage multiple stakeholders in the creation of safe, nurturing, and academically challenging and responsive school environments, Standard 4 specifically focuses on leadership for home, school, and community partnerships.

According to ISLLC Standard 4:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

This book has been designed to assist administrators in meeting professional standards for leadership in school, family, and community partnerships. It draws on theories, research, and best practice to provide readers with a deep understanding of how to create school climates that support partnerships, how to ensure that partnerships respect and respond to diversity, and how to evaluate partnership programs to maximize benefits for students, families, communities, and the school. While some of the research discussed in the book is drawn from our individual and collaborative studies at the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and with the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS),[1] both at Johns Hopkins University, we have sought to present a broad array of literature from the field.

The book is organized into three parts. The first section, Laying the Foundation, includes two chapters. The first chapter discusses research on student outcomes associated with family and community involvement and the significant influence of administrators on a variety of school outcomes, including the quality of home-school partnerships. Chapter 2

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[1] NNPS was established in 1996 to provide schools, districts, and states with research-based guidelines and tools to develop goal-focused programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

builds on this discussion to describe how administrators can create school cultures that support partnerships. More specifically, this chapter discusses the role of schools as community institutions, defines partnerships as a school improvement effort, describes obstacles to effective partnerships, and presents steps that principals can take to create schools that support and sustain partnerships.

Part II, Responding to Diversity, includes four chapters that focus on populations that may be overlooked in partnership programs but are found in most schools. Chapter 3 focuses of the role of fathers and father-figures in children's learning and school success. Much of the current research and practice on partnerships focuses on mothers who have traditionally been most involved in children and adolescents' schooling. However, research shows the positive effects of fathers' involvement on student outcomes. This chapter discusses how schools can welcome and include fathers in their partnership efforts.

Chapter 4 focuses on the families of children with disabilities. Current legislation requires schools to involve families of children with disabilities in educational decision making. Such legislation, however, focuses more on procedure than partnerships, and the families of children with disabilities can be rendered invisible in many schools' partnership plans and activities. With focused attention, schools can ensure that these families' unique needs and concerns are not overlooked in partnership efforts and that they reap the many benefits of home-school-community collaboration.

Chapter 5 focuses on linguistically diverse families. Over the last decade, linguistic diversity and the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have grown in the United States. The U.S. census defines LEP populations as individuals who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than "very well" (Capps et al., 2005). According to census data, the LEP share of students in grades preK–5 rose from 4.7 to 7.4 percent from 1980 to 2000, while the LEP share of children in grades 6–12 rose from 3.1 to 5.5 percent. In 2000 a total of 1.7 million LEP children were in grades preK–5 and 1.6 million were in grades 6–12 (Capps et al., 2005). This chapter discusses the impact of growing linguistic diversity on home-school interaction and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements for school outreach to LEP families. It also describes strategies schools can use to build stronger ties with linguistically diverse families and communities, and the importance of culturally intelligent leadership for their successful implementation.

Finally, Chapter 6 focuses on families living in poverty. Twenty percent of children under the age of six live in poor families; 16 percent of children age six or older live in poor families (NCCP, n.d.). The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that about 39 percent of the nation's children live in families with low incomes, that is, incomes below twice the official poverty level (for 2008, about $42,000 for a family of four). Poverty is a significant predictor of low academic achievement, school failure, and

high school drop out. Chapter 6 focuses on how schools can create partnerships to support the educational success of low-income children and adolescents. The chapter describes school activities to support families living in and near poverty, as well as activities that can be implemented with the support of community organizations and resources.

Part III, Maximizing Outcomes, includes a chapter on evaluating programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Partnership programs that make a difference for students' school outcomes must be linked to school goals for students, evaluated, and refined over time. Chapter 7 provides practical recommendations on how schools can ensure that their partnership efforts produce desired results for schools, communities, families, and most important, students. The conclusion describes how, through the strategies presented in this book, administrators can meet and exceed professional standards for leadership in school, family, and community partnerships. This chapter also includes a list of organizations that can support schools in their efforts to maximize the results of partnerships.

Educational standards and policies have established school, family, and community partnerships as a critical component of educational excellence. These standards and policies have also raised the bar for action and leadership to ensure that partnerships realize their full potential. In this book, we have strived to provide school leaders with information, examples, tools, and resources that can be used so that partnership programs are goal-focused, equitable, sustainable, and effective. In other words, we have attempted to provide educational leaders with a guidebook to develop the kinds of partnership programs that we wish for our children's schools and for the schools of all children.