Leadership for Social Justice and Morality: Collaborative Partnerships, School-Linked Services and the Plight of the Poor

Leadership for Learning in the Context of Social Justice: An American Perspective

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ABSTRACT: Despite the educational reform initiatives outlined in programs similar to and in the American 2000 plan, conspicuously absent is any in-depth discussion regarding the growing rate of poverty among youth in inner cities. It is a poverty which engulfed one in seven youth in 1970, one in six in 1980, one in five in 1990, and one in four in 2000. Today there are more than thirteen million children living in the below-poverty bracket. Among the critical issues that have received some attention about poverty in inner-city schools are: (a) the demographic factors of the disadvantaged students and their urban communities; (b) collaborative efforts for school-linked services and delivery systems; and (c) social justice and moral responsibilities of school leaders and the urban communities which they serve. Drawing from a review of literature, this article posits that leadership for social justice and morality is imperative as advocates commit to collaborative partnerships for integrating services and delivery of programs for poverty-stricken school populations.

Poverty among youth has been called the father of social failure, job insecurity, emotional imbalance, and social rejection, even though poverty-stricken parents have high expectations for their youngsters. In 2002, Williams-Boyd reported that there were more than 32 million Americans who had no health insurance. More recently, Morrison (2006) reported that approximately 47 million Americans have no health insurance. According to Morrison (2006), "In the world's biggest economy, one in eight Americans and almost one in four blacks lived in poverty last year" (n.p.). Further research indicates that there are approximately 53 million Americans who will face these hardships during 2007 (Jazzar & Algozzine, 2007). Lacking health-care benefits harms individuals and their families. According to Blanco (2003) out of the 48 million school children in the United States, more than thirteen million were living in the below-poverty bracket.

The treatment of poor students in American schools remains an intractable problem of the school reform movement. Brown (2003) maintains that, along with minorities, students from low income families invariably crowd the lower-level academic tracks, which has led for community-based leadership in schools to commit to improving this situation. According to Brown (2003), "a society stratified by unequal positions of power, income, and social status can hardly alter social and economic mobility through its schools. It can merely reproduce the existing inequalities" (p. 75). Gordon, (2004) argues that children who historically have been economically disadvantaged and undereducated should have access to the basic human resource development capital that supports development of academic abilities, including good health, intellectually stimulating life experiences, and a network of significant people who have the knowledge and experience to nurture, guide, and support them in their academic pursuits.

No proposed education reform plans to date have addressed the differences in levels of family or community capacity to exert aggressive measures on behalf of culturally-deprived children (i.e., those marginalized by the dominant classes) in urban neighborhoods infested with destruction, defeatism, and damaging physical and social health. Urban schools have numerous challenges and social issues that derive from the high concentrations of families

whose social mobility is limited by poverty and minority status. We contend that America has failed to offer substantive measures regarding the poor beyond remediation and meals as well as beyond deficiency-oriented rather than school-discriminatory programs. Cultural and racial diversity and the plight of the poor demand that schools embrace a revised and enlightened view of true community leadership that advocates and achieves unity and respect for differences. However, in order for such an endorsement to be effective, school leaders and their communities must engage in leadership where they re-conceptualize their practice based on social justice agendas, specific moral capacities and responsibilities. If urban schools become more racial, ethnic, and socio-economic specific, the major issue for future leaders will be to demonstrate the greatest respect for the parents and nurture the abilities of children in these schools by utilizing the leadership most desired by their respective communities. In other words, it becomes morally imperative to commit to integrating services (i.e., school-linked) whereby the school itself serves as a link between service delivery systems and families. Integrated services occur when these services are available at a school or a nearby site in partnership with a school and involve a coordinated delivery of health, education, prevention, and social services designed to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in order to effectively address the needs of all students.

The purpose of this article is to explore social justice leadership and the moral responsibilities of school leaders and their communities as they advocate for the needs of students from low income families. Combing through common themes and patterns in the literature, a list of implications is provided that can assist leaders in urban education systems to adequately address the social, cultural, and academic needs of all students. We begin by presenting the context of 400 years of historical developments on poverty in America. Since 400 years of history can hardly be captured in an article of this length, we highlight critical events within the 400 year time period to help build the case for community-school-based leadership and education that spans the multiple needs of poor urban children and families. This is followed by a presentation of the demographic factors of disadvantaged school communities. Then we discuss social justice leadership. Next, collaborative partnerships and school-linked services, including large-scale full service schools and delivery programs are discussed, followed by a discussion about the need for collaborative partnerships to engage in moral leadership efforts to meet the social, cultural, and academic needs of students. Finally, we offer a summary and conclusion.

Historical Perspectives: Context of Social Justice

The fracturing of the American family has resulted in two distinct perspectives on public education: some people believe that schools should do more and provide many of the services heretofore provided by the family whereas others believe that schools should simply return to teaching the "basics." Essentially, children cannot and will not reach their academic potential unless they are reasonably prepared to learn; thus, the concept of full-service schools exemplifies the need to re-channel responsibilities toward local communities, families, and individuals without having to change education through centralized mandates. In support of this assertion, Kowaslski (2004) suggests that leaders ought to, therefore, "rekindle a very close relationship between schools and their community of learners; they need to facilitate rather than dictate; and they need to be respectful and pro-active to public opinion and issues of public concern." (p. 42).

Based on the Poor Law of 1601 in the United States, towns and villages provided support services to local community families and friends in need. The number of transients and poor people grew, as did the lack of concern and care by those who had homes and jobs. Undergirding this construction of social policy lay a profound operational ambivalence regarding the role of society in service to the poor (Kagan, 1993, p. 4). In the late 1800's the Charity Organization Societies (COS) were established to coordinate the often overlapping work of hundreds of smaller service groups. In the early 1900's the progressive movement called attention to the plight of the down-trodden, seen as the imperiled generation, by bringing health and social services into the schools. According to Hunter (1905, p. 209), parental rejection of health care was viewed as evidence of ignorance. Curiously enough dentists touted the need for dental hygiene to the extent that like doctors, they saw their work as a "cure-ill, claiming that eliminating caries would bring good health, lessen school failure, and even prevent delinquency" (Tyack, 1997, p. 21 At the time many philanthropic women's clubs provided free and inexpensive lunches because they felt hungry children were inattentive and could not learn. They pushed schools to provide free or reduced meals, not as charity but rather as part of the service of the school. They also paid teachers to provide experimental learning experiences such as field trips, plays, museum and park visits and trips to the country (Tyack, 1992). However, there is little indication that this

level of service was inclusive of all people. The demand soon became far higher than the supply of service.

By 1910 over 300 cities offered medical inspections, and, by 1920, most cities with a large concentration of immigrants provided medical and dental services at the school. In these early days of community-based social services at the school, reformers felt they knew better what the immigrant family needed than the family itself. Therefore, the family was approached from a "deficit model" (Melaville, Blanck, & Asayesh, 1993) indicating that immigrant families were deficient in their knowledge of proper health care for their children, of the civic responsibilities and moral values of their newly adopted country, and even unaware of how to rear their children. By the late 1930s the number of summer school programs began to decrease and health, human and social services became less important in light of the emphasis placed on school curriculum (Sedlak & Church, 1982). At the end of this decade, "vacation schools" became institutionalized and changed from enrichment programs for the poor to general population sessions in which students who have failed academic work during the year could repeat courses. Guidance counselors no longer linked students with work opportunities but began to advise them about appropriate courses to take and what academic track to follow. In the 1940s, the government provided childcare as women were drawn into the male-abandoned workforce. Yet, following WWII, these services were deemed unnecessary as women returned to the home which left the provision of other services disorganized and sporadic. During "The Great Society" of the 1950s, however, the Civil Rights movement became the single most influential mobilizer of services and support for the poor and for minorities. School psychologists and social workers were once again added to the school staff in an effort to reduce the high number of high school drop outs.

Many of the services intended for the poor in the period of 1920-1960 disproportionately went to the rich because of local property taxes. During this period of social movement and cultural awareness, when attention was particularly paid to previously ignored groups (i.e., women, Hispanics, African Americans, Aborigines, disabled), education became a dynamic force in the continued War on Poverty. The 1960s saw a flurry of legislation with the establishment of Community Action Agencies (CAA) intended to coordinate services at the local level leading the forefront. The significant Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, with focus on the poor through Title I (i.e., ensuring that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and academic assessments) pushed the creation of Head Start programs. These programs provided health care, nutrition, and preparation for low-income pre-schoolers which continued to strengthen the participation of parents in compensatory programs (Williams-Boyd, 2002, p. 7).

With a return emphasis on the country's economic competitiveness in the 1970s, the focus was placed on academic standards, heightened graduation requirements, and visible evidence of progress on state-mandated tests. The lack of attention to issues of poverty and equity once again resulted in the muting of the dialogue related to linked-services. In the 1980s, once again, the federal government turned away from parent participation requirements in favor of more state and local government control. Emphasis was placed on the intensification of school requirements rather than on the restructuring of social services. In response to the fragmentation of services of the preceding decade, the number of linked-services initiatives reached new heights in the 1990s. These services represented a holistic, community-based, pro-family perspective with interagency case plans, case management, de-categorized funding, and co-location of services (Williams-Boyd, 2002, p. 8).

In the new millennium, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 redefined the role of the federal government in K-12 education. It has been touted as the broadest bill since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Proponents of the bill maintain it will streamline programs and target funds for existing programs for poor children. School personnel, however, experience the bill as "No Child Shall Go Untested" (Blanco, 2004, p. 10). According to Murray (2006), NCLB takes a giant step toward nationalizing elementary and secondary education for holding schools accountable. Murray states:

It pushes classrooms toward relentless drilling, not something that inspires able people to become teachers or makes children eager to learn. It holds good students hostage to the performance of the least talented, at a time when the economic future of the country depends more than ever on the performance of the most talented. The one aspect of the act that could have inspired enthusiasm from me, promoting school choice, has fallen far short of its hopes. The only way to justify NCLB is through compelling evidence that test scores are improving…(n.p.).

Few would argue that "accountability" is NCLB's favorite word, and the Department of Education is holding school systems accountable for improvements in test scores (see Murray, 2006) with a focus on "proficiency". Murray further reiterates:

Conceptually, "proficiency" has no objective meaning that lends itself to a cutoff. Administratively, the NCLB penalties for failure to make adequate progress give the states powerful incentives to make progress as easy to show as possible. A pass percentage throws away valuable information, telling you whether someone got over a bar, but not how high the bar was set or by how much the bar was cleared. Most importantly: If you are trying to measure progress in closing group differences, a comparison of changes in pass percentages is inherently misleading.

Research indicates that the federal government continues to reward and punish school systems across the United States based on changes in pass percentages (e.g., Blanco, 2004; Brown, 2003; Murray, 2006). According to Murray (2006): "It is an uninformative measure for many reasons, but when it comes to measuring one of the central outcomes sought by No Child Left Behind, the closure of the achievement gap that separates poor students from rich, Latino from white, and black from white, the measure is beyond uninformative. It is deceptive"(n.p.).

We now turn to the demographic factors of the disadvantaged. Embedded within the demographics are the complex issues of inner-city communities and factors that marginalize students at schools.

Demographics of the Disadvantaged

The 'culture of poverty' posits the poor in a micro-culture which frames its own values and dimensions. As W.E.B. Dubois predicted in 1958, the line between the 'haves' and have-nots' has become the "real Achilles' heel" of today's society (Gordon, 2004, p. 2). The young become the socially disadvantaged for they are not only imperiled materially but also emotionally and psychologically. Likewise, they are the educationally marginalized, not only due to poverty but also due to minority status, for they cannot take full advantage of available educational opportunities nor are resources afforded to them in an equitable fashion. Research indicates that in 1999, for instance, 20% of Hispanic students, 38% of American Indian/Alaska Native students, 13% of Asian/Pacific Islander students, 35% of Black, non-Hispanic Students, and 15% of White, non-Hispanic students had been suspended or expelled at some point between grades 7-12. In 2001, approximately 12% of all children were assigned to special education program from which 25% were African American boys. Placement in 'special programs' has far-reaching effects. Once children are 'labeled' or 'expelled,' their chances of graduating on time and going on to higher education are greatly reduced (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003, p. 2). Urban minority and poor students are often overrepresented in special education, and these urban special education classes have been shown to fail to benefit students (Kavale, 1995; Kavale & Forness, 2000; MacMillan & Siperstein, 2002), particularly minority and poor students (Hunter & Donahoo, 2003) who are placed, but may be ill-served.

According to NCES (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003, p. 8), at least one in six children had no health care while nearly 13.5 million children lived in poverty—two million more than a decade before. Around a quarter of Blacks and 21.8 percent of Hispanics are living in poverty (Morrison, 2006). Some 17.6 percent of children under 18 and one in five of those under 6 live in poverty, higher than for any other age group. "Among African Americans the problem correlates primarily to the inner-city and single mothers," said Michael Tanner of CATO Institute, a free-market think tank in Washington. He noted that Black people also suffer disproportionately from poor education and lower quality jobs (See Morrison, 2006). Poverty, socio-economic class, and deprivation account for poor performances in urban schools to the extent that children from poor families are three times more likely to drop out of school than children from more advantaged homes (Hahn & Danzberger, 1987). Living in substandard housing and foregoing utilities, telephone, plumbing, child care, health care, and transportation, children of the poor often come to school hungry, fatigued, suffering from headaches, dizziness, abuse, and malnutrition leaving them unable to concentrate on learning.

Policymakers in demographically diverse states (i.e., Texas, Georgia, Florida, California, North Carolina) acknowledge that community and school populations are changing. Demographic data in these states highlight a dramatic growth in minorities, second-language learners, recent immigrants, and economically disadvantaged students (see Dantley & Tillman, 2006). This in turn points to the need to address what diverse students need

Despite the demographic realities, "racial and ethic minority groups continue to suffer educational disenfranchisement, such as disproportional high dropout rates, educational underachievement in K-12, and inequitable access to and retention in college" (Marshall & Oliva, 2006, p. 6)

Alone schools cannot adapt to the aggressive changing demands in the demographic, economic, political, and social welfare arenas. Alone no single institution has the resources or the capacity to address such issues. Educators recognize that poor children bring more than educational needs to the classroom, needs which left unmet leave little room for learning (Delpit & Kilgour-Dowdy, 2002). The stark reality of today's youth is that children are surrounded and imperiled by drugs, gangs, violence, family dissolution and stress, financial hardship, and social discrepancy. Other factors which place children at-risk include an increase in the enrollment of minority and limited-English-proficiency children in schools. Such is the case of one inner city senior high school in south Florida, whose student body is more than 80% Haitian and to whom the State of Florida has labeled not only as a "failing" school but also as a "quadruple F school" (i.e., four consecutive years of receiving an "F" grade) based on the results of the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) and the State of Florida Department of Education criteria in grading the adequate yearly progress of schools (M-DCPS, 2005). There are 38 additional low-performing ("failing") schools in the same school district—all inner city. According to Weisglass (2001), these standardized tests can be considered a form of 'institutionalized racism' (p. 218) because they lend credibility to policies that have denied, and continue to deny, minorities and poor students equal access to educational and job opportunities. The business of education is not about testing children until they fail but rather a change in family, community, and social structures (Williams & Parker, 2003). We now commonly speak of losing a wide band of poor children to early death, lengthy incarceration, joblessness, or one form of misery or another. Noguera (2004) suggests that "there is a direct link between education and incarceration. The more money the USA government spends on incarceration, the less it spends on education." (oral quotation, plenary session, May 6). Noguera raises questions: Why are we modeling schools after prisons? What are schools doing to keep children out of prison? Exclusion, rising rates of poverty, and exploitation of minorities continue to be issues; segregation replaced exclusion—12 million people of color are still considered second class citizens in the USA; anger has resulted out of frustration with confinements; and, incarceration is replacing segregation (Noguera, 2004).

Pluralistic America no longer has a dominant nuclear family. People on welfare are increasingly Black, female and youthful. Parental engagement with children has been altered by work schedules, salary problems, and family structures. Unfortunately, parental involvement continues to reflect socioeconomic status with higher status parents more likely to be involved. Tillman (2003) suggests that school leaders take an active role as leaders for social justice in facilitating parental involvement so that "the life chances of disadvantaged children can be significantly enhanced by effective leadership, school leaders who care and are committed to their success, and parents who are given every opportunity to exercise their right to full participation in their children's education" (p. 311).

Leadership for Social Justice

Recent commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education (i.e., the 1954 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court took scientific research into account in issuing this landmark ruling for desegregation of schools across America) and the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act (i.e., the 1964 Civil Rights Act made racial discrimination in public places, such as theaters, restaurants and hotels, illegal in America, and required employers to provide equal employment opportunities) have emphasized how movements for social justice have helped to define American history. Furthermore, these commemorations have continued to serve as catalysts to refocus thinking on how school leaders have become social justice advocates and activists. According to Dantley and Tillman (2006), discussions about social justice in the field of education have typically framed the concept of social justice around several issues including race, diversity, poverty, marginalization, gender, and spirituality. These authors add age, ability and sexual orientation to the discourse.

The discourse of social justice and leadership are inextricably linked which begs the question if there exists any one definition for social justice leadership. Some research (e.g., Bogotch, 2005) insists that social justice has no one specific meaning. Rather, "its multiple a posteriori meanings emerge[d] differently from experiences and contexts" (p. 7). Bogotch (2005) zeros in on a key component of social justice by stating that "social justice, like education, is a deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power" (p. 2) and concludes that it is "both much more than what

we currently call democratic schooling and community education, and much less than what we hold out as the ideals of progressing toward a just and democratic society and a new humanity worldwide" (p. 8). Marshall and Oliva (2006) assert that social justice theorists and activists focus inquiry on how institutional norms, theories and practices in schools and in society lead to social, political, economic, and educational inequities. Furman and Shields (2005) argue the "need for social justice to encompass education that is not only just, democratic, emphatic, and optimistic, but also academically excellent" (As cited in Firestone & Riehl, 2005, p. 123). Starratt (2004) proposes a multidimensional ethical approach for leaders with a social justice agenda. He bases his approach on the combination of ethics of care, justice and critique and posits that school leaders give serious consideration to the ways in which students, particularly those from marginalized groups (i.e., racial and ethnic minorities, poor, gay, lesbian, female students), are socialized in the school setting (more on this further along in the article). Lee and McKerrow (2005) define social justice as "not only by what it is but also by what it is not, namely injustice. By seeking justice, we anticipate the ideal. By questioning injustice, we approach it. Integrating both, we achieve it" (p. 1). The second dimension focuses on the practice of social justice: Individuals for social justice seek to challenge political, economic and social structures that privilege some and disadvantage others in the name of democracy, equity, care, and compassion. They challenge unequal power relationships based on gender, social class, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, language, and other systems of oppression.

Care and compassion are not enough given the demographics of poverty and its complexities. Coming to school hungry or being abused at home places a child at serious risk of not being successful in school. However, care for the emotional, social, physical, and academic needs of students, parents, and community members can lead to the combined and coordinated partnership efforts of an array of educators and community members who act as advocates for school-linked services. The concept of full-service schools (schools that are prepared to meet the needs of the child, including mental health, medical, dental, social, and nutritional assistance), exemplifies the creation and nurturing of community leadership and collaborative efforts for urban communities in which, as Sergiovanni (1994) suggests, children are provided with human and social capital. Although examples of successful full-service school services exist in part in a few schools throughout the United States (e.g., Wayne County Public Schools in North Carolina), these schools serve only a miniscule fraction of the school children in need of these services across America (Jazzar & Algozzine, 2007). Throughout the literature, there is no indication that any full-service program meets all the needs of a child, or that this is even possible—at least not in the United States. However, literature indicates that a keen interest in forming full-service schools exists more now than ever (Adelman & Taylor, 2004; Dryfoos, 2002; Evans, Axelrod, & Langberg, 2004; Hunter, Hoagwood, Evans, Weist, Smith, Paternite, Horner, Osher, Jenson, & The School Mental Health Alliance, 2005; Jazzar & Algozzine, 2007; Nabors, Leff, & Power, 2004).

School-Linked Services

A fundamental question for school leaders and communities to address is how one-in-three "at-risk" youth in school can be reclaimed. How can the precipitating problems such as poverty, premature parenthood, substance abuse, unemployment, and homelessness be addressed so children can learn and be successful in schools? What supports do families need in order to raise their children to be educationally and emotionally ready for school? What is the role of educational leaders in this process? Are there moral responsibilities and obligations of community-based leadership to the family and to the school?

The ambitiousness of the American 2000 Education Strategy (i.e., children coming to schools ready to learn) can only be achieved if schools critically examine the extent to which they serve as catalytic points of contact for children and families in need of support and services beyond the confines of the present school configuration; and whether government provides the resources, authority, and impetus to deal with social justice (Levy & Shepardson, 1992; Levy, Kagan, & Copple, 1992). Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) established a framework in which to identify world-class academic standards to measure student progress, and to provide the support that students may need to meet the standards. The Act codified in law the six original education goals concerning school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, and safe and drug-free schools. It is the fourth goal of American 2000, however, that charged the community, not just the institution of school, to be the context in which learning takes place. Bruner (1994), and Garvin and Young (1994) maintained that linking delivery systems will help prepare and keep children in school; it will lessen the stigma associated with

seeking assistance, and most importantly, it can positively affect the ways in which school personnel interact with families.

According to Evans, Axelrod, & Langberg (2004) and Jazzar & Algozinne (2007) full-service schools ought to be discussed in just about every sector in community as a way of thinking and acting that recognizes the central role of schools in communities—and the power of working together for a common good. It is appropriate that partnerships throughout the learning communities (i.e., schools, colleges, universities, social services, businesses, school districts, parks and recreation departments, child-and-family agencies, museums and zoos, hospitals and health clinics, YM/WCA's, local United Way, Girls and Boy Scout chapters, forestry, police and fire departments, and more) engage moral action and social justice advocacy in diminishing the dividing line between the "haves" and "have nots". Nabors, Leff, & Power (2004) assert that community partnerships and educational leadership are the foundational forces upon which education is perceived as the foundation of democracy. Jazzar and Algozzine (2007) reiterate that when those living in democracy have had needs, education has responded affirmatively. It is only right for educational leaders and their communities to respond as moral leadership role models once again to create a climate, culture and community ethic that exemplifies the very values that they espouse (Fullan, 2003; Furman, 2004; Normore, 2004). As leaders act, so leaders instruct, guide, lead, and commit to delivering adequate services.

Service delivery. The problem is not so much service supply, but rather the service delivery. Rather than being driven by the needs of children and families, too frequently services are regulated by bureaucratic formalities, funding restrictions, legislative mandates, and professional structures. Constrained by funding requirements or by their other obligations schools and helping institutions engage in crisis-intervention and treatment services rather than in preventive assistance, and even then they work alone rather than in force with each other (Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Melaville, Blanck, & Asayesh, 1993). Needs cut across categories of services to embrace health, mental health, education, employment, housing, nutrition, and social services. However, the neediest children are the ones who get "punished" either by humiliation and/or isolation. The fact is that the most severely affected families typically live in a conflicted community, one which presents weak labor markets, substandard schools, unsafe and deteriorating neighborhoods which are characterized by violence, drugs and dissolution (Blanco, 2004).

Typically, services are built on a deficit-model, or on what is wrong with the family. From the outset, this places the family in a disparaging position, and poses the case worker as the sole expert. The family soon learns the road to assistance is paved with acquiescence to the provider's suggestions rather than laid with the bricks made of the toil and soil of the family's true needs (Melaville et al., 1993). The proponents of school-linked services believe poor education, health and social outcomes for children result in part from the inability of current services systems to respond in a timely, coordinated, and comprehensive fashion to the multiple and interconnected needs of a child and her or his family (The Packard Foundation, 1992, p. 8). Tillman (2003) suggests that "there is a direct link between the active involvement of parents and the educational success of students, particularly in large urban school districts" (p. 295). She maintains that leadership for urban school districts should focus on various elements including: (a) community and social service agencies that provide services for children, and particularly those that service urban children and their families, (b) broaden the term parent to include other family members or legal guardians, (c) design ways to communicate with "hard to reach" parents, and (d) get rid of deficit theorizing and replace it with family values and culture applicable to the context and community (p. 302).

As stated by Sergiovanni (1994, p. xiii), "The need for community is universal. It creates a sense of belonging, continuity, of being connected to others and to ideas and values that make our lives meaningful and significant." Society and the public schools are inextricably intertwined, therefore, forces us to consider Epstein's (1995) model which suggests that "the highest level of parental involvement occurs when the resources of the community and parents are integrated with those of the school in a total effort centered on the child" (cited in Casanova, 1996, p. 30).

The United States has enjoyed a rich history of providing non-educational services at school sites. From the aid given colonial-day immigrants and medical and health services provided in the early 1900s—efforts to acculturate the waves of poor immigrant children and families, to the full-service community schools of the early years in the new millennium, the school has served in various forms as the hub of integrated services for the local community (Morrill, 1992). Gomby and Larson (1992) state:

In a school-linked approach to integrating services for children, (a) services are provided to children and their families through a collaboration among schools, health care providers, and social services agencies; (b) the schools are among the central participants in planning and governing the collaborative effort; and (c) the services are provided at, or are coordinated by personnel located at, the school or a site near the school. Most often, the school-linked approach requires agencies that typically provide health and social services off the school site to move some of their staff and/or services to the school. Although school personnel are actively involved in identifying children who need services, they are not typically the actual providers of the services (p. 7).

To the degree that integrated services are successful is the amount of success schools experience in forming collaborations. Currently in the United States, schools have begun forming collaborations with families and communities to support school improvement efforts and student achievement (Adelman & Taylor, 2004). These authors maintain that schools have been linked with a variety of community partners for recreation, presentations, fairs, and other activities. According to Jazzar and Algozinne (2007), "every professional working with the same child, adult, and family will need to be engaged in cooperative and synchronized efforts. . . that the unity of purpose will need to be grounded in an understanding of the value of relationships. . .simply put, 'working together, works!" (p. 225). In this capacity, to reiterate earlier messages in this article, it is appropriate for schools, school leaders, their partnerships, and the communities in which they serve, to exercise their moral obligations, responsibilities, and actions to ensure that all students are provided with education of the highest quality and on an equitable playing field. Hence, we argue that this action-oriented leadership is a moral and ethical imperative that supports partnerships and collaborative efforts.

Enhancing Collaborative Partnerships: Ethical Leadership

Given the decline of traditional social structures (i.e., stable family life, intergenerational influence, introduction of wealth of diversity, and the growth of cities), a shared value system cannot be presumed; if indeed one ever could (Normore, 2004). Due to the breakdown of traditional values we can no longer count on these to guide educational leaders and the communities in which they serve. In a dynamic, globally-linked world, values-systems, moral responsibilities, obligations, and actions involve practices and policies that incorporate their dynamism into the work of school leaders as instructional and transformational.

Important to this component of the discussion is a growing body of research that emphasizes the significance of moral and ethical leadership. This form of leadership can enhance collaborative partnerships if interdependent efforts are to impact the quality of education for all students. Collaborative partnerships are needed because no one educational leader can achieve his or goal maximally and meet the accountabilities efficiently without the collaborative support of others (Jazzar & Algozinne, 2007). Edyburn, Higgins, and Boone (2005) assert that professions and organizations will collaborate out of practical necessity while reflecting their self-interest. As common ground is developed, these collaborators will also develop norms and procedures for reciprocity. For example, according to Jazaar and Algozzine (2007), "the school is well served when collaborative partners prepare children and youth to come to school ready and able to learn. . .in turn, collaborative partners will be supported and reinforced when children and youth succeed in school….each system improves and gets stronger because of its new boundary relationships and exchanges" (p. 228).

Few would argue that the business of education is to ethically prepare all children to become responsible adults and productive citizens. Alvy and Robbins (2005) and Brooks and Normore (2005) assert that leaders who are committed to ethical leadership make an unwavering moral commitment to behave justly, encourage and promote student success, facilitate and support teacher growth, and foster quality relationships throughout the school community. Beyond acting on clear-cut issues of right versus wrong (i.e., enforcing discipline policies even-handedly), it is morally and ethically imperative that school leaders facilitate the teaching and learning process to make a positive difference in the life of each student in the school. This moral imperative, according to Fullan (2003), is what makes school leadership a calling rather than just a profession so all students, regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status, receive the highest quality of education with all students at its heart.

Keeping all students at the heart of education enables leaders first to consider student interests when making important decisions. As a result, leaders at all levels must get in the habit of asking themselves student-centered

questions whenever they make decisions or take action concerning school policy, district initiatives, or the everyday activities of the school. They must reflect on whether or not their actions cause any harm to any students; the message that their actions send to the learning community about the importance of student learning; whether their actions support community participation, access and equitability, social justice, effective teaching and learning opportunities, and; the impact of their actions on students. Staratt (1997) explores school and community leadership and how it interconnects with the ethics of justice, care, and critique. He argues that these ethics are mutually inseparable and complimentary to each other. According to Staratt (1997):

> … the 'ethic of justice' concerns the universal application of principles of justice among individuals in society;… the 'ethic of care' compels us to be proactively sensitive to another person, extending ourselves beyond duty and convenience to offer other persons our concern and attention;…the 'ethic of critique' calls upon us to speak out against unjust rules and laws and social arrangements on behalf of those principles of human and civil rights, of brother and sisterhood as human beings, on behalf of a common humanity which is violated through discrimination, disenfranchisement, and an arbitrary denial of equal treatment (p. 99)

Starratt's ethical paradigm reinforces, for example, that school leaders are morally obligated to lead with integrity in order to make the bold and sometimes agonizing decisions necessary to ensure that all students are receiving a high quality of education. Research indicates that school leaders need to re-commit and exercise constant vigilance about the services they provide for students which in turn reflects their moral actions. Those actions speak volumes about the values they support (Quick & Normore, 2004). It is impossible for a school leader to take an action that does not signify some comment about how things should be done—which, by definition is a moral action.

Preparing children to live and work in the 21st century requires very special school leaders who have grappled with their own personal and professional codes of ethics and have reflected upon diverse forms of ethics, taking into account the differing backgrounds of the students who are enrolled in American schools (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Duke and Grogan (1997) assert that an important step toward more ethical action by leaders is greater clarity concerning personal values and ideals… "that an unfortunate consequence of the fast pace of contemporary life has been less reflection on what is truly important in life" (p. 151). O'Keefe (1997) suggests that the importance of including a strong ethical foundation for practice "promotes philosophical, historical and sociological perspectives through which students can better understand the contexts in which schooling takes place…where students are encouraged to enter the political arena as agents of educational and social change and prepare for equitable schools" (p.171). For the inner city school leaders who may feel overwhelmed by the multitude of educational reform initiatives and the theories available, it becomes critical to translate these theories into actionable strategies for effective practices in order to address their daily realities. As one example, leaders have an ethical responsibility to help the school and the community to thoughtfully examine which initiatives are in the best interest of students and teachers. The ethical leader considers it part of the job to defend staff members and the community against fads that do not help students and waste valuable learning time. A number of other scholars stress the legitimacy of school leaders and communities identifying shared norms, values—and applying these to resolve or manage moral dilemmas (Fullan, 2003; Furman, 2004; Normore, 2004; O'Brien, 2004). Crittenden (1984) argued that general moral values can be upheld objectively and center around "respect for human life" and include such notions as "love, loyalty, justice, honesty, courage, generosity, telling the truth and keeping promises, as well as respect for political authority, property, family and community" (p. 16).

The life chances of poor students can be significantly enhanced by effective leaders who care and are committed to their success, and parents who are given every opportunity to exercise their rights to full participation in their children's education (Tillman, 2003, p. 311). Together, school leaders and their communities can provide the vision, structures, and incentives for initiatives that are intended to improve social, emotional and academic growth of all students. These same leaders model attitudes, behaviors, values, moral purpose and actions that lead to collaborative and successful partnerships between school and the parent community in order to "to get knowledge of

the parent population and validate their cultural frames of reference, values and heritage" (Tillman, 2003, p. 309). Furthermore, as suggested by Delpit and Kilgour-Dowdy (2002, p. 42), "if we are to invite children into the language of school, we must make school inviting to them."

The crisis in inner-city school systems identifies many of the problems found in inner cities ranging from poor economic conditions for schools and families, personnel shortages and attrition rates, to improper facilities and materials, to political turmoil over issues of structure and control. Urban education is the primary target of the school reform movement and continues to be difficult to assess. The agent of change in this school reform process is the local community, not the school in isolation. Students, teachers, school leaders, parents, community leaders, professionals, and all stakeholders must join with and speak with, not for, those who have been dispossessed. This relational perspective is prudent to developing a respect for differences as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life.

Summary and Conclusion

Despite increasing interest to schools to form collaborative partnerships by necessity, the road will not likely be smooth, as this means a departure from past traditions. A school paradigm, as old as industrial America, will be broken during this century. As asserted by Ellis and Hughes (2002), schools need to come to the realization that collaborative partnerships do not form automatically. Fox (2005) states that multiple forms of collaboration ought to be promoted and become part of the planning frame but they will not stand alone. Family-centered collaboration, interorganizational collaboration, and broad-based community collaboration may add to the complexities of how educational leaders can best form meaningful relationships. Jazaar and Algozzine (2007) reiterate that schools must realize that their strength is found in the services they provide for students, parents, and the community members, not as an exclusive academic island unto themselves. For educational systems to survive the twenty-first century, the school as a stand-alone institution in which educators do it all alone risk extinction —without exception. These authors further assert:

> United schools will stand; divided (non-partnered) schools will
> fall short in taking care of their students, parents, and
> community members (their stakeholders)….that educational
> leaders must know that if they elect not to take care of their
> stakeholders, then other educational leaders, in other school
> systems, will welcome the opportunity (p. 227)

From the colonial days of the 1600s and the settlement houses of the late 1800s, to the full-service schools of the new millennium, many of the non-educational compensatory programs provided by outside lay people or volunteers soon became part of the operating structure of the school. A vast number of the initial services assumed other forms, as teachers and school leaders shaped the service to the needs of the student in particular classrooms. Essentially, children were, and continue to be, labeled and disengaged with learning. In the 1970s researchers wrote about barriers to their partnerships. In the 1980s they wrote about possibilities which would overcome the barriers and in the 1990s and the beginning years of the new millennium they continue to write about they ways in which any given school can build comprehensive partnerships. Today schools are still multiple service agencies, some with more deliberate linkages to health and social service agencies in the communities than others. Yet, they are all more than academic institutions. Some would see this as a deterrent to the single mission of the school—to prepare students academically to be productive citizens in the world economic market. Back-to-the basics people hold fast to the singular study of numeracy and literacy. Others maintain the school is the single institution, trusted by the neighborhood by virtue and values of its children's attendance, and therefore, should help the whole student and family access all the services they need.

Whereas the Progressive Era attempted to divorce schools from the very communities they were established to serve, the contemporary movement to provide social services through the neighborhood school is an attempt to claim. It is the ethical role of instructional leaders to be involved in a reform movement based on integration versus alienation; citizens with rights and duties versus the consumer awash in a competitive marketplace. The current human services delivery system is divided into three categories: (a) education, which is charged with providing

instructional services to children in public and private schools; (b) health, which includes nutrition, medical and mental health; and (c) social services, which support child welfare, day care, counseling, income maintenance, housing and training. However, education is an irreplaceable element for the future success of our society. It is an enduring, dominant institution which has a history of providing health and social services. Thus, we ought to "engage" our children in their education; they have to understand "who" they are and they ought to have a sense of purpose. Providing sound leadership and services (Irvine, 2004, p. 9) for all children must be seen as a moral act reminiscent of the 'lifting as we climb' philosophy. It is our moral and ethical duty to make urban schools safer not by modeling after prisons, but by making teaching and learning meaningful (Blanco, 2004), by providing leadership capacity throughout the community to translate vision into reality, and by defining the craft of education in terms of quality education as a civil right.

The establishment of an educationally sound and focused school community depends on appropriate innovation and change. When communities and educational leaders reflect on the collective vision of what makes a good school, it is essential to view the school within the context of the community. Each school and community has different needs— even schools within close proximity of each other. Thus, deciding how to use community resources and how the school can contribute to the community is a unique project for each school. Today, helping each student succeed is a shared school-community responsibility. Community stakeholder groups—including service agencies, public organizations, and private businesses—expect schools to ask for their support. Effective school leaders need to proactively seek community assistance and distribute the leadership accordingly.

The public schools of inner cities will continue to serve as the "most essential institution in the dissemination of education and assimilation of peoples in forming a nation of vitality, energy, and virtue" (Kern, 2003, p. xx). Community-based leadership might consider the ethical paradigm described by Staratt (2004, 1997) aiding the community in the creation of an institution that is characterized by power-sharing, equitable treatment of all within the community, caring and compassionate interpersonal relationships and purpose driven focus—one that seeks to draw out the inherent potential within individuals and simultaneously address the social, cultural, economic and academic realities and needs of schools and communities. As maintained by research (e.g., Garcia, 2002; Garcia & Hasson, 2004), it is time for urban schools and communities to remember that educational programs, initiatives, strategies, policies, and services that benefit students are equitable, respectful, responsive, responsible, resourceful, and reasonable. When school leaders and their communities engage in a common focus it will likely lead to a movement forward to thwarting the academic failure of students placed at risk. Leadership for social justice and morality is ultimately imperative as school leaders and their communities commit to efforts of collaboration for integrating services and delivery of programs for poverty-stricken school populations.

In times of economic, social, and political change and turbulence it becomes critical that these leaders and their communities not lose sight of their moral obligation and responsibility in support of all children gaining access to a quality education in America, particularly as it relates to the NCLB Act. It takes a strong political skill to bring about the necessary consensus and commitment to make schools work well for everyone. For example, the NCLB Act may well be considered the antithesis of moral leadership and social justice. The Act sets out with a laudable aim—that narrowing the achievement gap is essential to democracy. However, as asserted by Noddings (1999), such aims must be followed up with reflection, guided by care to see whether the original policy has fulfilled its aims or has introduced new inequities or harm. Since its enactment in 2002, concerns regarding implementation and funding of the Act quickly emanated from advocates for equality and social justice as it became clear that not all states understood aspects of the Act. Increased accountability mechanisms lead to affected vulnerability at all levels of the education system. As reiterated by Storey and Beeman (2006), "Not surprisingly, vulnerable people often react with negativity and hostility" (n.p.). The current focus on standardized tests, accountability, and efficiency has caused educational leaders to be more concerned with management rather than leadership and does not 'work well for everyone.' (Sergiovanni, 2000, p.166). Surface appearance in the form of student test scores has become the purpose of schooling and what is being lost is the true purpose of education—the drawing out of the inherent potential in all children. It is morally imperative for schools and their communities to establish and communicate high expectations for all students regardless of their skills and ability levels. In advocating for social justice, we must all bring our values and beliefs to the forefront; we must also bring along our prior socialization and present experiences; and gender, race, ethnicity, and class.

Secondly, the War on Poverty is an issue of morals and ethics. Urban school communities and school leaders need to further engage in meaningful discourse to include an ethic of critique that identifies the power inequities and social injustices, and make them right. This will be precarious work for the leader alone. Political concerns mount as the leader questions current power arrangements. Working to evaluate and discard the old and inequitable and creating new structures, policies and procedures that are just and fair to everyone involved with education is the purview of ethically and socially just leaders.

Thirdly, community development has to precede school reform (Blanco, 2004; Brown, 2003). Schools are there for parents, students, and communities and it is these very individuals who need to have a voice in how education is practiced demonstrating that the community works together as an interrelated body composed of many parts, teaching the lessons of moral responsibilities. As a moral enterprise education must stay above political power plays and must secure that all individuals have an equal voice in the educational conversation, including the voices of students. The most silent voices in evaluations of schools may well be that of students. Decisions about school-linked services are made based on student needs. These decisions are made for them, but rarely by them. Regrettably, students in low-performing schools are those who seem most shut-out of the shaping of changes in their schools. In the mainstream culture they are often portrayed as dysfunctional illiterates who need "dummied down" curriculum and a climate of control where "sit–down" and "keep quiet" strategies are the instructional norm. Students have great agency in defining school environment, including interaction with teachers and principals and the larger community. These students come to school with positive or negative values or orientations toward education that can override or, hopefully, facilitate any school reform initiative or effort. For example, low income and minority students are often overrepresented in special education, and these special education classes have been shown to fall short of any benefit to students (Hunter & Donahoo, 2003) who are placed, but may be ill-served. The ethic of caring (Starratt, 2004) does not ignore the demands of community governance issues, but claims that caring is the ideal fulfillment of all social relationships (Noddings, 1999), even though most relationships among members of a community might function according to a more remote form of caring.

Finally, a strand of learning should be dedicated to designing and organizing urban schools that are to be "full-service" schools (Melaville, et al.,1993; Morrill, 1992). Full-service urban schools is the goal of systemic change and school transformation—schools that will go beyond just providing instruction to students, schools that are opened longer than student hours, and opened to adults and their needs. These schools must serve as the hub of integrated services. For example, schools can be used as places where adults come to learn about house improvements or non-school staff can provide information about legal aid on immigration matters (Wirt, 1993). Schools can be places to host neighborhood association meetings to discuss community-wide issues of concern. Full-service schools can provide space where other community services can be assessed, such as providing free transportation late at night for grocery shopping, emergency baby-sitting for a single parent household, when the parent has to work late.

Educational leaders' roles and responsibilities will change as they and their schools accept new challenges. Although collaborative partnerships have not traditionally fit into the industrial models of top-down leadership, educational leaders of the twenty-first century will need to transform their practices and form effective relationships with all. As asserted by Jazaar and Algozzine (2007), "all educational leaders will need to form these partnerships with others or watch others depart as increasing numbers of schools will be providing for their children's health, education and wellness" (p. 229).Educators interested in social change and social justice have used an analysis of privilege for some time. Possessing globally privileged citizenship of a safe, stable and, materially comfortable country provides similar unearned assets as does characteristics of dominant groups. The dominant institutional definition of schooling may well be in need of radical change as schools journey through the new millennium. The American public school, as a stand alone organization, will need to open its doors and embrace collaborative partnerships so educators and their colleagues teamed collaboratively at school can focus on children's health, wellness, and academic achievement. As researchers, practitioners, and educators within and outside the United States join ranks and advocate for social justice and the plight of the poor, we need to reflect on ways we might learn from each other in our collaborative efforts to provide socially just and improved educational experiences for all children. We need to critically think about ways to provide a service to the educational leadership profession and to the children in our charge. Collaborative partnerships will share a simple yet compelling logic that school improvement and renewal processes will not accomplish full potentials until the family and the community contexts for children's learning and health and wellness development are addressed simultaneously (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). We contend there is a moral

obligation to engage in collaborative efforts to provide school-linked services that address the needs of all children—regardless of political, socio-economic status, race, or geographical boundaries. In other words, as noted by Jazzar and Algiozinne (2007):

Today's schools will need to start the factors and forces known to influence and determine children's learning such as healthy development, academic achievement, and success in school and then ask how professional, parents, and other diverse stakeholders, in school communities can work collaboratively to address them. This work will entail institutional change involving schools in building collaborative partnerships (p. 228).

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The School of Social Work faculty viewed this political decision as an opportunity to take advantage of the strengths available in metropoli-tan Atlanta to develop a MSW program with a unique community focus and a community partnerships concentration. From the outset of the planning for this program, the faculty embraced the contributions of the. 128 UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS. MSW Advisory Committee comprised of social workers and others from across the public and private human service sectors of greater At-lanta. The Advisory Committee was pivotal in collaborating with fac-ulty on the Part III: collaborative partnerships for social justice: communities, youth, and school-linked services. A Collaboration of Community Educators Follows Crisis in Cincinnati: Two Museums and a University Join Forces to Promote Understanding, Lionel H. Brown, Judith I. Larsen, Ruth S.Britt, Donna M. Ruiz, and Rachel Star. Student Voice Or Empowerment?Â Leadership for Social Justice and Morality: Collaborative Partnerships, School-Linked Services, and the Plight of the Poor, Anthony H. Normore and Roger I. Blanco. Part IV: ethical leadership and principles of social justice. Ethics, Values, and Social Justice Leadership: Embarking on a Moral Quest for Authenticity, Pauline Leonard.