The National Network for Educational Renewal is designed to bring into close collaboration a number of school-university partnerships, each formed for the purpose of simultaneously improving schools and the education of educators. These partnerships, in turn, have been established because of a shared belief that nothing short of fundamental renewal of educational programs for both children and youth, on one hand, and those who teach in and administer schools, on the other, is now required. Merely adding or subtracting a few things, tightening up here and there and patching the weak spots in the educational system will not suffice.

Nonetheless, there is little in the history of educational improvement to suggest that more than changes around the edges is possible. Recent major studies of schooling have identified problems of the curriculum, of pedagogy, persisting over the years and changing only in the specifics of their manifestations. Similarly, dozens of reports testify to the intransigence of critical problems pertaining to the education of educators. One is forced to ask the question regarding the shortfall between our ideal expectations for education and what the system delivers: Do the problems and shortcomings prevail because too many people are served so well by keeping things the way they are?

There is little in the history of school-university relations to suggest that collaboration has served to solve tough, persistent problems. Often, the relationship has been self-serving, bypassing areas of mutual self-interest calling for give-and-take and joint inquiry. Schools, for example, have sought university-based consultants to help them do better what they already do. Universities have sought out teachers in schools to supervise their student teachers, and these "cooperating teachers" have passed along the conventional wisdom to their future colleagues. Neither the schools nor the teacher education programs have been fundamentally changed in the process. Yet, the criticism of both seldom has been more intense. It is hard not to conclude that more than tinkering is necessary.

Consequently, over a dozen universities have entered into long-term agreements with surrounding school districts (and their schools) to work closely together with one another as equal partners for purposes of addressing long-standing, tough problem areas in which both sets of institutions have a stake. Recognizing the difficulties and complexities of working together on overlapping self-interests, which in themselves are complex, the institutions have made substantial commitments to the partnership of which they are a part. Some of these commitments are spelled out on subsequent pages. Recognizing that networking has proven to be a useful strategy for strengthening local, collaborating entities, each school-university partnership has joined in the National Network for Educational Renewal. Again, a serious commitment is involved, the minimum essentials of which are detailed subsequently.

Before proceeding with further elaboration on both these partnerships and the network joining them, it is essential to emphasize a fact that has been largely overlooked in the current rhetoric of educational reform. It is true that many of the most serious problems of schooling and many of the most persistent problems inherent in preparing educators for the schools have been around for a long time. Reform movements have come and gone, leaving very little mark on them. But what has changed—and is changing rapidly—is the context within which institutionalized forms of education function.

Not only have the coalitions that created and sustained the educational system withered, but the institutions comprising a significant part of these coalitions have weakened significantly. The family rivals the school in its loss of stability. Home, school, and religious institution no longer join as they once did in rearing the young. Further, a secondary school that once enrolled only a fraction of the age group—and those young people most supported by other institutions in the coalition—has become part of the common school. The problems of dealing with student diversity grow ever greater. Perhaps most serious of all,
the parental and solid-citizen role models of an intimate community and the heroes of virtue of earlier times have been largely replaced by the glamorized lives of "beautiful people" and athletes whose exploits are made exotic and larger than life by attentive media. The role of education in enculturation is threatened by serious imperfections in the culture itself.

One major implication of all this, and more, is that we must look beneath the often-cited problems of low test scores, for example, in seeking an agenda worth the time and energy of the teachers, principals, professors, superintendents, and deans, embraced by a school-university partnership. Another is that the changing context briefly sketched above will not become more amenable to educational processes — especially the moral imperatives embedded in such processes — unless the educative role of other institutions is maximized. Although this document focuses on the minimum essentials of a healthy school-university relationship, it is assumed that each partnership will join with other agencies committed to the ideal of educative communities. The drug problem, for instance, will not be solved by school-based classes, counseling, and student searches, however useful these may be. If it is to be resolved at all, the solutions will come from recognizing and addressing this problem and others attributed to schools as clear signs of pathology in home and community and, indeed, the larger society.

Some Assumptions

It is assumed that the partnerships entered into are symbiotic in nature — that is, two different kinds of organisms (institutions) are joining for the joint satisfaction of mutual self-interests. The obvious differences between schools and universities, which undeniably complicate and frustrate collaborations, are strengths, not weaknesses to be overcome. Without them, collaborations would represent redundancy. Nonetheless, there are overlapping self-interests (schools need better teachers; universities need better sites in which to prepare future teachers). The agenda of collaboration grows out of the points of overlap. For a partnership to be successful, each partner must see satisfaction of the self-interests of the other(s) as essential to the satisfaction of its own. Consequently, to see to it that the self-interests of the other(s) are met is to be both self-less and self-serving. It is realistic, not cynical, to suggest that partnerships lacking this balance of selflessness and selfishness are short-lived.

It is assumed that each partnership is to be characterized by efficient and effective sharing of information and knowledge, either produced by its members or coming from other sources. Schools and universities in collaboration for the improvement of schooling and education must maintain a commitment to quality information and knowledge in context — that is, in terms of relevant historical, current, and projected social, political, and economic circumstances and conditions at local, state, national, and international levels. Consequently, the results of both previous research and new research (including formative evaluation) will infuse ongoing processes of renewal.

It is assumed that each partnership will seek to clarify and promulgate a small set of beliefs about what education is and what this conception means for priorities, programs, and practices. This set must be small enough to maximize near-consensus of endorsement, and yet permit maximum flexibility for local initiative and creative response. Leaders, therefore, must be willing and able to empower others with the time and autonomy necessary for individual creativity. For example, it is assumed that each partnership is committed to assuring equal access to knowledge for all students. But what blocks access and, therefore, what must be done to remove the blocks differs from institution to institution.

It is assumed that individual schools and individual preparation programs are the centers of improvement efforts. Research shows that change does not come about and is not sustained through intervention and installation techniques. Rather, persons in schools and responsible for programs must learn how to effect improvement as a built-in characteristic. They take care of their business in increasingly better ways. Therefore, resources and time are essential to a renewal process that involves dialogue, decision making, action taking, and evaluation. Unless the conditions for renewal marked by inquiry are created, improvement once more will be at the edges, not fundamental.

The paths to truly effective partnerships between schools or school districts and universities are not at all clear. Indeed, a preliminary review of the literature suggests that symbiotic partnerships, as defined above, have scarcely been attempted. It is assumed, then, that there is much to be learned by everyone involved. Consequently, "staff development," as inservice education has come to be called, is for everyone, not just those at the base of the organizational pyramid — superintendents, deans, and professors, as well as teachers and principals.

Efforts to attribute accountability signal pathology in the system. Consequently, it is assumed that the partnership entered into will eschew in their operations any search for persons or places for the affixing of blame. Instead, every effort will be made to develop values and
practices that promote a system of shared responsibilities. Clearly, the largest source of power and energy for educational improvement is at the base of the organizational pyramid referred to above. We see once again the enlightened role of leadership in empowering teachers and principals in schools and those who have responsibility for teacher education and other preparation programs so that the process of change becomes one of continual renewal.

The cards are stacked against improvement that is anything other than glacial or cosmetic. Policy makers frequently berate educators for their apparent inertia and then often enact mandates that encourage inertia. It is assumed that the current opportunity to restructure schooling and the education of educators will pass us by unless the policies enacted (and not enacted) succeed in both unleashing the energy of educators and then providing the infrastructure by means of which this energy will be constructively guided and supported. In some cases, this means rolling back state legislature already on the books. In some instances, it means providing the financial resources for local planning and action. Consequently, the partnerships cannot afford to remain mute with respect to the larger educational context of which they are a part. Some of them represent up to 30 percent of the student enrollment in the state. It becomes obvious that partnerships can and must play a significant role in the advocacy of policy to support sound educational practices. Likewise, the National Network for Educational Renewal assumes such advocacy as one of its major functions.

School-University Partnerships: Minimum Essentials

**Concept.** A school-university partnership represents a planned effort to establish a formal, mutually beneficial inter-institutional relationship characterized by the following:

- Sufficient dissimilarity among institutions to warrant the effort of seeking complementarity in the fulfillment of some functions.
- Sufficient overlap in some functions to make clearly apparent the potential benefits of collaboration.
- Sufficient commitment to the effective fulfillment of these overlapping functions to warrant the inevitable loss of some present control and authority on the part of the institution currently claiming dominant interest.

**Purposes.** The intent is to create a process and an accompanying structure through which each equal party to a collaborative agreement will seek to draw on the complementary strengths of the other equal parties in advancing its self-interests. Each partnership is a means to this end — and not an end in itself.

The central purposes are three:

- The exemplary performance by universities of their educational responsibility to those seeking to become educators or to enhance their present performance as educators. (Increasing the usefulness of the university research function is a major part of this responsibility.)
- The exemplary performance by schools of their educational function and the accompanying exemplary performance of school districts in providing the necessary support.
- The exemplary performance of both universities and schools (and their school districts) in collaborative arrangements and processes that promote both of the above purposes.

**Agenda.** The agenda grows out of fulfillment of the above purposes. It must not be allowed to grow out of preoccupation with sustaining a partnership for its own sake. Nor is the partnership to be the vehicle for solving all of the problems of schools or all of the problems of preparing educators for the schools. Rather, the partnership is to be used as a device for bringing together institutions that need each other for the solution of tough problems.

The agenda grows out of mutual institutional sensitivity to those problems that have largely resisted previous attempts to resolve them, whether mounted by single institutions or institutions in unison. The specifics will change but the following emerge as hard-rock problems worthy of concerted attention and action:

- The creation of exemplary sites in which future teachers are educated that demonstrate the best we know about how schools should function.
- The creation of internships and residencies for educational specialists (including administrators) through which these professionals may observe and gain experience with the best possible educational practices.
- The development of curriculum that truly reflect the best analyses and projections of what young people need.
- The assurance of equal access of students to these curricula.
- The cultivation of site-based staff development activities.
designed to foster continual school renewal, particularly of the curriculum and accompanying pedagogical practices.

- The restructuring of schools to assure increased continuity in student's programs, decreased accumulation of partial and inadequate or misdirected learnings, decreased alienation of students, and more effective utilization of varied teaching resources, including technology.

- The continuous infusion of knowledge relative to provision of good education in schools and in programs preparing educators.

- The creation and utilization of opportunities to promote in the community a continuing informed dialogue about what education is and why it has more to do with the welfare of both individuals and society — than the preparation for jobs.

Structure. Although there probably is no best way to organize school-university partnerships, experience and careful thought suggest at least these minimum essentials (or their equivalents) for structuring each partnership:

- A governing board composed minimally of the superintendent of each collaborating school district and the dean(s) of the participating school(s) or college(s) of education.

- A modest secretariat composed of an executive director reporting to the governing board, and charged with performing both leadership and management functions; and necessary support services provided by a secretary, and desirably, a research assistant — all paid from the partnership budget.

- An operating budget providing both money and specifically assigned personnel from participating institutions. (N.B.: Should any institution volunteer to provide for the executive director, for example, it must be clearly understood that this person reports directly to the governing board in performing partnership functions, not to the institution contributing this resource.)

- Top-level endorsement and support from the cooperating university's chief executive officer and, ultimately, university involvement beyond the school or college of education.

- An orderly process within each partnership of authorizing and monitoring all projects and activities undertaken in the partnership so as to assure widespread understanding and a minimum of bureaucratic procedures and control.

- An ongoing effort to document, analyze, and communicate successes and failures and possible reasons for success and failures (preferably through designating and supporting an individual to take the lead in assuring that the gathering of relevant data is built into the functioning of the partnership.

- The establishment and maintenance of connecting linkages with the National Network for purposes of giving help to and receiving help from other partnerships in the Network.

- A deliberate effort to secure additional funds from external funding sources (particularly those in the state or region).

- The redirection of existing funds within and across institutions for purposes of securing the time necessary for educational renewal.

- A formal time commitment of at least five years.

- Arrangements for sharing information, ideas, and even resources within and across partnerships, including the sharing of responsibility for advocating the best in educational policy and practice.

National Network: Minimum Essentials

In the same vein, a set of minimum essentials is proposed for a network of school-university partnerships focusing on educational renewal:

- Exchange of ideas, practices, information, and personnel among partnerships.

- Provision of data and analysis of experiences for purposes of contributing to our knowledge about change and improvement.

- Task forces addressing common self-interests.

- A communications network among partnerships.

- Support from the Center for Educational Renewal in the form of consultants, exchange of information (newsletter), organization of task forces, periodic meetings and conferences, networking of expertise, and assistance in securing supplementary funds.

- Use of the totality of the National Network for Educational Renewal in advocating the importance of education, sound educational practices and policies that support renewal, not just periodic efforts to upgrade the delivery system.

Conclusion

At the time of this writing, the National Network for Educational Renewal consists of 14 school-university partnerships in as many states. Not surprisingly, these
About the Cover

The National Network for Educational Renewal currently involves school/university partnerships in fourteen states, including Hawai‘i. Working collaboratively as equal partners in addressing educational problems, these partnerships operate on the premise that significant change will not take place unless universities and schools change together.

Committed to formulating and implementing this change, the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, and the Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate formed the Hawai‘i School/University Partnership and joined the NNER in October 1986. Although these institutions had prior working agreements, this Partnership offered the first opportunity to formalize their collaboration as equal partners.

Our cover introduces visually the dynamic leaders of the HIS/UP. Standing, left, Charles Toguchi, Superintendent, Hawai‘i State Department of Education; right, Michael Chun, President, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate; seated, John P Dolly, Dean, College of Education, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa.

For partnerships to survive — and be so successful that everybody wants to be a part of the process — leadership and management must be constant, consistent and compatible. Such a leader-manager is Juvenna Chang, left, Executive Director, Hawai‘i School/University Partnership.

partnerships vary in their purposes, activities, and robustness. Most are characterized now by the belief that the collaboration underway is well worth the effort, that the differing cultures of the school and the university can and do work to considerable mutual benefit, that this relationship warrants continued cultivation and that accomplishments to date promise many more in the future. A school-university partnership is not a project; it is a way of life.

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