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Editorial Policy and Procedure

The School Community Journal is committed to scholarly inquiry, discussion, and reportage of topics related to the community of the school. Manuscripts are considered in four categories: (1) research (original, review, and interpretation), (2) essay and discussion, (3) reports from the field, including descriptions of programs, and (4) book reviews. The journal follows the format suggested in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*.

Contributors should send two copies of the manuscript; an abstract of no more than 250 words; key word list; a one paragraph description of the author; and a phone number, fax number, and e-mail address where the author can be reached to:

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Please include a copy of the manuscript on diskette (in Word if possible, APA format with titles italicized) OR send an electronic copy as an e-mail attachment to editor@adi.org. The cover letter should state that the work is not under simultaneous consideration by other publication sources. Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

As a refereed journal, all submissions undergo a blind peer review as part of the selection process. Therefore, please include the author's description and other identifying information on a separate page and in a separate electronic file.

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Requests for Manuscripts

The School Community Journal publishes a mix of:

- (1) research (original, review, and interpretation)
- (2) essay and discussion,
- (3) reports from the field, including descriptions of programs, and
- (4) book reviews.

The journal seeks manuscripts from scholars, administrators, teachers, school board members, parents, and others interested in the school as a community. Please see editorial policy on page 2 for submission information.

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Editor's Comments

This issue of *The School Community Journal* begins with an article by Allen and Chavkin that holds out much hope for cash-strapped schools who want to help their students succeed at a critical time in their development. Community volunteers provided tutoring to middle school students who were failing or at risk of failing classes, cited as a key indicator for dropout risks. They succeeded in improving grades, even though many of the tutors did not have college training. The authors mention, almost in passing, that "Program managers were primarily social workers who helped the tutors understand the academic, social, and emotional needs of students" (p. 10). This highlights one example of the pivotal role school social workers can play in a school community, which is precisely the subject of our second article. Teasley gives an informative background along with a passionate cry for social workers to stand in the gaps to promote healthy school communities. The third article, by Sheldon and Epstein, also looks at a major predictor of school dropout—student absenteeism. They conclude that school, family, and community partnership practices can decrease chronic absenteeism.

Next, Adler gives an interesting look into one school community and the challenges they face in being sensitive and responsive to a unique cultural group, the Hmong. She highlights the conflicts between the perceptions of various groups within the school community. Similarly, Xu looks at a unique situation in his case study of a mixed heritage family, but draws conclusions that can apply everywhere. Schools must be sensitive to the unique needs of not only various groups within their schools, but the needs and values of individual students and families. Xu, in particular, challenges the assumption that each family speaks with one voice, but shows that various situations can elicit a variety of responses, even from an individual. Reali and Tancredi, working to connect schools and families in Brazil, also see the challenge of a wide variety of situations among students. They propose that preservice and inservice education can better prepare teachers to foster relationships with families that will promote student learning. While so many diverse needs and voices may seem overwhelming, I believe Xu, Adler, Reali, and Tancredi would all agree that if a school develops a culture of respect and a commitment to listening, it will go a long way toward developing a sense of community for all their students and their families.

The final article is a program report describing a parent education program that focuses on promoting student achievement. Ramirez provides a picture of a successful learning experience for parents that empowers them to help their children learn. We conclude this issue with a review of James Comer's latest work, *Leave No Child Behind*. According to reviewer Kochan, this book is a worthwhile read for everyone interested in helping students thrive within caring school communities.

Lori Thomas, Editor
November, 2004

