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T h r i v i n g T o g e t h e r

Connecting Rural School Improvement and
Community Development

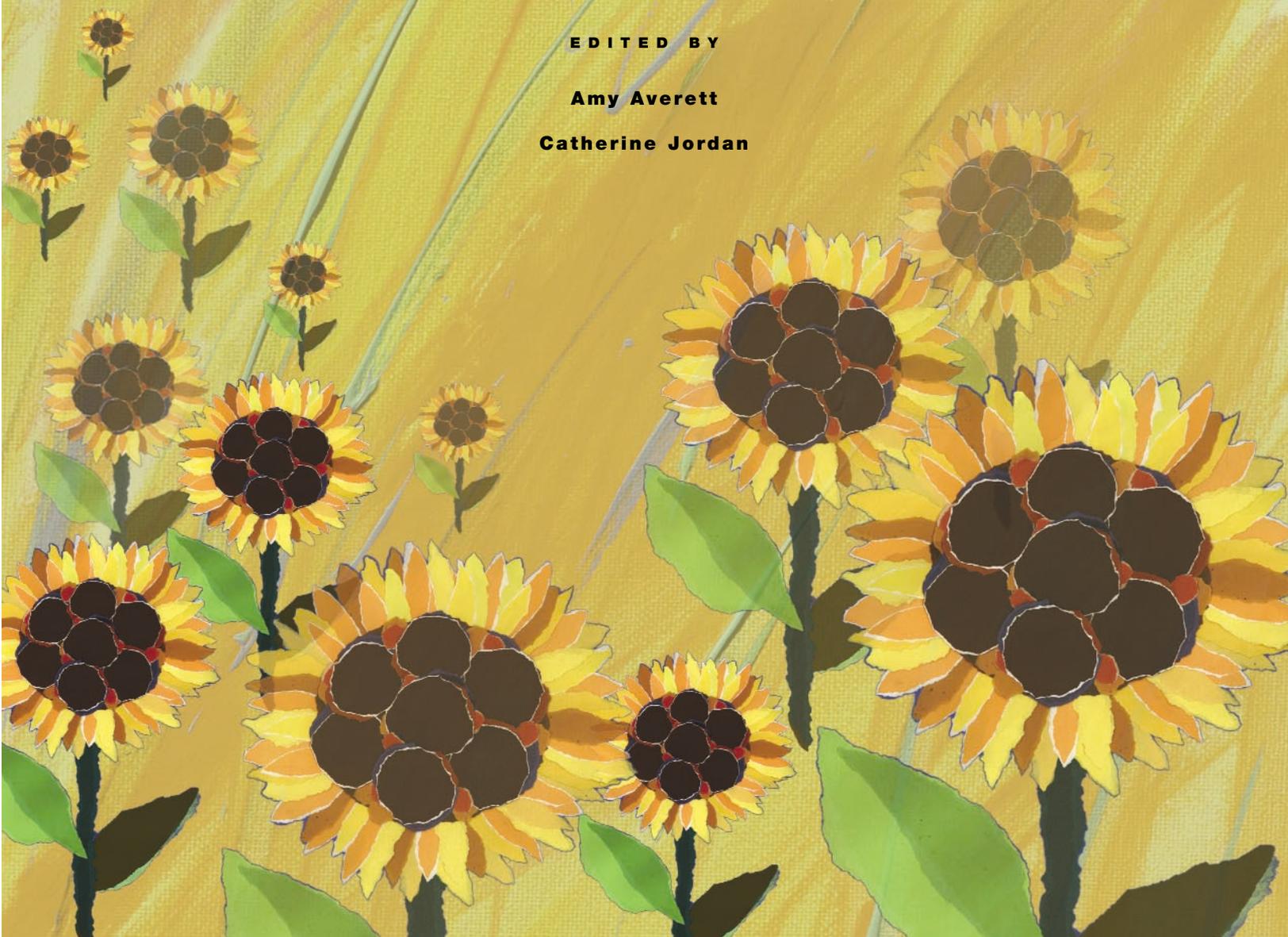
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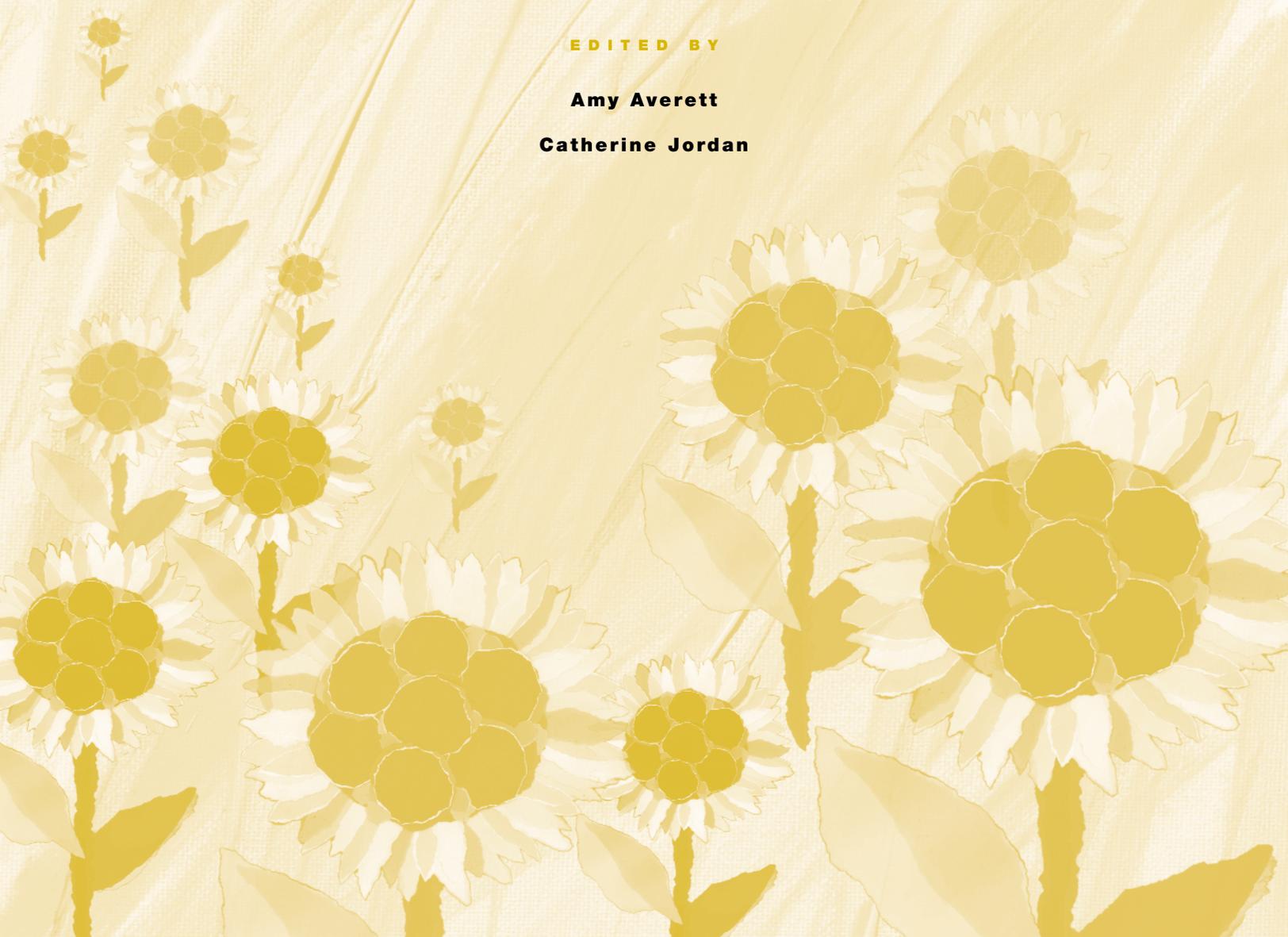
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1. Introduction

What Do We Mean by “Integrated School Improvement–Community Development”?

By this mouthful of a term, we mean more than a partnership between a school and some element within the surrounding locale. We do mean a partnership—but one that directly benefits both the school and the community. When the members of such a partnership set their goals, they look at both sides of this equation. Most strategies for joint school-community development fit into one of three major categories identified by rural education expert Bruce A. Miller.¹ His three categories serve as the organizing principle for the “nuts and bolts” chapters of this guide:

The *school as a community center* involves rural schools serving “as both a resource for lifelong learning and as a vehicle for the delivery of a wide range of services” (p. 5). Activities include such things as making school facilities available to local residents for events after school hours, or starting adult education classes or a community health clinic on the school grounds.

The *community as curriculum* puts students into the community to perform services that are linked to students’ academic work, or to help document local history and culture. This approach, Miller says, emphasizes “the study of community in all its various dimensions” (p. 6).

School-based enterprise “places a major emphasis on developing entrepreneurial skills whereby students not only identify potential service needs in their rural communities, but actually establish a business to address those needs” (p. 6). Students learn valuable business skills, the community obtains needed products or services, and the local economy gets a boost. School-based enterprise also includes other school-to-work initiatives.

¹ Bruce A. Miller, “The role of rural schools in community development: Policy issues and implications.” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1995, pp. 163-172.

Purpose of the guide.

This resource guide is designed to help rural schools and communities to learn ways of supporting each other so that both can thrive. By working together, schools and their surrounding locales can...

- improve student motivation and achievement,
- strengthen the bond between students and the communities in which they live,
- build students' capacity to be good citizens as well as good workers, and
- strengthen community resources, both social and physical.

Who it's for.

Thriving Together is intended to help people from rural schools and communities who want to help themselves. You may be a teacher or principal, a parent or small business owner, a school board member, even a student. Whatever your role or position, if you possess...

- an understanding that rural schools and rural communities need each other in order to thrive,
- a sense that your neighbors might be willing to try some new things in order to get ahead,
- a sense that students, when properly challenged, can accomplish a lot more than most folks think, and
- the willingness to work long and hard and to be patient in expecting results...

...then this guide is for you.

Its contents.

This guide attempts to give you the background information and basic tools you need to get started with a joint school-community development effort. Chapters address:

- why such efforts are worthwhile, how they can strengthen both school and community, and whether your area needs a development project ([Chapter 2, Why Bother?](#)),

- some of the basic resources and characteristics communities need to succeed in this work, with an informal inventory of your school and community's readiness ([Chapter 3, What It Takes](#)),
- ways of using collaborative tools to improve your project's odds of success ([Chapter 4, A Team Approach to Making Things Happen](#)),
- types of projects that have been successful, with ideas and information you can adapt to fit local needs ([Chapters 5-7, Nuts and Bolts](#)),
- issues and concerns you'll likely need to address ([Chapter 8, Cautions and Concerns](#)), and
- people, organizations, materials, and Internet sites that can help you in your efforts ([Chapter 9, Resources](#)).

Overall, the guide offers four things: motivation, ideas, planning tools, and links to other resources. If you're starting from scratch, you may need all these items. If you've been at this for awhile, you may need only a new idea or two, or a few names and phone numbers. The guide is organized so that users can easily dip in and out, or move step-by-step through the entire process. Materials include...

- *background narrative*, helpful in familiarizing yourself with new concepts and terms, and in bolstering your "pitch" to other key players in the community,
- *fact sheets*, with statistics and other research-based information that can support your cause,
- *planning tools*, from project ideas to checklists to sample forms and procedures,
- *real-world examples*, to help bring abstract ideas to life,
- *references* for further reading, and
- *resources*, organizations and individuals who can offer help or materials.

Its philosophy.

The material in this guide reflects a particular set of basic beliefs. These beliefs, which have to do with the nature of learning, of community, of collaboration, and of change, are summarized below.

Its context.

This guide is a companion to another resource guide, *Creating Collaborative Action Teams: Working Together for Student Success*.

Statement of Beliefs about Effective School–Community Development Projects

Learning is an active, not a passive, process. Students learn best when they are engaged in solving problems that are meaningful to them, and when they have opportunities to talk about, and reflect on, what they are learning.

The purpose of schooling is to help students find productive roles as citizens within their local community, as well as members of the workforce.

One of the biggest problems we face today is that young people have been separated from the tasks and relationships that give purpose to adult lives. School, family, and community must work together to mend these broken links.

While many schools and communities share some common characteristics, every place is unique. Local problems require local solutions, and those

solutions must reflect local values and have broad community support.

A community is not a community if it cannot embrace all of its members. Factions and groups must learn that they can work together for common good without sacrificing their identity or integrity.

Though working as a group can seem slower and more cumbersome than just pitching in there and getting things done, a collaborative effort is almost always stronger and more enduring. There are tools and processes that can make working as a group less frustrating and more effective.

Change, when you're working toward it, is excruciatingly slow. But if you sit back and wait for change to happen to you, it often comes swiftly, and in ways you never imagined or wanted.

Both have been developed through a project at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), which provides services and materials to educators in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The project focuses on strategies for collaborative work that can help school-community partnerships to make significant, long-term contributions to both community and school. SEDL has worked with a number of school sites—rural, urban, and suburban—to

establish Collaborative Action Teams composed of school staff, parents, students, and community members. The two resource guides draw from SEDL's experience with these local sites, as well as from the literature on **collaboration** and school-community partnerships.

The *Creating Collaborative Action Teams Guide* is designed for use by all schools; it focuses entirely on the collaborative process and ways of making it work effectively. This guide, aimed specifically at rural schools and communities, draws some of its material from the broader resource guide. But it also includes a focus on specific project approaches that have helped rural schools and communities to cope with problems common in rural areas. Although *Thriving Together* contains material that can be used by almost any school, it is based on the presumption that there are differences in the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities with which rural and urban schools and communities must cope.

The developers of this resource guide believe that the future of rural schools is inextricably linked to the future of their surrounding communities. In many ways, perhaps, rural areas are fortunate that their interdependence is so clearly visible. For in the larger scheme of things, all schools must look to the **community** to help students emerge as good citizens. As the visionary educator Joseph K. Hart stated back in 1924,

The democratic problem in education is not primarily a problem of training children: It is a problem of making a community in which children cannot help growing up to be democratic, intelligent, disciplined to freedom, reverent of the goods of life and eager to share in the tasks of the age. A school cannot produce this result; nothing but a community can do so. (p. 22)²

² Quoted in Edwin C. Nelson, "Community/school revitalization: Joining rural schools and towns together to empower young people and enhance their sense of belonging." *Small Town*, September-October, 1995.

2. Why Bother?

Just the Facts: Conflicting Goals for Rural Students

A study analyzing data from *High School and Beyond* found that “rural youth were more likely to leave their hometowns than metropolitan youth” (p. 134).³ A 1995 study “found that conflict over whether to stay or move was greater among rural as compared to nonrural adolescents. According to [this] data, rural youth felt ‘more empty and angry about their futures’” (p. 151).⁴

“Conventional wisdom asserts that a major advantage of rural settings is the value of highly personal relationships with family, the land, community values and traditions. Yet, factors associated with such community ties—community leadership, stewardship, family connections, civic affairs, social responsibility, voluntary service, close friendships, and other community contributions—all ranked in the bottom half of factors considered important for successful adulthood. Not only was this true among the ideals of the majority of rural young adults which were surveyed, but also for the expectations of more seasoned, mature parents and teachers. It would appear that personal career and economic success overshadowed more selfless concern for the common benefit of the community. Civic mindedness does not stand out as central to the ‘American dream’ . . .

“Rural communities concerned with long-term sustainability and survival see youth as their future. Yet, the importance of community leadership and activism, interpersonal connectedness, and stewardship of place are not attributes to which rural youth are expected to, nor do they, aspire. While a premium is placed upon personal character, it is not being invested in the local community” (pp. 139-140).⁵

³ Joyce Ley, Steven Nelson, and Svetlana Beltyukova, “Congruence of aspirations of rural youth with expectations held by parents and school staff.” Citing Pollard, O’Hare, and Berg (1990). *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Winter 1996, pp. 133-141.

⁴ Craig B. Howley, Hobart L. Harmon, and Gregory D. Leopold, “Rural scholars or bright rednecks? Aspirations for a sense of place among rural youth in Appalachia.” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Winter 1996, p. 151.

⁵ Joyce Ley et al., pp. 139-140.

Given everything that's already on your plate, why should you take up your valuable time with yet another project? And why should your neighbors and colleagues pay attention when you try to get them involved? To help decide how seriously your school and community need a change, read the paragraphs below—or skip to the checklists on pages 12 and 13.

The need for rural development.

In many rural areas, both communities and schools are under threat. For many country towns and villages, changes in agriculture, business, technology, and society have decimated the local economy and eroded the social cohesiveness that once characterized rural life. Farming and ranching are dominated by agribusiness enterprises. Manufacturing and industry keep moving to other countries. Rural residents must look to larger towns and cities for their livelihoods, moving away altogether or commuting long distances to work.

Most newcomers to the area are commuters, too, or retirees. Retired persons, living on fixed incomes, often tend to be frugal in their spending and reluctant to support bond initiatives or tax increases. And people who work in the city tend to spend their money in the city. The boom in mail order and Internet sales doesn't help, either. One by one, the little shops on Main Street close their doors, unable to compete with the big discount stores, suburban shopping malls, and dot.com enterprises.

Another problem faced by many rural communities is the degradation of the local environment, due to big companies or big cities that look to the countryside either as a cheap and easy source of things they need—water, minerals, room to grow—or as a garbage dump. As rural expert Bruce A. Miller points out,

Rural America has become the dumping ground for the waste products of urban core areas. With the decline in extractive industries, the quality of the environment may be one of the last marketable resources available in many rural communities. (p. 100)⁶

⁶ Bruce A. Miller, "Rural distress and survival: The school and the importance of 'community.'" *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Fall 1993, pp. 84-103.

Rural schools in turn suffer from the drain of dollars and people. As the remaining residents loosen their ties to the local **community**, support for the school—once a center of daily life in many locales—erodes even further. Many rural districts lack the resources to maintain school buildings, much less to offer competitive teacher salaries or support instructional reforms. At the same time, rural schools must address the issues that face educational systems across the nation: how to strengthen student achievement, how to work effectively with diverse student populations, how to engage students whose connections to the values and responsibilities of human citizenship seem ever-more tenuous.

What school-community partnerships have to offer.

Integrated school-community projects benefit the community in many ways. They can stimulate the local economy, through entrepreneurial activities that generate income and encourage residents to shop at home. They can help make the community a more appealing place to live, by providing needed services, improving the local environment, and offering quality education. And they can strengthen the bonds of community, encouraging residents to take part, and take pride, in local culture and history.

Schools benefit in equal measure. Rural schools gain resources, directly through community contributions of time, expertise, or funds, and indirectly, through a strengthened local economy and broader support for educational initiatives. Schools develop an academic program that is rooted in principles of effective teaching and learning; students learn experientially and are able to see the connections between their academic subjects and the world around them. Perhaps most important, schools develop ways of coping with “the single most important problem that American society faces in its effort to educate children”:

Young people [have] become segregated from the structure of responsibilities and rewards of the productive adult society. As a result, children and adolescents face historically unprecedented challenges in finding a sense of purpose in their schooling tasks and a sense of connection with adult roles of authority and responsibility. (pp.129-130)⁷

Education that links school and **community** can restore students' sense of purpose, by helping them to become effective community members as well as productive workers. A central element of this approach is attention to place. By looking to, and at, the local community—recognizing “the strength of places and cultures that have usually been identified by their putative weaknesses”⁸—students gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in family, community, and society. As Jack Shelton, founder of the PACERS Small Schools Cooperative, puts it:

In schools not connected to place, kids don't have a role and they're anonymous; the teachers are anonymous; the places are anonymous. I don't believe morality is a function of anonymity. (p. 28)⁹

⁷ T.B. Hoffer and James S. Coleman, “Changing families and communities: Implications for schools.” 89th Yearbook, Part 2, pp. 118-134. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

⁸ Toni Haas and Robin Lambert, “To establish the bonds of common purpose and mutual enjoyment.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 1995, p. 142.

⁹ “A life connected to community: An interview with Jack Shelton.” *The Active Learner*, Winter 2000, pp. 24-29.

Community Issues Checklist

For each item, use the scale below to note how big a problem it seems in your area; use the blank lines to list other problems, and rank them as well.

1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Pretty Big 4 = Huge

- 1 2 3 4 Industries moving, taking jobs with them.
- 1 2 3 4 Fewer and fewer jobs that pay a decent wage.
- 1 2 3 4 More people working two jobs to make ends meet.
- 1 2 3 4 Residents forced to move away to find work.
- 1 2 3 4 More people having to commute long distances.
- 1 2 3 4 Local businesses struggling for customers.
- 1 2 3 4 Local businesses forced to close.
- 1 2 3 4 Products and services not available locally.
- 1 2 3 4 Traffic congestion and safety problems.
- 1 2 3 4 Increasing air pollution.
- 1 2 3 4 Dwindling water supply or poor water quality.
- 1 2 3 4 Countryside getting torn up.
- 1 2 3 4 Hazardous wastes dumped nearby.
- 1 2 3 4 Community landmarks decaying or disappearing.
- 1 2 3 4 Declining interest in community events.
- 1 2 3 4 Fewer people concerned about their neighbors.
- 1 2 3 4 Fewer people stepping up as community leaders.
- 1 2 3 4 People losing touch with local history/culture.
- 1 2 3 4 _____
- 1 2 3 4 _____
- 1 2 3 4 _____

Now complete the school issues checklist (next page).

School Issues Checklist

For each item, note how big a problem it seems in your schools; use the blank lines to list and rank other problems.

1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Pretty Big 4 = Huge

- 1 2 3 4 Schools unable to meet state mandates.
- 1 2 3 4 Student achievement not what it should be.
- 1 2 3 4 Schools threatened with consolidation.
- 1 2 3 4 Schools limited in the courses they can offer.
- 1 2 3 4 School buildings in disrepair.
- 1 2 3 4 Schools unable to keep up with new technology.
- 1 2 3 4 Difficulty passing school bonds or tax increases.
- 1 2 3 4 School salaries below the state average.
- 1 2 3 4 Difficulty keeping good administrators.
- 1 2 3 4 Difficulty keeping good teachers.
- 1 2 3 4 Teachers losing their motivation for teaching.
- 1 2 3 4 Declining community support for school events.
- 1 2 3 4 Parents not involved in their kids' schooling.
- 1 2 3 4 Conflicts between school and community factions.
- 1 2 3 4 Greater numbers of troubled students.
- 1 2 3 4 Students less motivated to learn.
- 1 2 3 4 Student behavior problems increasing.
- 1 2 3 4 _____
- 1 2 3 4 _____
- 1 2 3 4 _____

If you marked any item as “pretty big” or “huge,” take a minute to compare this list with the community issues checklist. Do problems on one list link to problems on the other? School-community partnerships can help to address problems on both checklists.

“You drop a pebble in the water and it ripples out: The case of Balmorhea

Balmorhea, Texas (pop. 855) is a rural community in far west Texas. The nearest town of any size, the county seat of Pecos (pop. 11,852), is thirty miles away; to reach anything resembling a city, residents must drive to Odessa, nearly a hundred miles distant. Balmorhea’s roots go deep into Texas history. Indian tribes were irrigating crops from nearby springs when the first Spanish explorers came through in 1583. Since the late 1800s the town, whose population is predominantly Hispanic, has witnessed both booms and busts. In recent decades, however, Balmorhea has struggled economically, as has the rest of the county; countywide, the average weekly wage is just over \$300.

The school system has suffered, too. The district is poor, as are most students, with nearly 70 percent on free or reduced lunch. A single school serves all students, K-12. As recently as 1993, scores on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) hovered around the 20th percentile. But now, says assistant principal Michael Barrantey, average TAAS scores are in the 80s and still rising. Why the turnaround? A great deal of the credit, Barrantey reports, belongs to joint school-community development.

It all began in 1994, when Barrantey, at his superintendent’s suggestion, attended a service learning workshop. The workshop in turn led to a \$5,000 grant, which the district used to purchase supplies for the local EMS service and to plant trees in a deteriorating downtown park. These modest activities sparked a sense of possibility—and responsibility—that grows stronger each year. Today school, city, and county government work together on community improvement efforts.

The town also now boasts a school-based community health clinic, which students help operate; a school-operated weather station that provides data for area farmers and ranchers; and a technology

program through which students help community residents and businesses, repairing computer systems and providing guidance in their operation. Plans are underway for students to wire the school building for fiber optics. The school is also creating a parent involvement center that offers an adult GED program and training in technology use.

And the benefits of all these efforts? In addition to dramatic increases in TAAS scores, Barrantey notes, the school has seen growth in the percentage of students who go on to college, and in the number of adults getting their GEDs. And almost half the teaching staff is now “homegrown.”

In spite of such success, Balmorhea has faced problems that confront many change efforts. “It’s hard for people to accept change,” Barrantey explains. A couple of long-time teachers decided to retire rather than adapt to new community-based learning strategies. And, he says, problems arise due to the factionalism common in small towns. “There are still people who say, ‘I don’t want to get involved because I don’t like so-and-so.’ The difference is, with so much support, now it makes them look bad when they don’t participate.”

According to Barrantey, struggling communities don’t need miracles in order to succeed. “You have to think out of the box,” he says, and most small towns will need some help. In Balmorhea, the Region 18 Education Service Center provided early guidance. The health clinic operates in cooperation with Texas Tech University. But help is usually available for those who persist, he observes, and “sometimes it just takes a phone call.” The main thing, says Barrantey, is that residents—school staff not the least among them—must step up and take responsibility for making change happen. In Balmorhea, he says, “when people say ‘somebody needs to do something,’ somebody does something.”

3. What It Takes

Just the Facts: Declining Rural Populations

The rural population in the United States has dropped from more than half the population in 1910 to only a quarter of the national total. “In 1910 two-thirds of the people of rural America lived on farms... By 1990 only one of every sixteen rural people lived on a farm.” (pp. 64, 69)¹⁰

“Since 1984, U.S. public schools have been experiencing the effects of the Baby Boom echo and have been steadily increasing school enrollments... Yet this growth, described as a ‘population explosion’ by the U.S. [Department of Education], has largely bypassed rural public schools. Instead, rural schools throughout the country are losing students... When students leave schools, so does the money.”¹¹

“It is almost certain that the percentage of people who live and work outside metro areas will continue to decline in coming decades. The percentage of people who live and work in metro areas has risen inexorably each decade in the last fifty years.” (p. 115)¹²

¹⁰ John Fraser Hart, “Rural’ and ‘farm’ no longer mean the same.” In Emery N. Castle, Ed., *The changing American countryside: Rural people and places*. Lawrence Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1995.

¹¹ “Declining enrollment: Silent killer of rural communities.” *Rural Policy Matters*, May 2000, pp. 1-2.

¹² Edwin S. Mills, “The location of economic activity in rural and nonmetropolitan United States.” In Emery N. Castle, Ed., *The changing American countryside: Rural people and places*. Lawrence Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1995.

In spite of the challenges faced by so many rural areas—schools closing, industries and jobs disappearing, the tax base shrinking—some rural communities and their schools are finding ways to survive. The strategies they use are as varied as the surrounding landscapes. A great many, though, involve some form of joint school-community partnership, with the goal of improving outcomes for both sets of partners.

Changing roles for schools.

Such partnership activities offer tremendous benefits to students, the school system, and the **community** alike. But they require substantial changes from the usual ways in which schools function. As rural expert Bruce Miller cautions:

It needs to be kept in mind that the changes implied in building a community-school development project where students engage in community-based learning experiences are essentially questions about changing the way schools go about preparing rural youth for the future. (p. 7)¹³

What do such changes entail? The most important ones are changes in perspective, including:

- *Rethinking the school's function in the community.* The trend in recent years has been to distance schools from their surrounding environments. To support community-based education, however, it's necessary to reclaim the school's role as an integral part of the entire community's existence.
- *Changing ideas about students' capabilities.* Many people have become jaded in their attitudes about “kids today,” thinking of them—as a group—as pleasure-oriented, lazy, careless, or irresponsible. Experience shows, though, that students can help to direct their own learning; they can be helpful, attentive members of a collaborative group; and they can handle the responsibility of working in the community. In fact, most students seem hungry for these kinds of activities, once they see a connection to their own lives.

¹³ Bruce A. Miller, *The role of rural schools in community development: Policy issues and implications*. Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1995.

- *Expanding ideas about how effective teaching and learning can happen.* Traditionally, education is classroom- and textbook-bound; a student's measure of success is a test score. Community-based instruction is messier and more complicated than this traditional model. But it also reflects the characteristics of effective teaching and learning: experiential, problem-based instruction that relates to students' interests and experiences; opportunities to apply academic learning in real-world situations; provisions for students to have a voice in selecting learning activities; an emphasis on reflection through dialogue, journal-keeping, and the like; and a focus on major concepts and skills rather than on isolated facts.

These changes in attitude and belief also have implications for more practical changes in policy, procedures, and working relationships. For example, making the school more central to community life may mean changing procedures to allow broader community access into the school, as well as to allow students to get out into the community. Adapting the curriculum to allow for community-based learning may require some changes in class scheduling or teaching arrangements. (More on these in the “[Nuts and Bolts](#)” and “[Cautions and Safeguards](#)” chapters.)

Is your school ready for change?

The experience of a number of school-community partnerships across the country shows that school systems are often the most resistant to making changes needed for such partnerships to succeed. Sometimes the issue is turf, or money; sometimes it's a concern about liability. School personnel may worry about taking on a new effort and still meeting state mandates, or may have doubts about whether the new strategy will work. In many cases it's simply a reluctance to change the way things are.

The point here is not to be discouraging about the possibilities for change, but rather to issue a caution: *Never take the school system's support for granted.* This is important whether you are a teacher or the superintendent, the principal or a member of the school board. The worksheet at the end of the chapter is intended to help you to think through the kinds of support and resistance you are likely to encounter, and ways you might address people's concerns and fears.

Eight Characteristics of Rural Communities That Have Succeeded in Self-Development Projects

(This list is reproduced from the Ohio Planning Conference newsletter, October 1991; the items are based on the research of Drs. Cornelia and Jan L. Flora.)

1. In successful communities controversy was considered normal. It was expected. It was not treated as bad, wrong or abnormal—and neither were the people who presented it. Rather, controversy was regarded as a necessity of participatory governance.
2. People in successful towns held an objective view of politics. They did not side with someone out of friendship alone—neither did they oppose someone simply because that person was an educator, a business person, or a farmer.
3. The emphasis in schools was on academics rather than sports.
4. There was a willingness to take risks for the good of the town.
5. Successful towns had a willingness to tax themselves. They moved beyond want and desire into action.
6. Successful towns had the ability to expand; they made a place for more people—including those who were new to the community.
7. Successful towns had the ability to network vertically [up the hierarchy of governance and geographic spread] as well as horizontally [with other towns and groups like themselves].
8. Successful towns were flexible. They disbursed community leadership, with many people involved in the work and mission of the community.

Is your community ready for change?

For a joint development project to work, the community surrounding the school also must be ready for change. Several major research studies have identified community characteristics that seem to play an important part in determining whether a rural area will undertake, and succeed in, local self-help efforts. Key characteristics include:

- *risk-taking*, which includes the belief that it's possible to make changes work, and the willingness to risk time, effort and resources,
- *inclusiveness*, which refers to the habit of involving a broad, diverse range of community members (including newcomers, women, members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and members of different community factions) in decisions, activities, and leadership roles,

- *acceptance of controversy*, or the willingness to discuss issues and work through to a mutually agreeable solution, and
- the ability and willingness to *link to outsiders* who can help with joint activities, advice, expertise, or resources.

It also helps to have a sense of urgency about the need for change. In a great majority of cases, rural school and/or community development efforts have been spurred by a specific problem or crisis—the threat of consolidation, for example, or the closing of a mine or factory that’s led to an economic downturn in the area.

The worksheet on page 23 is intended to help you to informally take stock of attitudes and conditions within your local community that might support or hinder a change effort. Like the school system readiness worksheet, this form is not meant to be a definitive assessment, but rather to help you and others working with you to organize your thoughts and to make realistic plans as to how to proceed.

Twenty Clues to Rural Community Survival

(This list is reproduced from the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Lincoln, Nebraska. It was reprinted in *What’s Noteworthy on Rural Schools and Community Development*, Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory, Aurora, Colorado, n.d.)

1. Evidence of community pride
2. Emphasis on quality in business and community life
3. Willingness to invest in the future
4. Participatory approach to community decision making
5. Cooperative community spirit
6. Realistic appraisal of future opportunities
7. Awareness of competitive positioning
8. Knowledge of the physical environment
9. Active economic development program
10. Deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders
11. Acceptance of women in leadership roles
12. Strong belief in and support for education
13. Problem-solving approach to providing health care
14. Strong multi-generational family orientation
15. Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life
16. Sound and well-maintained infrastructure
17. Careful use of fiscal resources
18. Sophisticated use of information resources
19. Willingness to seek help from the outside
20. Conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself

Starting small.

Even if the results of your informal readiness assessments are discouraging, don't lose heart. It is almost always possible to find a starting place, however small. In fact, most guides to community partnerships and other similar change efforts specifically recommend starting on a small scale. The trick is not to stay small. Rather, begin with a manageable effort with a good likelihood of success and support, and then grow incrementally.

Informally Assessing School Support and Resistance for a School-Community Development Project

Use this worksheet to take stock of likely support and resistance within your school, and to brainstorm ways of addressing concerns. In addition to filling it out yourself, ask other community and school representatives to complete the worksheet.

ROLE	REASONS FOR SUPPORTING	LIKELY CONCERNS/ RESISTANCE	WAYS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS
TEACHERS			
PRINCIPAL(S)			
SUPERINTENDENT			
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS			
PARENTS			
STUDENTS			

Informally Assessing Your Community’s Readiness for A School–Community Development Effort

For each of the following items, list your perceptions about community conditions or attitudes that might help or hinder a school-community development project. Ask several other community members to do the same thing, then compare notes. Don’t let negative items discourage you, unless they’re overwhelming—very few communities will have a virtually empty “negatives” column.

READINESS ELEMENT	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
RESIDENTS’ CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNITY’S HEALTH		
OPENNESS TO RISK AND NEW IDEAS FITTING COMMUNITY VALUES		
FACTIONALISM, IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND IN THE COMMUNITY		
AVAILABILITY OF KEY FOLKS WHO CAN WORK ON A NEW EFFORT		
AVAILABILITY OF KEY FOLKS WHO CAN HELP TO CREATE BROAD SUPPORT		
HISTORY OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF SIMILAR PROJECTS		
CURRENT OR POTENTIAL LINKAGES TO OUTSIDE RESOURCES		

4. A Team Approach to Making Things Happen

How Do We Define a Community?

A community is “a group in which membership is valued as an end in itself. The community’s members share a commitment to stability, subscribe to a set of common social norms, and maintain a sense of shared identity. In addition, the people have enduring and extensive personal contacts with each other. Lastly, a community concerns itself with many significant aspects of the members’ lives, tolerates competing factions, and has procedures for handling conflict” (p. 10).¹⁴

“Community can be thought of as a social space occupied by members who perceive common traditions and ways of doing things as well as problems that affect the vitality and viability of their community. Communities become effective when they organize themselves to address and resolve their commonly perceived problems. It is that quality that Peshkin (1982) refers to as community integrity—sense of unity and wholeness shared by members” (p. 31).¹⁵

“In the classroom, integrating curriculum and community is about concrete details. And, as they say, the devil is in the detail. And here is the devil’s challenge. Create learning experiences that: build a group identity and sense of ‘we’ among teachers and learners; help learners become part of a community larger than their own; use communities as learning laboratories; and ensure that the skills, traits, and habits that provide access to educational and professional choices are acquired. Perhaps the most basic ‘detail’ is also the most obvious and least noticed. That is the very notion of ‘the’ community. Even when children look and dress alike, carry the same lunch boxes and backpacks, speak the same dialect, or live in houses or apartment buildings that look very much alike, communities have their own cultures and standards. And whether we recognize the differences or not, these communities [within the larger community] have strict boundaries and a well-defined pecking order. So, there is great significance in whose community is included and for what purpose” (p. 43).¹⁶

¹⁴ M. W. Galbraith, Ed., *Education in the rural American community*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1992. Citing Fellin, 1987.

¹⁵ Daryl Hobbs, “The rural context for education: Adjusting the images.” In M. W. Galbraith, Ed., *Education in the rural American community*, pp. 21-41.

¹⁶ Bobby Ann Starnes, “From Otello Avenue to Shakespeare and back again.” *The Active Learner*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 2000, pp. 43-44.

*Material in this chapter is reproduced in abbreviated form, with slight adaptations, from the introductory section of another publication, **Creating Collaborative Action Teams: Working Together for Student Success**. For in-depth guidance in implementing the collaborative approach described here, readers are encouraged to obtain the complete publication. For purchasing information, contact the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701; telephone 512/476-6861; www.sedl.org.*

Research conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) supports the idea that collaboration, local control, and self-reliance are keys to achieving successful results in schools and communities. Collaboration happens when people and organizations come together to achieve common goals. The result is that they often accomplish more together than they would working separately. (See the following page, for a definition of *collaboration*.)

Local control and self-reliance occur when local people determine how to make things happen in their own communities. As people begin to work together, they realize the many strengths and resources that exist in their own backyard. They also take responsibility for making things happen, instead of waiting for someone else to provide solutions.

The Collaborative Action Team process.

Recognizing the benefits of addressing issues through collaboration, SEDL has developed a process that schools and their surrounding communities can use to build partnerships at the local level. The process brings people together and helps them learn how to work collaboratively. It guides the development of teams composed of family members, community representatives, school personnel and students. These team members make plans and take action together to address pressing issues facing their schools and community.

Combining team building and action planning to mobilize your team.

SEDL's Collaborative Action Team process combines **team building** and action planning to enable teams both to function well together

and to accomplish their goals. *Team building* focuses on how team members work together while respecting each individual's unique strengths. Mutual respect and trust grow as relationships and shared experiences develop. Members build team relationships by:

- Getting to know each other,
- Talking constructively from differing viewpoints, and
- Undertaking projects together.

Action planning helps your team develop and achieve its vision, mission, and goals. You prioritize, strategize, assign tasks and evaluate progress. Action planning also helps you produce fast visible results. You take manageable steps that help move your team forward.

What Do We Mean by Collaboration?

The word collaboration is frequently used interchangeably with similar words such as networking, cooperation, and coordination. However, its meaning differs from those of other words. The difference lies in the extent to which people share resources and use power and authority to achieve goals they can't accomplish independently.¹⁷

Collaboration describes a more formal and ongoing arrangement than does networking, cooperation, or coordination. It brings separate organizations or individuals into a new relationship with a joint commitment to a common purpose. Risk is greater because team members' reputations are at stake. They pool their resources and share the products of their work. Here's a common definition of collaboration:

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by

two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals, mutual authority and accountability for success and sharing of resources and rewards.¹⁸

Those in collaborative relationships view each other as partners. Each partner enhances the other's capacity to define excellence, set mutual goals and use their own personal and institutional power to achieve them.¹⁹ Collaboration also implies a style of work and a sense of community in which members deliberately decide to do things as a whole. They see themselves as complementary and mutually supportive contributors to the entire community.

¹⁷ S.L. Kagan, *United we stand: Collaboration for child care and early education*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1991.

¹⁸ P.W. Mattesich and B.R. Monsey, *Collaboration: What makes it work*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992.

¹⁹ A.T. Himmelman, *Communities working collaboratively for a change*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Himmelman Consulting Group, 1992.

Core concepts that guide the process.

SEDL's **Collaborative Action Team process** brings the characteristics of true collaboration to the school environment by developing a partnership between a school and its community. Then it helps your team to develop and follow an action plan and to use local resources in resolving problems. During this process, you develop a sense of momentum that helps your team move forward.

Four core concepts form the foundation of the Collaborative Action Team process:

- *Representative membership*—Each team contains a cross-section of the school and community that is consistently represented at meetings and actively involved in making decisions. This includes family members, community representatives, school personnel, and students. Representative membership enhances collaboration by helping the team develop a more comprehensive response to school and community needs. This concept reinforces local control and self-reliance.
- *Shared leadership*—Each team equally distributes leadership roles and responsibilities among all its members. Team members see themselves as a group of leaders working to benefit students, their families, and the community. All team members are equally included in representing the team, making decisions, carrying responsibilities and sharing success. Shared leadership builds true collaboration because it enhances commitment and willingness to work as a team. It also sustains individual energy, minimizes burnout and expands the community's leadership pool.
- *Consensus decision making*—Each team makes decisions that best reflect the viewpoints of all involved and that all members agree to support. This requires that team members develop the ability to discuss issues, listen to each other, address their differences, work to resolve them and reach decisions based on general agreement. Consensus decision making might take more time and effort than other forms of group decision making, such as voting. However, it minimizes conflict and maximizes commitment and willingness to take action together in the long run.

- *Action focus*—The underlying purpose of a Collaborative Action Team is to take action to improve the school and community, in the short run and in the long run. Describing a team vision and mission, setting goals and forming strategies are activities that prepare a team for action. As members take on roles and responsibilities and follow up on mutual decisions, they generate momentum for action, which leads to success.

Stages in the collaborative process.

The **Collaborative Action Team process** has five stages. To help groups through each stage, SEDL has developed a series of steps with corresponding activities. Some activities focus more on **team building**. Others focus more on **action planning**. However, successful teams engage in both kinds of activities throughout the entire process.

What Does Collaboration Have to Do with Gardening?

The gardening metaphors that you'll see throughout these stage descriptions are intended to help you understand how the stages of the collaborative process fit together to support your efforts. The gardening metaphor is fitting for a guide to collaboration, since collaborations “grow” gradually, much like gardens do. Gardeners must be patient, as seeds sprout slowly and mature over an entire growing season, and sometimes (as with strawberries, for example) over several years.

Gardeners must first do “groundwork”—preparing the soil and planning their garden. All along the way, they must decide what work needs to be done and who will do it, to help plants thrive. Gardeners must constantly monitor and adjust their care to fit the needs of different plants. They must also deal with problems, such as weeds and insects, that might weaken the plants. Gardeners know that the most healthy, vibrant gardens include a rich variety of plants and flowers. Finally, gardeners enjoy seeing visible changes as their garden flourishes and as they harvest the fruits of their labor.

Stage 1: Getting Started. As gardeners begin planting, they must do some preliminary work to prepare the soil. They must loosen hard-packed dirt and add fertilizer or compost to ensure that plants have the rich nutrients they need to grow. They must also ensure that soil is well-drained, so plants receive the right amount of water to grow. Taking time to prepare the soil helps ensure the right conditions for plants to thrive.

A Collaborative Action Team also must take time to do its “groundwork” to get the team started on the right foot. One such preliminary step is assessing the school and **community** environment to ensure that conditions are right to start a team. Another is to make certain all the right elements are present to nourish and support a healthy **collaboration**.

This stage involves learning about the Collaborative Action Team process, getting your team organized and building a working team. Sometimes the people on your team will be meeting for the first time. In other cases, you may already be working together and want to learn the process before taking any further action. Stage 1 activities include the following:

- Introduce the process
- Gather school-community information, and
- Plan the first steps.

This stage provides the foundation for success. Be sure to complete this stage before you move on to any other.

Stage 2: Mobilizing the Team. Once gardeners have prepared the soil, they’re ready to make some decisions about their garden. They must think about what kinds of seeds to plant to produce a garden rich in variety. The types of seeds they choose depend on many factors, including the amount of light and water available in the garden. Gardeners also must plan how the garden will be maintained—how often to water and fertilize, and when to prune. Finally, everyone must understand their roles in making the garden a success.

Your Collaborative Action Team also must decide how it will operate—including how the team will communicate and make decisions. The team must begin to think about individual people to include on the team to ensure that it is richly diverse. Stage 2 activities, then, include the following:

- Establish representative membership,
- Determine communication ground rules,
- Build common understanding,
- Support consensus decision making, and
- Identify shared leadership opportunities.

Stage 3: Setting Direction. At the culmination of this stage, gardeners are ready to plant their seeds in the garden. They have come together with a “vision” of the results they want and have planned accordingly. They understand that establishing a garden is a slow process and that careful planning will produce good results. As everyone plants their seeds, they start getting an idea of the overall landscape that will bloom from their efforts.

A Collaborative Action Team also must have a vision for what they want to produce. This vision will guide them as they move into action. As your team develops its mission and goals, team members begin getting a clearer picture of the potential results they’re cultivating.

This stage involves creating a team identity and purpose, and agreeing on goals. Activities include the following:

- Agree on a vision,
- Identify and prioritize issues,
- Develop a mission statement,
- Set team goals, and
- Communicate your message.

Stage 4: Taking Action. Once the seeds are planted, the hard work of maintaining the garden begins. Gardeners must pay careful attention to ensure that plants grow up healthy and hardy. Gardeners must deal with weeds and insects that threaten the health of plants. They also must pay close attention to growing conditions and adjust the amount of water and fertilizer accordingly. Gardeners usually find that some plant varieties grow easily, with very little care, while others require constant attention. This careful monitoring and maintenance will be worth the effort, though, as gardeners begin seeing the results of their efforts.

As the Collaborative Action Team implements its action plan, the team also will require monitoring and maintenance. Team members will find that some projects fall into place easily, while others require hard work and constant attention. The team also may find barriers they need to address for the team to continue to flourish. At the same time, however, team members will begin to see positive results as the team progresses and change starts to blossom.

This stage involves getting more specific about how you will achieve goals, share responsibilities, and monitor your progress. Activities include:

- Develop strategies,
- Determine necessary tasks,
- Establish evaluation methods,
- Monitor progress, and
- Expand network opportunities.

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining. As a result of their hard work, the gardeners have created a healthy, diverse, fruitful garden. They now can enjoy the harvest. At the same time, they will reflect back on the growing season and ask themselves, “What plants did particularly well?” and “What plants failed to thrive, despite our efforts?” This reflection helps gardeners learn from their experiences and plan for the next season, so that their garden will grow more vibrant and productive every year.

Your Collaborative Action Team also will have successes to celebrate. Team members should be recognized for their contributions. The team needs to take time to reflect on the challenges it has faced and to consider what changes to make in the future. This helps the team to become stronger and more effective over time.

Stage 5, then, involves celebrating achievements, reviewing what has worked and what has not, and making adjustments for the next steps. Activities include:

- Assess team effectiveness,
- Celebrate your successes, and
- Increase effectiveness and impact.

A Summary of SEDL's Collaborative Action Team Process

What it is: A set of concepts, activities and resources that groups can use to develop a partnership among home, school, students, and the community at the local level. Partnership teams identify pressing issues and take action to address those issues. Core concepts: (1) representative membership, (2) shared leadership, (3) consensus decision making, and (4) action focus

Stages and activities in the process:

Stage 1: Getting Started

- Introduce the process.
- Gather school-community information.
- Plan the first steps.

Set team goals.

Communicate your message.

Stage 2: Mobilizing the Team

- Establish representative membership.
- Determine communication ground rules.
- Build common understanding.
- Support consensus decision making.
- Identify shared leadership opportunities.

Stage 4: Taking Action

- Develop strategies.
- Determine necessary tasks.
- Establish evaluation methods.
- Monitor progress.
- Expand network opportunities.

Stage 3: Setting Direction

- Agree on a vision.
- Identify and prioritize issues.
- Develop a mission statement.

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining

- Assess team effectiveness.
- Celebrate your successes.
- Increase effectiveness and impact.

How SEDL's Collaborative Action Team process can support your school-community development effort.

Attempting significant change within a community is a large and risky undertaking. Likewise it's often hard to get a group to work well together, especially when the group is composed of busy people with different interests and perspectives. By using the **Collaborative Action Team process**—that is, by keeping to its basic principles and by moving deliberately through its five stages with help from the structured activities developed by **SEDL** staff—groups can increase their chances of success. The process helps to assure that:

- You avoid many of the pitfalls that have befallen other change efforts.

- You start with a broad base of involvement so that your goals and strategies are likely to be supported by the community.
- You build skills within your working group, so that people can become more effective at both collaboration and action.
- You work steadily but gradually toward your desired goals.

SEDL's **Collaborative Action Team process** is generic in the sense that it is not aimed toward any specific goal or action strategy. Rather, it presumes that each group can best determine its own goals and methods of meeting those goals. In planning your school-community development effort, you can use the Collaborative Action Team process to help organize and mobilize a group; the group then can decide what's most important for your community and what action projects to undertake. The specific project may be one of those described in upcoming sections of this guide (see the "**Nuts and Bolts**" chapters), or it may be something entirely of your own devising.

You may think, as many others have: *All this process stuff may be fine for some, but it's way too slow. We just need to get going and get things done.* And of course everything that needs doing needed to be done yesterday. But where far too many change efforts founder is in underestimating the importance of—and the effort required in—building a group that can both work well together and get things done in the community. As you decide how to proceed, keep in mind the words of Don Anderson, who created the National Alliance for Southern Poor, one of the most effective organizations in the United States for helping poor communities to strengthen their resources:

Organization is the key to power and economics...
You can't have self-help unless there is some means of collective decisionmaking. That is where I believe most... efforts fall short. They begin with a program, and not a structure or organization.²⁰

²⁰ Quoted in K. Prager, "Community partnerships bring community revitalization." *Issues in Restructuring Schools*, Fall 1993.

5. The Nuts and Bolts of Integrated School Improvement-Community Development: The School as Community Center

Just the Facts: After-School Programs

“According to recent surveys, nearly 80 percent of parents want their child to participate in an after-school program. But only 30 percent of public elementary and middle schools offer such programs.”²¹

“Juvenile crime triples starting at 3 p.m. In fact the 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. period—“Crime Time”—now accounts for more than 50 percent of all youth offenses.”²²

“The current school schedule—six hours a day, nine months a year—was invented when the United States was an agrarian nation and children were needed in the fields.”²³

“The schools in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, are now open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and there are plans to open a K-8 year-round school. This schedule grew out of a concern by parents and educators about the number of latch-key children in the community. On any given day more than half of the [community’s] elementary school students can be found in the extended-day program.”²⁴

“Researchers have identified three major functions of after-school programs: providing supervision, offering enriching experiences and positive social interaction, and improving academic achievement.”²⁵

²¹ “Fact Sheet,” in *Making after-school count!* Briefing packet for teleconference with Vice President Al Gore. U.S. Department of Education and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, n.d., n.p.

²² Jonathan Alter, “It’s 4:00 p.m. Do you know where your children are?” *Newsweek*, April 27, 1998, pp. 28-33.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ U.S. Department of Education, *Strong families, strong schools: Building community partnerships for learning*. Washington, D.C.: Author, September 1994.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, *Safe and smart II: making after-school hours work for kids*. Washington, D.C.: Author, March 2000.

Before our educational system began modeling itself on the principles of the industrial age, schools served as one of the most important centers of their local community. Social activities often centered around school events; civic groups met at the school after hours; students and teachers pitched in to help in times of crisis. Now, experts say, it's time for schools to reclaim their roles as vital community centers. Doing so, especially in stressed rural areas, can be essential to both school success and community survival.

Among the various ways that schools and communities can work together toward mutual goals, the *school as community center* involves activities that bring the community into the school. The school's role expands to include:

- new audiences (parents, other adults, community groups),
- new schedules (after-school or summer programs, expanded hours for use of school facilities), and/or
- new functions (offering parent or other adult education, allowing school facilities or resources to be used by community members, providing social or health services for students or their families).

As indicated above, there are many possibilities for activities that will draw the community back toward the school. These may be as modest as opening the school doors an hour earlier each morning, so that students can arrive early to use the school's computers. Or they may be as complex as working with other agencies and parents to establish a school-based center that provides health, social, and vocational services for both students and their families.

The planning worksheet at the end of the chapter can help you and your colleagues to brainstorm about relatively simple ways of expanding access to school resources or starting specific adult education or student enrichment classes. To plan for a comprehensive after-hours student enrichment program or an **integrated services** program, though, you will need to conduct a much more extensive needs assessment and community resource inventory. Because of their complexity, these two types of activity will be explored in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

After-school and summer programs.

Educational and enrichment programs appeal to many schools, because both demand and benefits are high (see “Just the Facts” at the beginning of this chapter). Another reason for their appeal is that such programs stay well within the traditional educational role for schools. It is possible, though, to set up your enrichment program in ways that maximize community involvement.

Components of Exemplary After-School Programs

Reprinted from *Safe and Smart II: Making After-School Hours Work for Kids*, U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, March 2000. The publication is available on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.ed.gov> or <http://www.ncjrs.org/ojhome.htm>. Or contact the U.S. Department of Education, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173, 1-800-USA-LEARN.

- Goal setting, strong management, and sustainability. Programs need to set and communicate goals from the beginning, develop a solid organizational structure, manage effectively, and plan for long-term sustainability.
- Quality after-school staffing. All programs need staff who are qualified and committed, have appropriate experience and realistic expectations, and can interact productively with regular school staff.
- Attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues. Programs should be safe, close to home, and accessible to all children and youth who want to participate. Good after-school programs provide a nutritious snack and other meals when appropriate.
- Effective partnerships with community-based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups. Effective programs draw on all of the community’s diverse resources, including the participation of children and youth in program planning.
- Strong involvement of families. When programs incorporate the ideas of parents and their children, activities tend to be more fun and culturally relevant and tend to capture children’s and adolescents’ interests better.
- Enriching learning opportunities. A wide variety of enriching and engaging activities can be offered. Opportunities not found during the regular school day—such as art, music, and drama, can complement the regular school day program.
- Linkages between school day and after-school personnel. These include regular meetings for planning and discussion.
- Evaluation of program progress and effectiveness. A system of accountability and continuous evaluation supports program improvement.

Activities in enrichment programs may include:

- tutoring and supplemental instruction in basic subjects,
- drug- and violence-prevention activities and counseling,
- youth leadership activities such as scouting or academic clubs,

- volunteer and community service activities,
- college awareness and preparation,
- help with homework,
- arts-based curricula and activities,
- technology instruction,
- language instruction,
- career exploration,
- job preparation or training,
- mentoring,
- athletic programs, and/or
- supervised recreation.²⁶

Some of these activities, by their very nature, involve partnerships with community representatives. Others can be adapted to be community-based or to involve local volunteers:

Communities can provide a wide range of resources for developing high-quality programs, such as funding, facilities, materials, expertise, job observation experiences, mentors, tutors, and community service and learning experiences. Advisory boards help maintain strong links among the community, families, community-based organizations, religious organizations, employers, and the school system... These boards can help the community conduct an inventory of existing after-school resources, such as opportunities for Boys and Girls Clubs or local churches and identify the needs of students in a neighborhood. (p. 42)²⁷

One of the biggest pitfalls of after-school and summer enrichment programs is their tendency to merely “baby-sit” kids. As the joint U.S. Department of Education-Department of Justice guide, *Safe and Smart II: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids*, concludes, “Many programs allow children to spend far too much time in passive activities such as television or video viewing” (p. 35). Reasons for poor quality programs often include a lack of access to

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

appropriate facilities, poorly trained and paid staff, and too-high ratios of student participants to staff. Characteristics of high quality programs are listed on page 36.

Integrated services for students and/or their families.

Sometimes referred to as “comprehensive services” or “school-linked services,” this activity involves “integrating existing health and human services with the school to bring about a more focused and effective approach to helping children” (p. 13).²⁸ The focus on integrated services has grown out of two understandings:

- Students’ capacity for learning is influenced by health, family, and social issues.
- Schools are the most constant, and often the most accessible, public institution in the lives of students and their families.

There is an educational payoff when schools invest resources in helping to assure that students come to school healthy and that their lives outside school are economically stable, physically and emotionally secure, and supportive of student learning. By making it easier for students and families to get the assistance they need, when they need it, schools can contribute to academic success. And, given that schools are a daily presence in most families’ lives, it makes sense to locate services—or at least the first contact for services—at the school.

School-linked service programs vary both in what they offer and in the way they are operated. For example, some focus exclusively on health services; some serve only students and not their families; some address short-term needs, often in crisis situations, while others attempt longer term strategies intended to rebuild “the social fabric of families and communities” (p. 3).²⁹ Some establish a coordinating mechanism with other agencies, while others assign each family a case manager who can help to negotiate the various bureaucracies with which many families must deal. Most programs, though, share certain basic goals and characteristics:

²⁸ TTARA Research Foundation, *School linked services*. Austin, Texas: Author, February 1995.

²⁹ C. Stone and C. Wehlage, *Community collaboration and the restructuring of schools*. Madison, Wisconsin: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 1992.

[They] attempt to provide preventive and support services in convenient and comfortable locations. Care is taken to fill gaps and avoid replication in the delivery of services. Flexibility... and an emphasis on encouraging new ideas from families, school personnel, community agencies, and other participants are key. (p. 1)³⁰

The types of services provided may include:

- health screenings,
- preventive health education,
- prenatal and neonatal health services,
- basic health services via on-site clinics,
- assistance in making and keeping medical and dental appointments,

The School as Community Center: Some Possible Activities

- after-school or summer programs for students
 - academic enrichment
 - technology skills
 - arts and crafts
 - athletics
 - recreation
 - tutoring
 - mentoring
 - leadership
 - youth groups
 - snacks/meals
- expanded hours for student access to school facilities
 - library
 - technology
 - study hall
 - recreational facilities
- services for teachers/school staff
 - professional development via distance learning
 - expanded access to technology resources
- parenting education programs or parenting centers
 - parenting skills
 - support for student learning
 - information and referral
 - GED programs
 - job skills
 - vocational counseling
- integrated services for families and/or children
 - school-based health services
 - case management
 - coordination with other social service providers
 - information and referral
 - transportation
 - family counseling
 - advocacy
 - vocational counseling
 - job-hunting help
- adult education programs
 - GED programs
 - business skills
 - technology skills
 - arts and enrichment
- after-hours community access to school facilities (fee-based or free)
 - use of technology resources
 - use of recreation facilities
 - use of FAX and copying services
 - use of library
 - use of meeting space

³⁰ Rivian Bernick and Barry Rutherford, *Connecting school•family•community resources*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, n.d.

- comprehensive case management, through which a case worker assists each family in addressing all its health and social service needs and serves as a family advocate,
- referral to appropriate agencies for various health or social service needs,
- help in obtaining emergency financial assistance, food, or temporary shelter,
- assistance in completing necessary forms and applications for public assistance,
- transportation assistance,
- help in securing child care,
- help in applying for legal residency or citizenship,
- help in locating and obtaining affordable housing,
- translation services,
- family and/or individual counseling,
- home visits to assess family needs and provide support,
- vocational counseling,
- job skills training,
- job referrals,
- help in preparing resumes and job applications, and
- parenting education.

Some experts have identified characteristics of **integrated services** programs that seem critical to programs' success (see page 41 for one example). Though the lists of such characteristics vary in their emphasis, the need to secure a broad base of community support, and the importance of seeking input from those the program intends to serve are almost always highlighted.

Establishing an integrated services programs is, perhaps, one of the most ambitious and complicated efforts a collaborative group can undertake. It requires the strong support and involvement of a number of public agencies, probably including several that are located outside your immediate community. Because significant resources and changes from agencies' standard operating procedures will be involved, it is essential to have approval from the highest

authorities in each agency. At the same time, you will need support from the staff members who must actually carry out the work. Often the perspectives and concerns of these two levels of authority are quite different from one another. You also will need the support and confidence of the families for whom services are intended. This, too, can be difficult, since many families have had negative experiences with public bureaucracies—including the schools.

For many groups, especially those new to change efforts, such an undertaking can be overwhelming. The solution we recommend: start small. Pick only one piece of the puzzle to start with—health services, for example. If a community such as Balmorhea, Texas ([see profile at the end of Chapter 2](#)) can set up a successful school-based health clinic, so can you.

Key Factors in Creating Effective School Linked Services Programs

This list is summarized from findings in a February 1995 research report by the TTARA Research Foundation, *School Linked Services*. The report is available from the TTARA Research Foundation, 400 W. 15th Street, Suite 400, Austin, Texas 78701, 512/472-3127.

- Creating local community partnerships to assure community input; this step includes conducting a needs assessment.
- Assuring meaningful collaboration, which includes making provisions for broad-based representation that reflects the community's diversity.
- Providing strong leadership, which includes making provisions for the school principal and the program manager to work in tandem.
- Engaging an able staff and assuring the ongoing quality of program staff members.
- Using a case management approach to address children's needs in a comprehensive manner.
- Providing for home visits, in which outreach workers are able to reach families who have remained outside the service system.
- Including mental health services, which promote self-esteem and healthy life choices.
- Assuring that the program's location is easily accessible to parents and students as well as school staff.
- Using volunteer programs to supplement agency services and bring valuable experience and insight to the program.

Planning Worksheet: Resources for Broadening Access to Your School

What physical resources does your school have that might be useful to the community?
How available and accessible are these kinds of resources from other sources ?

RESOURCES	AVAILABILITY ELSEWHERE				LIKELY DEMAND							
	easy	1	2	3	4	hard	low	1	2	3	4	high
library		1	2	3	4		low	1	2	3	4	high
computers		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
Internet access		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
distance learning programs		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
FAX machine		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
copier		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
woodworking workshop		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
metal workshop		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
recreation facilities		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
meeting space		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
_____		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
_____		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	
_____		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	

What special expertise do students, school staff, and/or community members have that could be channeled into student enrichment or adult education classes? What do you think the local demand might be?

TOPIC	POTENTIAL RESOURCE (PERSON OR GROUP)	LIKELY DEMAND					
		low	1	2	3	4	high
basic computer use	_____	low	1	2	3	4	high
Internet use	_____		1	2	3	4	
software applications	_____		1	2	3	4	
vocational skills	_____		1	2	3	4	
arts & crafts	_____		1	2	3	4	
history & culture	_____		1	2	3	4	
science & nature	_____		1	2	3	4	
parenting skills	_____		1	2	3	4	
home repair	_____		1	2	3	4	
_____	_____		1	2	3	4	
_____	_____		1	2	3	4	

6. Nuts and Bolts: The Community as Curriculum

The Community as Curriculum: What Is Service Learning?

This definition of service learning was set out by the Commission on National and Community Service in 1990.³¹

A service learning program provides educational experiences:

- a. Under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community;
- b. That are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity;
- c. That provide a student with opportunities to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- d. That enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and help to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.

³¹ Richard J. Kraft and Marc Swadener, *Building community: Service learning in the academic disciplines*. Denver: Colorado Campus Compact, 1994.

The preceding chapter talked about ways of drawing the community back to the school. Another strategy for strengthening both school and community is to turn the flow in the other direction, moving students—and their educational experiences—into the community.

As a Foxfire publication observes, “The curriculum lives all around us” (p. 9).³² By linking the academic curriculum to the community, it is possible to bring life to what once were abstract concepts, actively engaging students in their own education. When it is structured appropriately—with explicit links between activities and ideas, strong provisions for student exploration and problem solving, and opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning and doing—experiential learning can have tremendous power.

Community-based learning, then, can have great benefits for students, but how does it help the community? To address the twin goals of strengthening schools and building community resources, it is most helpful to think in terms of *service learning*. As the name suggests, service learning is learning through community service (for a more detailed definition, see the box on the preceding page):

Service learning makes students active participants in service projects that aim to respond to the needs of the community while furthering the academic goals of students... In addition to helping those they serve, such service learning activities seek to promote students’ self-esteem, to develop higher-order thinking skills, to make use of multiple abilities, and to provide authentic learning experiences—goals of current curriculum reform efforts. (p. 593)³³

Characteristics of service learning.

Service learning projects can be enormously varied (see page 47). A majority of activities tend to address community needs related to health, poverty, social issues, or the environment. Another popular category of community-based activity has students documenting

³² “The boiler room and beyond: Bridging standards and community.” *The Active Learner*, Winter 2000, pp. 8-11.

³³ Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer, “In the service of what? The politics of service learning.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 77, No. 9, 1996.

local history or culture through interviews, archival research, photography, or other means. These activities do not involve direct assistance to individuals, but rather help the community at large to maintain a sense of identity and pride. Student mentoring and peer or cross-age tutoring are also classified as service learning, since they involve students helping other students.

Some service learning activities, such as student mentoring or peer tutoring, can take place right in the classroom. Others involve forays into the community or beyond. Some, such as a weekend neighborhood cleanup, may be one-time activities, while others last a semester, a school year, or even longer.

Though most service learning projects are implemented in the middle or high school grades, elementary school students can benefit as well. Starting in the early grades can be effective because “it has been demonstrated that all kids, from the time they first enter school, can be made aware of their responsibilities to their communities” (p. 11).³⁴ The interdisciplinary curricular approach used in many middle schools is particularly adaptable to service learning. By including service learning in the early and middle grades, schools can reach students who otherwise might drop out before reaching high school.

It is important to note that service learning is an activity that can be effective with all students. It should not be reserved for gifted classrooms, or for any other specific set of students:

Service learning activities are not the province of any one group—the gifted, the talented, the average, or the exceptional kids. All are involved. All can serve. Furthermore, unlike the classroom, where students are rated individually, service is frequently a collaborative experience. Participants learn to work together and to accept the contributions of each person. (p. 11)³⁵

³⁴ Lillian S. Stephens, *The complete guide to learning through community service, grades K-9*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Service Learning: Some Possible Activities

In *The Complete Guide to Learning Through Community Service*, Grades K-9 (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), Lillian S. Stephens identifies more than 400 different activities. This list presents a sample of the possibilities, drawn from Stephens and from other sources.

Beautification

- conducting neighborhood cleanups
- designing and creating a community park or museum
- creating community artwork

Community Resources

- setting up a community center
- publishing a community newspaper
- documenting local history
- documenting traditions and practices among the community's various cultural and ethnic/ racial groups
- preparing a brochure about local attractions
- working with volunteer fire and rescue departments

Education

- tutoring, mentoring, or reading to younger students
- creating an outdoor learning environment
- developing skits or presentations on drug prevention

Environment

- monitoring weather conditions
- monitoring water quality
- creating a wetlands wildlife refuge
- setting up a community recycling center

Health

- working in a school or community health clinic
- conducting health inventories
- helping with blood drives
- collecting books or magazines for hospital patients

Social Change

- registering voters
- writing letters to support legislation
- researching and producing materials on specific issues

Social Services

- helping to build or repair low-income housing
- adopting a senior citizen penpal
- conducting a food drive
- planting a community garden
- raising funds for local causes

The planning worksheet on page 49 can help you in considering service learning activities that might be useful in your community. Another effective planning strategy is to involve students in designing and conducting a community needs survey, then planning activities based on the survey results.

Requirements for service learning.

For service learning to be effective, it must be integrated into the school's ongoing curriculum. Teachers must identify the academic

Guidelines for Service Learning Approaches That Are Effectively Integrated with the Curriculum

The following guidelines are quoted from an article by Peter Simons.³⁶ Though Simons focuses specifically on the elementary level, his guidelines are equally applicable at the middle and high school levels.

- Integration only works when the fit between service and the curriculum/instruction is natural, meaningful, and relevant. It cannot be forced to fit and still be effective.
- Service learning needs to meet the instructional goals of the school curriculum and the learner outcomes for each class.
- Students have to be involved in leadership and decision making roles in every phase of the service learning program.
- The school or class schedule needs to be changed to allow substantial blocks of time for meaningful service and associated activities to occur.
- Service learning must be developmentally appropriate, geared to the cognitive and affective levels of the students involved and accommodating of diverse learning styles.
- The best and most effective service learning involves direct and personal contact with those whose needs are being addressed.
- Service is most effective when delivered continuously over a long period of time such as a semester, year or longer, rather than a one shot deal or very time limited undertaking.
- Ongoing and regularly scheduled reflection is essential for service learning to be truly educational. Reflection can take many forms and is the glue that binds service and learning.

learning objectives to be addressed through the activity, and structure students' experiences to help assure that real learning takes place. This includes laying the groundwork beforehand, and allowing time for reflection afterwards.

The importance of reflection is consistently stressed. It has been called “the yeast that transforms service experiences into learning” (p. 31).³⁷ Students should be given opportunities “to contemplate the meaning of their service, to evaluate its context and impact, thereby reaching a greater understanding of themselves, their studies, and the society” (p. 10).³⁸ There are a number of ways to build provisions for reflection into your service learning effort, including classroom discussion, student journals, and products such as research reports or presentations (see above).

Several authors have identified key elements in service learning activities that result in help to the community and enhanced student

³⁶ Peter Simons, “A call to service: Merging the hearts and minds of America’s young children—Elementary school service learning.” In Kraft and Swadener, 1994, pp. 215-232.

³⁷ Lilian S. Stephens, *The complete guide to learning through community service, grades K-9*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Planning Worksheet: Possible Service Learning Activities

What facilities, services, and needs exist in your community or area? Are there ways students can bolster or expand existing services, or fill gaps?

SERVICE OR FACILITY	EXISTS OR NEEDED	SERVICE LEARNING IDEAS
HOSPITAL OR CLINIC		
HOME HEALTH SERVICES		
EMS		
HOSPICE CARE		
HEALTH EDUCATION		
LIBRARY		
MUSEUM OR HERITAGE CENTER		
BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM		
RECYCLING CENTER		
COMMUNITY GARDEN		
PARK OR PLAYGROUND		
FOREST OR PARK SERVICE		
WEATHER STATION		
WILDLIFE REFUGE		
ANIMAL RESCUE		
NEWSPAPER		
RADIO STATION		
LITERARY COUNCIL		
ENVIRONMENT GROUP		
SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER		
COMMUNITY CENTER		
MEALS ON WHEELS		
FOOD BANK		
HOMELESS SHELTER		
LOW INCOME HOUSING		
DAY CARE SERVICES		
FIRE DEPARTMENT		
CITY OR COUNTY OFFICES		
DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM		

Service Learning Reflection Activities

Reflection activities are designed for students to think, talk, and/or write about (1) what they have seen, done, and learned within the community, and (2) the links between their community service work and their academic learning. Activities should encourage students to reflect not only on what they have done, but on the impact of their efforts on other individuals, the larger community, and themselves.

This list of possible reflection activities has been reprinted from *Community Service/Service Learning: An Implementor's Guide and Resource Manual*, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, March 1996. Contact AEL at P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325-1348, 800/624-9120 or 303/347-0400, www.ael.org.

Writing

- Essays
- Journals or logs
- Special project report
- Guide for volunteers
- Newspaper or magazine articles
- Research papers
- Case study or history
- Narrative for a video
- Self- or program evaluation

Speaking

- Conference with teacher
- Small group discussion
- Discussions with community members or experts
- Whole class discussion
- Oral report
- Public speaking
- Teaching other students
- Testimony before policymakers

Products

- Survey or field research
- Conference or workshop presentation
- Plan for future projects
- Program budget
- Training session for others
- Simulation or role play
- Recruitment of peers
- Recognition and celebration programs
- Background information for project

Multimedia

- Dance
- Theater
- Collage, masks, etc.
- Video
- Music
- Painting or drawing
- Photographs or slides

learning. These include setting mutual goals, assigning tasks so that all students have an active role, structuring groups heterogeneously, providing training in social skills, and allowing adequate time both for the hands-on activities and for group processing.³⁹ Those experienced with service learning also stress the importance of student choice and decision making (see page 51 for a real-world lesson about the importance of giving students a role in decision making). Students need to be active in planning as well as implementing the service learning project.

Stephens and others observe that, with service learning, the teacher's role needs to change significantly from that of managing the traditional, textbook-driven classroom. The teacher becomes an organizer

³⁹ Bonnie Benard, *The case for peers*. Western Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon, 1990.

and **facilitator**, helping to structure activities in ways that promote learning, monitoring students as they complete their hands-on activities, and facilitating students' reflection and analysis of their experiences. Teachers need to be particularly skilled in asking open-ended questions that encourage students to explore and discuss their own ideas.

With activities that take students beyond classroom boundaries, the school principal and other staff also must be prepared to make changes. These may include adopting more flexible guidelines for off-campus activities or for use of school facilities, making schedule changes to accommodate student activities, and sharing resources with others in the community.

The Importance of Student Decision Making: A Lesson from Foxfire

The Foxfire Fund is one of the most highly respected resources for community-based teaching and learning. The Foxfire approach is built on a set of “core practices”; the very first stresses the need to involve students in making plans: The work teachers and learners do together is infused from the beginning with learner choice, design, and revision.⁴⁰

This emphasis goes back to Foxfire's beginnings, when high school English teacher Eliot Wigginton struggled to engage the students in his Appalachian Georgia classroom. Failing with the traditional curriculum, Wigginton challenged his students to develop and produce some type of magazine. “After some false starts, including the rejection of their teachers' suggestions, the students struck on the idea of a magazine which would tell the stories of community elders” (p. 6).⁴¹

Wigginton's strategy gained nationwide attention. Teachers across the country began having their students produce literary magazines. For many, though, their efforts failed to produce any significant change in the classroom. Wigginton later explained the problem:

It became apparent that without the benefit of student input, many teachers had simply decided to produce a publication, had secured the necessary support, had solved all the problems, had assigned articles to students for homework, had selected the best for publication, and had completely gutted the activity of all its educational potential and its life. For students, it was business as usual. (p. 25)⁴²

⁴⁰ The Foxfire Fund, Inc., *Core practices*. Mountain City, Georgia: Author, n.d.

⁴¹ Bobby Ann Starnes, *The Foxfire phenomenon: From one classroom to many*. Mountain City, Georgia: the Foxfire Fund, Inc., 1999.

⁴² Eliot Wigginton, “Foxfire grows up.” *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1, 1989.

Cautions and concerns.

Chapter 8 outlines a number of concerns that should be addressed by a service learning project as well as other types of integrated school-community development programs. There are also several issues more specific to service learning.

For one thing, it is important to keep in mind that “the real world doesn’t neatly divide itself into school subjects.” Teachers must be able to help students make the links between their hands-on experiences and their academic subject matter. School staffs also must be prepared to help students cope with the unexpected, and with “things that are normally difficult for children to consider” (p. 48).⁴³

Essential Elements in Effective Service Learning

This list is reprinted from Shelley H. Billig, “Research on K-12 school-based service-learning.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2000, p. 663.

1. There are clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines and involve students in the construction of their own knowledge.
2. Students are engaged in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally.
3. Assessment is used as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skill standards.
4. Students are engaged in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community, and have significant consequences for themselves and others.
5. Formative and summative evaluation are employed in a systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes.
6. Student voice is maximized in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project.
7. Diversity is valued as demonstrated by its participants, its practice, and its outcomes.
8. Communication and interaction with the community are promoted and partnerships and collaboration are encouraged.
9. Students are prepared for all aspects of their service work. They possess a clear understanding of tasks and roles, as well as the skills and information required by the tasks; awareness of safety precautions; and knowledge about and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.
10. Student reflection takes place before, during, and after service; uses multiple methods that encourage critical thinking; and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.
11. Multiple methods are designed to acknowledge, celebrate, and further validate students’ service work.

⁴³ Craig B. Howley and John M. Eckman, *Sustainable small schools*. Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1995.

Those experienced with service learning also urge careful consideration of the community purposes for any given service learning activity. There are differences between service learning projects that emphasize “charity” vs. those that emphasize “change,” and conflicts can arise when participants disagree as to an activity’s basic purpose. Projects focused on charity cultivate altruism, emphasizing “the importance of civic duty and the need for responsive citizens.” In contrast, those focused on change “call for a curriculum that emphasizes critical reflection about social policies and conditions, the acquisition of skills of political participation, and the formation of social bonds” (p. 595).⁴⁴ In a charity oriented project, for example, students may provide food for homeless people. In a change oriented project, student activity may also include investigations into the causes of homelessness and social policies that might help to reduce the problem. Both purposes have merit; in starting a service learning activity, the concern is to be sure that you—and everyone involved—understand the purpose your project will address.

⁴⁴ J. Kahne and J. Westheimer, “In service of what? The politics of service learning.” *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 77, No. 9, pp. 593-599.

“They’re after the project, we’re after the process”: The case of Marshall, Arkansas

Marshall, Arkansas, is large enough to sustain a weekly newspaper, the Marshall Mountain Wave, which features columns from other area communities like Big Flat, Magic Springs, Oxley, and Snowball. Located in an economically depressed region of the Ozarks, Marshall and its surrounding villages reflect a mix of traditionalism and innovation. Students can still see a movie at the drive-in theatre; they can also learn state-of-the-art computer skills through the high school’s technology-based service learning program.

Marshall, in fact, boasts not one but two service learning programs. In one, school staff and the Searcy County Literacy Council operate a tutoring program in which high school seniors work with younger students. The seniors receive a unit of credit for their activities, which range from helping with seventh-grade math to working with kindergarten students on communication skills. High school counselor Don Clifton recruits tutors and works with teachers to identify students who need help. Kari Balcom, the literacy council’s peer tutoring coordinator, trains students in tutoring strategies and monitors their progress. Tutors maintain a log of their time and the topics they address in their tutoring sessions.

Literacy council staff provided the initial impetus for the tutoring program. With something new like this, staffers report, you have to work to get the school’s attention and to build enthusiasm. “Teachers asking for help—that’s the exception rather than the norm, at least at first,” Balcom reports. She asked school principals for permission to speak during inservice sessions at every school in the county; if her presentation didn’t yield participants, she spoke to each teacher individually.

“It’s a matter of getting in, being persistent, reminding people that you’re there, and offering to help make schedules work.”

The high school has also implemented a service learning project called Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST). The program was started by Tim Stephenson, an environmental science teacher in Greenbrier, Arkansas, and has since expanded to include nearly 100 schools, a majority of them in Arkansas. Corporations donate equipment and software to the program, while area universities help with teacher training and technical expertise. The state’s Education Department also has contributed grant funds.

Marshall’s EAST program offers three computer design classes, each with 10 students, as an elective for grades 9 to 12. There are no prerequisites, and students who have had academic difficulties are encouraged to enroll. The primary goal is not to teach technology but to help students develop higher-order thinking skills. Given project-based assignments, such as surveying a farm or designing a press box for the football field, students must figure out for themselves how to use the equipment and software they need to complete the project.

Jerry Prince, facilitator for Marshall’s EAST project, describes the experience as a novel and unsettling one for most students, since throughout their years of schooling “somebody in the classroom has always had the answer.” Interestingly, Prince says, it’s the straight-A students who often have the most difficulty adjusting to this new learning environment. In the end, though, the approach has “fantastic” results: “Once those kids taste success, get out of the way.”

As is true in many communities, Marshall's service learning activities are strongly supported by outside resources. High school counselor Don Clifton emphasizes the importance of monitoring the landscape, and searching for such opportunities. His knowledge of changes in the Community Service Act, for example, helped to build administrative support for the for-credit tutoring program. Clifton attends an array of briefing sessions and workshops

and sifts through the technical language of new legislation, prospecting for opportunities. Recently he's been studying the Workforce Education Act, with an eye to the possibility for a student-operated career decision-making service. "We've got plenty of ideas," he notes. Perhaps most important, folks in Marshall have the persistence and energy to turn ideas into action.

7. Nuts and Bolts: Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning: Helping Students to Succeed and Stay

The standard view of rural education has been that the best and brightest students must leave home and move to the city if they are to live up to their career potential. Those who remain in their home communities, according to this view, must lower both their aspirations and their accomplishments.⁴⁵

Now, however, many rural educators are criticizing this view, arguing that it sets up a false dichotomy by putting too great a value on high salaries and high status jobs and by failing to value the benefits of a deeply rooted community. For example, Howley, Harmon and Leopold question those who “seem to regard the quest for higher and higher income and status as the unavoidable responsibility of all adults.” These three scholars conducted a study of rural Appalachian students and found that, although youth in the study “do value the ability of good-paying jobs in an ideal community,” students recognize “a difference between the aspiration for decent work and greed” (p. 158).⁴⁶

These authors, among others, argue that parents, teachers, and the community must help students to feel the value of a sense of place. Creating opportunities for meaningful work within their own communities is an important way of nurturing students’ aspirations to succeed and to stay.

⁴⁵ Joel M. Hektner, “When moving up implies moving out: Rural adolescent conflict in the transition to adulthood.” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Spring 1995, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 3-14.

⁴⁶ Craig B. Howley, Hobert L. Harmon, and Gregory D. Leopold, “Rural scholars or bright rednecks? Aspirations for a sense of place among rural youth in Appalachia.” *Journal of Research in Education*, Winter 1996, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 150-160.

To boost both the local economy and student achievement, a growing number of rural schools are turning to some form of work-based learning program. These may include:

- *Job shadowing*—Students visit and observe workers as they go about their jobs, usually in a single visit to each of several job sites.
- *Career exploration*—“Students spend time one-on-one with workers and engage in hands-on activities,” usually making several visits to each of one or more job sites.
- *Internship*—Students are placed at a job site, usually for a period of weeks, where they “develop broad skills through hands-on learning and instruction, culminating in a product or presentation.”
- *Extensive work-based learning*—Students are placed at a job site, usually for a period of months, and work at a specific job; they “gain specific technical skills, college credits, and/or certification through hands-on learning” that is closely integrated with their ongoing academic work. (p. 6)⁴⁷

The concept of work-based learning will not seem new to many rural educators. As one expert notes, “Work-based learning, while currently a term linked with the national school-to-career movement, could be found in quality high school agricultural education programs more than a half century ago” (p. 24).⁴⁸

The federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 provided a strong impetus for many local work-based learning initiatives. The Act called for three components:

- **School-based learning.** Schools were to provide career exploration activities for students in early high school grades and, by the 11th grade, to create “integrated academic and vocational courses focused on a career area or industry students plan to enter, with links to related postsecondary programs.”

⁴⁷ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, *Integrated workplace learning project: Teacher reference guide*. Portland, Oregon: Author, 1996.

⁴⁸ Hobart L. Harmon, “Learning opportunities for rural schools.” *The High School Magazine*, April 1999, pp. 23-27.

- **Work-based learning.** Students were to have opportunities “to take part in work experience and training coordinated with their school-based studies and their chosen career major. Work-based learning would involve progressively more advanced skill instruction and encompass all aspects of the target industry.”
- **Connecting activities.** Partnership activities were to be structured to assure coordination among the various groups involved. “For example, partnerships or particular members would have to recruit employers, match students with work-based learning, help employers work with students, and assist employers in integrating their instruction” (p. 2).⁴⁹

In practice, this ambitious program has rarely been carried out in full. However, many schools have initiated career exploration activities, using community-based approaches such as field trips and job shadowing. And some have placed students in the workplace, providing them with hands-on work experiences that link back to the school curriculum.

To initiate work-based learning activities, then, it is possible to begin on a smaller scale than is called for by the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. However, there are certain principles of effectiveness to keep in mind (see next page). Researchers from Cornell University warn that work-based learning is a promising complement to conventional school-based learning... But its promise can be fulfilled only if the experience is of high quality. Workplaces are no more magical than schools; simply placing young people in them does not guarantee that they will learn (p. 24).⁵⁰

Entrepreneurial education.

Another approach that shares some important characteristics of work-based learning, but moves students more actively into creating

⁴⁹ Alan M. Hershey, Marsha K. Silverberg, and Joshua Haimson, *Expanding options for students, executive summary*. Princeton, New Jersey: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., February 1999.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Harmon, “Learning opportunities for rural schools.”

Principles of Effective Work-Based Learning

The following seven principles are reprinted from Hobart L. Harmon, “Learning opportunities for rural schools,” *The High School Magazine*, April 1999, pp. 23-27. The author, in turn, extracted the principles from the work of Cornell University researchers M. Hamilton and S. Hamilton (“When is work a learning experience?” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(1997):682-89).

1. Students gain basic and high-level technical competence through challenging work.
2. Students gain broad technical competency and understand all aspects of the industry through rotation and projects.
3. Students gain personal and social competence in the workplace.
4. Workplace teachers convey clear expectations to students and assess progress toward achieving them.
5. Students learn from adults with formally assigned teaching roles.
6. Students achieve high academic standards.
7. Students identify and follow career paths.

their own work, is perhaps the most promising for rural communities’ economic renewal. This approach is called *entrepreneurial education*. In school entrepreneurship programs, students create small businesses under the guidance of the school and, often, **community** partners.

Rather than focusing only on teaching specific occupational and workplace skills, entrepreneurial education encourages students to identify and create business opportunities as well as to develop the skills needed to implement them.

Entrepreneurship offers special benefits to rural communities in need of enterprises that bolster the local economy and encourage residents to support their home-town businesses. Both schools and townspeople can benefit from a stronger sense of community as well as from the availability of new products or services.

Students also benefit in many ways. They gain exposure to adult role models who understand the importance of learning skills for work. They learn life-long, transferable skills that will serve them in the world of work: planning, decision making, communication, budgeting, advertising, marketing, merchandising, and production.

As a student editor of a school-community newspaper explains, “This work is definitely preparing me for the real world... You can learn so much more by doing something than you can by staring at a teacher in front of a chalk board.”⁵¹ Students also learn how to deal with risk and, sometimes, how to cope with failure. In some cases, students may even start up businesses that flourish enough to develop into long-term career opportunities.

Characteristics of entrepreneurial education.

There are three major elements to entrepreneurial education:

- planning the business enterprise,
- implementing the business plan, and
- integrating these two activities with students’ academic instruction so that each supports the other.

With some programs, students go only so far as to develop business plans, leaving community members to put the plans into action or waiting until after graduation to start up their own enterprise. Learning is most powerful, however, when students are able to follow through with their plans and gain hands-on experience in actually operating the businesses they have helped to design.

Entrepreneurial Education: Some Possible Activities

Greeting card business	Bicycle sales, repair, and/or rental	Tennis lessons
Grocery store	Community newspaper	Riding lessons
Hardware store	Directory of business services	Growing and selling organic produce
Candy store	Home building	Catering
Ice cream parlor	Home repair	Conducting home safety audits
Printing business	House painting	Child care
Work processing service	Lawn services	Pet sitting
Copying and FAX services	Odd jobs	Pet grooming
Computer training	Building and selling furniture	Delivery service
Computer troubleshooting or repair	Making and selling birdhouses	
Sewing machine sales and repair	Arts and crafts production and sales	

⁵¹ PACERS Cooperative Newsletter, April 1995, n.p.

Many entrepreneurship programs draw on the resources available through vocational education, such as agriculture, woodworking, or metal shop facilities and teacher expertise. Others link to community resources, such as a local construction company. Still others, particularly crafts enterprises and retail shops, may be entirely self-created.

A vast majority of entrepreneurial programs are geared to high school students. However, middle school and even elementary students also can benefit. In one school, for example, elementary students operate a successful greeting card business; in another, students run a school store, with their classmates as customers.

Whatever the grade level, **entrepreneurial education** also offers opportunities for students to explore cultural diversity and to take pride in their own cultural heritage. Many entrepreneurial activities—from the images on greeting cards to the production of native crafts—can draw on students' and their community's history and heritage.

Examples of student entrepreneurship are richly diverse (see previous page). Schools and students are operating restaurants, child care centers, summer camps, rental libraries, word-processing businesses, hardware stores, grocery stores, and ice cream parlors. They are providing odd-job services, tennis coaching, and computer training. They are conducting agricultural experiments, energy and safety audits, and market research. They have developed directories of business services and produced television shows with local commercials. Some of these activities may seem to overlap with **service learning** activities. The difference is that, in entrepreneurial education, the focus is on producing services or products that can generate income as well as fill a community need. The planning worksheet on the following page can help you in your initial brainstorming about the kinds of entrepreneurial activities that may be viable in your community. Also keep in mind the guidelines for school-business success listed on page 63; these were derived from evaluations of school entrepreneurship programs.

Planning Worksheet for Entrepreneurial Projects

Much of what students learn in entrepreneurial education they will learn through the process of developing a detailed business plan. Such planning requires knowledge about marketing, cost and price estimation, and many other business concepts. The following worksheet is not intended to substitute for a detailed business plan. Instead, use this worksheet as a preliminary planning tool.

Possible business enterprise

- product (e.g., birdhouses): _____
- service (e.g., lawnmower repair): _____
- facility (e.g., ice cream parlor): _____

Evidence of need: _____

Segments of the population likely to buy: _____

Other places they can get the same products/services (Remember that your purpose is not to compete with existing local businesses, but to fill gaps within the immediate community): _____

Advantages of shopping with you: _____

Disadvantages of shopping with you: _____

WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED	SPECIFIC NEEDS	POTENTIAL SOURCES
Skills	_____	_____
Knowledge	_____	_____
Resources	_____	_____
• facilities/space	_____	_____
• equipment	_____	_____
• transportation	_____	_____
• raw materials	_____	_____
• product inventory	_____	_____
• marketing supports	_____	_____
• other	_____	_____

Guidelines for School Business Success

The following guidelines are reprinted from *fine print* (March 2000, p. 5), a publication of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. The guidelines were derived from an evaluation of youth entrepreneurship programs conducted by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation in 1998. For further information contact the Center for School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 301 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, and/or the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, 218/759-2057.

- Successful projects have limited human and financial risk. They require less intensive management oversight and do not begin with large debt.
- Projects should not require a high level of ownership in order to succeed. While the rhetoric used is real life business, these are still school projects implemented in a learning environment.
- Someone with real life business experience should be part of the project; and teachers responsible for entrepreneurial projects should have business experience or take business start-up classes.
- The community should be informed about any project to be implemented—especially stand-alone businesses—along with the risks involved. Doing so will limit negative publicity if a business fails.
- The type of business a school chooses to start must be realistic given the level of resources available.

Requirements for entrepreneurial education.

Howley and Eckman emphasize that “successful business startups can offer a lot to a community, but the real point is educational” (p. 56). The first goal of student entrepreneurship is always learning; the program, then, must be integrated into the school’s ongoing curriculum. Entrepreneurship is well suited to interdisciplinary approaches; students must draw on mathematical and literacy skills as well as more specialized vocational or business-oriented understandings.

Classroom instruction, especially at higher grade levels, will need to address specific elements of business planning and operation (see page 64 for an overview of these elements). In many instances, these elements will be beyond the experience and expertise of most teachers. Fortunately, there are a number of good curriculum materials, as well as professional development programs, that can help to make the educational end of your entrepreneurial program both comprehensive and effective. (See [chapter 9, Resources](#), for specific information.)

Elements of Business Planning and Operation That Need to be Addressed via the School Curriculum

- **market research**—assessing community needs that could be effectively met via a student-run enterprise
- **student self-assessment**—for each student, identifying personal skills and resources that contribute to the likelihood of a business’s success or failure
- **development of business plans**—developing and laying out goals, production and marketing strategies, resource needs, costs, pricing structures, and timelines
- **management of production or services**—acquiring raw materials or inventory, creating the product or providing services on schedule, within budget, and with good quality
- **marketing**—creating awareness and building demand for the product or service
- **administration**—keeping records, maintaining inventory, keeping the operation running smoothly, and managing income and expenses

As is true of **service learning** approaches, the teacher’s role in entrepreneurial education changes substantially from the more traditional function of “sage on the stage.” Teachers must function more as **facilitators**, structuring the environment so that students can productively explore and test their own ideas, nurturing students’ self-development rather than leading them to a preconceived outcome. As is usually the case with real-world hands-on experiences, learning through entrepreneurship is less tidy than traditional instruction, conceptually as well as literally. Students work in groups, conferring, debating ideas and issues; ideas spill over from one subject to another; the learning environment expands well beyond the classroom.

Some entrepreneurial activities, such as a student-operated school store, may be confined to the school campus, with other students as the intended clients or customers. Many activities, though, will need to extend beyond school boundaries and into the community for marketing and sales, and sometimes for production or service as well. In these cases, the school principal and other staff must be prepared to adapt their traditional modes of operation to accommodate the program’s needs. Rules for off-campus visits or use of school facilities may need to become more flexible. Schedules may need to be changed, consolidating class periods or extending the school day. Schools may need to share facilities, equipment, or other resources not only with student groups but also with other community members.

For most types of entrepreneurial activity, community cooperation is essential to student success. Formal school-community partnerships, while not an absolute requirement, can greatly facilitate entrepreneurship programs. Partnerships provide a structured forum for identifying community priorities and needs, building support for specific activities, generating start-up funds or other needed resources, adapting rules and customs to the needs of entrepreneurial programs, and addressing problems as they arise. For a program to be most successful in supporting student learning and growth, students will need to play an active role in such partnerships. Students should function as working members of the group and participate in decision making as well as other activities.

Cautions and concerns.

In addition to the broad concerns discussed in [Chapter 8](#), there are several issues to consider regarding **entrepreneurial education**. First, rural entrepreneurship programs are intended to benefit the community as well as students. It is important, then, to be sure that student-created businesses fill gaps in locally available products and services rather than competing with existing enterprises. This requires a close understanding of the community and thorough initial market research.

Some enterprises may require start-up funds in order to purchase raw materials or initial inventory. There are a variety of strategies for raising such funds, including small grants, contributions, fundraising events, or investments by community members. Programs need to distinguish between contributions and investments, and initial planning activities need to make any necessary provisions for recouping and repaying start-up funds, as well as for distributing profits.

Ideally, student-developed businesses will be successful enough to sustain themselves beyond the immediate instructional goals of the school program. It is important to consider the possibility that any student-created enterprise may become a viable, profit-making business; the initial planning process needs to include specifications as to rights and ownership, and to provide for transition from a school-guided activity to an independent enterprise.

Breaking the barriers to success: The case of the Mora Valley, New Mexico

A 1940 guide developed by the federal Work Projects Administration describes the Mora Valley as an area of “magnificent vistas and panoramas,” of farms, ranches, and tiny settlements characterized by narrow streets and close-set adobe buildings.⁵² This sixty-year-old description still fits today.

The region boasts a rich history of both enterprise and community. In the 1800s when wealthy dons began illegally seizing land, area residents, working secretly and at night, began destroying fences “so that the livestock of poor men could find forage.” The effort was so successful that “the land again came into possession of the community.”⁵³

This tradition of struggle and creativity is reflected today in a variety of student enterprises. Two area resources help to support entrepreneurial education for students in Valley communities.

Through a consortium of ten area school districts, the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations—based at nearby New Mexico Highlands University—facilitates career-focused student learning. Entrepreneurial activities focus on tourism and sustainable agriculture.

Eric Romero, the consortium’s coordinator, works with participating school staffs. One of his biggest challenges is building teacher commitment. “For teachers to get involved,” he observes, “they have to

see a link between the activity and the state-mandated content standards and benchmarks.” With accountability strongly linked to standardized tests, “if something doesn’t show up on a test score, teachers wonder why they should bother.” The solution? Linking entrepreneurship explicitly to content standards, and involving teachers early in the planning process. Once they’re committed, Romero explains, teachers can be a project’s greatest resource, not only overseeing student activities but using their knowledge of the community to identify new business opportunities.

Romero also strongly recommends conducting a community assessment to identify resources and potential partners. The assessment, he explains, “serves as a process of identifying indigenous knowledge systems” that can be linked to the curriculum. “Science and math are all around us,” in the traditions and practices of community members. Local customs should be seen “not as a limitation but as a source of sustenance and development.”

Students in a school-to-work transition program operated through a second area resource, La Jicarita Enterprise Community, often draw on traditional knowledge, from crafts to agricultural practices. The educational program provides training and materials through which students generate ideas and develop detailed business plans. The training culminates in

⁵² Work Projects Administration, *New Mexico: A guide to the colorful state*. American Guide Series. New York: Hastings House, 1940. p. 377.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

a trade fair where students attempt to sell their products or services to parents and community members.

Michael Rivera, La Jicarita's director for youth development, observes that "the real support is needed after the training is over." To help students who seek to turn their business plans into ongoing reality, the program sets up "incubator centers" where students can use the space, equipment, and supplies to further their enterprises. A youth entrepreneurship counselor is also available to offer advice and problem-solving strategies. Both of

these resource agencies have had the benefit of grant funds: the Center with support from the Annenberg Rural Challenge, La Jicarita from the U.S. Department of Education. However, local staffers note that much can be done without substantial funding; the important task is seeing what possibilities exist. For example, two school districts and the Mora Chamber of Commerce are working together to furnish space for the local incubator center. It is possible to tear down the barriers to student success—but it takes a community to do it.

8. Concerns and Safeguards

Just the Facts: School Size and Educational Benefits

“Research evidence reveals little, if any, economic and educational benefit associated with increases in school size” (p. 11).⁵⁴

“There is little relationship between the number of courses a school offers and overall student achievement” (p. 25).⁵⁵

Recent research has uncovered “a negative relationship between school (or district) size and student achievement. That is, the lower the enrollment, the higher the achievement [assuming other conditions to be equal] (p. 30).⁵⁶

“The positive effects of small school size on students’ attitudes and satisfaction, extracurricular participation, attachment to school, and attendance has been confirmed by decades of research findings” (p. 30).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Daryl Hobbs, *Education reform and rural economic health: Policy implications*. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, May 1989.

⁵⁵ Craig B. Howley and John M. Eckman, Eds., *Sustainable small schools: A handbook for rural communities*, Charleston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

No matter what or how small your undertaking, there are certain concerns you will likely need to address. Some may seem, at least momentarily, to be major headaches. But keep in mind that, for every type of activity described in this guide, there are schools that have found a way to make it happen. Remember, too: It's one of those rules of life that the contingencies you've planned for are the ones *least likely* to happen.

The following paragraphs highlight some of the most common issues you may need to address. The safety and liability checklist on the following page also can help you in your project planning.

Safety.

Safety concerns include safety for students, both on and off campus. They also include safety for **community** and family members who come to the school or participate in school-sponsored activities.

Worries about school violence have led many schools to close their campuses or to beef up school security. While these measures may help safeguard against violence on campus, they can also be intimidating to family and community members, and they can make it more difficult for students to participate in off-campus activities. You may have to find new ways of balancing the need to maintain necessary standards of safety and to make responsible students, family, and community members feel welcome and free to engage in productive activities. With assurances of appropriate supervision, it should be possible to grant exceptions to a closed campus policy. Some schools use volunteer “greeters” as well as security guards to help make families and community feel welcome on campus. Another helpful step is to be sure that students, parents, and community members know ahead of time what security measures to expect, and the reasons for them.

Safety, of course, involves concerns other than violence. Inspecting and assuring proper maintenance of all facilities and equipment to be used, whether on or off campus, is one important step. Another is to provide a thorough orientation for all volunteers and staff regarding safety procedures in case of fire or other emergencies.

Safety and Liability Checklist

What potential safety and security-related issues are involved in your project? How might you address them?

ISSUE	WAYS TO ADDRESS
_____ students going off campus	_____
_____ non-students coming onto campus	_____
_____ assuring safe, reliable student transportation	_____
_____ assuring adequate off-campus student supervision	_____
_____ assuring participant safety in using school equipment	_____
_____ assuring participant safety in using off-campus facilities or equipment	_____
_____ assuring participant safety during strenuous activity	_____
_____ assuring safety and security of on-campus facilities and equipment	_____
_____ assuring safety and security of off-campus facilities and equipment	_____
_____ assuring compliance with state and federal child labor laws	_____
_____ assuring adequate insurance coverage for:	
<input type="checkbox"/> non-student safety on campus	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> student safety off-campus	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> student safety in transit	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> safety of customers, clients or employers with whom students are engaged	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> damage to school equipment or facilities	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> damage to non-school equipment or facilities	_____

For student activities, and for adult activities involving exercise or strenuous effort, be sure someone is available who has up-to-date CPR and first aid training.

Security.

Another concern is assuring that facilities, equipment, supplies, and participants' possessions are protected from vandalism and theft. Designating a responsible party, assuring adequate supervision, and locking down equipment such as computers usually will address most security concerns. In a few cases, you may want to request a security deposit or to require payment for a school-employed security guard or other staff member who can provide supervision. Keep in mind, though, the need to balance reasonable security concerns with hospitality and sensitivity to the circumstances of those you are trying to engage.

For projects involving networked or online computer use, you will need to consider additional security issues. These may include protecting Internet accounts from unauthorized use, blocking access to Internet sites that are inappropriate for kids or for use with public funds, and protecting computerized school records or other data from tampering. All of these concerns can be readily addressed by someone with appropriate technological expertise.

On-site supervision.

Students involved in community-based activities will, in most cases, need on-site supervision. This supervision cannot always be provided by the teacher, whose students may be scattered across multiple community sites. For safety, service, and academic reasons, it is imperative to work out with the agency, group or business involved—well ahead of the actual implementation of the activity—the logistics of on-site supervision. Written checklists or descriptions of supervisory responsibilities can be helpful in assuring that both parties share the same expectations. It is also helpful to conduct regular checks to assure that provisions for supervision are being carried out as planned.

Transportation.

Transportation for students can be a logistical as well as a safety and cost problem. Some schools address the problem by requiring that any off-campus **service learning** or work-related sites must be within walking distance of the school. In many areas, though, that is not a viable solution, since rural communities tend to be spread out over substantial distances. The problem remains, too, of assuring that students whose community-based activities extend beyond school hours have a safe and reliable way to get home at the end of the day.

No single solution will work for every situation. Using parent or other volunteers is one strategy. In some instances you may be able to use school vehicles. Sometimes businesses or social service agencies are willing to provide transportation in exchange for volunteer help.

If you provide parent or other adult programs at the school, you must also consider their transportation needs. Don't take for granted that everyone will be able to get themselves to and from the school campus. Arranging for volunteer drivers or car pools can be a big help, as can care in scheduling events at times and in places that are most convenient for family and community members.

Liability.

With any expansion of the school's role or schedule, it is important to consider potential liability issues (see box at left for examples). Be sure the new activity, audience, and/or times are covered by the school's insurance policies. You also may want to inquire about the liability coverage held by any group or facilities that students visit off campus. Also be sure to thoroughly discuss any relevant liability issues with community agencies, employers, or individuals with whom students will be engaged.

Parental permission is, of course, essential for off-campus or after-hours activities. In addition, you can and should obtain liability waivers from participants (or their parents) in after-hours or off-campus activities. Be sure to have a draft of the waiver reviewed by the school system's consulting attorney (or by a volunteer attorney). And keep in mind that waivers will not necessarily protect you from

lawsuits under all circumstances. However, if you are prudent in taking safety, security, and supervision measures, the school should be adequately protected.

Liability Issues That Can Arise with Work-Based Learning

The following information is reprinted, in an abbreviated form, from the *Employer Recruitment & Orientation Guide* (1996), one in a series of publications developed through the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Connections: Linking Work and Learning program. For further information or to order the publication, contact NWREL, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon 97204, 800/547-6339, www.nwrel.org. *Note: These are general guidelines only and do not substitute for legal advice or local policy.*

Injury to the student at the workplace. Students involved in paid work-based learning experiences should be covered under the employer's workers' compensation insurance. Students in unpaid experiences cannot be covered by the employer's workers' compensation plan. However, because student learning activities off school premises generally are considered to be an extension of the school, they are usually protected by the school district's liability policies.

Some employers may want students covered by special insurance policies and riders. A school district can amend its workers' compensation insurance or purchase separate medical coverage, and an employer can acquire a general liability policy.

Transportation. In general, liability for injuries or accidents during transit rests with the party responsible for transportation. For example, a student is responsible if he or she drives a personally owned car; the district is responsible if students travel by public transportation; and the employer is responsible if students are transported in a company-owned vehicle. There are, however, variations in different districts and states, making it necessary for the

school's contact person, working with the employer, to determine the standards that apply locally.

Injury to patrons or employees of a business. The employer and the school district are exposed to the possibility that students may cause injury to patrons or employees of the business. By extending its liability policy, a school district can usually provide coverage in the event a student injures someone at the workplace. Exposure to the employer can also occur, particularly if the employer has sole responsibility for training and/or supervising students.

Damage to the employer's property. It is possible that either through accidental or intentional acts students will damage the employer's property. The employer's property insurance may provide coverage in such cases, but there will likely be deductibles, payment of which will need to be negotiated between the employer and the school district. Possible solutions are to have the students named on the school district's policy if it provides property damage coverage or to have the employer waive subrogation rights against the district, school, and students.

Compliance with laws and regulations.

In addition to school policy and the policies of any other agency or institution involved in your activities, there may be laws and regulations that apply to your efforts. For example, there are federal and state regulations regarding child labor. A Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory guide to **work-based learning** points out that:

Child labor laws may differ at state and federal levels. When there is a discrepancy between federal and state regulations, the more stringent regulations appl[y]. Employers [and schools] should seek legal advice or consult federal and state wage and hour offices if there is a possibility students will be considered “employed” under the law. (p. 33)⁵⁸

Students are considered exempt from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which regulates and protects young workers, if certain relatively stringent educational criteria are met. These criteria relate to the integration of work experiences with school learning experiences, the sequencing of activities, the job exposure and skills students acquire, and the supervision provided at the job site. There are also criteria requiring that students may not displace regular employees, may not be promised a job ahead of time, and may not receive wages or compensation other than a stipend for expenses.⁵⁹

Confidentiality.

The issue of confidentiality can arise in two ways: first, over student records, when multiple agencies are cooperating to provide services for a student or family; and second, over patient or client records, when students are engaged in certain service or work-based learning activities. According to most guides, the latter issue generally can be addressed by taking the same kinds of steps agencies or businesses take with other employees; that is, by thoroughly orienting the student volunteer or employee in the relevant confidentiality policies and procedures.

⁵⁸ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, *Employer recruitment & orientation guide*, Linking Work and Learning Series. Portland, Oregon: Author, 1996.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

The issue of confidentiality of student records, though, is less easily resolved, both because of legal requirements and because of the intricacies of different agencies' policies and procedures for maintaining student records. No single solution appears to work in all instances; you will need to work out an effective approach based on the unique circumstances of your program. Two cautions may be helpful: One, be sure to tackle this issue early in your planning process. And two, keep in mind the need to balance issues of privacy and confidentiality with the need to share information that can help project staff to provide the most effective help to students and their families.

9. Resources

Just the Facts: Influences on Rural Community Success

“Recent studies...find that the capacity of rural localities for social organization is more important than location, natural resources, and other endowments in differentiating rural localities that are thriving from those that are not.” (pp. 390-392)⁶⁰

Businesses appear to be paying increased attention to education when they make location decisions, and this link has been receiving increasing attention in the regional growth literature.” (p. 187) ⁶¹

“Remoteness, a defining characteristic of many rural places, is an economic liability unless favorable scenery or climate can attract retirees, tourists, or entrepreneurs.” (p. 2) ⁶²

Telecommunications technology has played a role in the economic redevelopment of a number of rural communities. One study of rural counties that were experiencing economic growth “found them full of independent consultants, contractors, brokers, and other types of professionals that use modern telecommunications (along with some leg work) to serve customers around the country and around the world” (p. 2) ⁶³

⁶⁰ Daryl Hobbs, “Social organization in the countryside.” In Emery N. Castle, Ed., *The changing American countryside: Rural people and places*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1995.

⁶¹ Mark Drabenstott and Tim R. Smith, “Finding rural success.” In Emery N. Castle, Ed., *The changing American countryside: Rural people and places*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1995.

⁶² Hobart Harmon, “Building school-to-work systems in rural America.” ERIC Digest, April 1998, pp. 1-2.

⁶³ D. Carney, “Promoting technology in America’s rural areas.” *The New York Times*, online edition, January 20, 1997.

This chapter lists resources that can help you in your efforts to strengthen both school and community. Information is grouped into the following categories:

- Publications and materials (if you're looking for publications and materials, also be sure to check the "further information" category; most of the groups listed offer publication lists, and sometimes the documents themselves, online via their websites),
- Resources for further information and/or technical assistance, and
- Local community partners and resources.

In compiling this list, we have attempted to be selective. In almost every case, we are thoroughly familiar with the materials listed or their developers or with the resource agency or organization. For readers hungry for additional information or contacts, a visit to any of the websites listed here will link you to a whole new universe of possibilities.

Publications and Materials

Resources in this category include background information, how-to guides, and instructional supports. Listings are grouped according to specific topics addressed in this guide.

Rural schools

Craig B. Howley and John M. Eckman, Eds., *Sustainable Small Schools: A Handbook for Rural Communities*. Charleston, West Virginia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, 1997. ERIC/CRESS, 800/624-9120, www.ael.org/eric/. A clear, well organized guide that includes both background discussion and practical strategies for sustaining small schools and communities. Includes a discussion about integrated school-community development.

The Rural Educator. The journal of the National Rural Education Association. NREA, 970/491-7022, www.ColoState.edu/Orgs/NREA/. See in particular the Winter 1999-2000 issue, which focuses on rural school improvement initiatives.

Clark D. Webb, Larry K. Shumway, and R. Wayne Shute, *Local Schools of Thought*. Charleston, West Virginia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, 1996 (see Howley and Eckman, above, for contact information). Argues for the potential of rural, small schools as meaningful learning environments in which students are able to perceive important connections between their lives and the curriculum, and between individuals and the larger community. Designed to help practitioners re-evaluate the purpose and focus of their educational practice.

Rural community development

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory, *What's Noteworthy on Rural Schools and Community Development*. Aurora, Colorado: Author, n.d. McREL, 2550 South Parker Road, Aurora, Colorado, 80014, 303/337-0990, www.mcrel.org. Using a magazine format, it summarizes major issues and strategies in linking rural schools and community development. Includes overviews of **service learning** and entrepreneurship with sample community survey and business plan.

Bruce A. Miller, "Rural distress and survival: The school and the importance of 'community.'" *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, Fall 1993. Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 84-103. May also be available from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon, 97204, 503/275-9500, www.nwrel.org/ruraled/. Discusses in detail the issues facing rural schools and communities, their interdependence, and the strategies being tried to strengthen both. An excellent overview.

School-community-family partnerships

J.G. Cibulka and W.J. Kritek, Eds., *Coordination among Schools, Families, and Communities: Prospects for Educational Reform*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. Discusses issues and research on a range of topics related to school-family-partnerships. Includes a strong focus on **integrated services** for students and their families.

Joyce Epstein, Ed., *School Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. An action

guide for teachers and administrators, edited by a leader in the movement for integrated services. Focuses on creating partnerships to support integrated, school-linked services for students and their families.

Molloy, Patricia, et al., *Building Home, School, Community Partnerships: The Planning Phase*. Austin, Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1995. [SEDL](#), 211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, 800/476-6861, www.sedl.org. Describes learnings from a project designed to support partnerships, with suggested steps for planning new efforts.

Schorr, Lisabeth B., *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*. New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1997. A highly readable book, discussing the need for family and community to be involved in educational and support services for students.

Collaborative strategies

A.F. Melaville, M.J. Blank, and G. Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Creating a Profamily System of Education and Human Services*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, 1993. A step-by-step guide to [collaboration](#), with the focus of the collaborative work on providing integrated, school-linked services for students and their families.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, *Creating Collaborative Action Teams: Working Together for Student Success*, with accompanying Toolkit and CD-ROM. Austin, Texas: Author, 2000. SEDL, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, 800/476-6861, www.sedl.org. A step-by-step guide for groups interested in establishing a collaborative group to support local schools. Includes an overview of the process as well as guidelines and activities to help the group through each step. Also available in Spanish.

After-hours/student enrichment programs

U.S. Department of Education, *Bringing Education into the Afterschool Hours*. Washington, D.C.: Author, Summer 1999. Available via the World Wide Web at www.ed.gov/pubs/After_School_Programs/. Geared to after-school providers,

focused on ways of integrating educational content into after-hours programs.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, *Safe and Smart II: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids*. Washington, D.C.: Author, March 2000. Available via the World Wide Web at www.ed.gov or <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org>. A helpful sourcebook for those interested in setting up after-school enrichment programs. Presents a research-based rationale, describes elements of effective programs, gives examples of working programs, and lists a variety of resources.

Integrated services for students and families

Carol Calfee, Frank Wittwer, and Mimi Meredith, *Building a Full-Service School: A Step-by-Step Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

G.D. Haertel and M.C. Wang, *Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration: What We Know about School-Linked Services*. Philadelphia: Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory, 1997. 800/892-5550, www.temple.edu/lss/. Discusses issues and research on topics related to integrated, school-linked services.

U.S. Department of Education, *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-Linked Strategies for Children and Families*. Washington, D.C.: Author, May 1996. www.ed.gov. A step-by-step guide to building collaboratives that can deliver school-linked services to students and families.

See also the listings under school, family, and community partnerships, most of which focus either entirely or in part on partnerships geared to providing **integrated services**.

Adult, parent, and community education

Parson, Steve R. *Transforming Schools into Community Learning Centers*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Suite 106, Larchmont, NY 10538.

Place-based, experiential learning

The Active Learner. Foxfire, 706/746-5828, www.foxfire.org.

Excellent practice-oriented magazine for classroom teachers, published three times a year by the Foxfire Fund, Inc. Highlights actual classroom strategies and experience using teacher-developed articles.

Bobby Ann Starnes and Angela Carone, *From Thinking to Doing: Constructing a Framework to Teach Mandates through Experience-Based Learning*. Mountain City, Georgia: Foxfire, 1999. (See contact information in previous listing.) A detailed discussion, grounded in actual teacher experiences as well as research, of Foxfire's learner-centered, community-focused instructional approach and the eleven core practices that guide Foxfire's activities.

Service learning

Robert Bhaerman and Karen Cordell, *Service Learning as a Component of Systemic Reform in Rural Schools and Communities*. Available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 800/443-ERIC. ERIC number ED 391614. Describes issues and strategies for implementing **service learning** in a specifically rural context.

Shelley H. Billig, "Research on K-12 school-based service learning." *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2000, pp. 658-675. Overview of what research studies reveal about the effectiveness of service learning.

Hobart L. Harmon, *Work-Based, Community Service-Learning Activities for Students in Rural America*. Charleston, West Virginia: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1996. 800/624-9120, www.ael.org. Also available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 800/443-ERIC. Lists potential kinds of service-learning activities that could be initiated in rural areas, based on focus group research in five rural Eastern U.S. communities.

Harry C. Silcox, *A How-To Guide to Reflection: Adding Cognitive Learning to Community Service Programs*. 2nd Edition. Philadelphia: Brighton Press, Inc., 1995. Focuses in detail on strategies for encouraging student reflection, such as reading, directed writing, and various structures for oral discussions and presentations.

Lillian S. Stephen, *The Complete Guide to Learning Through Community Service*, Grades K-9. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995. May be out of print, but should be available in libraries or via Interlibrary Loan, and is well worth hunting for. A detailed, practice-oriented guide to all aspects of **service learning**, with a vast array of examples drawn from actual school experience. Activities can be adapted to higher grades.

A.S. Waterman, Ed. *Service-Learning: Applications from the Research*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997. Not specifically geared to a practitioner audience, but provides both depth and variety of information about service learning, including approaches, teacher concerns, evaluation, and research outcomes.

Work-based learning

Hobart L. Harmon, *Work-Based, Community Service-Learning Activities for Students in Rural America*. See listing under Service Learning, above.

Bruce A. Miller and Karen J. Hahn, *Finding Their Own Place*. Charleston, West Virginia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, 1997. ERIC/CRESS, 800/624-9120, www.ael.org/eric/. Focuses on school-to-work initiatives, with a brief review of research and detailed descriptions of the experiences of three rural communities in Montana and Washington. Though not a step-by-step guide, should be very useful to those interested in starting a **work-based learning** program.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. *Connections: Linking Work and Learning Publication Series*, 1996. 800/547-6339, www.nwrel.org. Series includes several action guides for initiating work-based learning activities, including guides for teachers, students, and employers.

Entrepreneurial education

Paul Huh, *Entrepreneurial Education Textbooks: A Review*. Available via the Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education, www.cel-cee.edu. Examines a number of textbooks and curricula focused on entrepreneurial education, with a strong focus on materials

sponsored by the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (see resource listing, below).

NOTE: To establish an effective **entrepreneurial education** program, we highly recommend that you obtain and use actual curriculum materials. While a number of these exist, many are available only to those who go through training or orientations conducted by the sponsoring organization. For information and access to such programs as well as to other materials, see the “Entrepreneurial education” listings under “Resources for Technical Assistance or Information,” below.

Resources for Technical Assistance or Information

These resources include groups that can provide information, consultation, or training support as you go about the process of initiating an integrated school-community development project. Most are national or regional groups focused on one or more of the topics covered in this guide. Most have websites that offer a variety of background information, access to publications, and links to other resources.

(NOTE: Much of the information that is available online from these groups is in “PDF format.” This means that you will need to have a copy of the software application, Adobe Acrobat Reader®. This application, which is free to users, is often included with the most popular Web browsers. If not, it can be downloaded from a number of Internet sites, including many of the sites whose web addresses are listed here.)

Rural schools

Center for School Change
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612/626-1834, www.hhh.umn.edu/Centers/school-change

The Center’s focus is on increasing student success and strengthening the bonds among school, family, and community. The Center has supported change projects in rural Minnesota schools. In addition, it offers publications and resources to a broader

audience. The website provides an overview of the Center's activities and publications.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25328-1348
800/624-9120, www.ael.org/eric/

ERIC/CRESS, housed at the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, maintains a library and database of information related to education in rural and small schools. It also publishes summaries, updates, and occasional books on topics of interest to rural educators, including [work-based learning](#) and [service learning](#). The website includes a searchable database.

Rural School and Community Trust, www.ruraledu.org

The Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization, evolved from the Annenberg Rural Challenge. It focuses primarily on policy matters influencing rural education, with activities including advocacy, research, and publications. The website lists publications, describes policy issues, and provides links to sponsored projects as well as other rural-focused sites.

National Rural Education Association
970/491-7022, www.ColoState.edu/Orgs/NREA/

The NREA is a professional association for rural school administrators, teachers, board members, and others. The Association produces a journal, *The Rural Educator*. The website is not extensive, but includes news, membership information, and tables of contents for current and back issues of *The Rural Educator*.

Rural community development

Center for Rural Affairs, www.cfra.org

The Center's focus is not specifically educational. It addresses a variety of issues affecting rural communities, with an emphasis on agriculture and economic development. One area of focus is entrepreneurship; while information and projects are targeted mainly to adults, the Center does sponsor an entrepreneurship camp for high school students. The website includes information about the camp, as well as a publications list and other information.

W.K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources www.unl.edu/kellogg/index.html

This website offers a searchable database of publications about rural issues. Most materials are not focused on education, but there are some relevant materials.

Rural Policy Research Institute, www.rupri.org

The Institute's focus is generally on non-school issues affecting rural communities. Economic development is one major area of concern.

School-community-family partnerships

Communities in Schools, www.cisnet.org

Communities in Schools is a national network that promotes community involvement in schools. State and local affiliates provide information and technical assistance. The website includes a document outlining the program's basic approach.

Family Support America
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606
312/338-0900, www.familysupportamerica.org

Formerly the Family Resource Coalition of America, this organization offers a broad array of materials to help local groups establish and operate family support programs. Programs may include advocacy, parent education, social or health services, support for student learning, or information and referral. The website lists resources, as does a quarterly catalog.

Center for School Change, (see listing under Rural Schools)

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
800/USA-LEARN, <http://pfie.ed.gov>

A coalition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the Partnership is organized into four groups: Family-School Partners, Employers for Learning, Community Organizations, and Religious Groups. Activities are at both national and local levels. The website includes information on developing partnerships, publications, and news about federal and other partnership-related initiatives.

Collaborative strategies

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701
800/476-6861, www.sedl.org

SEDL, which has produced this guide, works with schools and communities in five states (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) to help them plan and implement collaborative partnerships that support school improvement. SEDL resources include publications, online information, technical assistance to selected sites, and links to other resources. The website includes a searchable database as well as overviews of SEDL programs; some publications are available online.

After-hours/student enrichment programs

21st Century Community Learning Centers, www.ed.gov/21stcccl/

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers is a federal initiative that supports after-school student enrichment programs through grant funding. The website outlines funding criteria and application information, though as of mid-June 2000, the application information was not current. The website also provides access to publications and includes a number of links, including links to related federal funding programs.

Afterschool Alliance, www.afterschoolalliance.org

The Afterschool Alliance provides information and other supports for after-school initiatives. As of mid-June 2000, the website was still “under construction.”

Integrated services for students and families

Family Support America
(see listing under School-community-family partnerships)

National Assembly on School-Based Health Care, www.nasbhc.org

The Assembly focuses on promoting “accessible, quality school-based primary health and mental health care for children and youth through interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts.” The website lists publications, member health centers, and links to related sites.

Adult, parent, and community education

National Center for Community Education
1017 Avon Street, Flint, Michigan 48503
800/811-1105, www.nccenet.org

The Center's focus is on parent involvement and community education. The website includes publications and organization lists along with extensive links to related sites.

Coalition for Community Schools, www.communityschools.org

The Coalition supports the establishment of community education programs in local schools. Its website includes a variety of supporting information and links to additional sites.

Place-based, experiential learning

The Foxfire Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 541, Mountain City, Georgia 30562-0541
706/746-5828, www.foxfire.org

Foxfire is a national leader in supporting hands-on learning that helps students connect community and curriculum. The organization offers a number of supports for teachers, including workshops and an array of publications. The Foxfire approach lends itself to integration with both **service learning** and **work-based learning**, and the specific learning activities highlighted in *The Active Learner* and other publications include a number of examples of service learning. The website provides an overview of Foxfire's activities and resources.

See PACERS, below.

Service learning

See Foxfire, above.

Corporation for National Service, ww.cns.gov and
National Service-Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse
800/808-7378, www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu

These two resources are affiliated; both focus on programs and strategies for **service learning**, with the most notable of these the Learn and Serve America initiative. Both websites include helpful information about what service learning is and how to go about it. The sites include access to information, publication lists, and links to related sites.

PACERS, Program for Rural Services and Research
Box 870372, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0372
205/348-6432, www.pacers.org

The PACERS Small Schools Cooperative is operated by the Program for Rural Services and Research at the University of Alabama. Although PACERS focuses specifically on schools within Alabama, its approaches have received national attention. Its primary program, “Better Schools Building Better Communities,” incorporates service learning strategies. The website provides an overview of PACERS’ programs and resources.

Work-based learning

National School-to-Work Learning and Information Center
400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20024
800/251-7236, www.stw.ed.gov

The Center, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, offers extensive information to support **work-based learning** activities. The website includes access to publications, information about technical assistance providers throughout the U.S., and links to resources in specific states. The site also maintains a listserv (a type of online network) through which persons involved in work-based learning exchange ideas and offer informal support.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon 97204-3297
503/275-9500, www.nwrel.org/ruraled/

One of ten regional educational laboratories across the U.S., NWREL focuses strongly on rural education, including work-based learning approaches. Its website includes information about the laboratory's rural education programs, online access to selected publications, and links to related sites.

School at the Center, c/o Professor Paul Olson
University of Nebraska, 33B Andrews Hall, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588
402/472-3198

The School at the Center project helps schools to implement community-based learning activities, including both **service learning** and entrepreneurial strategies. Though the Center's focus is on Nebraska schools, it has developed curriculum materials that can be used in other locales as well.

Entrepreneurial education

BizWorld, <http://bizworld.org>

BizWorld is an organization focused on "Volunteers Teaching Kids about Business." It offers a training course for volunteers, an eight-hour course for elementary and middle school students, and other supports. The website includes an overview of activities and an online game for kids.

Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education
Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, c/o UCLA
A325G Moore Hall, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California
90095, 888/423-5233, www.celcee.edu/

The Clearinghouse is an affiliate of the national ERIC system; it maintains a searchable database focused on **entrepreneurial education** at both K-12 and higher education levels. Provides information about and access to an extensive array of resources, including instructional materials. Summaries of publications may be viewed online.

Micro-Society, National Institute for Consumer Education
www.emich.edu/public/cor/nice/res1.html

Micro-Society is an educational approach, complete with instructional materials, designed to give elementary students hands-on experiences with basic economic concepts. The NICE website lists teaching guides that are currently available. A local school site, www.jacksonville.net/~livingst/, although out of date, offers a glimpse of the Micro-Society approach in operation.

National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship
120 Wall Street, 29th Floor, New York, New York 10005
800/367-6383, <http://nfte.com>

The Foundation is a nonprofit agency focused on supporting **entrepreneurial education** for youth, particularly low-income, at-risk students. Through its “NFTE University,” the agency provides 2-day and 5-day trainings for teachers. It also has produced curriculum materials for use in schools. The website provides extensive information about the Foundation’s activities and resources.

REAL Enterprises, Inc.
115 Market Street, Suite 320, Durham, North Carolina 27701
919/688-7325, [no website currently available]

REAL Enterprises is one of the best-known programs supporting entrepreneurial education at the high school and post-secondary levels. REAL provides training to teachers and other **facilitators**, after which participants can use the agency’s extensive curricular materials.

School at the Center (see listing under Service Learning)

YoungBiz.com, www.youngbiz.com

YoungBiz.com is a website and online magazine targeted to kids and their teachers. The company also publishes and sells curriculum materials, including both student and teacher guides. The website includes profiles of youth entrepreneurs, how-to information, pages for teachers with instructional ideas, and a list of resources available from the company.

Local Community Partners and Resources

Following is a list of groups and agencies that may exist in your area. These may serve as partners in your overall effort, and/or may be able to offer help with specific initiatives, such as a service learning program. Some also may be able to provide modest funds to support your effort. Where possible, we have included contact information for a national affiliate that can help you to identify and contact resources in your area. Keep in mind that this list is not intended to be comprehensive, but to help you to get started and, perhaps, to think beyond your ordinary list of community partners.

4-H Clubs. Contact the National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, 20815, 301/961-2801, www.fourhcouncil.edu. 4-H Clubs traditionally have had a strong presence in rural areas. They can help with **work-based learning**, student enrichment, and community education activities.

Agricultural extension services. Local agricultural extension agents may provide service or work-based learning ideas and opportunities; they also may be willing to teach school-based community or student enrichment classes.

American Association of Retired Persons. Local AARP groups are often involved in a variety of community activities. They can be a useful partner group as well as a source of ideas and volunteers.

Anti-poverty initiatives. Anti-poverty advocates or service providers can offer opportunities for **service learning** and mentoring. They may also be resources for community education.

Community or county government. Your local or area governing structures—mayor's office, county commissioners, and the like—can help in assuring coordination for **integrated services** programs. They also can provide service learning opportunities and can help to build community awareness and support.

Fraternal, service, and faith-based organizations. Even in very small communities there are often community groups that can serve as partners or help in more specific ways.

Environmental groups. Environmental groups, particularly those with local or area action projects, can offer **service learning** opportunities such as monitoring water quality, conducting census counts of particular species, or maintaining wildlife areas. They also may be resources for community education.

Public and private health services. In very small communities, you may have to reach beyond the immediate environment to engage health providers. But there will likely be providers in larger, nearby towns that include your community in their service area. If not, your community might be a candidate for school-linked health services.

Human services agencies. The information on health service providers, above, is applicable here as well.

Independent banks. Locally owned banks have a stake in maintaining the vitality of the surrounding communities. They may serve as partners, provide funds, or help support service and work-based learning activities.

Independent telecommunications companies. Like local banks, small, independent telecommunications companies have a stake in supporting a thriving rural economy. They may serve as partners, provide funds, or help support service and work-based learning activities.

Libraries. If there is no community library in your immediate area, here again is an opportunity for action. Look to libraries in surrounding communities for advice and possible assistance.

Literacy councils. In many areas there are country or regional literacy councils whose functions include work with schools or school-age children and their families. Literacy council staff and volunteers may conduct adult/community education activities, help to organize and supervise student tutoring activities, and provide other assistance. Many literacy councils are affiliated with Laubach Literacy, 1320 Jamesville Avenue, Box 131, Syracuse, New York 13210, 315/422-9121. Or contact the adult education division of your state education agency.

Museums. These days, even very small communities often boast a local history or natural history museum. (For example, McDade, Texas, an unincorporated community of about 300 residents, has a local history museum, housed in a former saloon). These can be important partners, offering opportunities for service or **work-based learning** activities, community education or student enrichment classes, and ideas for community development.

Natural resource districts or river authorities. Many areas have county or regional water or other resource conservation or management districts. These often engage scientists and other professionals who can be resources for service and work-based learning opportunities, as well as for community education activities.

Newspapers, radio stations, or television stations. Though a part of the private enterprise sector, communications businesses have a special role in supporting schools and community. In addition to serving in a variety of roles (see private enterprise listing), these resources can be of great help in building community awareness and support.

Private business owners, industries, or area corporate affiliates. Private enterprise has a stake in educational quality as well as in helping to maintain a supportive and thriving community. Business representatives may serve as partners, provide funds, provide opportunities for service or work-based learning, serve as advisers for entrepreneurial activities, act as student mentors, or conduct community education classes.

Rural utilities cooperatives. Electric cooperatives and nonprofit water providers tend to be strong supporters of the areas and schools they serve. They may serve as partners, provide funds, or help support service and work-based learning activities.

U.S. Forest Service, Park Service, or Bureau of Land Management. Many rural communities are located near federally managed lands or parks. Unfortunately, relationships between community members and these agencies are often strained, due to a history of conflicts over land use or other problems. Even if this is the case in your area, however, it can be worthwhile to include local

representatives in your effort. One important lesson in community development is that groups and individuals with differing perspectives and interests need to be able to find common ground and work toward mutually beneficial solutions. At a narrower level, workers from these agencies can serve as resources in service or work-based learning activities.



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