

CHAPTER 9

Inclusive Leadership on the Social Frontiers

Family and Community Engagement

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This chapter focuses on inclusive service delivery and the role of leadership in promoting social justice but departs from emphasizing a specific area of difference within K–12 schools, shifting toward the broader context: the school as nested in a wider community. Attending to this broader context is a vital extension of inclusive leadership for social justice. How do school leaders engage families and external community members in their efforts to craft school communities that are inclusive? How does this engagement shape the ways that school leaders notice and work with other stakeholders to eliminate barriers to inclusion? These are the types of questions we examine here.

The premise of this chapter is that inclusive leadership for social justice extends beyond the schoolhouse doors. Previous chapters have focused on inclusion across multiple dimensions of diversity within schools, describing ways to ameliorate the educational inequities that students who have been historically marginalized experience. Complementing these chapters, we turn here to argue that inequities within schools cannot be understood without considering various out-of-school influences (Berliner, 2014). Hence, school leaders must take a holistic, or “ecological” approach to unpacking these inequities (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). This means seeing the developing child nested in a family that is in turn nested in a neighborhood. It means working with others to connect the intersections of these various sectors. Engaging families and communities in culturally appropriate manners is a key dimension of culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016).

Our students’ families are diverse, with parents and caregivers coming into children’s lives in many different ways. Demographically, urban and suburban communities alike are growing more diverse by race and ethnicity, with urban Whites being a numerical minority (Kim Parker et al., 2018) (for two tools to examine demographic shifts, see this resource and this interactive tool from Pew Research Center). The communities with which school leaders seek to engage are multifaceted as well,

comprising a wide range of organizations and institutions. In this chapter, we argue that building socially just, inclusive schools entails a holistic approach in which school leaders apprehend and appreciate the pluralism inherent in this broader context. Referring to this context as “social frontiers,” this chapter describes how school leaders committed to fostering educational equity and inclusivity can navigate this terrain as boundary spanners, border crossers, and advocates.

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Pew Research Center Tool for Examining Demographic Shifts

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/22/america-is-changing-demographically-heres-how-your-county-compares/>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/22/america-is-changing-demographically-heres-how-your-county-compares/> and <https://www.pewresearch.org/next-america/#Two-Dramas-in-Slow-Motion>

PART 1: THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF SOCIAL FRONTIERS IN SCHOOLS

What is a social frontier? Sociologist Ronald Burt (1992) coined this term to describe places where different social worlds collide, forcing the interaction of people who would otherwise tend to be isolated from one another. Interpersonal relationships “that cross the frontier involve continual negotiation” (p. 163), Burt argues, since commonly held expectations and cultural norms do not exist.

The metaphor of social frontiers is a useful one for school leaders to apply to the complexities inherent in building productive relationships with families and with communities (Miller, Scanlan, & Wills, 2014; Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013). Schools themselves are social frontiers, to the degree that they create a space in which diverse families are forced together to negotiate different notions of teaching and learning—the *why* of schooling (Rose, 2009). But more than this, school administrators—particularly building-level principals—are uniquely positioned to engage with others—such as neighborhood residents, community activists, and colleagues in local businesses, government, and faith communities—to find and build common ground and pursue shared goals. Such relationships are formed on social frontiers.

By their nature, social frontiers are heterogeneous, bringing together individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, races, and so forth. Here are some snapshots to illustrate:

- At a home-school meeting, a Hmong mother meets a Jewish mother. They bond over shared concerns about the school’s cafeteria, and in the process, discover that their children share a homeroom.

- At a neighborhood meeting, a principal meets a local store owner. The principal, who is Black, American-born, and middle class, does not live in the neighborhood. The store owner is Korean, a first-generation immigrant, and a working-class resident of the neighborhood.
- A local university holds a workshop for local educators on depression, mental health, and suicide prevention. Over lunch, a high school principal and counselor encounter a social worker whose office is right up the road from their school.
- The director of a local shelter for the homeless comes to school to meet with the leadership team. Concerned with the rising incidence of itinerant and homeless families in the area, she is seeking to partner with the school to more effectively meet the educational needs of children in these families.

INTERSECTIONS: BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS

All of these snapshots can be considered social frontiers: in each, people have new encounters, coming together over shared interests or, perhaps, shared conflicts. Social frontiers bring out boundaries: places of intersection. Boundaries are ambiguous middle grounds, where something is held in common while much remains apart. These snapshots illustrate Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) point that "Boundaries simultaneously suggest a sameness and continuity in the sense that within discontinuity two or more sites are relevant to one another in a particular way" (p. 133). The school cafeteria is relevant to the two mothers, and a safe neighborhood is relevant to the principal and store owner alike. The particular shared interest creates a point of intersection, creates a social frontier.

Increasingly, scholarship in educational leadership emphasizes the importance of boundary spanning. As Miller (2008) asserts, "To varying degrees all educational leaders are called to serve as boundary spanners" (p. 356). We extend this notion by claiming that these leaders are also called to serve as border crossers. Miller characterizes boundary-spanning leaders as "institutional infiltrators organizing for community advancement" who are "in" and "of" their communities (Miller, 2008, p. 372), and who operate as "flexible organizational navigators" and "knowledgeable information brokers" (Miller, 2009, p. 619).

Sometimes boundaries are permeable, allowing one to stand with a foot on either side. Other times they act as borders, where crossing over requires leaving one context and joining another. The notion of boundary spanners implies that the individual has connections to more than one world or organization and can act as a link between. In contrast, the notion of border crossers implies leaving behind one's assumptions, privileges, and expectations in order to enter a new space.

Using the distinction of borders and boundaries, Erickson (2007) recommends that schools reframe cultural borders as cultural boundaries, so that students do not need to leave behind dimensions of their cultural identity in order to belong to the school community. We are making a different point here: leadership on social frontiers does not necessarily entail reframing borders into boundaries but rather, navigating both. Sometimes school leaders span boundaries, standing with individuals

who come from very different places and helping them address a common concern. Other times, school leaders must cross a border on social frontiers, leaving behind what is familiar and comfortable and putting themselves in a new space. In the process, they often must confront their own sociocultural differences and power dynamics in their work with diverse communities.

Returning to the snapshots above, how often are the Hmong and Jewish mothers in the same room and *not provided opportunities to discuss common concerns*? What brings the Black principal and Korean businesswoman *together to work for the benefit of the larger community*? Are these intersections borders or boundaries? The challenge is for school leaders to navigate these intersections in ways that respect the voices and perspectives of each participant.

One specific area in which school leaders are called upon to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in boundary spanning and border crossing is with the rising numbers of immigrant students in schools. In the last quarter-century, migration trends across the globe have risen by 60%, with the most growth occurring in Europe, Asia, and North America (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). Interacting with these students and families can place school leaders in uncharted terrain, where they may be unclear about their legal and ethical obligations (Crawford, 2017) (for a helpful resource on supporting immigrants, see the Supporting Immigrants in School: four-part video series).

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Supporting Immigrants in School: four-part video series

<https://www.cuny-iie.org/videos>

ADVOCACY AT INTERSECTIONS

School leaders for social justice are called to be not only boundary spanners and border crossers, but also advocates. Advocacy signifies standing with others—particularly those who are being marginalized—providing support and solidarity (Johnson, 2017). In boundary spanning and border crossing one *encounters* others on social frontiers, forming relationships. Advocacy deepens these relationships to alliances. As an advocate, I not only know the other, but identify as an ally to them.

Literature describing educational leadership for social justice and inclusivity frequently emphasizes the importance of advocacy skills (Theoharis, 2007). As Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) put it,

within a social justice context, school leaders are being called on to take up the role of transformative intellectuals, public intellectuals, or critical intellectuals—that is, individuals who engage in critical analysis of conditions that have

perpetuated historical inequities in schools and who work to change institutional structures and culture.

(p. 202)

Lopez, Gonzalez, and Fierro (2006) argue that “Educational leaders who cross cultural borders engage their work in fundamentally different ways ... In a nutshell, they are social *activists* as well as educators who seek to challenge and change the world through their praxis” (pp. 67–68, emphasis added). At times, this puts principals in the uncomfortable position of advocating for parent and community groups against school district authorities. Anderson (2009) argues that educational leaders in positional power—such as principals and superintendents—need to be “motivated primarily through their advocacy for children and their communities” (p. 8) and pursue this “advocacy in alliance with other groups, such as teachers, parent and community leaders, unions, policy advocates, and other emerging civil society groups” (p. 2). The type of advocacy leadership that Anderson calls for is a “more politicized notion of leadership that acknowledges that schools are sites of struggle over material and cultural resources and ideological commitments” (p. 13). Johnson & Pak (2019) assert that leaders play a critical role in “support[ing] democracy in the development of partnerships between school and district personnel, community activists, and civic foundations; the establishment of advocacy networks across borders; and the “borrowing” of diversity policies from other school districts” (p. 422), but caution that this advocacy can be fragile, and “efforts to create more inclusive schools and teach democratic citizenship can easily be dismantled by a host of factors” (p. 422). In addition, advocacy for students and families can become more complicated when students’ documentation status is in question, as Crawford and Hairston’s case illustrates (Crawford & Hairston, 2017).

BOUNDARY SPANNERS, BORDER CROSSERS, AND ADVOCATES

These concepts—social frontiers, crossing boundaries and borders, and advocacy leadership—weave together to form a conceptual framework for this chapter. Our fundamental argument is that creating inclusive, socially just schooling demands that school leaders develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to navigate as boundary spanners, border crossers, *and* advocates. In this sense, our conceptual framework aligns with the argument Lopez and colleagues (2006) make:

[I]n addition to having a thorough understanding of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, and other areas of difference and how such factors impact the schooling process for everyone within the organization ... [school leaders] must have a keen awareness of school-community relations, group dynamics, intercultural tolerance, politics and power, team building, and community engagement and how to effectively bridge these “borders” in order to collectively work toward success.

(p. 66)

This framework is distinct from how educational administrators have been trained to think about school-community relations. Traditionally, school-community relations has been treated largely as a matter of public relations. Relatedly, it has also been approached primarily in a school-centric manner. In our framework, emphasizing the role of school leaders as boundary spanners, border crossers, and advocates, we are shifting the focus and moving well beyond this traditional approach to school-community relations. This framework asks school leaders to recognize how power is shared with families and organizations beyond the schoolhouse doors, and to explore how their educational goals for students intersect with the interests and goals of families and neighborhood residents. In the next section, we ground our thesis in empirical and conceptual literature, before turning to the main point of the chapter: operationalizing social frontiers.

PART 2: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL FRONTIERS: THE LITERATURE

Several key strands of literature are important for school leaders to understand when considering how to foster inclusivity on these social frontiers through crossing borders and boundaries and through advocacy. These include literature on culturally responsive leadership, parent engagement, and community engagement.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP

The first strand of literature examines the development of the concept of culturally responsive leadership. This involves those leadership practices that emphasize high expectations for student achievement, incorporate the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities in the school curriculum, work to develop a critical consciousness among both students and faculty to challenge inequities in the larger society, and create inclusive organizational structures at the school and district level that empower students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic communities. Similar terms, such as culturally proficient leadership, culturally relevant leadership, multicultural leadership, and diversity leadership, have been used to describe these leadership practices that support students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and create inclusive schooling environments.

The concept of culturally responsive leadership arises from inquiry into culturally oriented teaching practices. Ladson-Billings (1994) coined the term *culturally relevant pedagogy* in the late twentieth century in *The Dreamkeepers*, her classic study of eight exemplary teachers of African American students. Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995b) bases culturally relevant pedagogy on three propositions: students must (a) experience academic success; (b) develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the social order. Others (e.g., Gay, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2001) include additional

teacher practices such as developing effective cross-cultural communication and embracing constructivist views of teaching. In sum, most approaches to culturally relevant or culturally responsive instruction not only utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning, but also advocate teaching students how to develop a broader socio-political consciousness that enables them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 162). In an effort to embrace a more dynamic view of culture (youth cultures in particular), some researchers have extended the conceptualization of assets-based pedagogies to what they term *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). Paris (2012) argues that instruction should do more than relate to a student's culture; it should "support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (p. 95). In a similar vein, López (2017) describes asset-based pedagogy as viewing "students' culture as a strength," and asserts that teachers engage in this by developing critical awareness of sociohistorical influences on traditionally marginalized students' trajectories, allowing them to "cultivate students' knowledge by building on their prior knowledge (cultural knowledge) and incorporating knowledge that validates students' experiences (cultural content integration) into their instruction" (p. 1).

While assets-based approaches have generally been applied to classroom teaching, some researchers have used a culturally responsive framework to study the practices of school leaders. These studies have identified culturally responsive principals as those who (a) model critical self-awareness; (b) support culturally responsive teaching and learning in both curricula and teacher preparation; (c) foster culturally responsive, inclusive classrooms and schools; and (d) maintain a commitment and connection to parents, caregivers, and the broader community (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016).

Because all students and their families engage in a variety of cultural practices, culturally responsive leadership focuses on improving the educational experiences and outcomes for all students, but particularly those who have been historically marginalized in schools. To become culturally responsive, school leaders need to move beyond a "food and festival approach" to cultural diversity that focuses on sharing cultural contributions to an analysis of the ways that schools may reinforce inequalities and blame students and their families for realities beyond their control (see further Horsford & Clark, this volume).

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

A second strand of literature focuses on engaging parents in authentic partnerships. Individuals who parent are varied, extending to a wide range of individuals including guardians, extended family, and other caregivers. Over the past few decades, literature on parent engagement has evolved. Epstein (Epstein, 1986, 1990; Epstein & Salinas, 2004) articulates a typology of different types of involvement of parents

and community members in schools. Many of these may seem fundamental, such as parents providing health and safety for children, parents volunteering in schools and extending the learning from school to the home (e.g., homework), and schools communicating effectively with parents about the teaching and learning goals and progress toward these goals. Others are more sophisticated, such as schools providing opportunities for parents to actively influence decision-making in the school and assisting families in accessing support services from community agencies and organizations (e.g., healthcare, tutoring, economic development).

Efforts to engage parents—even when ostensibly seeking to empower those who have traditionally been marginalized—can effectively reinforce the power of the privileged. As Anderson (1998) notes, “In socioeconomically diverse schools, those who have the time, interest, and cultural capital to participate in schools tend to be middle-class parents whose class socialization is similar to that of school personnel, many of whom are themselves parents” (p. 581). School leaders, accordingly, must critically examine how power relations shape partnerships. Fine (1993) points out that parents (and community members) frequently “feel and are typically treated as ‘less’ than the professionals” (p. 684). Given these dynamics, Fine asserts that “Rich and real parental involvement requires a three-way commitment—to organizing parents, to restructuring schools and communities toward enriched educational and economic outcomes, and to inventing rich visions of educational democracies of difference” (p. 474). Auerbach (2012) makes a similar point, calling for “respectful alliances among educators, families, and community groups that value relationship building, dialogue across difference, and sharing power in pursuit of a common purpose in socially just, democratic schools” (p. 29). Auerbach points out that this can challenge school norms: “Despite the rhetoric of partnership, the literature suggests that many educators don’t want parents or community groups as equal partners with agency and voice” (p. 32). Moreover, this plays out differently across school settings. Principals in schools with high concentrations of families living in poverty tend to be less proactive and effective at engaging parents than their counterparts serving schools with higher concentrations of families who are economically privileged (Rogers, Freelon, & Terriquez, 2012). Yet, scholarship shows that the “combination of teacher and parent support [is] critical for student engagement and school trouble avoidance” (Garcia-Reid et al., 2015, p. 336).

An ecological perspective toward parent engagement attends to these dynamics of power by seeing parents as “authors and agents,” and their involvement as “a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interactions with schools and among school actors” (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004, p. 3). This perspective recognizes that parental interactions with schooling occur in both school-based spaces (some academic, others nonacademic) and home/community spaces (e.g., church-based groups, community organizations). Schools successful at engaging parents—particularly those traditionally marginalized—hold themselves accountable to engaging with and meeting the needs of parents across this variety of spaces (Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). This begins with developing processes to carefully listen to and communicate respectfully with parents (Ramirez, 2003; Scanlan, 2008) and a willingness to

meet with families outside of schools in community spaces, which provide a more level playing field for relationships. Evidence suggests that building trusting, collaborative relationships with families and community members, recognizing and addressing families' diverse needs, and sharing power and responsibility in authentic partnerships are all features of schools where parent engagement correlates with growth in student learning (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A third strand of literature is community engagement. In ways, this literature parallels and overlaps with literature on parent engagement. Concentrated poverty and accompanying adverse social conditions create barriers for student learning (Noguera, 2011). These barriers include reduced academic and social supports available to students outside school, as well as adverse conditions diminishing students' health, safety, and well-being. Research shows several trends of productive ways to foster community engagement to overcome such obstacles.

Toward this end, Warren (2005) describes three different approaches to collaboration between schools and community-based organizations. First, the service model—epitomized in community schools—uses schools as hubs that house a range of support services for families. For instance, community schools frequently include health clinics and provide adult education classes. Second, the development model involves the community sponsoring a new school, investing resources in creating the school as a vital organization in the neighborhood. Third, the organizing model uses schools as one partner amongst many local organizations working in a concerted manner to reform the quality of life in a neighborhood. As Warren (2005) summarizes,

all three models seek to build new, stronger, and more collaborative relationships between and among parents, educators, and community members. In conceptual terms, they work to build social capital and relational power. But each model does so in different ways, which gives them distinctive strengths and weaknesses.

(p. 163)

One lesson across all the models is the importance of investing resources in building social capital. For instance, schools with staff dedicated to engaging community and parent partners are much more successful. Such investments can yield particularly innovative cultural brokering approaches, including “creating a welcoming climate, building relationships between parents, and situating engagement in broader community contexts” (Ishimaru et al., 2016, p. 867). Green's (2017) comprehensive approach to fostering community engagement via a sophisticated community-based equity audit provides a helpful illustration of how to make such an investment. Green describes this in four stages, beginning with disrupting deficit views of community. Continuing with conducting initial inquiry into the community and shared community experiences, followed by developing a

community leadership team, and concluding with collecting and analysing data with an action-orientation.

In addition, independent community organizations that bring together parents and school personnel across racial and economic diversity play an important role in developing *bridging* social capital across organizational boundaries, which strengthens relations between school personnel and families (Johnson, Carter, & Finn, 2011). Partnerships between schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) can be particularly helpful when working with immigrant students, many of whom have interrupted formal education and thus benefit from targeted interventions and supports (Sugarman, 2017). For a range of resources related to educating refugees and collaborating with CBOs, see this link. Finally, conflicts around relational power, including racial tensions and competing organizational self-interests, often accompany all these models.

PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES

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Refugees and Resettlement: The who, what, where, when & why
<https://brycs.org/migration-resettlement-awareness/refugee-resettlement-the-who-what-where-when-why/>

Increasingly, these models of community engagement are blended in place-based initiatives—such as Promise Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Educational Opportunity Zones—with substantial support from both federal grants and private foundations (Miller et al., 2013; Scanlan & Miller, 2013). Place-based initiatives function as social frontiers when they bring together people of different professions and social worlds, such as PreK–12 schools, childcare agencies, providers of social service and health care, and economic development agencies. As Miller and colleagues (2014) describe,

while still teaming with others who are predominantly like themselves (e.g., principals collaborating with other school personnel) or pursuing organization-specific goals/outcomes (e.g., principals focusing upon student achievement and school resource allotment), leaders on social frontiers are also challenged to expand their collaborative orientations and core objectives.

(p. 3)

These place-based initiatives typically target urban neighborhoods that, due to extreme concentrations of poverty, can be characterized as “truly disadvantaged” (Williams, 1987). Yet, they are also directed toward rural, including tribal, contexts

(Miller et al., 2017, 2013). Across these contexts, place-based initiatives strive to be guided by the collaborative efforts of people who are rooted, through work and residency, in the area. This stands in contrast to efforts of outsiders coming into communities to “solve their problems.”

In these different formats, community engagement has many benefits. For instance, it can help children start school better prepared to learn, foster participation from more stakeholders in support of the school, and build public support for education (Warren, 2005). A central critique of efforts by schools to promote community engagement is that these efforts frequently focus primarily on improving schools, not communities, and encourage only token participation and decision-making by community stakeholders (Schutz, 2006). Schutz argues that more balanced and collaborative partnerships between schools and community organizations and residents have the *potential* to contribute not only to advanced academic achievement within schools, but also to evolve schools’ core understandings of their “role in promoting a more equal and more democratic society” (p. 693).

INTERSECTIONS

These three strands of literature—culturally responsive leadership, parent engagement, and community engagement—intersect to create a foundation for inclusive leadership on social frontiers. Each of these literatures describes different requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions for school leaders to create productive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders beyond the schoolhouse doors. Together, they necessitate the recognition that effective culturally responsive strategies to engage and work collectively with parents and community members may vary across different ethnic, cultural, and geographic communities. Advocacy by school leaders designed to challenge inequities must also be attuned to the particular community contexts in which they work.

Inclusive leadership *within schools* requires attending to the multiple, intersecting dimensions of student diversity in order to cross cultural borders and integrate service delivery to meet needs associated with these dimensions. In a parallel manner, the inclusive leadership *on social frontiers* that we address requires attending to multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity in the broader familial and community context. Moreover, developing the knowledge and skills requires that aspiring and novice school leaders have access to authentic experiences working with parents and community organizations in equal status relationships. We now turn to apply these bodies of literature by describing specific examples of inclusive leadership on social frontiers.

PART 3: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP ON SOCIAL FRONTIERS IN SCHOOLS

As discussed at the outset, inclusive leadership on social frontiers is manifest through the practices of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy. In

order to illustrate specific ways this may look, we weave in examples of how parent and community organizations in different communities have engaged with schools and school leaders. We organize this into three themes:

- Tripping Equity Traps.
- Fostering Relational Networks.
- Building Partnerships.

The themes are meant to help you, as a school leader or aspiring school leader, to conceptualize these possible examples, as opposed to an exhaustive list.

At the outset of this section, we want to be clear about a point that we will weave throughout: these strategies for inclusive leadership on social frontiers are not ancillary. Rather, they are central to effective, innovative leadership that builds social justice. Abundant evidence shows that effectively engaging families and communities is an essential support for organizing schools to be effective learning environments (Bryk et al., 2010; Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

TRIPPING EQUITY TRAPS

Practicing boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy entails overcoming equity traps. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) describe equity traps as “patterns of thinking and behavior that trap the possibilities for creating equitable schools for children of color. In other words, they trap equity; they stop or hinder our ability to move toward equity in schooling” (p. 603). For instance, some equity traps are deficit orientations toward minoritized students and families and refusal to face race, racism, and White privilege. In our experience, inclusive leadership on social frontiers entails “tripping”—or dismantling—these equity traps. Put differently, it requires acknowledging and overcoming patterns of thinking and behavior that hinder educators from moving toward engaging as boundary spanners, border crossers, and advocates for parents and community members.

ASSET ORIENTATIONS

One fundamental equity trap to inclusive leadership on social frontiers is deficit orientations (Schutz, 2006). Tripping this trap involves replacing deficit orientations with asset orientations. We know that students are more likely to succeed when educators hold and communicate ambitious expectations for students within schools (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Deficit orientations are the antithesis of this (Valencia, 1997). In schools, directly confronting and dispelling myths of intellectual inferiority of people of color is an important step to interrupting deficit orientations and adopting a culturally responsive leadership approach (Perry, 2003a, 2003b). A practical step toward “tripping” this equity trap is by creating counternarratives (Delgado, 1989; Perry, 2011). The counternarrative to seeing communities as laden

with deficits is to recognize, affirm, and build from assets in ways that join community resources with the school. Two examples of creating counternarratives is by recrafting space and by using schools as sites for continuing education.

RERAFTING SPACE

Since the communities in which schools are located are often seen as places defined by their deficits, one way to interrupt this narrative is by seeing these communities through new perspectives.

RERAFTING SPACES AT SCHOOLS

An example of creating this counternarrative is collaboratively recrafting spaces at schools. For instance, several schools with which we have worked in both the United States and England have engaged in initiatives to transform sections of asphalt playgrounds into neighborhood vegetable gardens, rain gardens, native plant gardens, and outdoor spaces to house small animals (i.e., chickens and rabbits), that were cared for by the students. In each of these cases, the school communities were situated in densely populated urban areas with relatively few public green spaces. By leveraging resources from local foundations and businesses, these schools were able to fund the necessary materials to create community garden spaces. In each case, local residents were central to planning the space and implementing the change. This support was central to the gardens' success, as none of the schools were year-round, so school personnel were not around to tend to the space during the prime growing season.

Public gardens on playgrounds create counternarratives by inverting the traditional view of school playgrounds as separate, gated spaces reserved for school usage, to shared, communal spaces that serve multiple audiences. A boundary between school and community that was formerly impervious becomes porous, and a space that was once viewed as belonging solely to the school is now shared. This *process* of working together to recraft the school's outdoor spaces illustrates boundary spanning. As school personnel, parents, and other community members built the garden, they developed and deepened their relationships, but the educators did not need to leave their familiar roles and spaces to do so.

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Restorative Justice Approaches at Lyons Community School

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/538/is-this-working>

RERAFTING SPACE IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Another example of recrafting space is the collaborative effort to improve neighborhoods. For instance, one school with which we worked engaged in raising awareness about the need to protect a local waterway from pollutants. Using resources from a local foundation, students and community members stenciled storm drains with messages to inform the public about how these drain to a local waterway. They also created signage for a park about the history and health of the watershed. In another community, a local community organization converted abandoned plots of land into urban orchards, community vegetable gardens, and apiaries for beekeeping. The community group then welcomed schools to these spaces for field trips. In a third urban neighborhood, students worked with the school's community liaison and other community residents to clean up a city park near the school that was filled with abandoned tires and garbage. Again, these serve as counternarratives by inverting the common assumption that densely populated urban areas are necessarily disconnected from the natural environment. This example reflects not only boundary spanning, but culturally responsive advocacy as well: action by school personnel who challenge the status quo and work alongside community groups to advocate for the improvement of the neighborhood.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

A second example of creating counternarratives to deficit orientations is using schools as sites for the continuing education of parents and community members. Many schools innovatively use their resources to foster continuing education. Some efforts are long-term, such as providing space for English-as-a-Second-Language courses and African-centered cultural programs. Others are targeted, short-term initiatives, such as health and wellness workshops or legal clinics on immigration. When school leaders partner with community groups to provide continuing education, they create counternarratives to the destructive myths that people living in poverty are unmotivated or unable to use their agency to improve their communities. It also serves to refashion the school building as a community learning center that serves all ages.

CONNECTING TO THE CORE ROLE AS SCHOOL LEADER

You can create counternarratives in these (and other) ways, in manners that both directly and indirectly connect back to the core teaching and learning in the school community. For instance, the process and products of recrafting space around the school are opportunities to integrate authentic curricular materials for addressing science, social studies, and writing standards. In addition, continuing education opportunities build the capacity of parents and caregivers to support and extend the learning of their children outside the schoolhouse doors.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you imagine the educators who establish continuing education in their school, or are working to recraft the outdoor spaces in their school, are practicing boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy?
- What are the challenges that educators face as they practice boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy?
- In your experience, what are other counternarratives that promote asset orientations to local communities?

ANTIRACISM

A second equity trap to inclusive leadership on social frontiers is the reluctance of school personnel to directly and proactively confront racism and White privilege (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Kendi, 2019). Importantly, antiracism should be considered a part of the broader context of critically and proactively confronting all examples of oppression, ranging from ableism to misogyny, to classism, heteronormativity, religious, and linguistic prejudices. The biases operating at the personal level, along with structures operating at institutional levels, perpetuate these oppressions, and the chapters throughout this book elucidate the implications of these for school leadership. In the context of social frontiers, however, we focus on race because of its profound and persistent role impacting communities. Many—perhaps most—aspects of the residential neighborhoods in which students and families in our schools live are racialized. In other words, when considering a whole host of community aspects, from quality of life indicators to crime rates, housing, and employment rates, practices of racial inequality persist (Perry, 2011). Counternarratives to racist orientations can emerge from reflection on strategies to be antiracist (Kendi, 2017) and then engagement in critical discourse, assisted by resources such as these.

EXTENDED LEARNING – ERESOURCES

Companion website: www.routledge.com/9780367404604 under Ch. 9 resources

Teaching Tolerance: Race and Ethnicity Resources

<https://www.tolerance.org/topics/race-ethnicity>

In many urban areas, a racial and ethnic mismatch exists between school personnel, many of whom are White, and neighborhood residents, who are often people of color. Addressing racism—both at the personal and institutional level—is frequently something that school personnel are reluctant to do. A practical way to trip

this equity trap is to engage in antiracist training. School leaders can play a catalytic role in this, as Case Study One illustrates.

CASE STUDY ONE

Bryce Elementary Grows Antiracist

Bryce Elementary (a pseudonym) is an elementary school in Chicago serving 350 students. Over the course of five years, Bryce developed an antiracist mission, vision, and identity. The school principal, Ms. Megan, spearheaded this effort. Ms. Megan had two decades of administrative experience and had been at Bryce for six years. She was struck by the complexities that Bryce was experiencing as it went through a demographic transformation.

Most educators in Bryce—including Ms. Megan—were White and monolingual, and the population of teachers was relatively stable. In contrast, the student and neighborhood population had transformed in the past decade from being primarily White and native English speaking to being predominantly Latinx and native Spanish speaking, with several different national origins. This transformation led to increased tensions within the school community around language, race/ethnicity, and school identity.

As Ms. Megan considered this, she became interested in antiracism. She started at the personal level, engaging in extensive training and reflection to raise her own awareness of racism and White privilege. She slowly undertook the process of critiquing this and developing an understanding and commitment to antiracism. This personal process of confronting her own racism and White privilege laid the foundation for Ms. Megan to consider how to address racism in Bryce, as a school community. She began a deliberative, thoughtful process of working with teachers on developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of antiracism.

Just as the personal transformation was not a quick fix, but a methodical shift in orientation, so, too, was the institutional transformation. By steadily supporting teachers in on-going reflections and professional development, Bryce developed a deep and widespread commitment to antiracism. This resulted in a faculty-led process of recreating the school mission to explicate an antiracist identity. Importantly, while this antiracist commitment began at the behest of Ms. Megan, it grew to be widely shared. This led directly to increased engagement of parents within the school community and laid a foundation for increased engagement with community members on shared initiatives.

As Case Study One suggests, educators can move across a continuum of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy on social frontiers. In this case, the principal's initial movement toward antiracism was boundary spanning. By enrolling in a professional development course on antiracism, she stretched outside her comfort zone, but did so on relatively familiar ground. As she continued this journey, she then experienced border crossing, by moving from predictable modes of learning (e.g., formal professional development activities) into interactions in which she was more vulnerable. Attending neighborhood meetings, for instance, placed her off her own "turf" and out of a position of authority. Yet, this was a vital step to forging deeper relationships across race, ethnicity, and culture. Finally, she embraced advocacy, by affirmatively embracing antiracism within the school's policies and mission.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you identify with the educators in these examples practicing boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy?
- In your experience, what are other antiracist initiatives that apply to leadership on social frontiers?
- Asset orientations and antiracist initiatives are two ways to trip equity traps. Consider these as examples, not an exhaustive list. What are other equity traps—other patterns of thinking and behavior that trap the possibilities of inclusive schooling on social frontiers?

FOSTERING RELATIONAL NETWORKS

In addition to tripping equity traps, a second way to pursue inclusive leadership on social frontiers is to foster relational networks with families and community partners that develop new understandings about community issues. We describe several examples of how school leaders can effectively build these relationships in their schools and how aspiring school leaders can learn network-building skills through their leadership preparation courses. Again, we emphasize the roles of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy on these social frontiers.

HOME VISITS

The value of building personal relationships with families by having school personnel conduct home visits is not a new idea. Research has found this strategy to be valuable for engaging many traditionally marginalized populations in both urban and rural contexts (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lopez et al., 2001). Sometimes, home visits are promoted by the district level with well-defined processes and goals (e.g., The

Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, <http://www.pthvp.org/>). At other times these initiatives arise within individual schools, or even from particular teachers in schools. Home visits can be a way to learn about and highlight the “funds of knowledge” that are present in students’ home environments (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

As a school leader, an important role you play is to ensure that home visits support productive learning. One barrier to productive learning is when individuals engaging in home visits work in isolation, without having opportunities to process and share their learning. As a result, the benefits of these visits are idiosyncratic and limited to the individuals, rather than shared and systematic. Another more insidious threat to productive learning is that, if educators are not well prepared and provided opportunities to process them, home visits can actually reinforce negative, deficit orientations toward families and communities.

Being mindful of these barriers, school leaders must ensure productive learning from home visits. There are several ways to do this. First and most fundamentally, home visits must be resourced. When home visits are not adequately resourced, then they are only available to those who are able to volunteer the additional time to participate. Providing meaningful professional development opportunities to prepare teachers and staff to develop an assets-based mindset for conducting home visits is another important strategy. This should include regular occasions for those making home visits to share the successes and challenges they are experiencing with one another and with the broader school community. In addition, school leaders should gather and analyze data from all participants, including families, regarding what is beneficial and what can be improved about home visits. For instance, questions about home visits could be included on regular school climate surveys. Johnson (2014) provides school leaders with specific activities to help guide teachers through the process—before, during, and after the visit—that focus on procedures to help teachers use the home visits to develop deeper relationships with families (see Table 9.1, “Home Visit Procedural Framework”).

Note that home visits provide a structure that may help educators move from boundary spanning into border crossing. Boundary spanning involves fostering relational networks with diverse partners, including parents, but can be done from within a familiar space. Border crossing asks educators to leave their familiar spaces and enter new ones.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How might some educators experience home visits as boundary spanning and others experience it as border crossing? How might discussing these differences in experience be helpful in a school community?
- How can home visits create opportunities for developing skills in advocacy?
- Who in your school community would be (or is) the biggest champion of home visits? Who would be (or is) the biggest critic? How can you, as a school leader, learn from people at both ends of this spectrum?

Table 9.1 Home Visit Procedural Framework

Phase 1: Before the visit

- Inquire about administrative policy on home visits.
- Find school or community assistance with translation of documents or phone calls.
- Send letters home with all students describing the purpose of home visits.
- Talk to parents about home visits in person when informal occasions arise.
- Set up visits according to appropriate days/time for the family.
- Research culturally appropriate etiquette for visits.
- Collect home visit props (work samples, photographs, games, food, etc.).
- Compile a list of community resources that might be useful to the family.

Phase 2: During the visit

- When introducing yourself, let the family know what name they can use with you (e.g., Ms./Mr. Xyz or first name).
- Greet everyone present, including young children.
- Accept refreshments, or provide information about allergies if you cannot consume something being offered.
- Discuss topics that are not related to school, if possible—use your props as a prompt for conversation.
- Inquire about the family's home, customs, children, and so on.
- Take pictures if appropriate—start by asking if it is OK to get a photo of you and your student (include siblings, pets, friends, etc.).
- Mention to parents that you enjoy having parents visit your class and extend an invitation if they seem interested.

Phase 3: After the visit

- Record details of visit and develop a “funds of knowledge” list.
 - Share your experiences with faculty and administrators.
 - Send a thank-you note home with the student and include photographs of the visit.
 - Post photographs in classroom on a “home visit wall” for other students and faculty to see (after getting permission from student).
 - Contact other parents about visits, especially those who know the families whom you have already visited.
 - Maintain informal communication—for example, send a personal note home to one family per week, or drop by the families' homes periodically for brief greetings.
 - Invite an administrator or colleague to accompany you on a subsequent visit.
 - Offer to accompany a colleague on a home visit.
-

COMMUNITY-BASED EQUITY AUDITS

Alongside home visits, another strategy for fostering relational networks on social frontiers is conducting a community-based equity audit. Community walks are designed to help educators develop some basic familiarity with the neighborhoods of school families. When done well, community walks provide a forum for learning about a variety of topics, such as housing issues, business and community organizations, religious institutions, and community-based advocacy organizations. A vital component to successful community walks is that educators hear from the perspective of community residents. This serves as a consciousness-raising activity, providing educators with an insider's view about both assets and challenges present in the neighborhoods surrounding their school. A community resident can act as a

“cultural broker,” who brings familiarity with the neighborhood and a willingness to help teachers and administrators view the neighborhood in a new light. Case Study Two provides an illustration of how a community walk can work.

CASE STUDY TWO

Community Walks in Boston

In Spring 2014, as part of a Family and Community Engagement course at Boston College, local teachers and aspiring school leaders participated in “community walks” in diverse communities throughout the greater Boston metropolitan area, including Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Allston-Brighton, Framingham, and Waltham. Modeled after the neighborhood walk activity described in the UCEA *Preparing Leaders to Support Diverse Learners* module on Family and Community Engagement (see <http://www.ucea.org/fipse/ple-1-module-5/>), participants organized themselves into small groups of three to five participants. Some explored community institutions in the neighborhood where they taught, while others elected to walk a Boston neighborhood quite culturally and ethnically different from their school neighborhood. As a culminating project, each group produced a photo essay or digital story of the neighborhood and wrote a reflection about their experiences.

High school students served as cultural brokers in two of the groups. One student highlighted community sites she deemed significant to neighborhood youth (e.g., the local park where they played sports and the Caribbean convenience store where they congregate with their friends after school). Another student leader discussed local divisions along class and race lines and the unfair stereotypes about crime associated with his neighborhood. Although some stops on the community walks were predetermined, each group also experienced serendipitous experiences along the way, such as a conversation with a community organizer at City Life, a storefront organization in Jamaica Plain that fights banks on behalf of residents who have fallen prey to “predatory lending practices” that result in foreclosure. Some groups later used the contacts they made during their community walk for a follow-up class inquiry project, which required them to collect data about a neighborhood issue from the perspective of at least two stakeholder groups.

STORY MAPPING

A related activity to community walks that also can help foster relational networks is *story mapping*. The goal of story mapping is to uncover, recover, and retell the stories and assets of community members in order to develop a road map for future advocacy. In the story mapping process, there are multiple ways to develop community stories (see Table 9.2).

In May 2014, a story mapping process was modeled in Pittsburgh at the 7th Annual Duquesne Educational Leadership Symposium. The theme of the symposium was “Rivers of Justice, Bridges of Love: What is the new steel upon which we re-imagine a healthier, more equitable Pittsburgh community?” Duquesne University graduate students, visiting university professors from around the country, and community residents worked in teams of three to collect stories in the Hill District and West Pittsburgh neighborhoods over a two-day period. Community residents conducted the interviews, and Duquesne University students (many of whom are Pittsburgh school leaders) and visiting university professors served as notetakers and critical friends. Shifting the power relationships in the story mapping process provides an authentic border-crossing experience where school leaders learn to take leadership from community residents who identify what issues in the neighborhood matter, and what advocacy school leaders might provide in the neighborhood improvement process. Short one-page stories based on the interviews were written up and shared across the groups for further reflection. These story mapping techniques, which are part of Community Learning Exchanges developed by the Center for Ethical Leadership, are

Table 9.2 Story Mapping Strategies

1. Use a pre-determined prompt

A prompt asks the storyteller to consider a particular event and tell the story of a conflict or dilemma. That may be followed by reflective questions that support deeper reflection. Those stories help the storyteller talk through a dilemma and come to ideas about how to address an issue.

2. Create a digital story

A digital story asks the director/writer to frame a story around an individual, collective, or community autobiography, biography, or issue. The story is told through the eyes, research, images, and perspective of the person or team constructing the script and choosing the images for the story.

3. Interview community members

An interview can provide the framework for a story. Begin with guiding questions to start the interview and continue with probing questions in response to what the storyteller says. The story emerges as a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. When multiple persons are interviewed in a community, this helps the group map the story of the community through several stories and experiences.

designed to honor collective leadership by local residents for sustainable community change (see <http://www.communitylearningexchange.org>).

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do story mapping and neighborhood walks foster relational networks in different ways than home visits?
- How might some participants experience community walks and story mapping as boundary spanning and others experience these as border crossing? How might discussing these differences in experience be helpful in a school community?
- How can these create opportunities for developing skills in advocacy?
- Who in your school community would be (or is) the biggest champion of neighborhood walks and story mapping? Who would be (or is) the biggest critic? How can you, as a school leader, learn from people at both ends of this spectrum?

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Alongside tripping equity traps and fostering relational networks, a third way to pursue inclusive leadership on social frontiers is to build partnerships across organizations. Partnerships are linkages—some more formalized, others less so—that connect individuals working in different sectors by way of common pursuits. We briefly discuss three organizational levels that we have seen catalyzing these partnerships: PreK–12 educational institutions, institutes of higher education, and community-based organizations. Organizational structures promote and facilitate partnerships across these levels. These structures support practices of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy.

PREK–12 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

First, educational institutions—at the school and district level—often catalyze partnerships. Often developed through coalitions between community advocates and their school district allies, the development of inclusive structures and dedicated staff positions serves to provide official sanction and recognition of the importance of parent and community engagement. These structures also create culturally responsive avenues to assist both families and educators to span cultural boundaries and cross cultural borders. In Case Study Three, we describe examples from the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that underscore the importance of these structures, at both the building and district

levels, for providing parents and community members a “place at the table” in educational decision-making.

CASE STUDY THREE

Schools and Districts Catalyzing Partnerships

In Boston, parent organizations such as BPON (the Boston Parent Organizing Network) targeted the appointment of a full-time Parent Liaison or Community Partnership Coordinator in every Boston public school as a key community organizing issue (Evans & Shirley). As noted in their mission statement, BPON “organizes, develops and supports parents and families who are marginalized by class, race, language, disabilities and immigration status to work with and hold accountable the Boston Public School system to provide an excellent education for all students” (for more information on BPON, see <http://bpon.org>). BPON successfully advocated with school district leadership to establish these building-level positions, as well as a cabinet-level position for Assistant Superintendent for Family and Student Engagement. While BPON is no longer active, a former parent organizer from BPON, Myriam Ortiz, currently serves in this district level position. Her Boston Public Schools office also sponsors a student advocacy group (the Boston Student Advisory Council), whose members advocated for a new Student Disciplinary Code and were active in recent neighborhood forums to identify the qualities that parents and community members are looking for in a new superintendent for BPS. The partnerships established between advocacy organizations such as BPON and their school district allies legitimate advocacy as part of the school improvement process.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) first established consultative committees (e.g., Black Consultative Committee, Portuguese Consultative Committee) in the late 1970s, to provide parents and community members from particular ethnic communities a forum to discuss issues that affected their ethnic community with school officials. Historically, these committees worked with Toronto school district officials to draft and monitor the first Race Relations Policy in a North American school district in 1979 and advocate for more teachers of color and multicultural curriculum in the Toronto schools. The establishment of the district position of Executive Officer for Student and Community Equity in 2005, filled by longtime equity advocate Lloyd McKell, provided a cabinet-level position to collect data on the racial achievement gap in relation to African Canadian students, and the establishment of a parent-district task force, which led to the

development of Toronto's first Africentric Public Elementary School in 2009. As immigration to Toronto has shifted in recent years to include East African families, a new Task Force on the Success of Students of Somali Descent was established. Over the years, these consultative committees have provided an official space where parents and school district officials could work together to make the Toronto schools more culturally responsive (Johnson, 2016).

INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

While sometimes PreK–12 schools and districts prompt partnerships, at other times, institutes of higher education (IHEs) are the instigators. There are several advantages for school leaders who look to colleagues in IHEs to facilitate partnerships. First, IHEs can play the role of being neutral players who bridge relationships amongst institutions on social frontiers which otherwise would be isolated, or even in competition with one another. Secondly, IHEs bring different types of resources—such as content-area expertise in a variety of fields—that can prove valuable in crafting productive partnerships. Finally, IHEs often enjoy a strong reputation in the extended community that schools and community partners can exploit to help establish the credibility of nascent partnerships. In Case Study Four we describe an example of this.

CASE STUDY FOUR

An IHE Catalyzing Partnerships

The Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) was established in 1996 at Loyola University in Chicago with the mission to create “innovative solutions that promote equity and opportunity in communities throughout the Chicago metropolitan region” (<http://www.luc.edu/curl/Mission.shtml>). In contrast to most centers that promote collaboration with community groups to examine research that is driven by the interests and agendas of faculty, CURL operates on a team model of research. “A primary element in CURL’s mission is to bring the community’s eyes, ears, and voice to the metaphorical or real ‘research table’” (Nyden, 2009, p. 2). Community members serve as integral team members, proposing and designing any research project. Nyden (2009), a founding member and director of CURL, describes the fluid process of conceptualizing new partnership ideas:

The venues for conceptualization vary. They have been breakfasts with community leaders where emerging community needs are discussed. They have been meetings with executive directors and/or staff of social service agencies related to pressing internal evaluation needs. In other instances, collaborative research projects themselves have generated new research ideas. When new issues emerge out of ongoing research, CURL often convenes “think tank” meetings of potentially interested faculty, community leaders, and policy makers to discuss facets of an issue and how additional information—either existing data or newly collected data—may be useful in addressing that issue.

(pp. 2–3)

The innovative structure of CURL includes recognizing that community partners need not only a seat at the table, but compensation as well:

To provide a more level playing field in collaborative research, CURL has always worked to build in compensation for community partners. While this can take the form of paying for community organization office space or other project expenses, it most often means salary support for staff members involved in the research team. CURL offers community fellowships which range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 in a given year.

(Nyden, 2009, p. 7)

CURL partnerships engage Loyola faculty and students to work with community and nonprofit organizations, civic groups, and government agencies to address specific issues, which range widely, including homelessness, hunger and nutrition, community health and safety, and job training and placement.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Finally, community-based organizations (CBOs), at times, are the catalysts for building partnerships on social frontiers. As opposed to partnerships that originate with PreK-12 schools or IHEs, partnerships that emerge from CBOs are most naturally based in the needs of the community members. Here, the roles are reversed: schools are invited to the table, as opposed to being the hosts.

Examples of partnerships that originate in CBOs abound. Sometimes, local foundations provide the start-up funding for such partnerships. For instance, the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative has funded several CBOs focusing on sustained neighborhood transformation efforts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Zilber Family

Foundation, n.d.). At other times, state governments provide this funding. For instance, the Department of Human Services in Dane County, Wisconsin, has created a series of 16 offices—nine urban, seven rural—that coordinate “voluntary, community-based, supportive service that helps families address their basic human needs” (Joining Forces for Families, n.d.). Teams from various sectors, including public health nurses, social workers, school personnel, clergy, and others, work “to support efforts to make their community a safer, healthier place to live.” Examples of this include creating job fairs, hosting immunization clinics, helping families register and prepare children for school, and organizing citizens to problem-solve public safety concerns.

Another way to partner with CBOs is via community-based internships. Such internships require aspiring school leaders to engage with diverse families and community-based projects for an extended period of time. Leadership preparation programs typically require the completion of 300–500 practicum hours, working in schools, in order to provide hands-on experience to learn leadership skills. Some states, such as Massachusetts, have added Family and Community Engagement as one of the state-wide leadership standards and instituted performance-based assessments, which all candidates must complete before qualifying for their principal licensure. Community-oriented internships provide practicum experiences where aspiring school leaders can learn boundary spanning and advocacy skills by apprenticing with principals who are deeply connected to their local community, or work under the leadership of parents and neighborhood leaders in community-based improvement projects. For example, this might involve working with the Community Partnership Coordinator at a full-service middle school to assess student and parent needs regarding the high school choice process, or an internship at a local community center that is providing outreach and advocacy for families who are displaced because of school closures in their urban neighborhood. To be most effective, these internships should be coupled with seminars where aspiring school leaders can dialogue and critically reflect on how their experiences in diverse communities intersect with issues of race, culture, and power (Auerbach, 2009; Johnson & Campbell-Stephens, 2013).

ROLES OF SCHOOL LEADERS

The differing levels from which partnerships originate—PreK–12 schools and districts, IHEs, or CBOs—influence how school leaders engage in roles of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy. Partnerships structured via schools and districts tend to promote boundary spanning opportunities, facilitating relationships from within traditional roles. Partnerships activated by CBOs are more apt to provide opportunities for border crossing and advocacy, as they require educators to give up more control to enter. Partnerships rooted in IHEs run the gamut. Across all levels, however, a key component to remember is that the structures, such

as specific roles and committees (see Case Study Three) or new organizations (see Case Study Four), play an important role in shaping their outcomes. For instance, CURL could have been structured in a manner that facilitated boundary spanning. Yet, as configured, it is much more likely that the partnerships it spurs result in advocacy as well.

Returning to a point we made earlier, the role of school leaders in such partnerships is a departure and expansion on the traditional emphasis in school-community relations on public relations. Being a boundary spanner, border crosser, and advocate is a stance. School leaders take this stance when they engage with community organizers proactively. One motivation for this is a recognition that this stance can enhance the teaching and learning directly in their school communities—such as by providing new opportunities to meet the needs of students or families. Another motivation is a recognition of the indirect effects of such partnerships, such as strengthened alliances with stakeholders in the community. In other words, some of the benefits are more immediate and tangible, while others are delayed and less tangible.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Reflect on the partnerships between schools and other organizations with which you have participated. Have these been catalyzed by PreK–12 schools or districts, IHEs, or CBOs? Have they promoted roles of boundary spanning, border crossing, or advocacy?
- What are the low-hanging fruit for building partnerships in your context?

EQUITY AUDIT QUESTIONS

Projects like equity audits (see Chapter 10 in this volume), where achievement gaps and differences in teacher quality are compared across local school districts, can help uncover how schools reinforce social inequality. These audits might also include analyzing the curriculum to investigate whose culture is included (or not) in textbooks, school assemblies, extra-curricular activities, and parent involvement programs. The final chapter of this text describes a comprehensive equity audit process (see the social frontiers section and full equity audit detailed in Chapter 10 and online (www.routledge.com/9780367404604)).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have explored how school leaders engage families and external community members in their efforts to craft school communities that are

inclusive in the context of social frontiers. We have emphasized that school leaders navigate these social frontiers by being boundary spanners, border crossers, and advocates, applying these roles to the practices of tripping equity traps, fostering relational networks, and building partnerships. This is substantively different from traditional approaches to community relations. As boundary spanners, border crossers, and advocates, school leaders recognize that, while their central responsibility resides in the school, authentic partnerships with families and community members do not need to exclusively focus on the school as the center, and that power in envisioning and enacting such partnerships should be distributed across key stakeholders.

A key implication that we want to underscore in this conclusion is how engaging in these roles beyond the schoolhouse doors complements inclusive leadership *within* the school community. These are complementary in many ways, two of which we focus on here.

First, by practicing boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy with families and community groups, school leaders enhance skills that also apply to working with students and families each day inside the school. Each of us is more familiar and comfortable with some dimensions of diversity than others. Clearly, we play to these advantages when building relationships on social frontiers. For example, if I am a native Spanish speaker and have a bilingual family, I am going to be more adept at working with my Latin community members. I cannot stop there, though, ignoring the other stakeholders with whom I am less accustomed. As we have discussed throughout this chapter, school leaders need to learn ways to engage with *all* their families and community partners, not just the ones that come easily. In a parallel manner, within our schools, we typically are more comfortable with some dimensions of diversity and less so with others. For instance, if I identify as a heterosexual woman and have a brother who identifies as gay, I may find myself very much at ease engaging with the Gay-Straight Alliance at the middle school where I am the principal. However, I may find that—since I identify as an atheist—I have a strong reluctance to discuss religious pluralism in the school community. Thus, growing my skills at boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy on the social frontier can help strengthen my practices at engaging across the multiple dimensions of diversity within my school.

Second, since the practices of boundary spanning, border crossing, and advocacy are all asset-oriented, these may provide novel insights into community resources that can support my efforts at inclusion within the school. Throughout the other chapters in this text, authors have focused on building asset-oriented approaches to inclusion across multiple dimensions of diversity—from race to language, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, and religion. Either implicitly or explicitly, many of the strategies suggested in these chapters involve not just drawing upon existing resources within the school, but engaging community members in bringing new resources to the school. Tripping equity traps, fostering relational networks, and building partnerships are specific strategies for identifying and securing such resources.

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Journal of case-studies:

- Addressing food insecurity (Atwood et al., 2019)
- Engaging on immigration, rural schools (Guillaume et al., n.d.)
- Sustaining community partnerships during district transition (LeChasseur, 2017)