Schools and Disadvantaged Neighborhoods: The Community Development Challenge

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In many ways schools are a natural focus for community development efforts. As social institutions schools have sustained contact with children and their families and thus have a means by which they can enable the residents of less wealthy areas not only to improve their individual skills but also to develop their capacity to act on community concerns. They possess a large store of useful physical and material assets.[1] Most important, charged with educating the young, schools embody a potentially unifying purpose of meeting the needs of children and providing them with a capacity to overcome poverty and disadvantage. In some cities, community organizers have found that the educational concerns of parents can serve as a means for mobilizing neighborhoods.[2]

Schools thus are far from peripheral to community development. They employ able and concerned people, and some have achieved remarkable feats in making schools in poor neighborhoods centers of academic achievement and community activity.[3] In light of such possibilities, observers have long advocated more active and open schools. Peter Schrag, for example, once called for "a new style of school—a school open to the

1. Kretzmann (1992).
2. Shirley (1997).
3. Fliegel and MacGuire (1993); Tyack and Hansot (1982); and Covello (1958).

community, open at all hours and to all people, a school concerned not merely with apologizing for the going order . . . but one that seeks to reform that order and that identifies with the genuine problems of the people it proposes to serve."[4] Contemporary observers continue to see schools as means for civic engagement and community improvement—in the words of one author, as part of a "chain of changes" encompassing not only a variety of afterschool activities but also extending to such areas as community policing and neighborhood stabilization.[5]

Enlisting schools in a broad agenda of community development activities is an ideal. What about the reality? Particularly in the nation's cities where communities of concentrated poverty are beset with social problems, schools on their own often lack a constructive relationship with the surrounding community.

Isolated, and with limited financial and social capital, educators in poor communities may see themselves as facing an unwinnable struggle.[6] They may simply accommodate to what they see as a harsh and unrelenting reality by lowering expectations, adopting a defensive posture, and minimizing their contact with the community. Far from taking an activist stance toward their communities, many educators come to see their task narrowly, and some operate with little sense of obligation to the neighborhoods in which they work. Schools in low-income neighborhoods sometimes provide little more than custodial care for children and by some accounts are a harmful force in their lives.[7]

Particularly in low-income communities, teachers voice concerns that parents fail to help educators do their jobs. For their part, many parents and community members experience the school as an alienating institution. In extreme cases they may see the school as "like the encampment of a foreign power," and in the eyes of some it appears so uninviting that it is more the fortress of a hostile force than a center of community life.[8]

In disadvantaged communities, bad schools and decaying neighborhoods are a familiar and disheartening combination seemingly locked together. Weak schools work against neighborhood improvement, and neighborhoods beset with social problems are unfertile ground for good

4. Schrag (1967, p. 146). See also McCorry (1978).
5. Shirley (1997).
6. Payne (1997). See also Anyon (1997).
7. Fine (1991); and Calabrese (1990).
8. Schrag (1967, p. 165). For the larger historical context, see Halpern (1995).

schools. The relationship between schools and community members is often riddled with tensions, or as one author said, is caught up in a "vicious circle of civic disengagement."[9] Enlisting schools in community development means first reversing the dissociation between schools and poor neighborhoods.[10] How, then, can this gap be bridged in such a way that schools become an important contributor to social change?

The coda at the end of this chapter brings the matter to a concrete level by showing how various initiatives can join schools and their communities in partnership. These initiatives call for engaging parents in the life of the school, sometimes in school governance itself. They include providing comprehensive services to the community through the school link. Some call for the school to serve as a center for neighborhood activity, while others bring schools into collaboration with business and citywide alliances. Under the right conditions all have the potential to lessen the school-community divide and allow schools to become significant contributors to community development.

On another level the question of how to bridge the gap brings us face to face with questions about power and social cooperation. Like other institutions, schools cannot do their jobs alone. They cannot meaningfully contribute to social change without cooperation and collaboration with other institutions, groups, and the community members they purport to serve. Diminishing the school-community divide so that *schools* can play a more vital role in community improvement is part of a more general challenge of creating cross-sector cooperation around community development issues. Community development initiatives are typically pilot projects or isolated instances of innovative practice. There are individual success stories of schools that have become centers of community activity and focal points for community improvement efforts. But more often community development efforts are piecemeal. Large-scale change in the

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9. Shirley (1997, p. 158).

10. One could, of course, argue that the best way to bring about school and neighborhood improvement is to achieve genuinely integrated neighborhoods with a healthy mix of the middle class residentially and in the school population. At this stage, with a massive concentration of the poor in many inner-city areas, it is unlikely that these heavily poor neighborhoods and their schools can move very far toward class integration. Success stories are few. Integration may be more readily achieved by moving the poor to suburban areas. But since that is unlikely to happen on a vast scale, the question remains about how best to improve opportunities for those remaining in the inner city. This is the population to which our discussion is directed.

school-community relationship remains an elusive goal, and the process is for the most part unexplored territory.[11] There is no shortage of ideas about how schools might contribute to community development in disadvantaged neighborhoods, but little is known about *the conditions that need to be in place* to transform these ideas into operating realities. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Politics of Changing School-Neighborhood Relationships

Studies of reform often assume that policy change depends on the ability of proponents to communicate clearly the content of their proposals.[12] Or they assume that a successful demonstration project will be widely embraced by those who hear about it.[13] These assumptions treat reform largely as a matter of information dissemination. In a few instances, advocates of change see a fundamentally different challenge. To them, reform can best be seen as waging a political struggle in a context of fundamental social conflict. In its most radical form the task is one of raising critical consciousness among oppressed groups.[14]

We want to suggest a different view of the problem without denying the need for the dissemination of information or the presence of deep social cleavages. Consider Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky's study of policy implementation.[15] They described situations in which the major participants agreed about broad policy, but moves to further that policy were undercut by the immediate concerns of various interests focused on their particular place in the scheme of things. The policy aim did not moti-

11. Some cities have given neighborhoods a voice in school governance, either by elected school boards at the subcity level, as with New York's community school boards, or by giving parents representation at individual schools, such as Chicago's local school councils. But as these cities discovered, changing school governance is not a panacea (Flinspach and Ryan, 1994; Rollow and Bryk, 1993; and Rogers and Chung, 1983). It may decrease the isolation of schools from communities, but it does not necessarily end mutual antagonism and may do little to develop the potential for schools and communities to act together to build neighborhood capacity

12. See, for example, Spillane and Thompson (1997).

13. Henig (1995); and Schorr (1997).

14. Fine (1991). For a more nuanced treatment see Gaventa (1995).

15. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984).

vate behavior; distrust of others and protection of particular positions did.

Much the same situation can be seen in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative and in various efforts at school reform.[16] The barriers to achieving broad reform goals have become a familiar litany: turf protection (not only by agencies but by advocacy groups and employee organizations such as teachers' unions), channeled thinking by professionals who see their responsibilities in narrow and highly specialized terms, posturing and personal rivalries within agencies and neighborhoods, and suspicion between clients and agencies or between parents and educators.[17] Crucial allies may not measure up. Business executives often show little awareness of their stake in community improvement, or they may be reluctant to make long-term commitments to efforts to deal with complex and open-ended social problems.[18]

Still, many reformers are puzzled that there are many particular initiatives, special projects, foundation-funded demonstrations, and the like, but few concerted and sustained efforts to bring about change.[19] As they see it, the challenge is one of scaling up from scattered, particular efforts to a more far-reaching or even comprehensive approach.[20] But how does this happen? Enlisting schools in a comprehensive community development strategy is not a program that can simply be enacted and funded. It is a task that calls for many kinds of efforts, a variety of resources, and most essentially a different pattern of behavior, different relationships, and different ways of interacting at both the neighborhood level and in the larger community. Thus, the term "scaling up" does not quite go to the heart of the matter. The challenge is how to create and sustain social change.

A crucial question, then, is how to bring about conditions under which wide cooperation in the service of disadvantaged communities can occur. Whether in school reform or other matters, this cooperation will not occur in the ordinary course of events. Public life in America is strongly ad-

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16. Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995); Center for the Study of Social Policy (1995); Nelson (1996); Stephens and others (1994); Wagner (1994); Rich (1996); Tittle (1995); and Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthey (1996).

17. See, for example, Tittle (1995) and Payne (1997).

18. Stone (1998a).

19. Stone (1998a); and Henig (1995).

20. Schorr (1997). Among the thoughtful discussions of internal factors that stand in the way of changes in teaching and classroom practices are Elmore (1996); Tucker and Codding (1994); and Olson (1994). These, however, do not address the school-community connection.

versarial, and narrow interests are fiercely defended. Participants often think strategically: not in terms of broad social concerns but in terms of how to exact concessions from others or how to protect themselves from such demands.

The challenge is at least partly a matter of frame of mind, of seeing the possibility of making important gains by cooperative behavior. Creating a productive school-neighborhood relationship is not inevitably a win-lose matter, but it does involve various trade-offs. School-linked services can benefit both social agencies and neighborhood residents, but creating the relationship requires agencies to trade some autonomy for greater effectiveness. Volunteer efforts, such as mentorship programs, can provide useful reinforcement to the classroom experience; someone, however, needs to contribute time and resources from both school and community to see that efforts are aligned with needs. Parent involvement can be a positive-sum game for parents and educators, although it does require changed behavior from both sides. One writer talks about the need for "mutual accountability" between school and community.[21] This means that schools have to lessen their isolation and, among other things, report publicly test scores and other indicators of student achievement while parents, for their part, assume a share of the responsibility for the academic performance of their children. Involvement in school-to-work programs can expand the employment base for businesses, but that also means altering hiring practices and becoming open to less conventional channels of recruitment, areas in which businesses are not known for being adventuresome. The point is that constructing a beneficial school-neighborhood relationship requires making sacrifices, expending some effort, and taking some risks to realize a potential overall gain. The gain encompasses both a social good and benefits to individual participants, but it is neither cost free nor surefire.

Cooperative behaviors occur in individual cases. Can they become general practice? If so, how? The following are potentially significant issues to consider.

Problem Definition

Summoning participants to help link schools and neighborhoods in positive and mutually reinforcing ways is likely to be made easier by some atti-

21. Shirley (1997, p. 5).

tudes toward the situation and diverted by others. The attitude that schooling is the sole responsibility of professional educators is not conducive to a comprehensive program, whereas acknowledging that it "takes a village" to educate a child is potentially more facilitative of broad civic action. Indeed, focusing on children can be a galvanizing force. In Oakland, California, advocates of change sought "to capture the vision and moral authority" by using the term *equitable school reform.*[22] Working through a blue-ribbon commission, they made the bid by centering on children.[23]

Although defining the problem is important, little is known about how it is connected to actions.[24] Education studies are replete with calls for bringing the major stakeholders to the table. Many advocates of change are especially eager to have business assume a more prominent role in furthering change. Others emphasize the need for a broad coalition of interests. But setting forth the need for a coalition does not explain how community members come to see themselves as stakeholders in a community development effort in the first place. In some cases conflict or crisis may be the first step in bringing them to see that they need to devise ways to work together for common purposes.[25] In school-business compacts, studies suggest that success depends on a broad understanding of education and its place in the community.[26] But what are the dynamics of this process?

Institutionalizing Changed Relationships

A number of cities have called summit meetings of government, business, community-based organizations, nonprofits, educators, racial and religious leaders, and parent associations to lay the groundwork for citywide collaboration in activities on behalf of schools and the disadvantaged.[27] Yet it is not clear that such gestures carry weight unless they are followed by measures that institutionalize the collaboration and put it on a lasting basis with permanent staff. Business involvement, especially, may need

22. Blackwell and Makower (1993, p. 136).
23. Walsh (1996, p. 17). See also Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997), p. 38.
24. On the importance of problem definition see Baumgartner and Jones (1993); and Moore (1988).
25. Shirley (1997).
26. Waddock (1993, 1994).
27. Peirce (1993); and Garvin and Young (1993).

institutionalization to be credible and sustainable. For example, with its permanent staff and continuing engagement in all sorts of community problems, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) in Pittsburgh has been fairly productive. In contrast, Civic Progress in St. Louis, with scant institutionalization has been only sporadically engaged in issues and at these times has relied on its business members to provide temporary staff. Civic Progress has had a very limited impact.[28]

Avoiding the Blame Game

Bringing major interests together in a coalition is no small task. Nevertheless, a number of school districts have made starts by adopting programs like James Comer's School Development Plan, with its emphasis on parent involvement.[29] Crucial to overcoming school-community estrangement, according to Comer, is to avoid casting blame. If problem solving in a no-fault context is emphasized, participants can more readily recognize the need for change and act appropriately. Comer's approach, however, is not unchallenged. It stands in contrast with the argument that the surest path to social change is an adversarial stance against an identified "enemy."[30]

Scale of Start-up

A well-known method of community organizing is to begin with small but winnable issues that are of everyday concern.[31] Small victories can turn around expectations and pave the way for a more comprehensive grassroots effort to bring about change. One overview of school reform also emphasizes the importance of starting with small, manageable steps—"revolution in small bites."[32] And one observer of school reform in Chicago argues that there are so many unknowns in bringing about complex change that it is smart to keep initial efforts small.[33] Left open is the question of how such efforts become cumulative, but one can detect a pattern of momentum in some instances. In Baltimore's Sandtown-

28. Jones, Portz, and Stein (1997).
29. Comer (1980); and Comer and others (1996).
30. Alinsky (1971); and Piven and Cloward (1977).
31. Horwitt (1989).
32. Martz (1992).
33. Payne (1997).

Winchester area, for example, initial community-based planning and projects laid a foundation for later initiatives and additional funding.[34]

However, there is nothing automatic about such a succession. Pilot projects, particularly, can become an end in themselves. Sometimes those who run the projects seem uninterested in bringing about wider adoption.[35] They enjoy an enclave of satisfying work and may be reluctant to put that at risk. But such enclaves may lack viability over the long run. Because individual school successes can generate district resentment and resistance, some reformers advocate parallel reform at the level of the district and of the neighborhood or school.[36] This poses the question of how, if one starts small, is the effort enlarged? Instead of scaling up, it could be that the most effective strategy is to begin on a large scale by altering basic features of the entire education system.

Decentralization

At what level should efforts for change be pursued? Many reformers argue for decentralization. They see greater likelihood of collaboration for improvement occurring in individual schools where a less diverse body of stakeholders is involved. Studies of "common pool resource" issues agree that smaller and more homogeneous entities are more likely to develop cooperative ways of problem solving.[37] But although there is a logic behind decentralization, the difficulty of focusing on smaller and more homogeneous entities is that the base of resources and opportunities is also smaller. Without an expanded base to draw on, efforts to make the school-neighborhood relationship productive may remain anemic.

Trust, Social Bonds, and Collective Action

It can be argued that people are most likely to contribute to a socially worthy cause if they believe that everyone or most others are also contributing their fair share.[38] For this reason, blue-ribbon supporters can be of special value, particularly in the early stages of an effort. When prominent people

34. Costigan (1997). For a similar pattern in Texas cities see Shirley (1997, pp. 197–200). For a parallel in Boston's Dudley Street Initiative see Medoff and Sklar (1993).
35. Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997).
36. Comer and others (1996); and Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthy (1996).
37. Ostrom (1990); and Gruber (n.d.).
38. Chong (1991). See also Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997, p. 39).

or institutions contribute to a cause, they may convey a sense of sharing a burden and heighten the willingness of others to contribute. In a related observation, Robert Putnam's research comparing regions of Italy makes a strong case that a large network of civic associations promotes social trust and cooperative behavior. Social bonds, Putnam argues, promote skills in cooperation and may nurture concerns for others.[39] The unknown is how well social bonds operate in a variety of circumstances. For example, civic cooperation built around downtown redevelopment does not necessarily carry over to school reform or neighborhood revitalization.

From Interpersonal to Intergroup

Part of the challenge of community development is to counter interpersonal competition and distrust. One way of doing this is to use professional organizers in team building and send mixed stakeholders on retreats.[40] To provide such training is to recognize that creating common attachments among diverse participants is a challenge. Training a team provides opportunities to create interpersonal bonds as well as reinforce attachment to a goal. But this process may be much easier to sustain on a small stage than on a large one, where group relations may override interpersonal ones. Thus what we most need to know may be how to translate lessons from a small interpersonal situation to a large, intergroup situation.

The difference between building interpersonal and intergroup trust is that the immediacy of personal interaction can overcome prejudgments based on past experiences. Thus individuals with very different social backgrounds can achieve mutual understanding. But when *representatives of groups* interact, the groups themselves do not have the immediacy of personal experiences. Their history of group relations is largely unchanged by the personal interaction of a few individuals. Where the intergroup history has been one of conflict (as in collective bargaining or race relations), there is a substantial residue of prejudgment. Individuals acting on a large stage serve as group representatives and cannot escape the context of intergroup competition and distrust.

Although efforts in small projects can succeed in building interpersonal trust and cooperation, they do not necessarily cumulate. A different kind

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39. Putnam (1993, 1995). See also Chong (1991, p. 72).
40. Comer and others (1996).

of process may be needed. Group reassurances may also be essential to allow cooperation to flourish. For example, with urban school systems as major employers of the black middle class, a move to restructure schools or promote greater accountability can be perceived as racially motivated unless some form of concrete reassurance is given.[41]

Limits to School and Community Change as a Positive-Sum Game

Any move that portends a significant redistribution of power or resources is likely to provoke deep resistance. Change is more easily promoted when it is not seen as redistributive. For example, a study of schools regarded as exemplary in educating disadvantaged children found that reform was facilitated by a policy of "transfer with dignity." Under this policy faculty members unwilling to embrace a reform adopted by the majority of the faculty and the principal could transfer to another school in the district "without negative repercussions and with all seniority."[42] Such hold-harmless provisions are not always possible, however, unless additional resources are made available. But how can additional resources be made available without taking them from some other activity? Thus it is often the case that decisionmakers may decline to replicate demonstrations they see as too costly to pursue without significant reallocation.[43]

Community Development as an Assurance Game

We come back, then, to the question of whether there are circumstances under which schools along with various agencies, organizations, and institutions will alter the ways they relate to the poor and disadvantaged. Does change necessarily involve redistribution, or can it be thought of as introducing a new and productive set of relationships? This is perhaps the leading question faced by efforts at community development. How do participants experience the process? Do they see it as potentially beneficial for all or is a zero-sum mentality paramount? Certainly where substantial change is at issue, a zero-sum mentality can readily emerge. But does it necessarily carry the day? The answer may depend partly on bring-

41. Orr (1998). See also Walsh (1996).
42. Stringfield and others (1997, p. xviii).
43. Schorr (1997, p. 26).

ing in new participants and additional resources, on expanding the body of those who see themselves as stakeholders and on enlarging their understanding of what is at issue.[44]

In recasting the rational-choice argument as it applies to social movements, Dennis Chong offers a fresh understanding of collective action by showing how community-minded action can be viewed as an assurance game. Acting on behalf of a public good may be preferred, Chong suggests, but only under the right condition—"the condition being that 'enough others' also participate to make collective action successful."[45] In an assurance game the major problem is coordination, not reconciliation of fundamentally conflicting aims.[46] One acts in a public-spirited manner when there is good reason to believe that others will also and that such actions will succeed in bringing about social improvement.

Oakland, California's, Urban Strategies Council provides an example of the willingness to incur personal costs for the opportunity to further the social good. As reported in one account, Angela Blackwell, the founder of the council, believed that "talented professionals would sacrifice salary and prestige if they were adequately paid to do good work *that made a difference*, and she was proven right."[47] Lisbeth Schorr makes a parallel point in talking about the importance of "a sense of mission, of belonging to something larger than one's own isolated effort."[48]

Chong acknowledges that sacrifices are an integral part of change—that is, community-minded action is not a free good, but people may be willing to make sacrifices when there is a credible prospect of furthering a goal valued by society. Important benefits, including benefits to reputations, may arise from contributing to a social change. Given the high level of frustration and powerlessness often voiced by those who live

44. This is what may be termed *building civic capacity*. See Stone (1998a).

45. Chong (1991, p. 1).

46. Of course, in some circumstances there are fundamental conflicts among educators, neighborhood groups, and members from the community. But the possibility of a beneficial development argues for an effort to move beyond the appearance of irreconcilable conflict to see what bases of cooperation might be established by mediation, negotiation, empathy, "hold harmless" provisions, and the like.

47. Emphasis added. Walsh (1996, p. 31). One can think of the choice as in part a matter of trading extrinsic benefits for intrinsic ones. But there are also situations in which distrust can stand as a barrier to both greater extrinsic and intrinsic benefits. For example, dysfunctional relationships interfere with performance and limit career mobility (Payne, 1997).

48. Schorr (1997, p. 36).

or work in poor neighborhoods, the prospect of building a productive school-neighborhood relationship can have special appeal.

To this end, leadership must bring about shared expectations that a social purpose can be achieved, or as Chong views it, generate a belief that mutual effort can be productive.[49] This is what James Burns terms transformational leadership, and leadership of this kind involves replacing embedded skepticism with public-spirited action.[50] In a contemporary social science imbued with cynicism and reinforced by training to look behind seemingly public-minded actions for underlying self-interest, this language may well sound naive. Yet Chong argues that social and expressive motives, though always fragile, can inspire community-minded efforts.

But does his argument apply to community development? Promoting the kinds of initiatives that bring schools and communities together entails no mass demonstration, no sustained campaign of protest. Yet it does call for a particularly complex form of collective action with many different parts. It contains elements of neighborhood self-help mixed with outreach and responsiveness by the business, public, and nonprofit sectors of the larger community. It means that school superintendents and central office staff need to facilitate, not obstruct, changes in practice.

Specifically, the effort involves increased activism among parents and other community residents—in everything from meeting with teachers and school officials to spending extra time tutoring and working with children to attending classes and engaging in community discussions. Organizers for the Industrial Areas Foundation aim for a series of steps, ranging from small group "town meetings" through neighborhood walks to large group rallies and ultimately to the formation of task forces and "action teams."[51] The overall effort also calls for different and more flexible forms of behavior by educators, especially in interactions with parents and representatives of nonschool agencies. It may mean increased demands on teacher time. It may mean waiving or changing collective bargaining contracts. It calls for boards and agencies to see their work and responsibilities in a less channeled manner. Businesses and other employers

49. Schorr (1997, p. 46) cites the case of a program advocate who could elicit a strong sense of mission among agency staff, one of whom remarked, "She made us feel like the New Frontier all over again, like there really was something we could do to change things."

50. Burns (1978). For an instance of local transformation to a more collaborative approach, see the account of Hampton, Virginia, in Osborne and Plastrik (1997).

51. Shirley (1997, p. 33).

are asked to make adjustments in their recruitment and internship practices as well as commit significant resources to civic good works in ways that complement and reinforce the efforts of others. It may mean additional pro bono and voluntary efforts for various segments of the larger community.[52] Thus, community development rests on the cumulative efforts of a variety of people and organizations.

Seeing a parallel between community development and an assurance game is only one step in a larger exploration of how participants might be enlisted to support community-minded actions. An assurance game is not about a vacuous form of the power of positive thinking. It is about fostering a shared identity through civic engagement and also about reassuring potential contributors that they are not being asked to make disproportionate sacrifices. So an assurance game is not just a matter of persuading participants that change is possible, but also that change will occur in a manner in which all will share equitably in both the costs and the benefits.[53]

Sometimes the challenge is even more fundamental. The belief that there is a common good in which all share does not come easily in some circumstances. A conflict-ridden history of collective bargaining between teachers and school officials can, for example, encourage an us-versus-them attitude that cripples attempts to bring about change. A study of school reform in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, found that union officials instinctively opposed any move in which administrators had a part, and their response to efforts to involve teachers in planning was to invoke the union slogan, "police the contract."[54] For education to be perceived in such fiercely competitive terms rules out pursuit of collective goals and creates a negative-sum game.[55]

But distrust and antagonism do not inevitably carry the day. Communities can overcome conflict by bringing major groups together to support widely shared social aims.[56] Especially with a focus on children and youth, it is possible to highlight the gains that come through cooperation and give rein to the social and expressive benefits that Chong identifies as

52. For an interesting account of how pro bono and voluntary efforts can be blended with and magnified by public funding and support, see Garr (1995).

53. Blackwell and Makower (1993).

54. Tittle (1995, pp. 73–85).

55. For unequivocal examples, see Payne (1997) for the school level and Mirel (1993) for the system level.

56. Walsh (1996).

potentially part of the pursuit of socially worthy goals. In an era of cynicism it is easy to assume that mutual distrust and antagonism are the only behaviors one can count on. But in fact some actors come to see that such behaviors diminish possibilities and shrink the benefits available, and they put their support behind the development of more cooperative relationships.[57] Communities vary in the level of cooperation they generate on behalf of social purposes, both in the extent of cooperativeness and in the problem areas addressed.[58] Why they vary and how cooperation can be increased stand high on the list of what agents of social change need to know.

Issues of Power

Strategies of change rest on broad, not easily tested assumptions about the nature of society. As a form of intervention, community development takes shape accordingly. One's view of community development, especially the role of civic cooperation in bringing it about, turns ultimately on how one understands power and conflict in American society. If society is considered essentially a battleground between haves and have-nots, community development might well consist of cultivating a collective consciousness among the disadvantaged so that they can organize to press for more resources and different practices from those who control the major institutions in society, including the public school system.

Implicit in this view of community development is an understanding of power as domination. Development consists of successfully resisting domination once endured. It comes from a subordinate group's being able to overturn or at least diminish the control of another. Michelle Fine argues that "the state and private business interests enjoy enormous presence inside public schools," while other voices are excluded. A successful challenge to that control would consist of "social change organizations, labor unions, advocacy groups, parents, and community leaders" bringing an end to their exclusion.[59] Behind Fine's call for the incorporation of new voices is an assumption of an intact capacity to govern, a capacity

57. Walsh (1997).
58. This is one of the topics explored in an eleven-city study of "civic capacity and urban education." See Stone (1998a). Other studies indicating significant variation in level of civic cooperation are Putnam (1993) and Ferman (1996).
59. Fine (1991, p. 213).

over which groups compete. In Fine's view, business domination of this capacity is subject to challenge from previously subordinate groups.

The alternative to such a social control model of power is a social production model.[60] The social production model assumes that society is characterized mainly by lack of coherence, not by a single system of domination and subordination.[61] Society is a loose network of institutional arrangements; many activities are autonomous with many middle-range accommodations instead of a cohesive system of control.[62] In this kind of loosely joined society, "the issue is how to bring about enough cooperation among disparate community elements to get things done."[63] This is "power to" rather than "power over." Of course, there is a great deal of "power over" in society, and struggle and conflict are real, but one can acknowledge this dimension of power without positing an overall tight-knit system of social control.

Another piece of the social production model has to do with preferences. If one assumes that preferences are not fixed, but can modify as situations change and new possibilities open up, power is no longer about the terms on which fixed preferences are adjusted to one another.[64] "Power to" is about the ability to constitute new possibilities—as in an assurance game. Chong notes that "preferences can change as a movement gathers momentum."[65]

Though the process need not be fully conscious, social production can be a matter of bringing about a fresh configuration of preferences through opening up new possibilities. The effort may not succeed (the power to produce a reconstituted arrangement may be inadequate), but success means putting people in different relationships with one another, and that in turn means bringing together sufficient resources to pursue a broadly

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60. The argument about the models of power is spelled out in more detail in Stone (1989, pp. 219–33). See also the discussion of unilateral and relational power in Shirley (1997, p. 85).

61. Perrow (1986, p. 117).

62. Tilly (1984).

63. Stone (1989, p. 227).

64. It is widely agreed that preferences are influenced by capacity. If people see that something is within their reach, they may actively want it, whereas if it appears beyond their reach, they may simply put it out of their thoughts. This is part of Chong's argument about an assurance game. But there is another dimension of preference formation, and it has to do with discovery. New experiences, even those people initially resist, may bring about an appreciation, a preference, not previously held. See Cohen and March (1974, pp. 216–29).

65. Chong (1991, p. 101). See also March and Olsen (1989, p. 146).

defined purpose. As some observers see it, the task of social reform is that of capacity building, thereby expanding the range of possibilities.[66]

Power as social production need not be in the service of worthy causes. It is not inherently benevolent. As a concept, social production is simply a way of enabling people to see a larger range of possibilities. The concept provides a way of thinking about the relation of education and community development that, without ignoring the importance of conflict, frees people from the assumption that community development is mainly about waging social conflict. Social change need not be a zero-sum game. As enlarged possibilities come into being, calculations about interest and preference can be modified.

So although community development can be thought of as a struggle against defenders of dominant interests, it can also be thought of as an effort to bring about an enlarged view of what is possible. To consider community development in terms of social production therefore means seeing the task as different from the mobilization of opposition to guardians of racial and class privilege. The "enemy" need not take such an ideological form. The fetters constraining new possibilities may consist more of proximate conditions than broad structural forces. Instead of a culpable group of "others" to be overcome, one could see the enemy as also consisting of protection of turf, channeled thinking, widely shared habits of outlook that foster parochialism, and a narrow view of obligation and duty, all of which stand as barriers to collaboration in pursuit of broad community purposes. This is a Pogo scenario—"We have met the enemy and he is us"—not the standard us-versus-them view. At issue is what it would take to establish an enlarged way of thinking about interests and preferences.

If people pay heed to cooperative relationships as means by which schools and communities can be linked in beneficial and mutually reinforcing ways, they can see that this approach is based on a social production model of power. Perhaps poor neighborhoods are empowered not so much by taking something away from others (which by virtue of being poor they are weakly positioned to do in any case), as by bringing about a network of relationships through which neighborhood people are enabled to develop their capacities individually and collectively to respond to the problems they face. Significantly, when the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) underwent a change in leadership with the death of Saul Alinsky, the organization's strategy of social change also modified. Under Edward

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66. Shirley (1997); and Walsh (n.d.).

Chambers, Ernesto Cortés, and others, the IAF relied "less on spectacular assaults on the status quo and more on a patient building of power through collaboration based on mutual interests."[67] Proceeding in this vein assumes that conflict is not the foundation of all important social relationships, but that the mix of conflict and cooperation is contingent on the path chosen.

Conclusion

What do we know about the relationship between schools and community development? First, in many urban areas, especially the poorest ones, the school-neighborhood relationship is a troubled one. In response, various initiatives have addressed the problem, and many have had specific beneficial effects. However, most have been pilot or small-scale projects. Because this pattern has held for a number of years, it does not appear to be merely a transition stage.

As we consider where to go from here, there are large matters that should be discussed. If the goal of policy is to foster social capacity in poor neighborhoods, what is the most productive approach to community development? Some would argue for the development of a critical consciousness as a basis for demanding redress of grievances, breaking down barriers to participation, and strengthening resistance to an oppressive order.[68] Yet if one assumes that community development calls for abandoning diffuse and unconnected activities to work toward concerted efforts to bring school and neighborhood together on behalf of community improvement, it is not apparent how a conflict strategy furthers the process. It might simply reinforce the fortress character of schools, spurring administrators to withdraw even further into bureaucratic isolation.

Some recent studies of school reform make a case for reshaping relationships.[69] Rather than focusing on adding programs or exacting resources from schools, this line of thought suggests that a more productive way to bring about change is to alter the relationships among schools, parents, neighborhood residents, and communitywide institutions. Dennis Shirley argues that these disparate elements can be molded into a force

67. Shirley (1997, p. 38).
68. Fine (1991).
69. Comer and others (1996); Shirley (1997); and Walsh (n.d.)

for civic engagement directed toward the local aims of school reform and neighborhood improvement.[70] Yet his is not a universally shared viewpoint.

Overall, studies of school-community relations contain disparate understandings of the causes of disadvantage and the appropriate remedies. Many education reform programs concentrate on the "deficits" of individuals and families and simply pursue change at that level. Some see disadvantage as private misfortune without links to larger causes. In this view, if those suffering deficits are treated to correct the deficiency, they can assume personal responsibility for their fate, and the communities they populate will improve accordingly.

Other observers see the situation in systemic terms.[71] That schools often perform poorly in disadvantaged neighborhoods and fail to contribute to community development indicates to these observers that schools are instruments through which dominant groups perpetuate their power. Social change will depend on strengthening the capacity to wage an adversarial struggle against the defenders of class and racial privilege.

We have suggested the importance of another strategy that assumes that, despite a backdrop of antagonism, achieving community development and improving schools for the poor have the potential to lead to a result in which all can gain. In this view the task of community development is to identify major stakeholders and activate them on behalf of a widely beneficial program of social improvement. The intent is to move beyond individualist solutions and create a sustainable arrangement of social supports, emphasizing the expansion of opportunity and the strengthening of connections between neighborhood residents and their schools; between neighborhood residents and the agencies, groups, and institutions of the larger community; and between the schools that serve disadvantaged neighborhoods and the agencies, groups, and institutions of the larger community. In this way the isolation of poor neighborhoods can be reduced and their capacity to act on behalf of community improvement expanded.

This approach appears especially conducive to community development. Treating the problem of individual deficits does little to reduce the isolation of disadvantaged neighborhoods or strengthen their capacity to engage in collective action. The systemic view contributes an understand-

70. Shirley (1997).
71. Anyon (1997); Bowles and Gintis (1976); Katz (1971); and Fine (1991).

ing of the origins of disadvantage, but it often calls for putting the disadvantaged neighborhood in an oppositional relationship to major centers of power. The approach to community development we suggest acknowledges that there are practices that perpetuate inequality and should be opposed, but because a capacity-building approach involves establishing alliances and collaborative relationships, it cannot rest on an oppositional mentality.[72]

The proximate barriers to putting schools and poorer neighborhoods into a productive relationship—turf battles, channeled thinking, patterns of distrust, the inertia of familiar practices—suggest that disadvantage has multiple sources but that overcoming many of them is a politically achievable goal. Specific initiatives—improving parent-school relations, employing school-linked services for disadvantaged students and their families, and forming partnerships and alliances that expand the resources available to poor neighborhoods and their schools—underscore the possibility that participants will experience new relationships, not in one grand transformation but through the practical and particular actions they engage in everyday.

Coda: Significant Initiatives in Creating School-Community Synergy

Using schools as instruments of community development has strong appeal. But what actual steps have a potential for realizing this idea? What obstacles do advocates of change face and how might they surmount them?

An example of how school and neighborhood can act together to further community improvement is the experience of the Pio Pico Elementary School in Santa Ana, California.[73] Opened in 1991 to serve the extremely poor, densely populated Latino neighborhood surrounding it, Pio Pico was designated a Spanish Language Arts Demonstration School. To inform parents about the new program, teachers invited them for a family night before the school opened. At the meeting, parents expressed concerns for the safety of their children because the school was located on a block dominated by gangs and drug-related activity. Some parents devel-

72. Cf. Ogbu (1988).
73. Lubetkin (1996, pp. 10–12). Other examples are discussed in Shirley (1997).

oped a plan to escort their children to school, and a short time later this group developed into the Pio Pico Safety Committee.

The committee met regularly with educators and enlisted the help of the Santa Ana Police Department to rid the school area of drug and gang activity. With the help of Pio Pico's principal, it expanded into a neighborhood association composed of representatives from the apartment complexes surrounding the school. The association, the school staff, and other groups, in partnership with the school, organized Operacion Limpieza, an effort to clean up the area around the school. Members of the fire department, city council, school board, and the Santa Ana Neighborhood Improvement program also joined in the effort. The project succeeded and became an annual event. Crime in the community dropped 35 percent, and the school environment improved. The attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences rose to 99 percent and to 85 percent at PTA meetings. In addition, a program on parenting skills at the school graduated almost 200 parents.

The activity around Pio Pico shows that school, community, and city agencies can come together to further community improvement. Significantly, the school staff took the initiative in involving parents. Then together, staff and parents took a problem-solving approach. They started modestly with a single problem and built cumulatively from there. They institutionalized their initial concerns as the Safety Committee, then *with assistance from the principal* expanded into a Neighborhood Association.

The school has also provided expanded services to reach parents. Although the initiative originated and took hold at the school, the neighborhood association and the school formed a partnership with allies from the larger community and city government in *Operacion Limpieza*. Thus the experience shows that cooperation and collaboration are possible and that schools can provide the initial spark. Moreover, a game of assurance apparently came into operation. Contributions and efforts from various sources were mutually reinforcing and reassuring. As trust developed among various participants, Pio Pico became a process in which all the participants could see themselves as winners.

Because the process went through identifiable stages, it shows how school-community synergy can grow from even a small beginning. Still, the Pio Pico experience represents a stand-alone event. Except in broad terms, it does not provide a programmatic model for other communities to adopt and fit to their situation. The experience was long on spontaneity and short on replicability. In the following discussion we examine three

categories of initiatives to see more systematic efforts at work. The categories correspond to three stages in the Pio Pico experience.

Overcoming Community Alienation: The First Step

Exemplars such as Pio Pico show that a positive relationship between schools and parents can be a catalyst for neighborhood action. Still, parents in many disadvantaged communities often avoid involvement because they feel uncomfortable in the school setting or anxious about interacting with educators.[74] Others feel intimidated by their lack of education.[75] At the same time, class and racial differences may make teachers uncomfortable with parents. In addition, many educators jealously guard their professional autonomy. Trust and mutual respect are often in short supply. As a result, many families see professionals as generally uninterested in working as partners with them, and teachers frequently blame parents for showing limited interest in their child's education.[76]

Responsibility for this continuing cycle of mistrust rests heavily with educators. Studies suggest that school practices are the most important single factor in determining the level of parental and community involvement.[77] A significant barrier to be overcome, then, is educator reluctance to become actively engaged with the community on several fronts. This means encouraging school staff to define the problems they face as challenges in which parents are useful partners, to see parents "as part of the solution rather than the problem."[78] This means redefining professional practice and perhaps institutionalizing it in an explicit program initiative. One of the best known efforts to change school-parent dynamics is the School Development Plan (SDP) created under the direction of James Comer and now operating in more than 500 schools.[79] Comer argues that

74. Davies (1993).
75. Swap (1993).
76. Chaskin and Richman (1992).
77. Epstein (1986); and Epstein and Dauber (1991). The seven schools examined by Shirley (1997) through case narrative highlight the critical role played by the principal in promoting parent and community involvement.
78. Quoted in Schorr (1997, p. 13).
79. Comer (1980, p. 28). For evaluations of SDP see Comer and others (1986); Boger (1989); Becker and Hedges (1992, p. 28); Joyner (1990); and Haynes and Comer (1990). See also Stringfield, and others (1997); Stringfield and Herman (1997); and Lein, Johnson, and Ragland (1997).

inner-city children often receive contradictory messages. Parents may emphasize education but at the same time question the capabilities or intentions of school employees. Sometimes community members undermine school authority by identifying the school staff as the enemy. Teachers, in turn, see parents as the problem. These contradictory messages, Comer believes, can lead to a host of educational, behavioral, and social problems.

The Comer plan calls for school staff and community residents to embrace three principles: no fault, consensus, and collaboration.[80] The no-fault principle serves to build trust and focus attention on joint problem solving. Consensus is a way of reinforcing trust by advocating action that everyone sees as beneficial. Collaboration for action is the ultimate aim but can come about only as trust is built and maintained through no-fault proceedings and consensus. Comer calls for multiple channels of school-parent engagement, but is very much focused on the school. (With SDP the aim is to reduce school isolation from the community.) Other programs have demonstrated a more explicit link between parent-school relationships and community development.

Ira Gordon's Parent Education Follow Through Program, for example, made use of "parent educators" and offered promise of beneficial side effects for community development. Parent educators were neighborhood mothers who worked with teachers and students in the classroom but also conducted home visits and gave presentations to other parents on how they could contribute to the education of their children. In addition, Follow Through expanded career opportunities in its target communities. Many parent educators were prompted to increase their own schooling, with the result that because of the skills and confidence participants gained through the program, they went on to pursue other careers and opportunities.[81] Programs like this can also strengthen social ties and help build wider forms of social capital in poor neighborhoods.[82]

Services and an Infrastructure of Support: Further Steps

Everyone recognizes that parent involvement alone is no cure-all. Because multiple forms and levels of disadvantage can thwart both student

80. Comer and others (1996, p. 8).
81. Binford and Newell (1991).
82. Shirley (1997).

achievement and community development, some reformers advocate a concerted effort to build an infrastructure of support, a comprehensive way to compensate for underinvestment in poor children and their families. Here too, efforts that involve reconnecting schools and communities are vital.[83] Many education specialists emphasize the need for schooling to be linked to social services, not just for students but for their families as well.[84] Potentially, school-linked services can reduce the isolation of school staff and bring families into contact with services to equip them to support the education of their children and enhance their capacity to engage in community problem solving. Indeed some analysts see service provision itself as something that should be guided by an overarching aim of aiding poor neighborhoods in developing their internal capacity to provide social supports to needy children and their families.[85]

Here again definition of the problem is vital. Emphasizing school-linked services recognizes the complexity of problems that affect the disadvantaged. Addressing these problems, it is argued, requires substantial changes in relationships among service providers, community institutions, and community residents in order to treat families rather than problems as the relevant focus of intervention efforts. Otherwise, the fragmentation of modern service delivery often requires disadvantaged families to deal with five or more agencies, each with its own location, forms, rules, and eligibility requirements.[86] One way to reduce the discontinuity of this situation is to make schools a locus for service delivery or to connect schools to family resource centers. Schools do not have to be the place to deliver services, but they are a natural focus for such activities because, through their sustained contact with students, they encounter most of the problems of the community.[87]

One well-regarded program that has recognized and addressed multiple needs is Robert Slavin's Success for All (SFA), which operates in 750 schools in 37 states.[88] Tutors and intensive reading programs are the program's center, but SFA has also featured a family support team. The team of both professional and lay workers attempts to build relationships with

83. Rich (1993). See also Halpern (1995, pp. 171–75).
84. Adler and Gardner (1994).
85. Walsh (n.d.)
86. Kirst (1994).
87. Dryfoos (1994); and Kirst (1991).
88. Success for All Foundation (1998); Slavin and others (1994b, p. 8); Dolan (1995); Slavin and others (1992); and Schorr (1997).

parents. It facilitates social service delivery and may provide additional services such as helping a child obtain glasses or a family secure heat and food.[89] To increase parental support for the school, teams often provide parenting and other adult education classes and train parents to serve as volunteers.[90]

However, the mixed success of carrying out programs like SFA forces us to face the harsh reality that collaborative efforts are often honored more in rhetoric than in practice.[91] In addition to resistance from other service providers, schools themselves, long accustomed to operating as independent entities, are often major opponents of collaboration. For example, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative, which sought to integrate the work of agencies serving children and youth, encountered substantial resistance.[92] Despite some notable successes, the pattern of fragmented service provision by professionals specializing in particular problems proved hard to change, and schools were especially resistant to implementing the initiative.[93] Long accustomed to operating independently, often with their own taxing authority, school officials sometimes regard social service providers "as people who were meddling."[94]

Even when support is forthcoming, it may not last long. Staff changes are a recurring problem. Executives are notoriously indifferent about carrying through on initiatives introduced by their predecessors. In Baltimore, the hometown of SFA, Slavin's program got off to a good start under one superintendent, only to see expansion stymied by her successor.[95] Given the undependability of local political support, Slavin and others advocate establishing intermediary organizations or centers outside school districts that school staffs can look to for technical assistance, moral support, and even legitimation. As Slavin has said, teachers and principals need to be able to turn to "a valued and important group beyond the

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89. Dolan (1995). Evaluations of academic impact may be found in Slavin and others (1990); Slavin and others (1994a); Madden and others (1993); Ross and others (1994); and Slavin and others (1996).

90. Slavin and others (1992).

91. U.S. General Accounting Office (1995). See also Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997).

92. Nelson (1996); Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995); Center for the Study of Social Policy (1995); and Stephens and others (1994).

93. White and Wehlage (1995).

94. Otis Johnson, quoted in Walsh (n.d., p. 7).

95. Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997).

confines of their district that cares about and supports what they are doing."[96]

Although the overall picture is mixed, there are some clear successes. In Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood, a community-based initiative has generated a multifaceted program of community improvement that involves the schools and includes a multiservice center in a former school building.[97] Much the same as in the Pio Pico experience, success has built upon success and a game of assurance seems firmly established.

Another way of building an infrastructure of support is to develop after-school programs that contain not only academic and recreation components but also other services for students and their families. A related strategy is to use schools as centers of community activity. Although the involvement of regular school staff may be limited in such efforts, the idea is to use the school building for a broad range of adult education opportunities, activities, and social services like counseling, employment workshops, legal aid, and opportunities for residents to become involved in public issues. In this way schools are the domain of both students and families, providing a variety of social supports for the disadvantaged. Advocates of the school as social center also contend that schools can serve as a channel for group efforts toward neighborhood revitalization.

Even though schools are sometimes not tightly connected geographically to local neighborhoods, the idea of using schools as centers of community life enjoys a long history and significant support.[98] In St. Louis a Caring Communities program has operated since 1968, and more recently fifteen community education centers have opened. In addition to traditional recreational activities, the centers encourage adults to participate in literacy, GED, parenting, and family enrichment programs.[99] Caring Communities officially recognizes the need to involve the community in decisionmaking, setting priorities, and evaluating the centers. New York's thirty "beacon" schools, established in 1991, serve as community centers providing a similar mix of services and recreational opportuni-

96. Quoted in Schorr (1997, p. 59).
97. Costigan (1997). In this instance the center is operated independently of the school system. Some reformers see this as the preferred pattern—schools as partners in a collaboration but comprehensive services directed outside the school system. See Goodlad (1984, p. 350).
98. National Community Education Association (1997); and Shirley (1997).
99. Saint Louis Board of Education (1993).

ties.[100] Because the program's original sponsor, Mayor David Dinkins, wanted to bypass the city's education bureaucracy, he housed the program in the Department of Youth Services. As with Success for All, there is an intermediary organization to foster the program's survival and spread. Community-based organizations manage the centers. Thus the program has acquired a buffer between itself and some of the perils to new initiatives.

Schools have great potential as links between needy families and services that can meet needs while providing opportunities to develop skills in acting collectively to address neighborhood problems. Accumulated experience, however, points to significant barriers to the realization of this potential. One obstacle is the difficulty of bringing about collaboration among agencies and the other is the lack of agency willingness to provide parents and other neighborhood residents with opportunities to develop a collective voice.[101] Some programs achieve longevity because their sponsors find ways to maneuver around these obstacles.

Partnerships and Alliances: Making Wider Connections

Ultimately, for schools to achieve their full potential, they need to be linked to jobs, apprenticeships, college scholarships, and other opportunities in the "outside" world. In middle-class communities the families of students provide contacts, supports, high expectations, and skills in how to find and use these opportunities.[102] The skills and supports are much scarcer in lower-income communities. Indeed, their scarcity is what separates the disadvantaged from the advantaged. As a Rand evaluator has argued, students from poverty backgrounds can be caught in hopelessness, and this can be turned around only if they perceive that schooling has "real-life payoffs."[103] Providing such opportunities, reinforced by mentoring and guidance by employers, has a potential for diminishing the isolation of poor communities. Significantly, there are now thousands of partnerships between schools and businesses, and many operate in lower-income areas.

100. Lynda Richardson, "Dinkins to Propose 15 More Beacon Schools," *New York Times*, January 3, 1993, A25. See also Schorr (1997, pp. 47–55).

101. Marris and Rein (1982). See also Doherty, Jones, and Stone (1997).

102. Cohen (1995).

103. Oakes (1987); and Shirley (1997, pp. 122–23).

Some observers, however, see a need for a more systematic and long-term collaboration among businesses, schools, and the residents of urban neighborhoods.[104] Perhaps the most prominent examples have been citywide compacts. One of the first occurred in 1982 with the launching of the Boston Compact. Many businesses in that city had been involved in one-on-one relationships with schools. These efforts were coordinated to bring summer jobs to the city's youth and then evolved into a formal agreement between the business sector and the public school system to provide priority hiring status to public school graduates in return for improved attendance and academic performance.[105]

The Boston Compact served as a model for Cincinnati, Louisville, Houston, Baltimore, and other cities as well as the National Alliance of Business's twelve-city compact project.[106] Yet notwithstanding enthusiasm among education administrators for the idea of compacts and other partnership programs, the programs may rest on an unsteady foundation. Businesses and school systems operate in fundamentally different ways. Moreover, while top school officials value the favorable publicity that accompanies partnership with business, schools are accustomed to extensive independence, especially in day-to-day operations. Thus Baltimore's once-heralded compact has fallen short of expectations because the superintendent accorded it low priority and the system resisted called-for changes.[107]

But a go-it-alone mode of operation on the part of schools ignores the fact that disadvantaged students need better opportunities and, more generally, that low-income neighborhoods need powerful and resource-rich allies if they are to mount comprehensive improvement efforts. Consider an example from Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood. The community's residents, the mayor's office, and the late James Rouse's Enterprise Foundation came together around a comprehensive initiative called Community Building in Partnership.[108] Work groups chaired by and composed mostly of residents devised a plan of improvement and, in

104. Ashwell and Caropreso (1989); and Walsh (n.d., 1997).
105. Darr (1989).
106. Waddock (1993).
107. It has taken state intervention to put reform back on track; see Stone (1998b).
108. Costigan (1997). The Dudley Street Initiative in Boston has close parallels in the collaboration between the neighborhood and the Riley Foundation and the subsequent support from the mayor's office (Medoff and Sklar, 1994). For still other parallels described in brief form, see Walsh (1997).

collaboration with others, designed an action program. With the initiative coming from the action plan, Sandtown's three public schools became New Compact Schools and subsequently won a major grant from the Walter Annenberg Foundation. Resources from the larger community were also brought in, with the mayor's office and the Enterprise Foundation as primary links to other sources of support. As with Pio Pico, contributions and efforts from various sources seemed to bolster the conviction that change is possible.

As Patrick Costigan observes: "No community ... is a totally self-reliant social economy. The task for any community-building effort is to mobilize its indigenous resources while leveraging and matching external resources to meet the full range of its needs."[109] In Sandtown-Winchester, Community Building in Partnership provided the means to bring in much needed external resources. That the central office of the school system was so passive during all of this is, however, an indication of the extent to which public schools continue to be underutilized as a vehicle for community development.

As a caveat, it should be remembered that the special forms of assistance available to Sandtown-Winchester are not readily available to other Baltimore neighborhoods, at least not without a major reallocation of resources. Thus rarely is the specter of redistribution totally absent from any scene of social change.

Schools as a Vehicle for Community Development

The three initiatives we have considered—those that increase the level of parent involvement in schools, provide school-linked services and build an infrastructure of personal and social support for disadvantaged students and their families, and construct partnerships and alliances with major forces in city affairs—make diverse contributions to community development.

—They can provide parents and others in poor communities with valuable experience in interacting with public agencies.

—They can increase the skills and aptitudes of community residents for adults as well as children.

—They can strengthen social ties and the capacity for collective action within poor neighborhoods.

109. Costigan (1997).

—They can link these neighborhoods with much needed resources from the larger community.

There are, then, many programs that can promote school-community synergy. They can provide skills and open up opportunities for adults as well as students, and potentially they can improve neighborhood capacity for active engagement in collective problem solving. Yet we mostly know about potential. These are programs that have been sparsely evaluated. Some, such as Success for All, appear to be academically robust and may contribute to family capacity as well.[110] But almost no current evaluations look broadly at the building of neighborhood capacity nor at the community-development impact.[111]

Thus these are programs that can improve schools through an infrastructure of support for students and their families. Yet little systematic attention has been paid to the development of such a capacity at the neighborhood level. Neglect of this matter in evaluation research is especially unfortunate because there is some indication that, absent a policy intervention to turn the situation around, concerned parents may even seek ways of detaching their children from the immediate environment, leaving the neighborhood with a declining capacity for group efforts at problem solving.[112] Therefore unless policymakers look broadly at the potential of schools and school-linked services to develop neighborhood social capacity, a possibly crucial element for community improvement may be missing.

Current studies suggest two conclusions about the role of schools in community development. One is that initiatives are highly scattered and, despite considerable ferment in ideas, social change remains piecemeal. Second, for the process to broaden, school administrators, from superintendents down to assistant principals and teachers in neighborhood schools, must take on a more active and broadly conceived role at the interface between school and community. Though the pressure of preexisting organizations based in the neighborhood can help create a climate of change, educator receptiveness to community involvement is crucial. This means, for example, principals who cease hiding problems and are willing to say publicly, as one principal did, "I need help!"[113]

110. See, for example, Slavin and others (1992); Ross and others (1994); Dolan (1995); and Slavin and others (1996).

111. One significant exception is Shirley (1997).

112. Furstenberg and others (1993).

113. Quoted in Shirley (1997, p. 104).

That such an action constitutes a sharp break from past practice means that community development responsibilities need to be integrated into the selection, training, and performance evaluation of school officials and staff. Lisbeth Schorr, for one, has identified a need for "a new form of professional practice."[114] However, change does not occur in isolation. So community advocates might also benefit from training in ways of working with educators to make schools more receptive to both participation by outsiders in school affairs and school involvement in matters that go beyond the conventional scope of school concerns.

More appropriate selection, training, and evaluation are, however, only a small part of the overall challenge, which is to enlist a range of participants in a multifaceted effort of changing how schools and communities link together. Pio Pico, Sandtown-Winchester, and Oakland's Urban Strategies Council show that under appropriate conditions this effort can be, along with other examples, a win-win situation.

COMMENT BY
Gary Orfield

America has been having a discussion about urban redevelopment for more than half a century. As the signs of manifest decay appeared, redevelopment began as an effort to bulldoze blight, rebuild downtowns and transportation systems, and hold onto the rapidly suburbanizing middle class. By the 1960s it was apparent that suburbanization was irreversible and that cities were becoming predominantly nonwhite with growing concentrations of severe poverty at their cores, even in a period of unprecedented economic success. It was also apparent that urban renewal did not end slums; it merely moved them around. The nation launched a broadly conceived but relatively small and temporary War on Poverty as well as civil rights reforms to try to deal with the problems. Since then the discussion has focused much more on multidimensional efforts to rebuild poor communities, even while the minority middle class joins whites in suburbia and the outward movement of jobs continues. The idea at the center of the community development movement is that there is a way to organize the potential power of low-income communities and to use various government and nonprofit programs to turn them around. Because

114. Schorr (1997, p. 12).

the public does not want to talk about or deal with issues of race and class that are compounded as the suburbs become more and more dominant, the reformers put forward programs that they claim can work within this basic structure of metropolitan polarization.

My basic premise in this comment is that no community can develop successfully and hold its population, especially its upwardly mobile families, over the long run if it does not provide a form of education that is good enough to prepare children for college. I also believe that real economic development in a capitalist economy with shrinking public programs requires that neighborhoods be able to attract and hold families and businesses with money. In an era of welfare payments large enough to live on, well-funded service delivery agencies, and large housing subsidy programs, it was possible to create a semblance of development in an all-poor community. That is no longer true.

For a generation there has been a hope that poor urban communities can be transformed by community development corporations primarily engaged in developing and operating various forms of subsidized housing. Along with this there has been hope that a tighter link between local communities and schools, and locating more services and programs for more hours a day in the school building, will produce educational breakthroughs. Neither of these strategies deals with the fact that we expect black and Latino communities (and a handful of others) to develop under such incredibly difficult conditions. It was possible to maintain some serious hope for this when there was an expansion of programs for poverty areas and populations and an expansion of civil rights.

The peak came in the late 1960s with the Model Cities program, the War on Poverty, the new federal aid programs for high-poverty schools, abundant financial aid for college, and the largest subsidized housing and low-income home ownership programs in American history. Even when all this was going on and the rights of inner-city children to education outside the ghetto were being enforced by federal courts, central city neighborhoods were rapidly deteriorating.

Now rights are shrinking, housing and urban programs are a tiny fraction of what they were before the Reagan era, areas of intense isolated poverty have expanded greatly, huge tides of poorly prepared immigrants have found their way into city neighborhoods, the minority middle class has left town or is leaving, much of the job base in poor communities is gone, a huge share of young minority males are caught up in a vastly expanded incarceration effort, and welfare has been very sharply reduced.

Remaining urban programs are likely to see yearly cuts, given the federal budget deal's binding promise to reduce discretionary domestic spending much more during the coming decade.

So the question becomes, is there a viable strategy to upgrade urban neighborhoods and schools within the existing economic and policy frameworks, and how do schools fit into the strategy? Many community groups and housing agencies have reached the conclusion that substantial parts of neighborhoods must be redeveloped for families with jobs and some significant income if there is to be viability. Economically, a community without working families cannot afford to maintain its housing stock or create viable economic centers without massive subsidies that are no longer available. Socially, as William Julius Wilson has often noted, such communities tend to fail in many ways.

Schools are subject to the same, or even greater, limitations than neighborhoods. Schools tend to reflect and transmit much more than to transform the social structure of the families and communities they serve. Middle-class parents, particularly first generation middle-class black and Latino parents worried about how precarious and education-dependent their families' success is in an increasingly stratified society, will not accept the educational climate, the level of instruction and competition, and the peer groups that influence their children in a concentrated-poverty, inner-city school. To attract and hold the families needed for neighborhood success, schools that work are needed.

Neither compensatory programs nor community control has shown much promise in reversing an extremely powerful relationship between concentrated poverty in schools and lower achievement, weaker teachers, a limited curriculum, and higher dropout rates. Large compensatory programs date back to Head Start in 1964 and Title I in 1965. After thirty years there is very little evidence that either has had long-term effects on educational achievement. Only a very short list of programs, including Success for All (discussed in this chapter), show clear promise of solving a part of the problem, and that part tends to be increased achievement in limited subjects and limited age groups, all pre–high school. Even those programs are of very little interest to upwardly mobile parents because they focus on basic skills their children have anyway or on providing service interventions their families usually do not need. Those parents want to have their children socialized into schools and peer groups aimed at transmitting higher-order skills at competitive levels and moving their children steadily along a path to college.

Community control experiments date from the mid-1960s when the new programs, including Title I, bilingual education, and the Emergency School Aid Act, required parent committees to be involved in decisionmaking and from the late 1960s with the community control movement in New York City. Major experiments with different forms of community control and decentralization, including Chicago's parent-controlled school councils, show little effect on educational achievement. It is clear that parents in low-income communities have less involvement in schools, do not have clear shared ideas about how to run schools, and often get involved in local politics and ethnic issues when they are given power. Although parent involvement in education is obviously good for students, the level and efficacy of parent involvement is related to parent education and economic status. This is another reason for trying to attract and hold middle-class residents in communities and schools.

If neighborhoods have to be economically diverse to succeed and schools perform much better when they have such diversity, why not think about ways to make them more diverse, to bring in more parents who will take different and more powerful action, who have education, time, and connections because their lives have worked out better? If that cannot be done, why not talk about how it might be possible to attract and hold more middle-class residents in city neighborhoods if there were other kinds of schooling opportunities available for their children—magnet schools, parochial schools, or desegregation programs that enable people to live in an inner-city neighborhood and go to a suburban school?

Now weak neighborhoods tend to be linked with even weaker schools, and if they wish to live in the neighborhood and use public schools, families with choices have to choose to deal with educational, peer group, and neighborhood problems that they would not face in suburbia. Because middle-class students of all races and white students of all classes are much more likely to use private schools or move out, the local public school tends to exaggerate the poverty and minority status of the neighborhood. Even if the housing is considerably cheaper, the costs involved in finding an alternative to the local public school may be too great for families that would otherwise be interested in staying. If the school is black or Latino, the chances of marketing housing to whites or nonrefugee Asians with school-age children deteriorate, even if there is gentrification developing in the housing market. A family that has to come up with huge annual payments for private schools has to discount

sharply the price it would otherwise be willing to pay for housing in the community.

If a family can choose to buy a home in a city neighborhood and still have a competitive public school, however, the special features of housing affordability, location, history, and so forth may become much more determinative. Young couples with resources and options may not only settle there but may make a long-term commitment and raise their children there, becoming an important part of the life of the community.

Gentrifying neighborhoods offer special possibilities and special needs for thinking about the schools. Families who move into such neighborhoods are often young, professional, and childless DINKS (double income, no kids). They (both whites and minorities) typically leave when they get school-age children or make large sacrifices to keep them out of the concentrated-poverty, low-achievement schools in the community. If they stay and their numbers expand, the local public school will lose the children of previous residents and receive almost none of the newcomers' children. Consequently, the school may not have enough enrollment to continue. In such cases the public school loses local support rather than becoming a critical focal point for bringing the neighborhood together. The children in the new families and their parents are, of course, exactly the kind of high-achieving, well-connected families that can make a big difference for a school because they will insistently demand changes if the school is not functioning adequately.

In such a neighborhood, in addition to housing policies to preserve diversity by allowing many of the old families to remain through skillful use of subsidy and ownership programs, there is an urgent need for policies to draw in the new families by offering schools with upgraded academic offerings. Typically, there is almost no effort from either neighborhood organizations or the school district to foster such a beneficial evolution of schools. Experiments like the new small schools being created in some communities in New York can provide opportunities to bring together parents across class lines in school communities with high involvement. Unless such experiments are expanded, the potential to greatly improve the school and to bring long-time and new residents together around the common cause of a much more diverse and much better school is lost.

I would urge those working on community development to think more broadly about schools and to aim much higher. Because all neighborhoods must replace their population on average every six years and very few neighborhoods are all poor, successful neighborhoods must attract

and hold young families, including substantial numbers of families who are not poor. Bad schools are a leading obstacle to such efforts, and strong compensatory programs, while potentially valuable for the local children who need them, are of little interest to families with better prepared children. Schools, citywide school policy, and desegregation plans should attempt to create economically diverse schools with demanding curricula that are available to neighborhood residents. It is not a luxury but a vital necessity to think about these issues.

There are examples in communities in central cities, usually in gentrifying areas, where unsuccessful schools have been reformed, their image and their offerings have been changed, and what was once a principal barrier to the maintenance of an economically viable diverse community has become a major asset for the stability and attractiveness of the neighborhood. More than a million U.S. schoolchildren attend countywide school systems with desegregation plans, where the link between neighborhood isolation and school isolation has been broken and the school barrier to residential reinvestment does not exist. In school systems with magnet schools and other strategies for, in essence, creating new schools within old buildings, there are many possibilities for approaching this problem.

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