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Strategic Communication During Whole-System Change

Advice and Guidance for School District Leaders and PR Specialists

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Community Involvement in Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence¹

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Community involvement is crucial for systemic change to be successful in school districts. Without community members' approval and dedication to change, change efforts in school districts are not likely to succeed. The community has a direct and ongoing influence on its schools, and is connected by high intensity interactions (Banathy, 1992). Hence, as Duffy, Rogerson, and Blick (2000) and Reigeluth (1993) point out, community involvement is crucial for generating grassroots political support for whole-system change among respected parents, business leaders, and other community leaders.

To understand the importance of community involvement and what it should be like, it is helpful to reflect on the nature of systemic change. The term "systemic change" is used with different meanings by different people. Using it in the sense of Squire and Reigeluth's (2000) "ecological systemic change," it is an alternative to piecemeal change, which is the dominant paradigm for improving schooling. Ecological systemic change, which views school districts as whole systems, also provides a means by which educators and community members can experience an evolution of their mental models for what constitutes a "quality education" for their school system. Further, ecological systemic change requires this kind of mind shift in many people, both within and outside a school district. If only a small group of change leaders in a community transcends the traditional mind-set about what constitutes a "real school" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), the rest of the community may resist whole-system change. Only through broad community involvement can a "critical mass" of like-minded

people evolve to support a fundamental change in a school district's paradigm for defining what a quality education means for that district. Therefore, we believe that changing mental models through broad community involvement is one of the fundamental requirements for systemic change efforts in school districts.

Despite the importance of engaging external stakeholders in redefining what a quality education means for their school system, there is not much evidence suggesting that they are involved as much as they should be in most school district change efforts. Community members are generally the least represented stakeholder group when districtwide change initiatives are planned, partly because of educators' attitudes resisting the involvement of outside people but also because of the challenges of recruiting and selecting community members.

However, in a number of whole-system change efforts that have taken place, we see that community involvement can be a powerful driving force for smooth and successful systemic change efforts. A small school district in Indianapolis, called the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township, is a good example. This essay describes Decatur's systemic change effort and the community's involvement in it. In addition, the essay provides some reflections and recommendations that emerged from involving the community members in the change process.

THE METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DECATUR TOWNSHIP

The Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Decatur Township is one of 11 public school corporations in Marion County, Indiana, and is located in the southwest corner of Indianapolis. Decatur's roughly 5,600 students attend the school corporation's Early Childhood Center, four elementary schools, two intermediate schools, a middle school, and a high school. That total enrollment is served by approximately 380 full-time teachers, 35 administrators, and 270 nonteaching staff members. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Decatur's percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunches and textbooks for the 2003–2004 school year was about 42 percent, eclipsing the state average.

The majority of the Decatur students are from the Camby, West Newton, Valley Mills, Mars Hill, and Seerly Creek neighborhoods. Along with these students, the school system's enrollment includes African American students from the Indianapolis neighborhood of Mapleton-Fall Creek. Its students are bused to and from Decatur Township under a federal court order intended to desegregate the Indianapolis Public School System, but the busing program is now being phased out. These Mapleton-Fall Creek students make up most of the school corporation's minority population. About 80% of Decatur's student body is white, 10% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% each Asian and Native American students.

The Decatur Township is a growing community. The school corporation has been working on a construction/renovation project to meet the needs of the burgeoning population. The project has built two new intermediate schools and has carried out extensive renovations at the elementary schools. The school corporation is currently working on another construction/renovation project for the high school, which is in need of remodeling and expansion.

DECATUR'S DISTRICTWIDE "JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE"

In addition to its building and renovation program, the school corporation is collaborating with facilitators at Indiana University to work on a districtwide systemic change effort, called the Journey Toward Excellence. This change effort strives to transform the schools to better meet each individual student's needs and help each individual student reach his or her potential. Community members have been actively involved in this effort from the very beginning.

The systemic change effort is well timed for the school district because Decatur Township is now far into evolving from a heavy concentration of farming and somewhat rural characteristics to being more of an industrial and commercial locale. Much of that transformation results from the development of AmeriPlex, the state's largest business park. Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence is intended to address the resulting new educational needs of the community and new needs of

information-age learners. The purpose of this journey is to transform the schools in the district into learning communities where all stakeholders are empowered to achieve excellence.

The following is a brief introduction to the vision, ideal beliefs, and process principles of the Journey Toward Excellence. These were formed during a two-year period by a Leadership Team with input and suggestions of numerous community members and other stakeholder groups in the township who were gathered together during events described later in this essay.

The vision for the school system is:

- An information-age school corporation that is committed to being learner centered;
- A focus on learning and continuous personal growth is promoted in a safe, respectful, and caring environment characterized by high expectations;
- Learning communities are the means to fostering collaboration and empowerment; and,
- Assessments, interventions, and accommodations are used to meet the academic, social, emotional, physical, and developmental needs of all learners.

The ideal beliefs that support this vision are:

- *Learning:* We believe a focus on learning must be part of the culture of our school community because learning is a community responsibility;
- *Learning Environment:* We believe the school must provide a welcoming, safe, productive, learner-centered environment for learning to occur. This nurturing climate will foster trust and high expectations;
- *Assessment:* We believe assessment must be used to guide the learning process to meet individual student needs rather than to compare students;
- *The Learning Community:* We believe the relationship between the school and the larger community must be an interdependent one because students learn in both settings; and,

- *Professional Development:* We believe that professional development is important to provide all stakeholders with the skills to improve student learning.

Some of the most important process principles that underlie this journey include:

- As many stakeholders as possible should be involved (Banathy, 1991);
- The stakeholders collectively should have ownership over both the change process and the changes that are decided upon;
- The change process should focus on student learning and development—all changes should be designed with that in mind;
- The change process is first and foremost a process of helping people to evolve and deepen their thinking about education, to help them evolve their mental models about education (Senge, 2000) and to thereby evolve the culture of their schools (Fullan, 2001); and,
- The process should encourage all participants to think in the ideal, and to then develop a strategic plan for evolving as close as possible to that ideal (Ackoff, 1981).

The above underlying process principles for Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence show how the school district is dedicated to involving the community in its systemic change effort. There are three levels at which community members have participated in the change effort:

- *Level 1: One-way communication*—the first level of community involvement is one-way communication, where community members are mainly receiving information from the school district about how the change effort has been proceeding.
- *Level 2: Two-way communication*—the second level is two-way communication, where community members give input and feedback on the change process and the prospective changes, in addition to receiving information from the school district.
- *Level 3: Change-team member*—the third level is as a change-

team member, where community members participate as active team members on one of the many change teams (see Figure E5.1).

These three levels of community involvement are illustrated in the following section, which describes the major events in which community members are involved in Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence.

EVENTS WITH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There have been seven large "events" so far in the Journey Toward Excellence in which community members have participated actively. These events in chronological order are:

- the Starter Team effort
- community forums on educational needs
- the Leadership Team effort
- a community meeting on the Framework
- community forums on the Framework
- the Ownership Committee effort, and
- the School Assessment Team effort

Along with the above seven events which have already occurred, an eighth event will be taking place very soon and will also involve com-

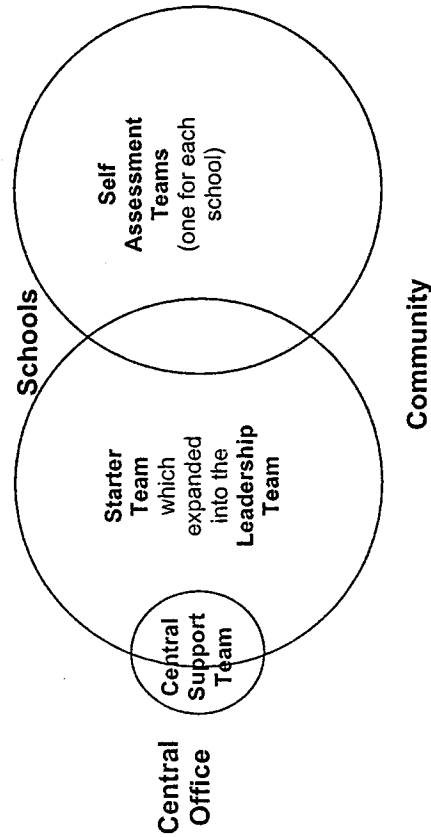


Figure E5.1. View of teams in the Journey Toward Excellence

munity members in the Journey Toward Excellence. This event is the "Design Team Work" event.

In this section, we describe each of the above seven events using four criteria: (1) level of community involvement, (2) how the community members became involved, (3) how community members were prepared and trained to participate, and (4) what kind of role community members played. The three levels of community member involvement are also highlighted.

The Starter-Team Effort

The five-member Starter Team was created at the beginning of the Journey Toward Excellence. Its purpose was to create an organization culture to support systemic change and to develop the system's capacity for that kind of change. Changing the culture in this way and developing capacity for systemic change helped lay the foundation for the Leadership Team that was formed later in the journey. A community member was recruited to serve as one of the five members of the Starter Team.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 3, participating as a change-team member.
- *Recruitment.* The community member on the Starter Team was selected from among the PTA/PTO leaders. The other members of the Starter Team included the superintendent, a board member, a principal, and the head of the teachers association.
- *Preparation and training.* The Starter Team participated in many 2-hour meetings and several 1- and 2-day retreats to understand information-age educational needs, systems thinking, developmental leadership, the systemic change process, and how to work as a learning community. The notion of an ongoing learning community was especially emphasized so that the Starter Team could evolve later into the Leadership Team.
- *Role of community member.* The role of the community member on the Starter Team was the same as for all other members of that team—that is, to contribute ideas about the district's vision and to identify needs for the various schools within the system. The

community member was also expected to contribute to the development of the Starter Team's culture by helping the team become a learning community that understood information-age educational needs, systems thinking, developmental leadership, and the change process. The Starter Team members communicated their progress with other members of their respective stakeholder groups and continually worked to prepare for their evolution into a Leadership Team.

Community Forums on Educational Needs

To get many stakeholders involved in the Journey Toward Excellence, the Starter Team held six widely publicized meetings at different schools between January and April 2002. These were among the biggest and most influential events designed to engage community members in the district's Journey Toward Excellence. The purpose of these community meetings was to begin building broader stakeholder understanding of the need for and nature of systemic change and to broaden stakeholder participation in and commitment to the change process. This was done by asking forum participants to identify the current (information-age) educational needs of the Decatur Township students and community and see how they had changed over the past 25 years or so.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 2, two-way communication.
- *Recruitment.* Open invitations were sent to all students' homes and flyers were distributed to encourage other community members' involvement. Approximately 20 participants attended each community forum (one forum in each school).
- *Preparation and training.* The community members were not prepared or trained in any way for these forums.
- *Role of community member.* The community members who attended the community forums first received some information on societal change (the transition from the industrial age to the information age). Then, they were asked to discuss four issues—not to reach consensus on them, but to understand why others believed

what they did so that they could become more receptive to others' thinking. The issues included: (1) how society and Decatur Township in particular have changed, (2) how the community should change, (3) what skills and personal qualities students must acquire to succeed in the future, and (4) how Decatur Township schools are doing now in providing those important skills and qualities. Community members provided valuable input that was reported in a newspaper article and the school district newsletter. This input was used later by the Leadership Team. The following is a summary of the community members' contributions during the meetings.

The participants agreed that the workplace had changed by having more service-related jobs that require more teamwork and more use of information technology. Participants also talked about longer commutes, greater workload, more job stress, and less job security. In terms of family, they concluded that the family has changed by having more single-parent households and two-working-parent homes, less family time, and that more parents want to be friends to their children instead of parents. Participants also identified the skills and personal qualities that their children will need to be successful members of their community; these included problem-solving, time-management, teamwork, conflict resolution, communication, and computer skills. Personal qualities included integrity; work ethic; responsibility; creativity; desire to balance family, faith, and work; respect for differences in others; passion for something positive; desire to learn; and service orientation.

The Leadership Team Effort

The Leadership Team was formed in February 2003. It is a large team (25–30 members) of opinion leaders representing the school system's stakeholder groups. Its primary purpose is to provide political support for the systemic change process and the resulting systemic changes. Therefore, consensus building and evolution of members' mind-sets were paramount. The first task of the Leadership Team was to develop, with input from many stakeholders, a districtwide "Frame-work of Vision, Mission, and Ideal Beliefs" about education. Beyond

that, this team shepherds the systemic change process, builds broader ownership of the Framework, builds central office capacity to support systemic change in the district's schools, helps the schools to enhance their stakeholders' readiness for systemic change, and helps the schools engage in redesigning and transforming themselves.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 3, participating as a change-team member.
- *Recruitment.* When the Starter Team expanded into the Leadership Team in February 2003, the community member on the Starter Team automatically became a member of the Leadership Team. Recognizing the importance of community involvement, the Starter Team then decided that half the Leadership Team members should be community members (who were not also working for the school district). Table E5.1 shows the community stakeholder groups identified by the Starter Team and the number of members they decided to recruit from each of those groups. Starter Team members recruited parent and other community leaders they knew might be interested in serving on the Leadership Team. While selection criteria were offered by the Indiana University facilitators and adapted by the Starter Team, there was little opportunity to use the selection criteria in a systematic way for community prospects because the challenge was to find anyone willing to devote sufficient time to the effort.

Periodically, a member would leave the Leadership Team, due mostly to competing demands on his or her time. New members were recruited in a fairly haphazard way. After a while, the Leadership Team established a formal process for recruiting and selecting new members, including new community members. The revised

Table E5.1. Number of community members by stakeholder group

Parents	4
Business	2
Clergy	2
Public Official	1
Fire Department	1
Lions Club, Civic Counsel, Senior Citizens	2
Youth Programs, Athletics, Boy/Girl Scouts	2
Dollars for Scholars	1

process calls for the Leadership Team to periodically monitor its membership to see if any stakeholder groups are underrepresented. Then, they reach consensus on how many members to add for each stakeholder group. The Leadership Team prepares a list with about three times more people than are needed. The selection criteria they use include: respected by peers, open-minded, flexible, and the lack of strong interpersonal conflicts. The Leadership Team discusses the candidates using their selection criteria to reach consensus on whom to invite to join the team. A Leadership Team member meets personally with each person invited. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage the invited community members to join the Leadership Team.

- *Preparation and training.* In lieu of a 2-day retreat, the Leadership Team devoted most of its first five 2-hour meetings to train on topics such as: (1) team-building activities, (2) guiding principles for the systemic change process (for example, developmental leadership, stakeholder empowerment, collaboration, consensus building, trust, disclosure, team learning), (3) what systemic change is and why it is needed, (4) the differences between the information age and the industrial age, and the educational implications of those differences, (5) the learning-focused paradigm of education and how it differs from the sorting-focused paradigm, (6) Decatur's systemic change process (the Journey Toward Excellence), and (7) systems thinking and the four other disciplines of a learning organization (Senge, 2000). As new members are brought on, they go through a 1-day workshop to catch them up on these topics. Furthermore, a retreat is held every summer to further the team's knowledge and capacity to lead the Journey Toward Excellence.

- *Role of community member.* The role of community members on the Leadership Team is identical to that of all other members. Community members have contributed equally to all the tasks of the team, such as developing the districtwide "Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs," building broad ownership of the beliefs, planning to form a Central Support Team (central office administrators who will support the schools in their attempts to redesign themselves), and planning to form a School Assessment

Team in each school. They also periodically identify and invite new members to the team and constantly endeavor to work effectively as a learning community.

Community Meeting on the Framework

The Leadership Team conducted a community meeting in October 2004 to obtain broader community input on and ownership of the first draft of the districtwide "Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs" that the Leadership Team had been developing for about a year. A brief presentation was given on the Framework, followed by small-group discussions of the Framework facilitated by a Leadership Team member. Important changes were made to the Framework as a result of this meeting.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 2, two-way communication.
- *Recruitment.* The Leadership Team sent out invitations to all community members, school faculty, and staff through flyers and the township newsletter. Approximately 70 participants attended, about one-quarter of whom were community members who were not employed by the school district.
- *Preparation and training.* The community members were not prepared or trained in any way for this meeting.
- *Role of community member.* The community members played the same role as all other participants in the meeting. They received information on the Framework; discussed the vision, mission, and ideal beliefs in small, heterogeneous groups with members of other stakeholder groups; and contributed their thoughts, feedback, and suggestions on the Framework. Some community members participated as recorders who reported out to the large group on the results of their discussions.

Community Forums on the Framework

After the Leadership Team finalized the Framework, community forums were held to publicize and build community ownership of the

Framework. Forums were first held in each of the schools for teachers, administrators, and staff because they felt it was important for these people to be informed about the Framework before the parents were. Then other forums were held for community members in various schools throughout the district and at the local Lions Club. These forums were scheduled during fall 2005 and in February 2006.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 2, two-way communication.
- *Recruitment.* The Leadership Team and each of the schools publicized these forums. Open invitations were sent to all students' homes and flyers were distributed widely for other community members' involvement.
- *Preparation and training.* The community members were not prepared or trained in any way for these forums.
- *Role of community members.* The community members who attended the forums received information on the ideal beliefs that the Leadership Team had finalized earlier in the process. Community members were asked if they agreed with these statements and were asked to support the beliefs.

The Ownership Committee Effort

The Leadership Team formed several subcommittees in January 2005 to work on different aspects of the systemic change process. The Ownership Committee worked on promoting ownership of the Framework and the change effort throughout the Decatur schools and community.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 1, one-way communication, and Level 2, two-way communication.
- *Recruitment.* To increase stakeholder involvement and support from the community, the Ownership Committee printed flyers and posters for schools and classrooms and sent these out to the community through school newspapers, newsletters, and lunch notes. In addition, the Ownership Committee is currently organizing more community forums to publicize the district's beliefs. They

held one forum in the Mapleton-Fall Creek community in August 2005 and two districtwide community forums in late March 2006. Additional school-based community forums are being planned. For these forums, open invitations are issued to all community members through notes, newsletter, newspaper announcements, and personal invitations.

- *Preparation and training.* The community members were not prepared or trained in any way for these one- and two-way communications.
- *Role of community members.* Through the fliers, newsletters, and lunch notes, the community members received some information on the districtwide Framework and thoughts on the new paradigm of education and the systemic change process. The Ownership Committee provided a short glossary along with the fliers on the Framework to help community members easily understand the Framework. Community members were invited to contact the school district with any input they had to offer. The presentations made at the community forums are always accompanied by small-group discussions and input is taken back to the Ownership Committee and the Leadership Team. In general, the participants were pleased that the schools were changing and expressed that they wanted to be a part of it.

The School Assessment Team Effort

The Leadership Team charged the Central Support Team, which is made up of all the central office administrators, with the formation and preparation of the School Assessment Teams. These teams are responsible for assessing and enhancing the readiness of their respective schools to transform them to conform to the district's learner-centered paradigm of education. Later, each of those teams will guide the formation of a Design Team for its school to design, implement, and improve its learner-centered paradigm. Each School Assessment Team has at least four members: the principal, a teacher, a staff member, and a parent. These teams are currently collecting and analyzing data about their respective schools' readiness.

- *Community member's level of involvement:* Level 3, team member, and Level 2, two-way communication.
- *Recruitment.* Because community readiness for systemic change is an important part of school readiness for change, community member involvement on each School Assessment Team is particularly important. Each school's PTA or PTO was asked to find someone to serve on its school's assessment team. Furthermore, the assessment teams asked parents and community members to participate through online surveys and paper surveys that were sent home.
- *Preparation and training.* The Central Support Team held workshops for the School Assessment Teams. At the first workshop, five topics were addressed: (1) education in the information-age and the learner-centered paradigm of education, (2) the systemic change process, (3) the districtwide Framework of Vision, Mission, and Ideal Beliefs for the Journey Toward Excellence, (4) team formation and group process, and (5) data-collection planning. The second workshop will address criteria for readiness and planning to enhance readiness.
- *Role of community members.* All community members on a School Assessment Team have the same role—that is, helping to plan and conduct the assessment of their school's readiness for systemic change and to help plan and conduct any readiness enhancement activities that are warranted. Other community members provide input through the survey and through community forums and conversations that will take place.

Design Team Work (This Will Begin in the Near Future)

The next major event in which community members will be involved will be the design of a new paradigm of education in each school within the district and which must be aligned with the broad parameters of the districtwide Framework. There will likely be two community members on each Design Team, each with about 10 members. All members will have equal voice and similar roles. Furthermore, much input will be sought from other community members and all other stakeholders.

REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In this section, we reflect on the many experiences with community involvement in the systemic change journey described above. What were some of the challenges? What were the strengths that we observed? And what could have been done better? These reflections are based on discussions in the Decatur Support Team (which is composed of the university-based facilitators) at Indiana University, which meets weekly to review what happened that week in the district, figure out how it might have been done better, and plan advice about next steps for the Leadership Team's consideration.

Challenges

We observed various challenges in having community involvement in systemic change. Perhaps the most fundamental challenge was helping community members to change their mind-sets about being involved. Community members were reluctant to participate in the change effort because they thought they did not know enough or that their opinions did not matter and would not be taken seriously. They needed to be convinced that their voices would be taken seriously and that their input would be valuable for the school corporation to move forward toward a more effective and humane system.

A related challenge for community involvement was the difficulty of recruiting and selecting members from the community. There was not much communication between the schools in the district, and community members and parents were typically not very involved in their schools' activities and decision making. A major reason for this appeared to be lack of time rather than lack of interest. This made the recruitment and selection of community members difficult. Furthermore, if a child is close to graduating from one school and will soon move into another school, parents are less likely to get involved on a leadership team for the school they are leaving. Also, since the intermediate schools and the middle school are all 2-year schools (grades 5-6 and 7-8, respectively), parents are likely to leave a school team before it finishes its work. The training and preparation of community members was also a challenge primarily because of competing demands on their time.

Strengths

However, in spite of the above challenges, the Indiana University facilitators (the Decatur Support Team) and the most active change leaders in the district felt that the community members who participated in the journey activities were more invested than many of the staff, administrators, and teachers on the teams. Community members' ability to use systems thinking, to honor the guiding principles of the change process, and to think "outside the box" (that is, to transcend their current paradigm of education) was generally impressive. They frequently set a good example for the other team members. This may be because staff, administrators, and teachers participated in the journey because it was part of their work responsibilities, while the community members participated because of their dedication to the goals of the transformation journey. It is also often easier for an outsider to think outside the box. Finally, community members may have been exposed to systems thinking in their workplace, which may have made it easier for them to participate effectively in journey activities.

How the Change Process Can Be Improved

Decatur's experiences with community involvement also show that several things could be improved in Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence or in other school district change efforts. One improvement is to ensure that each leadership team is transformed into a "learning community." While to date little time has been devoted to developing the teams into learning communities, the community members on the teams showed they were willing to learn new ideas, school culture, and language in order to move the change process forward. The major obstacle to their participation was their lack of time. A promising approach might be for a team's learning activities to be organized around the tasks in which the team is engaged using the just-in-time training philosophy.

Second, community involvement could be broadened by creating additional tasks for which community members could volunteer. This could also generate more learning communities. Such grassroots involvement could be enhanced through broader dissemination of

information to community members about the systemic change effort. However, all this would require more management and coordination of the change process, and time is again an obstacle. External funding to buy some of the participant's time from their employers would be a big help for overcoming this obstacle.

A third area for improvement is learning how to increase word-of-mouth commentary about the success of the transformation journey. It is important to recognize the power of community members going back to their neighborhoods and talking to other people about the changes they are helping to create. Sharing new ideas, visions, and future directions for a school district's community is a powerful part of systemic change. Community members should be encouraged to acknowledge this responsibility and share their thinking and progress with others more often. Encouraging, nurturing, and educating others may also enhance the sustainability of community involvement over the long period of the systemic change process.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this essay described the many forms of community involvement in the systemic change effort in the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township, Indiana. In addition, the essay provided some reflections and recommendations that emerged from the process of involving selected community members. Community members are usually the least represented stakeholder group in educational change efforts. Yet, in order to succeed in fundamentally changing in school systems, it is vital to build grassroots community support for these changes. Our experience in the Decatur Township school system showed that it is important to harness the power of building stakeholder ownership and helping community members to engage in learning communities.

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ENDNOTES

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Epilogue: Communicating in Times of Great Change

Strategic communication is like glue—it can hold things together; the lack of strategic communication is like solvent—it can dissolve the connections between and among people. Transformational change in school districts needs glue, not solvent, because when change leaders work to transform their entire school district they need ways to bind people together in support of their district's new grand vision and strategic direction.

The people that need to be bound together in support of a district's new vision and strategic direction are not just the folks who work in the district. People in the community need to coalesce in support of a district's change efforts too. These people, often called external stakeholders in the literature on change, need to be involved in setting a course for their community's school district in ways that are authentic, valued, and meaningful.

The traditional tools of school public relations, of course, are useful for building political support for change, both inside and outside a school district (see chapter 9 for more about power, politics, and ethics in school districts). Some of these traditional tools include media kits, press releases, focus groups, and “town hall” gatherings. Advocacy kits, offered by organizations such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, offer advice and guidance on how to influence external stakeholders to support change efforts. None of these tools, however, should be considered as a *succedaneum* for strategic communication with stakeholders.

Strategic communication, as you learned in chapter 1, connects a school district's vision, mission, and strategic goals to the needs and aspirations of its community for educating children; this, in turn, cre-