PREFACE

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T o me, this eighth volume in *The Soul of Educational Leadership* series, "Leadership for Family and Community Involvement," feels closely related to Volume 6, "Leaders as Communicators and Diplomats." Both volumes feature enormously important roles of education leaders that are often obscured by the everyday demands that clamor for any leader's attention. In Volume 6, a cadre of superintendents and national leaders wrote with firsthand knowledge of the leadership skills necessary to unite disparate followers in common cause. This current volume goes beyond leadership skills to probe the pivotal roles of families and community organizations in school success.

Since our initial discussions early in 2006, the three editors of this series—Paul Houston, Alan Blankstein, and myself—have envisioned this long-term undertaking as providing leaders in education with a toolbox for enriching and sustaining their work. The oft-neglected task of replenishing our personal resources—sharpening our saw, as management guru Tom Peters once said—has been an organizing purpose of this series. From the beginning, we have aimed to provide contributions from leading thinkers and practitioners on the "soul work" of educational leadership.

To that end, Volumes 1 and 2—"Engaging Every Learner" and "Out-of-the-Box Leadership"—emphasized the importance of all

students in our society and called for transformative leadership, which can come only by thinking differently about the problems and challenges we face. Subsequent volumes addressed challenging issues that all leaders must confront; "Sustaining Professional Learning Communities" (Volume 3) and "Building Sustainable Leadership Capacity" (Volume 5) acknowledged in their duality the daunting challenge of holding on to and even improving valuable work, and of creating learning communities that have the power to support enduring change. Volumes 4 and 7 covered what might be considered the two extremes in leadership: spirituality and data. Volume 4, "Spirituality in Educational Leadership," acknowledged, as Paul Houston wrote, that "the work we do is really more of a calling and a mission than it is a job." At the opposite end of the leadership spectrum, Volume 7 delved into the nitty-gritty of using data, rather than allowing data to use you.

"Both research and common sense tell us that parents and educators share the same goal—student success—yet strong school/family/community partnerships are often elusive," assert Alan Blankstein and Pedro Noguera in this volume's opening chapter, "Engaging Families to Enhance Student Success." Blankstein, president of the HOPE Foundation (and an editor of this series), and Noguera, the Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at New York University and an urban sociologist who focuses on the ways in which schools are influenced by urban socioeconomic conditions, call on leaders to transform schools into "welcoming community hubs where every parent feels engaged, every student succeeds, and failure is not an option for any child."

In "Parents as Leaders: School, Family, and Community Partnerships in Two Districts," Mavis Sanders explores parent leadership and the interplay between power and partnerships, identifying factors that have supported the growth and sustainability of parent leadership and engagement. Sanders, assistant professor of education in the School of Professional Studies in Business and Education at Johns Hopkins University and research scientist at the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR), concludes that "Public engagement in education, therefore, is a process that requires preparation and effort from educators as well as district and parent leaders."

Susan Frelick Wooley, Cynthia Rosacker Glimpse, and Sheri DeBoe Johnson, authors of "Sharing the Dream: Engaging Families as

Partners in Supporting Student Success," are, respectively, executive director of the American School Health Association, coordinator of Communities of Practice and Information Services at the Technical Assistance Coordination Center of the Academy for Educational Development, and senior program specialist in family engagement for the National PTA. They caution that decades of research tell us that family involvement is far more than helping with homework, attending parent–teacher conferences, or volunteering in the classroom. They describe "what has and has not worked in partnering between schools and students' families."

"Schools can be more successful, in terms of both academic and social-emotional outcomes, when they help parents foster social-emotional and character development in their children in an emotionally intelligent way," maintain Yoni Schwab and Maurice Elias in "The 'What' and 'How' of Helping Parents Help Students Become Successful Learners." Schwab, a psychologist at the Windward School in White Plains, New York, and at the Institute for Behavior Therapy in New York City, and Elias, a professor of psychology at Rutgers University and vice chair of the Leadership Team of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) affirm that "Creativity, knowing the community, and engaging parents in the planning from the beginning are key ingredients to overcoming the obstacles to parent education."

"Both school and public librarians know that neither party can provide all the literacy services that are needed," writes Lesley S. J. Farmer in "Family Literacy: The Roles of School Libraries and Public Libraries." Professor Farmer, who coordinates the Librarianship Program at California State University, Long Beach, and has worked as a teacher-librarian in K–12 school settings as well as in public, special, and academic libraries, adds that "The real issue, therefore, is how to build a successful partnership based on a clear understanding of each librarian's role."

"Planned, regular, two-way communication is essential to building the kind of strong working relationships and active engagement essential to school success and student achievement," asserts Edward Moore in "Balancing Your Communication Ledger: Using Audits to Involve Communities and Build Support for Schools." An associate professor in the College of Communication at Rowan University who has served as associate director of the National School Public Relations Association, Moore advocates that communication audits

can ensure "a better understanding of what the community wants both now and in the future."

"Keep small problems small," advises Lin Kuzmich in "Manage the Molehill Before It Becomes a Mountain: Keeping Parent Interactions Productive for Students." An educational consultant, professor, and author from Loveland, Colorado, who also serves as a senior consultant for the International Center for Leadership in Education, Kuzmich notes that "Heading off small problems is about knowing your culture, your staff, your students, and your community." When you do so successfully, you create the opportunity "to be an instructional leader, to form relationships with students and staff, and to become the effective leader you wanted to be in the first place."

In "Raising the Village by Bringing Communities and Schools Together," Paul Houston states the issue very simply: "The key to student success in our fractured world is to find ways to get the community more engaged with children and to get our children more engaged with the community." Houston, recently retired executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, and now president of the Center for Empowered Leadership (and an editor of this series), presents a challenge to leaders: "School leadership today is about understanding that learning is a 24/7 proposition. The school plays an important role as facilitator of learning, but to truly make a difference in the lives of children, the whole 360 degrees of their existence must be taken into consideration."

As we observed in Volume 5, leaders don't lead alone. They must know how to lead others in common cause—and sometimes to remind others throughout any given community what the common cause is toward which we are all working. In this volume, as in the previous volumes in this series, we have amassed examples from decades of research and from exemplary practice to point the way toward success for schools and their communities. The gains to be realized from creating communities and schools that work in partnership are valuable beyond price.