Creating a Community of Readers

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During the opening decades of the twentieth century, the elementary public school was fully institutionalized as a place of lonely work for teachers and students alike. Each teacher was assigned to a classroom, and each student, in turn, was assigned to a desk. This educational invention remains firmly in place throughout the United States. For several generations, school work has been conducted behind closed doors. Students are either listening to the teacher give instructions or working silently at their desks. Numerous accounts of life in American schools depict encapsulated classrooms guided by norms of social isolation (Goodlad, 1984; Sarason, 1991).

In the progressive era, many educators were convinced that methods of scientific instruction and scientific management could be applied to an elaborate scope and sequence curriculum. They designed learning tasks by grade levels and by ability groups within each grade level. Publishers and educational managers have been refining this system for most of the twentieth century. Grandparents, parents, and children are all familiar with the daily diet of standardized, yet fragmented, learning experiences that were carefully recorded in various workbooks. These workbooks were always kept at the students' desks and available on command of the teacher. "Please get out your reading workbook." But the last week of school always brought a sweet moment of revenge as kids gleefully trashed their workbooks on the way home. At last, they were free from the drudgery of school.

During the past decade, numerous reformers have challenged the merits of the factory-model of schools (Fiske, 1991; Goodman, et al. 1988; Sarason, 1991). Many of these critics have argued that schools should be less bureaucratic and more communally inclined. There are many variations on the communal themes of educational change. Perhaps the most popular development in this area is the widespread interest in cooperative learning. Other important endeavors include the development of collaborative

schools (Barth, 1990), Essential Schools (Sizer, 1992), and James Comer's work with mental health teams (1980). Many of these efforts promote opportunities for shared involvement among staff, students, and parents. This article addresses another aspect of communal development: creating a community of readers that is school-wide in character.

For most of this century, educators have taught reading as isolated sets of skills (hierarchial in nature and with detailed subskills) to be mastered and then applied in context. Students' mastery of these language fragments has been managed through individualized programs, ability groups, or whole group "tracking." Little attention, however, has been given to the creation of reading communities that go beyond the work of individual teachers inside each classroom. We see the need to explore learning opportunities for young readers in a broader context that includes the principal, all teachers, all students, and their parents. We believe schools should be more than the aggregation of classrooms that are connected by hallways. Schools are places that can foster a clear sense of community that encompasses staff, students, and parents. There is no better topic for building school-wide community than the joys and excitement of reading. We report on several recent endeavors to build communities of readers.

The Alliance for Achievement and the Value of Reading

The Alliance for Achievement is a network of schools committed to building value-based learning communities. The central organizational principle of the Alliance is the collaborative work of parents and teachers who identify, articulate, and develop a core set of values that are intended to permeate the entire school and every home where students and parents continue the learning process. A School Community Council is formed with four parents, two teachers, and the principal who serves as chairperson. Their work is guided by an eleven-step developmental model that includes the adoption of four school community values. One of the educational values most frequently adopted by the School Council is reading. We will use reading to illustrate the collaborative work of building a school community.

The central task of each School Community Council is to identify a short list of essential values that can focus the work of all members of the school community. According to the guidelines, "A school community value is a learned quality (ability or characteristic) that school community members believe is fundamentally desirable for all students" (Redding, 1991). An educational value attains the status of a school community value when it meets the following criteria:

1. It is considered valuable by most, if not all, school community members;
2. It is attainable by all students;
3. It is achieved through learning, including learning at home as well as learning at school;
4. It is applicable to all curricular areas of the school program rather than to specific areas, and;
5. It is achieved through the combined efforts of the students, parents, and teachers.

These five fundamental conditions are applied systematically to such school community values as decency, studying, and reading. The communal nature of such values as reading is crucial. Reading is no longer the privatized work of teachers and students with an occasional acknowledgment by parents. According to many school leaders in the Alliance for Achievement, reading has been elevated to a school-wide value that is nourished by common experiences for students, teachers, and parents.

Once the School Community Council has identified reading as one of its school community values, the leaders will restate this value as a *school community goal* for *all* its students. A goal statement will then be formally written by the Council. Many schools in the network have adopted such statements as the following: "Because [this school] values reading, it is the goal of [this school] that all students learn to read well, read often, and enjoy reading." The emphasis is on reaching *all* students with concrete goals that are attainable through the collaborative efforts of teachers and parents.

How can school leaders be assured that all students will pursue such goals as reading well, often, and with enjoyment? It is easy to state goals. The School Community Council seeks to go beyond platitudes by spelling out specific expectations for teachers, parents and students. These expectations are stated in clear behavioral terms as guidelines for action. Behavioral clarity is crucial. Participants (students, teachers, parents) should have no difficulty seeing the connection between the goals of reading and the specific expectations that meet this goal. Expectations should be stated in such a manner that students, teachers, and parents will know when they have met them.

We have studied the Council Reports of sixteen Alliance schools that have selected reading as an educational value. Table 1 presents an illustrative list of the expectations that are set forth for students, teachers, and parents.

An examination of these expectations indicates that both teachers and parents share a common responsibility to help children become successful lifelong readers. Adults at both school and home play several crucial roles: coaches who assist the young reader, team leaders who create and nurture

TABLE 1

SCHOOL COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS FOR READING

STUDENTS	TEACHERS	PARENTS
Read to family members at least twice a week.	Read to students frequently.	Read to child at least twice each week.
Listen to family members read.	Have students read each day including reading for pleasure.	Listen to child read at least twice each week.
Talk about what has been read.	Make "Writing about Reading" assignments.	Provide interesting reading materials in the home.
Write about what has been read.	Implement an incentive program to encourage all students to read.	Encourage family visits to libraries and book stores.
Obtain a public library card.	Establish a reading recognition program.	Encourage family discussion about reading.
Learn about and use different methods of reading.	Integrate the books of the shared reading program into lessons and activities.	Talk about what the child has been reading at school and home.
Participate in reading incentive programs.	Encourage "Book It" and other home reading programs.	Encourage children to read to each other.
Read books in a shared reading program.	Work with librarian to develop student interests in reading.	Show by example by reading in the home.
Visit library often and take books out for reading enjoyment.	Have students write about their reading in a journal each week.	Read books in the school's shared reading program.
Ask parents to talk about something they have recently read.	Provide a print rich environment in the classroom.	Support "Book It" program.
Participate in "Book It."	Communicate on a regular basis with parents about student's reading progress.	Participate in "Reading at Home" program.
Write about reading by keeping a journal.	Continue to grow professionally in the area of reading instruction.	Establish a family reading time as a regular family activity.
Utilize Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Independent Reading Time (SQUIRT) at least twice a week.		Talk with children about how reading is used in everyday situations.
Read from a variety of written materials.		

small reading circles, role models who demonstrate the joy of reading, and facilitators who help students to learn to use local public libraries.

Parents and teachers also work together to create various school-wide reading programs that take place at school and in the home. Numerous programs have been sponsored by various schools. For example, many schools have considered the "Shared Reading Program." "This program calls for the selection of two books for each grade level to receive special attention in the curriculum of all subject areas, in the activities of the school and in the home" (Redding, 1991). Parents are expected to read the books at home, and numerous activities are possible at school. An annual reading festival can be held at which students perform skits based on episodes in the books. Or the books can be used to create a costume parade in which students dress up according to their favorite character. The "Shared Reading Program" serves as a stimulus to consider reading as an enjoyable and sociable activity that is not limited to the lonely seat work of basals or the ponderous drudgery of thick textbooks.

Teachers also seek to encourage and support parents through numerous strategies of effective communication: parent-teacher conferences, special notes that report on student's progress in reading, and school newsletters that keep parents informed about reading projects, interesting books, and helpful hints for readers in the home. All of these efforts are intended to keep the value of reading uppermost in the minds of teachers, students, and parents.

Reading Programs at Two Alliance Schools

Schools that are part of the Alliance for Achievement are continually searching for new ways to build a strong community of readers. We will report briefly on the innovative work of two schools. The first case involves the incentives of food (pizza and ice cream) programs at Somonauk Elementary School. Several teachers in classes K through 6 participate in "Book It." Each student who meets a monthly requirement will be rewarded for the effort by receiving a small pizza at a local Pizza Hut. If all members of the class meet their reading goals for four out of five months, the class is awarded a pizza party. According to one teacher at Somonauk, "My last four classes have accomplished this [pizza party] for which I am happy. It took some encouraging and note writing on my part, buy it also took some cooperation by the parents" (Grandgeorge, 1992).

A second reading incentive program was sponsored by the School Community Council in the spring of 1991, " I Scream for Reading." This was a six-week program that was open to all students from kindergarten to eighth grade. Students were given a weekly time assignment (depending on grade level) to read independently or have someone read to them. This

commitment to reading had to be done in the home with reading material that was not part of the regular school work. Each Friday, students brought back a slip of paper with a daily tally of the amount of time spent reading, and verification with a parent's signature. Students who met the weekly reading requirement were awarded a part of an ice cream sundae complete with nuts, cherry, and whipped cream. Parents assisted by collecting and tallying papers. At the end of the six weeks, twenty-five parent volunteers served ice cream sundaes to the persevering readers. The reader who read the most minutes was give a watch. The room with the greatest total minutes was give a traveling plaque to be kept until next year's program.

One of the teachers at Somonauk interviewed teachers who participated in the "Book It" and "I Scream for Reading" incentive programs. There is general satisfaction with both incentive programs. However, several teachers offered important qualifications to the education value of reading for pizza or ice cream. They were not sure how successful such incentive programs are to develop sustained motivation for independent reading. They were also not sure that these programs alone would keep the poor readers interested in reading on their own. Finally, the teachers did not see the incentive programs as sufficient to improve standardized test scores (Grandgeorge, 1992).

North School in Sycamore, Illinois, has taken a different approach to schoolwide reading activities. The School Community Council has established a Book Month for all kinds of reading projects. The principal, Barb Dunham, challenged her students by agreeing to sit on the school roof dressed as Mrs. Santa Claus if they would read four thousand books. The students read 4, 872 books and enjoyed seeing their principal on the roof. A Reading Worm was places on the wall with each book allowing the Worm to grow a bit longer. In one month, the Reading Worm encircled the inner wall four times. One week was dedicated to inviting people from the community to share one of their favorite childhood books with the children. Students learned that all kinds of adults (e.g., the mayor, the fire chief, a university football player) enjoyed reading. On three spontaneous occasions on Drop-It Day, the principal announced that everyone should drop whatever they were doing and read for ten minutes. On another day, the school adopted Teacher Exchange which allowed teachers to exchange rooms and read to other students in the building. Books were also brought to life with a Book Parade that allowed students to illustrate their favorite book with costumes or posters. Finally, Book Month was a time for Word Day in which students wore clothes with words. The classroom with the most words won a prize.

North School illustrates dramatically the richness of communal activities that can highlight reading as a school value. By concentrating so many diverse activities in one month, all students become aware of the excitement

of reading. Reading is no longer a private talk. It is a shared experience to be enjoyed by children and adults alike.

We have argued for the need to define reading as a shared educational value that must be nurtured collaboratively by teachers, parents, and students. This approach to reading has been articulated and implemented by Sam Redding and his colleagues in the Alliance for Achievement. They are not alone in seeing the educational merit to building communities of readers. Several educational leaders have been extending the boundaries of reading to go beyond the four walls of the classroom. We now turn to some of these endeavors.

Family Literacy Events

Schools which build communities of readers often bring parents, children, and educators together for special events revolving around books and literacy. Parents, children, and teachers in Columbia, Missouri, celebrate one such family literacy event at their Parents and Reading Fair co-sponsored by Columbia Public Schools and Columbia Council of the International Reading Association. The evening is structured in the traditional conference format with a keynote address followed by small group sessions designed to explore various literacy and language topics. After a keynote address by Jerome Harste of Indiana University or another literacy learning expert, parents and children might select to attend a small group session on Enjoying Magazines Together or Turning Kids on to Reading. Small group sessions are designed for kids only, parents only, or parents and kids together. The family literacy night combines educators, children, and parents in an evening of learning about literacy and sharing literature, and builds a sense of community through a shared purpose and shared experiences with texts for children.

In Fairbanks, Alaska, children and parents join teachers in a literary group which meets one hour once a month (Titus, 1991). All participants, children and parents alike, read the same children's book and get together to discuss it in a program they call "Bookends." Limited only by the number of books available, the program is in its fourth year and has included children and their parents, brothers and sisters, and grandparents. The community of readers has read and discussed Ronald Dahl's *Danny: The Champion of the World* (1975), *The Root Cellar* by Janet Lunn (1983), and *The Talking Earth* by Jean George (1983), among others. The evening begins in a whole group meeting followed by small discussion groups. The community of readers is bound by the shared literacy event: they have laughed and cried together, and agreed or disagreed with one another about the books they have read. The community of readers has made these books their own.

Parents as Allies in Children's Home Reading

Reading in the home is one of the most important influences in the literacy learning of children (Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1981). Several School Community Councils in the Alliance for Achievement have identified reading aloud in the home as an objective in building a community of readers. In Ohio's Akron public schools, parents were given training in the paired reading program to provide supportive reading for five to fifteen minutes a day (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). Based on a program developed in England, paired reading allows children the opportunity to read texts of their own choosing in a supportive environment (Topping, 1987). Although parents may feel that reading is too difficult to teach at home, parents can learn to help their children by adjusting their oral participation according to the support their children need as readers. Ineffective readers often do not have the opportunity to read in an environment which encourages or supports the reading process (Stanovich, 1986). However, when children are given opportunities to read with the help of their parents, children are provided the supportive context for reading, a model for the reading process, and the attention of a parent.

In other parent and home reading endeavors, parents are encouraged to act as models for children by reading for their own purposes. Parents are urged to "pull the plug" of the TV and read aloud to their children daily. They are encouraged to provide opportunities and purposes for their children to read. In Metcalf Laboratory School, Normal, Illinois, children in Carol Owles' kindergarten program select, learn, read, and reread a poem each week in class. The poems are illustrated and collected in each child's poetry notebook which is sent home each weekend to be read with parents. By sharing the poetry with parents, children have a purpose and opportunity for reading, and parents are included in the community of young readers in the school.

Children, parents, and teachers also share writing experiences in a community of readers. Children's beginning efforts in writing are encouraged and valued just as beginning talk is encouraged and valued. Homes and schools provide authentic contexts for writing: shopping lists and letters are valued as children learn to orchestrate print. In the Metcalf kindergarten program, groups of children select an insect to study. Children's books on this insect are sent home with each child. Parents and children together read to find facts about the insect, and children write these facts on their data sheets. Children then compile their data as groups, illustrate their findings, and report these findings to the rest of the class. Parents are active participants as children explore the texts and are also invited to share the children's successes as they present information to the class.

A community of readers is nurtured by having access to a print-rich

environment. Although many teachers have had to rely on their own resources to build classroom libraries, schools which build a community of readers acknowledge that all readers must be surrounded by books for children. In some schools, parents, librarians, children, and teachers form groups to generate lists of the school's favorite books, arranged by grade level (Routman, 1991). The book list helps teachers, children, and parents select books from the library and helps parents select books for gifts and book order purchases. The process of selecting the favorite books to be included on the book list allows the opportunity for members of the community of readers to meet and discuss popular books for children.

School-wide Goals for the Reading Community

In schools which build a community of readers, teachers often set collective and inclusive goals for school-wide reading. Schools establish goals to read a ton of books or read a million pages; books are then weighed, counted, tallied, or logged in some central, highly visual display. Often, there is some reward for meeting the goal; the principal may sit on the roof or do a handstand for the entire school to see. In Diablo Elementary in the Panama Region (O'Masta & Wolf, 1992), children are encouraged to contribute to a school-wide goal of reading a million minutes outside of school. As in the best of these collective school-wide programs, Diablo Elementary's program is not an individual, competitive event, but rather a cooperative activity with all members of the school community working together to reach a mutual goal. The goals in these school-wide programs are extrinsic. Care must be taken to avoid the Pizza Hut effect: If children are only reading books to get a pizza, they will find ways to read only the barest minimum to get the reward. Schools successfully building a community of readers keep sight of the ultimate goal of nurturing readers, not pizza eaters.
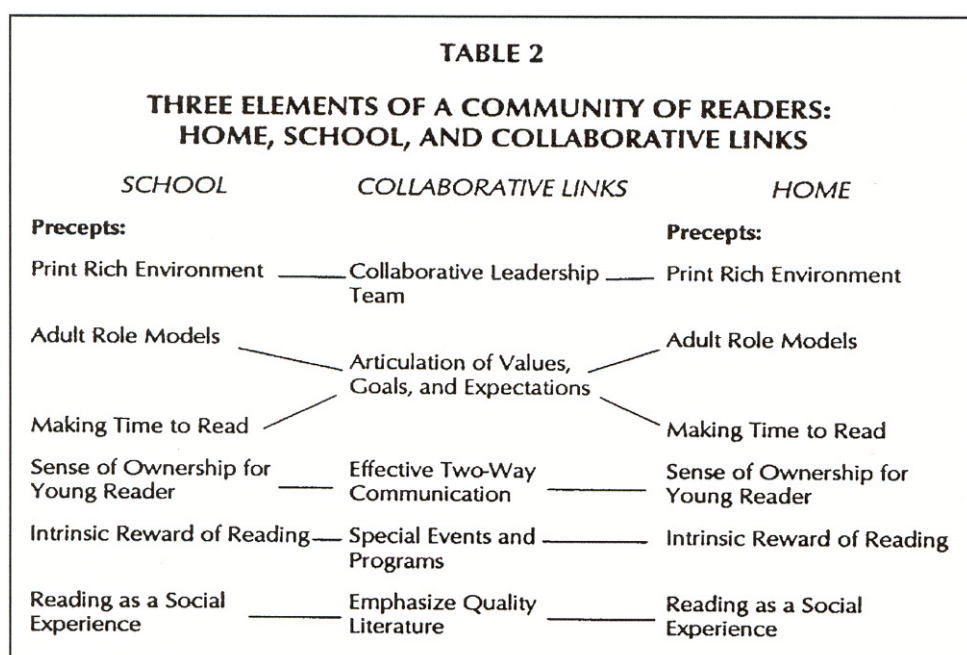
In other endeavors, readers are DEARing (Drop Everything And Read) or SQUIRTing (Super-Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time) as school-wide, inclusive activities. In these schools, fifteen or twenty minutes is set aside daily for everyone in the school to read a book of his or her choice. Still other schools are working with the Postal Service to establish a school-based mail delivery system (Office of Literacy, 1991) to encourage authentic purposes for writing. Schools are pairing children in cross-age buddy reading, writing, and thinking programs (Morrice & Simmons, 1991). Schools are adopting favorite books on a class-by-class basis and transforming hallways into mini-museums highlighting the books during the American Library Association's National Children's Book Week (Lapansky & McAndrew, 1989). In each endeavor, the goals are to excite children about reading, provide opportunities for children to read and write authentic texts, and welcome readers into the literacy club (Smith, 1986).

Designing Environments that Create a Community of Readers

Schools which successfully build communities of readers do so by emphasizing the interactive, social, constructive, and dynamic nature of the reading process (Hartste, 1989). In communities of readers, trade books are readily available, uninterrupted time for reading is scheduled, and readers reflect on and discuss what they read. In a supportive community of readers, successful readers support less effective readers and talk their way through the reading with a partner. The reading and writing endeavors center on meanings, shared understandings, and authentic purposes and audiences.

A community of readers in the home have homes which are littered with print. Books, magazines, cookbooks, and grocery lists are texts central to literacy events. Reading families send notes in lunch boxes, write lists of things to do today, read through the weekly church mailer, and read bedtime stories. Signs are taped to doors to keep out younger brothers, and notes are left on the kitchen table. Families which are communities of readers go to the library, browse through bookstores in the mall, and share different sections of the Sunday paper. Children write for free travel bureau information from Alaska, and write letters of complaint to toy companies when their products break. They write notes of thanks to grandmothers for their birthday gifts. Parents in reading families fuss at kids to be quiet so they can finish their books. Purposes for literacy permeate the home, and children growing up in these homes learn to read just as naturally as they learned to talk.

Readers in the school read to themselves and to others, read and "perform" *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1987), write to their favorite authors and illustrators, and write letters to the editor regarding the "no skateboard" ordinance. Students write letters of concern on National Smoke Out Day to a local grocery store that sells candy cigarettes. Teachers and students together explore the geography, history, religion, and culture of the Middle East during conflicts in that region. They write to servicemen, senators, and the Pentagon. Schools of readers build classroom libraries, tally their favorite books, and discuss stories and books daily. Teachers nurturing a community of readers know their students as readers; they know what they like and dislike, recommend books and authors, read aloud favorite parts of books, and discuss books with similar plots or characters. Schools building communities of readers write their own Thanksgiving plays, read aloud to the principal, and host Author's Teas celebrating their publications. Books published by children are catalogued and kept in the school library. The purposes for reading and writing are the threads woven throughout the curricular tapestry.

TABLE 2

**THREE ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY OF READERS:
HOME, SCHOOL, AND COLLABORATIVE LINKS**

SCHOOL	COLLABORATIVE LINKS	HOME
Precepts:		Precepts:
Print Rich Environment ———	Collaborative Leadership ——— Team	Print Rich Environment
Adult Role Models	Articulation of Values, Goals, and Expectations	Adult Role Models
Making Time to Read		Making Time to Read
Sense of Ownership for Young Reader	Effective Two-Way Communication	Sense of Ownership for Young Reader
Intrinsic Reward of Reading ——	Special Events and ————— Programs	Intrinsic Reward of Reading
Reading as a Social Experience	Emphasize Quality Literature	Reading as a Social Experience

The complex task of creating a community of readers requires the development of three essential areas of human involvement. The first two areas concern the basic centers of living and learning for the children: the home and the school. Adults in each of these centers of human development must consciously shape endless opportunities to engage the young mind in the wondrous would of print and pictures. The third area essential to building a community of readers is the network of relationships and understanding that connects school and home. A strong bridge is needed for the constant traffic flow between home and school. These three aspects of community building for young readers are presented in Table 2.

The community of reading must be built inside each home and school. We have identified six precepts which are essential for developing a community of readers (see Table 3). These themes do not pretend to be exhaustive. We merely outline some of the key components of social and cultural enrichment that foster a world of mindful engagement and thoughtful reflection. First and foremost, homes and schools must provide a print rich environment in which the young mind is constantly exposed to all kinds of reading materials. Second, adults are important role models whose own reading habits are daily reminders of the value of reading. Third, reading takes time; therefore, time must be set aside each day for regular reading activities. Fourth, young readers need to explore their own interests through open options to select topics and literature which best fits their curiosity. Fifth, readers must discover the intrinsic enjoyment of

Table 3		
CREATING A COMMUNITY OF READERS: **Essential Themes of Community Building Inside Schools and Homes**		
THEME	*SCHOOL*	*HOME*
CREATE AND USE A PRINT RICH ENVIRONMENT	Places throughout school where reading materials are on display and discussion of reading occurs (e.g., classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, principal's office).	Special places in home where variety of reading materials are available and where family can read. Parents and children also visit other print rich places.
ADULTS SERVE AS ROLE MODELS WHO ENJOY READING	Many adults (teachers, volunteers, parents, principal) enjoy sharing their interest in reading through numerous activities (e.g., reading aloud, DEAR, story telling, book reviews).	Parents make a special point to demonstrate their interest in reading for pleasure and information. Parents teach their children how to use all kinds of reading materials.
MAKE TIME FOR READING	Students need to have frequent opportunities to read. This time must exceed conventional time period of reading in the classroom schedule. Some of this time must include entire school as a common experience.	Parents must set aside specific time for reading in the home. Reading time should not be the same as "homework time."
CREATE A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP	Offer numerous opportunities to allow students to explore their own interests through various avenues of reading. The desire to read is enhanced with choices.	Parents can help students enjoy the pleasure of reading by creating opportunities to see the wide vista of reading materials found in public libraries, bookstores, etc.
EMPHASIZE THE INTRINSIC REWARDS OF READING	The sustained commitment to reading is best encouraged when the young reader learns both the skill of reading and the joy of the experience, not through coerced work or through manipulation for extrinsic rewards.	Parents can encourage the intrinsic rewards of reading by helping children find reading materials that interest them and by taking the time to discuss the many interesting aspects of the world that are found in books.
MAKE READING A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE	Reading can be more than solo seat work. It can involve a sense of shared enjoyment and purpose through reading aloud to an audience, dramatizing a story, and discussing ideas and people in a book.	Parents can help their child find meaning in various reading tasks by taking the time to share in the reading experience (e.g., reading to each other, listening to others tell about their reading, etc.)

Table 4
CREATING A COMMUNITY OF READERS: **Essential Themes of Collaboration Between School and Home**

THEME	*NATURE OF COLLABORATIVE CONNECTION*
CREATE A STRUCTURE OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP	School people and parents need a social arrangement that allows both staff and parents to plan, problem solve, and assess such educational areas as reading.
ARTICULATE VALUES, GOALS, AND EXPECTATIONS OF READING	The mission of the school must place high priority on reading as a crucial learning experience for all children. All adults (principal, teacher, parents) must acknowledge their responsibilities for meeting the goals of reading.
CREATE EFFECTIVE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME	Teachers and parents need to have regular occasions to share information on how well students are meeting various reading expectations. Principals must also create meaningful systems of communication with all parents in the school.
SPONSOR SPECIAL SCHOOL-WIDE EVENTS THAT CELEBRATE THE VALUE OF READING	Numerous school-wide activities can be sponsored by school staff and parents that emphasize the importance of reading, e.g., DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), "Book-It", "Bookends."
HIGHLIGHT BOOKS WORTH READING	School staff and parents have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to introduce high quality books and classics to the next generation of readers. Many programs foster this goal, e.g., Junior Great Books, Shared Reading Program.

reading for enlightenment and pleasure. Teachers and parents must avoid imposing extrinsic rewards for reading on students. Such circumstances are insufficient conditions to create a life-long enjoyment of reading. Sixth, numerous occasions need to be invented for sharing the reading experience with others. These six principles of community building on behalf of reading can be practices in the home and the school. Hopefully, the combined effect of both settings will help to stimulate a strong and enduring commitment to reading.

Homes and schools are ideal settings for creating reading communities. How can one best facilitate active reading in these two learning settings? We answer this question by suggesting a short list of collaborative strategies that are intended to help parents and teachers form a new partnership in reading endeavors. When parents and teachers learn to work together, they strengthen their own respective learning agendas, and they enhance the broader prospects for the child's success.

We offer six collaborative strategies for this alliance for achievement

(see Table 4). The first strategy is the need to invent a social arrangement that allows a group of parents and teachers to provide leadership on behalf of all parents and teachers in the school community. This organizational invention can take many titles (e.g., school community council, school improvement team, building leadership team). What is most important is a sense of common purpose and mutual respect for educators and parents. The collaborative team is then in a position to take the second step in building bridges between school and home--articulate values, goals, and expectations about reading for all concerned adults and all students. The third strategy is about communication. The leadership team must see that everyone is informed about the goals of reading as well as the many activities that support these goals. The fourth strategy concerns the need to develop numerous programs that highlight reading as a school-wide commitment. It is also important to plan special events that bring parents, students, and teachers together to encourage and celebrate the joy of reading. Our last collaborative suggestion places the accent on quality as an important value for readers of all ages. Parents and teachers need to give self-conscious attention to promoting the rich treasures of high quality literature that provide the context of cultural literacy. These six collaborative suggestions are not intended to be definitive. They are heuristic guides for building thick networks of support between home and school.

Conclusion

We conclude by asserting that reading instruction should not be limited to individual pursuits of students who perform daily assignments according to routine classroom schedules. Reading needs a broader social context that offers endless opportunities for shared learning among and between students, parents, and teachers. Educators and parents can invigorate their school by creating a community of readers who recognize and nurture the value of reading. Community building is a complex task that requires the thoughtful participation of the principal, teachers, and parents. The consequence of such literacy communities is the broad enjoyment of reading and its many benefits by adults and children alike. School leaders are expanding the horizons of reading by defining the printed word as a shared experience. This is the heart of community and the first step toward a better education.

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