
Foreword to the Second Edition

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*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

—Margaret Mead

I’ve enjoyed opportunities to work with Hank Rubin and know that he feels many of the same emotions as Margaret Mead when observing, writing about, and experiencing the daily collaborative efforts he sees in successful schools. So much of what we read and hear about education and schooling can be disheartening, filled with pessimism and blame. Hank Rubin emphasizes that our educational system is, indeed, rich with promise and achievement and that schools and teachers are key players in the educational equation. The message of this book is that families, communities, educators, business leaders and policy makers are engaged in an ongoing relationship and share responsibility for the education of our children and youth. This teamwork, this cooperative spirit should make us optimistic about our future . . . and deserves much more attention if we want to improve our schools and other public agencies to ensure that future.

The standards movement and the requirements of No Child Left Behind legislation made it abundantly clear: we can’t simply set goals and then punish people for not achieving them. We must pay attention to building the teams that will set the right goals and then work together to build the infrastructure and culture to achieve them. Isolating teachers and schools, neglecting cooperation and strong relationships *won’t* do. Research and years of experience have shown that forging a strong, positive bond between schools, families and communities *will do* what we need: build safe, secure and effective schools where children are challenged and motivated to learn at the highest levels.

This book is written for all of the people who touch the lives of children in schools and out. Hank Rubin challenges teachers, educational leaders,

volunteers, school board members, policy makers, and family members to model collaboration and make relationship building and relationship management an essential part of everyday life. The brief chapters in this book provide us with a broad array of tools and techniques, and a wide range of strategies to support and guide our efforts at increasing the effectiveness of our schools through this cooperative effort.

A review of the table of contents reveals the depth of what is found in these pages. Both updated and expanded from its first edition, the book starts by giving us definitions, principles, ways to think about and talk about collaboration, and compelling arguments for why this is important. It's hard to imagine anyone leaving these chapters without a serious and renewed commitment to collaboration. Collaboration's Life Cycle and the Dimensions of Collaboration also have been updated in this edition. And this edition introduces Constellations of Collaboration, new assessment and planning tools, a strong research agenda, and more.

Hank Rubin has devoted much of his professional life to researching and working on collaborative processes as a teacher, professor, dean, civic and education leader, and active consultant. The lessons he shares, he's learned through interviews, observations and scores of hands-on experiences beginning with his convening of the groundbreaking Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance in the 1980's to his current work in support of preK–20 partnerships for 21st century public education. With intellectual depth, the reflection you would expect of a serious teacher, and the social observations of a deeply empathic and caring colleague, Hank has practiced the process at personal and practical levels and has experienced the power of these concepts to effect and sustain change. His experiences and perspectives have shaped this book, enabled him to talk to us in language we all will understand and that will cause us each to think and react intentionally to situations where relationships can be built and managed with foresight and effectiveness.

I like to think that the greatest success of any life is the moment when a teacher touches a child's heart and it is never again the same . . . Everything America hopes to be depends upon what happens in our school's classrooms.

—Frosty Troy

While teachers have to touch children's hearts, unless we all strive to do the same thing any individual teacher's efforts may well be lost. Teachers and schools cannot accomplish each child's learning and achievement goals in isolation. All people who have responsibility in children's lives should not simply read this book, but be prepared to turn the ideas contained within it into practice, help children turn their dreams into reality. We should use the ideas to build stronger collaborative foundations for our children, their schools, and their future.