

**FULL CIRCLE:
THE EVOLUTION, DEVOLUTION AND SOLUTION;
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN ALBERTA**

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B.Ed. University of Lethbridge, 1980

**A One-Credit Project
Submitted to the Faculty of Education
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

August, 1997

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A Metaphor of Community Education

Imagine yourself, as a teacher, driving a school bus up a winding, slippery, mountain road. Your bus is full of students from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of interests. They are all excited about the field trip and anticipate quite diverse experiences. The road is slippery but a sanding truck passes you and has created some safeguards on the more treacherous curves. A snowplow has cleared a path in front of you so as to broaden your path. There are guard rails in place that offer you some reassurance as you move along on your journey.

These preventative measures have all been put in place to enable you to proceed safely and on course. Without these safeguards, your journey would be perilous and you would perhaps find yourself and your charges in a precarious position, about to fall off the mountain wall into the canyon below. Perhaps some of your students would plunge into the canyon below, but would be fortunate and land on outcroppings or cling to trees as they fall. Some students will plummet to the lowest levels of the canyon and will be desperately struggling to survive.

The journey is an educator's commitment to the students. The destination is their formal education. The poor driving conditions are the obstacles encountered throughout the school years. These obstacles signify the varied baggage that each student brings to school. The sanding truck and the plow are the intervention programs that are offered to children at risk. Not all students will be rescued with intervention and as they fall through the cracks of the

educational system they may reach out to grasp additional assistance from outside agencies. Rehabilitation occurs when the students reach the canyon bottom and have to scramble for skills that will enable them their basic survival.

I envision an educational system where preventative measures are put in place to protect our students and to meets the needs of students before they fall off the beaten path. I see community schools as the agent responsible for enabling students to survive. The staff of a school are the best possible community members to identify the needs of the students and their families. School personnel must be the link to the agencies that are available. Interagency cooperation is the answer. There must be intervention programs put in place for those in need of further services. Prevention and intervention are the agents that will limit the need for rehabilitation.

Chapter 1: UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN ALBERTA

Alberta's Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Social Services are in a time of restructuring. Now is the time to lobby for the reintroduction of community schools and community education into Alberta schools. Government funding to these two facets of education was eliminated in the recent budget cuts. Reinstating them may include starting at a base level and renaming a once viable philosophy.

An analytical look at Canadian and American case studies of community schools will support my belief in interagency cooperation and community involvement operating through the school facility. A look at successful examples will enable me to share exciting information that is relevant to our present situation as our educational structure in Alberta has been challenged.

I believe that it is time to change the focus of education as the needs of the students have changed and teachers' method of delivery has changed. Technology has changed our lives both in and out of school. Society has changed, the structure of families has changed and the multicultural climate that exists in Alberta has added many new beliefs and values into our provincial melting pot. Tolerance must be taught in our schools, the needs of children and families at risk need to be addressed. Responsible citizenship must be a focus for Albertans.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, community schools were making a difference in the quality of life in some of Alberta's communities. They were funded from the coffers of the provincial government. Their main focus was interagency cooperation, community involvement, and lifelong learning. They were following a mandate created by Alberta Education that was an optional approach to education.

In 1994 the provincial government withdrew community school funding as well as their philosophical support. In the same year, the government introduced a new commission responsible for children's services. The mandate of this group was very similar to those of the recently dissolved community schools. Supporters of the community school and community education realized this was a reintroduction of services the government had just eliminated. Alberta was in a time of turmoil due to all the restructuring in progress and the concept of community schools fell to the back burner.

Alberta's provincial government designates millions of dollars into education, health, and social and children's services each year. Our present government has allocated thousands of dollars to Albertans interested in developing and implementing new programs that encourage interagency cooperation. A new department responsible for children's services was created in 1995 to distribute these funds. Millions of dollars are earmarked for children, but many taxpayers in Alberta do not understand what the new department is or how funds can be accessed.

Interagency cooperation operating within a community school is a very efficient form of cooperation between public services. I believe that community schools are the answer to meeting the needs of children and adults and in Alberta. Community school coordinators, as teachers, can best identify the needs of a community. The newly created department responsible for children's services should channel the distribution of funds through a restructured education system.

Educators cannot expect a rebirth of community schools, but the opportunity has arisen to incorporate community school philosophy into the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services. As we must work together in order to support the families who require special attention, there are many ways to ensure their welfare is being looked after. Community schools are one instrument to implement change.

The following chapters will guide the reader through a basic interpretation of community schools, community education, and interagency cooperation. The history, case studies, and goals of community schools will be presented. Exclusive components of community schools, such as community involvement, the volunteer program, and staffing are described. The closing chapters provide a glance at the new developments in child welfare as well as arguments in support of community schools/integrated services versus the new direction of Children's Services. My personal reflections and recommendations will conclude this project.

Chapter 2: WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND WHAT ARE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS?

Community education and community schools are terms misunderstood by the majority of the public, the provincial government, and our present educational system. This misunderstanding has become more evident in the past four years as the Alberta government has eliminated all previously allocated community school funding and has denied moral support to those communities who have tried to continue to operate their community schools with local funding. As community schools should be the hub of the community, and agencies should work from a school setting out toward the people, educators and those to whom they answer must understand the meaning of community education and community schools.

The concept of community education is not new. Definitions of community education date back to the 1930s when Progressive Education was starting to make significant changes in the North American education systems. There is no universal definition for community schools and community education; they are products that have evolved to meet the needs of the community. Each community will incorporate a structure that addresses the social and cultural climate but it must operate under the leadership of individuals who have taken the initiative to employ the community, as a whole, as active participants. Community schools offer children and adults programs that meet the needs of the community. If funding is allocated to the schools, staff can design programs

that are appropriate, rather than rely on outside agencies to determine a perceived need, submit proposals, and offer assistance to those individuals they have identified.

Sixty years ago, Elsie Clapp (1939) in her book, Community Schools in Action, identified the following characteristics for community education:

First of all, it meets as best it can and with everyone's help, the urgent needs of people, for it holds that everything that affects the welfare of children and their families is its concern. Where does school end and life outside begin? There is no distinction between them. A community school is a used place, a place used freely and informally for all the needs of living and learning. It is, in effect, the place where learning and living converge (p. 89).

Later, Minzey and LeTarte (1969) developed a comprehensive definition of community education. They point out that:

Community Education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all the educational needs of all its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization (p. 26-27).

Similarly, Larry Decker (1972), a noted authority on community education, developed the following interpretation of community education (1972):

Community education is really an eclectic philosophy that combines many desirable aspects of educational movements of the past and present into a dynamic concept of education readily adaptable to today's society and flexible enough to be adapted to the future (p. 2).

The National Centre for Community Education pamphlet (1969), defines community education as a unique educational concept that embraces these beliefs:

- 1. Education is a lifelong process;**
- 2. Everyone in the community - individuals, businesses, public and private agencies - share the responsibility for the mission of educating all members of the community; and**
- 3. Citizens have a right and a responsibility to be involved in determining community resources, and linking these needs and resources to improve their community.**

Stamp (1973) offers a quote written over fifty years ago by a man who understood the basic backbone of community schools and their benefit to the community as a whole. William Carr (1942), American National Education Association member, wrote an analogy that describes the situation that exists in many schools that are not community schools:

A typical public school is an island connected to the mainland by a drawbridge that could be let down every morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday, for the children to come and go, and once or twice a year in the evening for adults from the mainland to visit on brief, ceremonial occasions. The final irony was the main purpose of the island stronghold was to teach the children how to live on the mainland (p. 3).

In 1980, the Community Education Society of Alberta (C.E.A.A.), in cooperation with Alberta Education, outlined major characteristics for operating community schools in Alberta. The provincial government must have had no knowledge of their mandate that existed under the auspices of C.E.A.A. This association worked closely with Alberta Education. In 1996 the minister of

education proposed changes that included implementing programs that were terminated in 1994. Did our politicians have no knowledge of who who they were allocating community school dollars to or what their program entailed?

Chapter 3: HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

To fully understand the term *community schools* and *community education*, the philosophy must be clearly understood. A historical background enables one to appreciate the necessity for community education ideals in our education systems today.

Community education evolved because it met the needs of the people. The foundation of community education began in the "little red schoolhouse". The school was the hub of the community. It was a meeting place for recreational, social and political activities. Residents, with or without children, considered the school the root of the community.

But as the rural population became more mobile, the "little red schoolhouse" lost its effectiveness. It was unable to continue to hold the community together as people believed that commuting to the growing towns was preferable to local gatherings. Schools gradually became only educational facilities and they closed themselves off from the community in an attempt to gain autonomy.

Schools in North America eventually became isolated institutions and operated without much input from the community or other outside influences. They were functioning autonomies - independent educational institutions. This shift created animosity between educators, community members and businesses. Many people became distrustful of teachers and questioned their motives and methods, and challenged their accountability.

The modern concept of community schools became more prevalent in the sixties and seventies, reinstating many characteristics of the old, rural one room schools. As society has changed there has become a need to reintroduce the philosophy behind the "little red schoolhouse", as elementary as it may appear.

In 1936, a teacher in Flint, Michigan, Frank Manley, recognized the potential for year round facility use and he began to seek out financial support in the community. He spoke to community members in his search for support. Charles Mott, a wealthy businessman donated \$6,000 to Manley, and the Mott Institute for Community Improvement was established. The goals of the institute grew beyond facility use and athletic programs to the promotion of community education and community schools.

The Mott Institute has provided training for community school personnel and has developed programming that focusses on meeting the needs of students in the inner city schools in Flint, as well as students in the surrounding area. In 1966 the Michigan State University and the Mott Foundation joined forces to promote their common goal - improving schools and communities to better meet the needs of the citizens, both young and old. They were supported by the local school board authorities. In this joint effort, the National Centre for Community Education was founded. Situated in Flint, it has become an internationally renowned resource centre for community educators. The additional support, both philosophical and financial, that this centre has awarded to the community has enabled many of Michigan's schools to become model community schools in

North America.

British Columbia has many community school success stories to share. The movement toward community schools in this province began in 1971 after an innovative educator, Jack Stevens, visited the National Centre for Community Education in Flint to investigate the possibility of implementing segments of the philosophy into schools in British Columbia. Stevens' recognized the potential for implementing the structures of community education in British Columbia's schools. Stamp (1973) quotes Stevens findings:

First of all, it meets as best it can, and with everyone's help, the urgent need of the people, for it holds that everything that affects the welfare of the children and their families is its concern. Where does school end and life outside begin? There is no distinction between them. A community school is a used place, a place used freely and informally for all the needs of living and learning. It is, in effect, the place where learning and living converge (p. 95).

Jack Stevens became a vocal proponent of community schools and community education in Canada. In 1973, he was appointed as the first district community school coordinator, responsible for implementing all facets of the philosophy - community use of schools, community school cooperation between staff and residents and community education.

It was not until 1980 that Alberta developed an Alberta Community School Programme. At this time, Alberta Education invited interested communities in Alberta to participate in community school ventures. Alberta Education, Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, Alberta Culture, and Alberta Parks and Recreation began interdepartmental discussions that would promote

cooperation from these groups encouraging the philosophical structuring of community schools. The following is a definition of community schools, developed for the Alberta Government by the Interdepartmental Community School Committee, as summarized by Walter Zararuk (1982):

A Community School is a school where, with the endorsement of the School Board in cooperation with other local authorities and on behalf of the community, there is a formal commitment to the use of the educational process for both individual and community betterment. There is also a formal commitment to consciously orient the school to the community it serves. A community school ideally exhibits the following characteristics:

- community focus in learning — 1. The basic educational competencies are enhanced by relating these commitments to real life situations in the community in which the school is located.
- community involvement — 2. There is an effective involvement of parents and other interested people in helping to develop the curriculum of the school and in helping teachers with the operation of the school through appropriate (voluntary) service.
- democratic collegial approach administration collaboration among teachers — 3. A democratic, collegial philosophy is encouraged by the school board and principal teacher in the administration and functioning of the school.
- 4. The faculty includes teachers working in cooperation with each other and with community adults and students.
- 5. Although the education of the young is a priority, all members of the community are potential students, including the very young and adults of all ages.
- 6. Consistent with The Goals of Basic Education for Alberta, the school regards itself as an integral part of the total community education system.
- 7. School facilities may be designed or modified with effective teacher and community input so that the building itself is different from the usual school.
- extended use of facilities — 8. The school facility is available for educational, recreational, cultural and social service and other community use on an extended time basis, daily and yearly.
- 9. The school, by policy, encourages a constructive study of the problems and issues of significance to the community, often in cooperation with other agencies.
- 10. The school has an important stated goal in fostering a sense of community (p. 2).

Teachers are a valuable segment of a community as they have the trust of the students and their families and are in a position to identify children and families at risk. It is time to incorporate the ideals of community education into our educational systems and work toward meeting the needs of all the citizens of the community.

As student's and community needs are changing, schools are expected to take on additional responsibilities. Community education is the enabling structure to facilitate change.

Chapter 4: CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The 'One Stop Family Service Centre' is the label that defines a working community school. The name suitably describes the function of the facility. The Howe Avenue Elementary School in Sacramento, California, the IS 218 school in New York City and the Hanshaw Middle School in Modesto, California are excellent examples of centres working to accommodate the diverse needs of the local populations.

Howe Avenue Elementary School, featured in the Community Education Journal (1994), recognized that a focus on the family was the best way to ensure that their students' educational opportunities were being met. The social climate of Howe's surrounding area had changed over the years and problems had begun to arise as the student population became very segmented. The district realized that a change in leadership and faculty could introduce an innovative approach for the existing, unstable situation. Again, the philosophy of the "little red school house" surfaced, this time under the direction of the district superintendent. Administration moved from a top-down model to a local community level and Howe Elementary School was on its way to growth.

Collaboration was the key. Agencies operated within the school and worked closely with all school staff members. Health services, employment services, counselling and academic support were offered to the community residents. Family support was readily available and the focus on the family became a vital

component of Howe Elementary's success. In their discussion of this Howe Elementary School, George Jeffers and Margaret Olebe (1994), identify the meaning of excellence, "Excellence" means everyone, and student success includes adults as well. Lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction are embedded in the process (p. 6).

The IS 218 school in New York was built as a joint venture between the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the New York City School System. The programming and physical arrangement were designed to meet the needs of a Dominican community. Joy Dryfoos (1994), in her article, Under One Roof, acknowledged that "Teachers cannot teach hungry children or cope with young people who are too distraught to learn" (p. 28).

Most educators agree that learning will not take place until the basic needs of an individual are met. Full service schools attempt to meet these needs. IS 218 opens at 7 a.m. and offers breakfast to students, and also allows students to attend extra-curricular activities after school, until 6 p.m. This eliminates problems that may arise when children are left unsupervised by working parents.

A family resource centre operates at IS 218. From 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. community members are assisted with special needs consultations. These special needs may be drug and alcohol abuse prevention, crisis intervention, immigration concerns and adult education. Health services are accessible near the family resource centre.

IS 218 is an example of another one-stop family service center striving to provide as many services as possible to its unique population. Immigrants who are intimidated by government bureaucracies can obtain assistance at a local level from their neighborhood school. The needs of immigrant families are often identified by teachers first. Large provincial, state or federal buildings, are intimidating and 'new' citizens would rather enter schools and request school staff for assistance in a nonthreatening atmosphere than approach a battery of clerical staff in a sterile office.

Multicultural neighborhoods have increased the need for community schools. Hanshaw Middle School in northern California was also designed to cater to varied ethnic backgrounds. This facility, built in 1991, has an interesting arrangement. The school is divided into seven 'communities' and teachers are labelled as 'community leaders' and are responsible for the workings of their division. Interagency cooperation has been facilitated in collaboration with the police force, health care workers, family support programs, and migrant support services. Dryfoos (1994), refers to the partnership of the on-site resource centre and the school as a campus where cultural differences are respected.

Evaluating the success of interagency collaboration within the school setting is difficult to measure. Dryfoos (1994) assumed that if all these services are provided, the outcomes for the students and their families will be greatly improved. She would interpret the success of a community school in terms of improved academic performance and improved health, with reduced family

violence, child abuse, and poverty.

There are very few published articles that feature individual studies of Canadian community schools. They are most often discussed in a collective format. Robert M. Stamp (1973) in his book About Schools: What Every Canadian Parent Should Know, refers to some of the more noteworthy examples of successful community schools in Canada.

In 1966, Flemington Road Elementary School in Toronto opened its doors to the community. Teachers were aware of the fact that they were not totally in touch with their students they needed to have a greater understanding of the students' value systems and environment. The best way to reach the student population concerns was to involve the parents and community in the school and to offer them the opportunity to utilize the facilities. This developed into a community education program that reached beyond recreational activities to interagency collaboration and adult education.

Trafalgar Elementary School in London, Ontario, was also a leader of the community school initiative in Ontario. Neighborhood residents were in need of a recreational facility. The principal of the school, George Jorgenson, surveyed the neighborhood and developed Trafalgar Elementary School programs around the interests of the people. Stamp (1973) makes the statement, "If the doors are open, the people will come in" to reiterate the idea of extended hours for community use. Jorgenson, turned to educators in Flint, Michigan for guidance and ideas for change. He wanted to cater to all ages, pre-school to seniors.

In Alberta, Langevin Community School, in Calgary, was constructed with community use in mind. It is a facility that is utilized day and night. Stamp (1973) found that its associates believe that schools are for everyone and should be used as extensively as possible and that formal education is not everything. Stamp quotes Langevin principal, Don Campbell (1975) as saying: "There is a more relaxed atmosphere and less tension among the youngsters around the school. I think it's because they're around the school working and playing -- often with their parents -- long after the school day is over" (p. 94).

Langevin Community School is respected by community school supporters throughout Alberta. The advisory council, consisting of agency representatives, school staff, parents, community members, clergymen, and businessmen is a model council with representation from shareholders throughout the community. It has maintained a structure for councils that the Alberta government has tried to impose on all Alberta school councils.

In 1981, the Alberta government accepted seventeen of the proposals for community schools. Each school was required to develop a charter that would allow it to be designated. This government recognition enabled schools to receive additional government funding to meet their goals. Seventeen schools received designated status and community schools in Alberta were formally and financially recognized. The Community Education Association of Alberta (C.E.A.A.) was founded. Teachers, administrators and community residents who were dedicated to the basic tenets of community schools were identified,

organized and looking forward to the exciting years ahead.

Alex Taylor Community School, an inner city school in Edmonton, Alberta, saw an opportunity for change. With additional funding available, it was now able to revamp its approach to education. The economically depressed community was suffering from many social problems. Over three quarters of the students were new Canadians from immigrant families. The majority of the children needed stability in their lives and they needed a caring environment. Steve Ramsacker, principal, was the catalyst for change. Ramsacker realized he needed to make his the school atmosphere positive and warm.

Ramsacker has provided an excellent working example of success in an inner city school. Dr. R. Whitt, author of A Handbook for the Community School Director, (1974) provides an superb description of how the community school philosophy can enhance the success of an inner-city school:

The school cannot go into the home and change the home patterns that have developed over the years, but the school can change its own patterns. The time has come when the school must focus on those elements over which it has control . There is one place in the cultural milieu that pupils may find a constant -- the classroom. The inner-city, with all its turmoil, and grinding poverty, can provide a haven to which the slum pupil may withdraw from the pointings of society (p.15).

Alex Taylor Community School in Edmonton is one of the most celebrated community schools in Alberta. It has been featured on the television series, *Man Alive*, and a video has been produced that depicts a typical day at Alex Taylor Community School. A commitment by the staff and dedicated volunteers has given many students an opportunity to become members of a family - a school

family, where all stakeholders in the community are striving to create a positive learning environment for the students.

Southview Community School in Medicine Hat, Alberta, received designation in 1981 and was another model example of an effective community school. Dr. Larry Henderson, principal of Southview Community School, had a dream. It began to materialize in the 1970's when Alberta Education endorsed the 'little red schoolhouse' philosophy. Staff, community members and agency representatives worked together to offer all members of the community the opportunity to become active participants in the school programming.

The social climate of the neighborhood was very diverse and therefore it was beneficial to all parties concerned, to incorporate a community school philosophy to meet the needs the community. A large segment of the student population consisted of immigrant children or children from welfare backgrounds. There was a need to adopt an open door policy to encourage parents to become involved in activities that would eliminate the fear of institutions and promote the best learning environment possible. Southview became a 'safe haven' for the community and through their effective advisory council, were able to offer many interagency collaborative ventures that benefited at risk area families.

The most effective method to initiate resident participation in school activities is through a recreational program, and Southview Community School chose this avenue. Following the Flint, Michigan model that originated in 1935,

Southview offered its recreational facilities to the public. As participants became familiar with the facility and a trust and empathy developed between staff and families, the school was able to develop programs suited to the needs of the community.

A positive relationship between immigration services, social and health services and employment agencies developed. Further education became a valuable component of the school as the merits of lifelong learning became apparent to participants. The community school staff reached out to all ages in the community as they tried to create a 'family' environment in the neighborhood.

Seniors were paired with students and their families in an effort to foster a sense of responsibility and compassion. Many seniors had a renewed sense of self worth as their contributions were integral to a given programs. Volunteer positions throughout the school such as in the library and in classroom were filled by dedicated seniors. They often brought fresh baked goods at recess time, as they enjoyed coffee with community school friends. Southview Community School was catering to all age groups and the community utilized the facility and took an active role in the programming.

For many years Southview flourished. In 1991, another chapter of the dream began. Southview received ample grants to build on a community wing to the existing structure. This facility would house offices that community agencies could share. A teen drop- in centre, a seniors drop- in centre, and a small computer lab were also proposed services for the community.

Henderson Community Wing was completed in May of 1994. In June of 1994, the provincial government withdrew its support for community schools. This meant that there were not sufficient funds to hire a coordinator to facilitate the use of the wing or work with the agencies to identify appropriate programs for community members. Dr. Henderson retired and Henderson Community Wing eventually became an extension of the school for traditional programs and additional office space rather than as the community facility for which it had been designed.

In 1995, the Alberta Teacher's Association invited schools to enter a contest that would demonstrate their commitment to community education. Southview Community School prepared an application for consideration. The application exemplified the fundamental operations and strengths of a community school (Appendix A).

Community schools are born from the dreams of master educators. Leadership is the vital component of their origin. Dedicated leaders, such as Jorgenson, Campbell, Ramsacker, Stevens and Henderson have a commitment to the students and communities that they serve. They have the ability to choose dedicated staff that support a community school philosophy. They are pioneers of community education in Canada and have created working models of community schools.

Changes in administration can lead to the demise of a community school. If the new administration does not possess the necessary skills to work with

people and become a part of the community, the community school will not endure the political or financial burdens that may challenge their community school. Dryfoos (1994), stated that the spirit and dedication of the innovators may be more meaningful than bricks and mortar.

The philosophical foundation of the 'little red schoolhouse' must be reinstituted into our schools and communities. The case studies discussed in this chapter exemplify the underlying message offered by Carr's definition of 'typical' schools. Many educators agree that educational institutions should follow the basic community model to create positive, caring, and safe learning environments that function with the support of the community to assist children with living beyond the classroom walls.

Chapter 5: GOALS OF EDUCATION IN ALBERTA IN RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY SCHOOL GOALS

The timeliness of discussing community schools in Alberta now is very pertinent. The Alberta government has eliminated the funding that enabled schools districts to create environments that were supportive of their existing goals. It is important to realize that Alberta Education has not rewritten their goals in this time of change. Educators are confused as to what we are trying to achieve for our students. Are we preparing our students for the work force, or are we preparing our students to be productive citizens, respectful of a democratic system and anxious to participate in lifelong learning?

If we are to abandon the current goals that promote the basic tenets of progressive education, then I feel we are doing an injustice to our communities. These fundamental characteristics of progressive education and community schools complement one another. The implementation of the community schools philosophy is a logical way to commit to the progressive philosophy.

It is ironic that the goals of education set by Alberta Education stress the importance of the individual rights within the context of a strong community. To remind us of what the true goals of our present educational system are, I find it necessary to list them (see Table 1). They do not seem to bear any resemblance to the current unwritten goals on accountability and competition between schools. The following desired outcomes do not focus on the dollar as the prime consideration of the educational system. Educators have a responsibility to their

clients and society. The goals are directive guidelines and must be followed by all educators. Our Department of Education is sending a mixed message to the educative community and it is becoming increasingly difficult to instruct students following the double standard as requested by Alberta Education.

Table 1

Goals of Education for Alberta

1. develop intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning
2. develop the ability to get along with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles
3. develop a sense of community responsibility which embraces respect for law and authority, public and private property, and the rights of others
4. develop self-discipline, self-understanding, and a positive self-concept through realistic appraisal of one's capabilities and limitations
5. develop an appreciation for tradition and the ability to understand and respond to change as it occurs in personal life and society
6. develop skills for the effective utilization of financial resources and leisure time and for constructive involvement in community endeavour
7. develop an appreciation for the role of the family in society
8. develop an interest in cultural and recreational pursuits
9. develop a commitment to the careful use of natural resources and to the preservation and improvement of the physical environment
10. develop a sense of purpose in life and ethical or spiritual values which respect the worth of the individual, justice, fair play, and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms.

The ten characteristics of community schools as outlined in the brochure, Beyond the Classroom Walls, published by The Community Education Society of Alberta (C.E.A.A.), (Appendix B), support the Alberta goals.

1. Community Related Curriculum

Basic education is enhanced by relating the curriculum to real life situations in the community. Students go into the community to use available facilities and resources, and to provide service while they learn. In turn, community resources are brought into the school. Intense study

of the local community becomes the basis for study of life and other communities and the world.

2. Involvement of Parents

There is an effective involvement of parents and other community members in helping to develop the curriculum of the school and in helping teachers through appropriate voluntary service.

3. Collegiality

A democratic, collegial philosophy is encouraged by the school board and principal teacher and the administration of the school. Parents and other interested community people are regarded as allies.

4. Everyone a Teacher

The faculty includes teachers, working in cooperation with each other, and community adults and students.

5. Everyone a Learner

Although the education of the young is the priority, all members of the community are potential students, including preschoolers and adults of all ages. Educational activities involving people of all ages are encouraged.

6. Interagency Co-operation

The school regards itself as an integral part of a total community educational system. The school cooperates with other community organizations and agencies to provide comprehensive educational, recreational, cultural and social services to people in the school attendance area.

7. Facility Adaptation

School facilities may be designed or modified with effective teacher and community involvement so that, ideally, the entire structure is designed to facilitate community use as well as to accommodate community education activities.

8. Community Use

The school facility is available for community educational, recreational, cultural and social use on an extended time basis daily and yearly. Community activities might be scheduled at any time during each operational day.

9. Community Issues

The school, by policy, encourages a study of problems and issues of significance to the community, often in cooperation with other agencies and organizations in the community.

10. Sense of Community

The school has a vital stated goal, which is to foster a sense of community. It assumes it is important that the people who live in its attendance area know and care about each other.

Despite the correlation between the goals of Alberta Education and the goals of community schools as they both work within the parameters of progressive education, the Alberta Government has abolished all support for community schools in Alberta.

Ironically, in 1994, The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta's Families, published a checklist for schools (Appendix C), that listed suggestions for schools to implement to involve the community in their programming. This checklist included many ideas from the community school mandate.

Suggestions by the premier's council were:

1. Schools welcome families and community members
2. Schools plan events that include all family members
3. Schools are responsive to different family types and structures and sensitive to their needs
4. Schools are accessible to the community that they serve
5. Outreach support for children in need and their families is facilitated/arranged by the school
6. Public participation is initiated on decisions that affect families
7. Schools have effective, functioning parent advisory committees
8. Before and after school child care is available at or near the school with busing arrangements where required
9. The curriculum is sensitive to the community values and standards

10. Schools are designed to meet the needs of children and their families (cafeteria, playgrounds, recreation areas, etc.)
11. School facilities are made available for after hour use
12. Staff are friendly when meeting the public
13. Parent/teacher meetings are arranged to reflect parents' work schedules
14. Business and schools work together in partnerships to encourage career exploration , job training, and skill development

If the above goals are to be achieved, schools will require additional manpower to initiate and follow through with the recommendations, which are actually community school based tenets. The Department of Education has removed the funding, pretending not to support the philosophy, and have turned around and asked schools to follow the community school philosophy without any financial assistance. This statement leads me to believe that our department of education has misunderstood exactly what community schools are or do. A fully functioning community school cannot operate without additional manpower. Additional funding, as recommended by the Interdepartmental Community School Committee, would allow existing or newly appointed staff release time to help in the implementation of the programs if the school is to go beyond the classroom walls.

Another document that requires consideration, and one that further compounds the issue of conflicting goals and perceived goals, is the Roles and Responsibilities Paper (1994). It is very intriguing to analyse this paper from a community school perspective, as the main thrust of the paper is based on community school concepts. The proposals in this paper relate to the restructuring of schools in regard to school-based management and school councils. Although this document was written in 1994 by the Department of Education, the Community Education Association of Alberta (C.E.A.A.), could

have prepared it in 1981. It was in that year that the first Alberta schools were designated to receive funding from the provincial government, should they accept the philosophy as stated earlier in this paper. A philosophy that was being proposed, unbeknown by our present government.

In the Roles and Responsibilities Paper, schools have been requested to implement an advisory council. Community schools experience with success often relied on the creation of a cooperative atmosphere in an advisory council that was made up of community members representing a wide spectrum of the neighbourhood population. Membership ranged from teachers, the principal leader, a member of the Further Education Council, the Ministerial Association, Family and Community Social Services, custodial and support staff, parents, and any other agency or organization that was interested in having input into the management of their neighbourhood school. The main reason for interest by individuals outside the school is because many of the agencies are working with families at risk and appreciate the contact with school personnel in reaching these families. I have included this section on the government document, Roles and Responsibilities Paper, because it again exemplifies duplication of thought from the typical school to the community school.

Chapter 6: INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Interagency cooperation or collaboration refers to the networking of community agencies or organizations toward a common goal. Eliminating the possible duplication of services may enable a more coordinated, economically feasible framework to exist. Although the terms collaboration and cooperation presuppose a positive working climate, this is not necessarily the case. Collaboration and cooperation refer to professional partnerships, not personal partnerships.

Stark (1974) states that systematic coordination and cooperation are necessary in order to eliminate the overlapping of services. He believes that the school is the best suited organization to identify needs and work with existing community agencies. Hiemstra (1972) also identifies the school as the best suited institution for interagency cooperation, but states that often the agencies are operating under different political parameters that may make interaction very difficult. In his book, The Community Education Handbook, Berridge (1973) said that the greatest obstacle in agency cooperation is the inherent mistrust between agencies. This mistrust may also lead to the issue of job security. Individuals may perceive that if they share too much knowledge, they will find themselves superseded by their associates.

One of the key obstacles in implementing interagency cooperation is the facility arrangement. If agencies are to operate within a school, there must be suitable space made available to them. This space may be utilized on a part time, full time or a temporary basis. If schools are constructed with community school ideals, they will design areas appropriate for outside agencies to use. If outside agencies are utilizing the facility available in traditional schools, it is the responsibility of the administration to provide space that is adequate to meet the needs of the agency.

Ideally schools should be built with additional rooms and offices to meet the needs of the whole community - the agencies, lifelong learners and the recreational user groups. For example, when Southview Community School in Medicine Hat built their community wing they included offices, equipped with computers, small comfortable meeting areas for individual counseling and large meeting rooms for groups. It was an exciting time for the community. Agencies were anxious to set up an office within the school in close proximity to their clients.

There are increased costs involved if additional space is being provided that is beyond the needs of the basic educative community. School districts, especially in the current economic climate, are unwilling and unable to supply extra funding, over and above the necessities. A viable option available to the community is to look elsewhere for funding. There are many private foundations willing to assist schools if programming is addressing the needs of the community populace (Appendix D). Alberta's provincial government has funds available through the Community Facilities Enhancement Grant and the Wildrose Foundation. These requests for funding take a lot of time as proposals may be lengthy. Community members need to be involved in the process in an effort to give them a sense of ownership of the building. If there is additional space available in the school, additional manpower will be required to do the scheduling, maintenance and general coordination of facility use. These needs will be addressed in a later chapter on staffing in a community school.

The current Alberta government is working toward eliminating the overlapping of services. This movement has caused increased work loads for many employees in the support services and they are feeling overloaded in their professional assignments. Many employees are feeling apprehensive toward other agencies and are tending to devote their energies to their own associations rather than reaching out to the community. Educators and those involved in creating healthy, productive citizens need to regroup and focus on

the needs of our clients. Our common goal and our limited funding make this issue more apropos than ever before.

Educators are feeling the frustrations of trying to teach in environments that are overloaded with social problems. To date, there has not been enough time devoted to initial networking that would permit teachers to be aware of what services are available. Of those who are aware of the support services that are available, very few assess their services as time constraints and anxiety limit their capacity to reach out beyond the school setting. Traditionally, educators are apprehensive to invite outside agencies into their domain in the classroom for fear of being judged. This apprehension would quickly diminish as positive working relationships are formed.

The question remains, "What agencies would increase the effectiveness of our educational programs?" Generally all social servants who work with children and families in an attempt to eliminate the factors that may make them at risk would complement our approach to meeting the needs of families.

One of the first agencies that comes to mind when we discuss families at risk is Social Services and Child Welfare. Many school families are working in close relationships with these government agencies. The schools need the opportunity to understand the foundations of the home issues that are affecting the academic growth of the students. The information sharing that is done between schools and these two agencies in regard to personal clients is often confidential and requires special attention. Adult clients, children and families may feel more comfortable meeting in the school rather than in a provincial or civic building. The intimidation factor is much less in familiar surroundings.

The overall climate of a community may be assessed by social workers and they may be able to offer programming that would facilitate the needs of the people. They may choose to focus on issues such as physical or emotional abuse, parenting, or financial management. Each neighborhood may have different needs.

②

Support

Family and Community Social Services (F.C.S.S.), operate with local funding. They offer counseling in family issues, such as the blended family, grieving, dealing with divorce and anger management. These courses are very necessary in our changing society where the traditional family is becoming less common. Many homes are affected by some form of change that needs addressing. If these courses are offered in a central neighborhood location, such as the school, they are much more willingly attended.

The Young Children's Development Centres (YCDC) are a service offered by local health authorities in Alberta. They offer services to children from birth to ten years of age. Their services are often utilized by parents with discipline concerns. Their ability to address concerns that affect both the teachers and the parents is very relevant to all parties involved.

Alberta Mental Health (AMH) is an agency that is frequently consulted by educators. There is a need for more coordination of their services with the schools. Many students do not have access to a school counselor and many counselors are not trained to cope with the extreme cases that exist in the schools. AMH may be able to provide preventative programs in the schools that address general wellness of not only students, but families as well.

The police service is one of the fundamental agencies that should be included in the wellbeing of the community. They are able to provide programs on substance abuse, Block Parenting, violence prevention, security systems and other programs that are relevant to the current social climate. Many police departments have implemented the police officer liaison program that permits all the members of the community to befriend a law enforcement officer. Local citizens will be much more comfortable seeking legal advice from someone that they know. Students who may find themselves in difficult situation will be more trusting of the system if they have a friend on the force assist them. These liaison officers must be included in the social functions of the community in order to foster relationships.

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Immigration agencies that assist new Canadians can play a large role in accommodating the needs of immigrant families. They can assist the families with basic skills such as shopping and riding the transportation systems and they work well as a liaison between the school and the family. They are aware of the cultural differences that may create hardship for these new families. They provide encouragement for the families, enabling them to become lifelong learners in a new environment. If they acquire their Canadian citizenship, the celebrations should be held in the school setting where students and community members may celebrate with their neighbors. If emergencies arise and language is a barrier, school staff need to quickly contact the immigration services. They do work closely together to help new families cope. Recreational programs involving new and existing Canadians can help eliminate any prejudices that may exist as well as teach children to be tolerant of differences.

The local health authorities that deal with public health issues frequent the schools on a regular basis. Generally they offer programs on nutrition, single parenting classes, prenatal care, and sex education for adolescents. The focus is primarily related to community health issues. Many inner city schools have problems in the area of hygiene. Health care workers would be much more accessible if they had an office, with scheduled hours, in the school, where families could visit. Public health nurses should work within the schools to educate families in general wellness for all ages.

The senior population will have their needs met by the community agencies. They may require recreational, health, or general interest courses that will strengthen their ability to continue to contribute to society, rather than become a burden.

In the majority of Canadian communities there is a definite demand to offer programming to aboriginal families. These may be recreational or social programs. They may incorporate the services of many agencies in the vicinity. The needs of these people are often forgotten as they are not contemporary,

natives are struggling with ongoing difficulties that have existed for many years. If the community does not have organizations who directly work with those members of this group who are at risk, it is the responsibility of the community to invite them to participate in those programs offered by previously mentioned agencies.

One of the reasons for success in communities that offer programming in the school is the unthreatening atmosphere and the easy accessibility. Families who do not have their own transportation are able to participate without the stress and cost involved with public transportation.

The goals of community education, as well as those of Alberta Education are met in the associations that exist when interagency cooperation occurs.

Personal growth and responsible citizenship are encouraged. The impact of interagency cooperation occurring within a school setting is unmeasurable but the benefits to the entire community cannot be forgotten as the community members are empowered with a sense of community. Citizens of all ages are included in the process of wellness; physical, emotional, and educational.

Chapter 7: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ VOLUNTEERS

Community School supporters believe that all schools should be 100/100 schools. This means that they would cater to 100 percent of the population, 100 percent of the waking hours. Currently our schools are 20/20 schools, which means they service 20 percent of the population, 20 percent of the time. The benefits of community schools to each neighbourhood have very far reaching advantages as they promote community citizenship that leads to a global responsibility. Opening the doors of the school to volunteers is a win/win situation.

Volunteers find a new sense of self worth as they participate in activities of importance. As they work as a team member in the schools, they develop a sense of belonging and may overcome the isolationism that offer occurs in larger centres. The concepts of belonging and a sense of community, are nebulous states of mind, just as the a successful, thriving community school is nebulous in interpretation but not nebulous in observation.

The concept of networking goes beyond the coordination of the helping agencies. A fully functioning community school attempts to incorporate the community into the classroom as part of the curriculum. Localizing the curriculum does not allow teachers to stray from the prescribed curriculum as set out by Alberta Education, but it does make the curriculum relevant to the students. Guest speakers and appropriate field trips can be the culminating activities that enable the student to fully understand the relevance of their studies. This form of networking can only be accomplished after a reasonable time period has occurred in which a teacher has become acquainted with various curriculums in the school as well as being acquainted with the community beyond the classroom walls. For example, in a small city that is supported by the outlying rural areas, there is a need to involve some of the agriculturally oriented citizens into the social studies curriculum. If students are studying

recycling and waste management they should visit the city sites that deal with these issues at the local level. Many senior citizens are willing to visit classroom to discuss the historical segments of social studies such as the depression, pioneering, and the importance of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

Seniors should also be included in the school community in other capacities than just curriculum. Grandparenting programs that have existed in community schools have been positively received by both the grandparent and the children involved. These programs enable both parties to build friendships and support structures that they otherwise may not experience.

Changes in the family structure has made it difficult for many children to enjoy the companionship of an elder. Often grandparents live far away and regular contact is not feasible. Adopting a grandparent can foster a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both parties. The needs of community members are being addressed.

Community involvement includes the concept of using students as helpers outside of the classroom as they need to learn the foundations of responsible citizenship. Children do not learn the fundamental rules of society in the classroom, they need to experience life in the outside world as well. Students should be awarded the opportunity to volunteer in various capacities. In my view, opening doors for students has become the role of the teachers. For many of our students, they will not encounter opportunities for personal growth if we do not provide them. Teaching responsible citizenship is now the obligation of the teacher.

Community involvement not only refers to the student population as volunteers but also includes the use of adult volunteers in the schools. Many community school supporters believe that the use of adult volunteers in our schools today is so successful because of the planning and implementation that has occurred during community school development. They were the founders of the concept of 'opening the doors' to the community. Again, we have the two

way street, where both parties benefit from a mutual friendship.

Every year adults donate thousands of hours of their time to the needs of the school. The duties of parent/adult volunteers in the classroom are many. These are duties beyond the commitment to parent advisory councils, although many adults are active in both capacities.

School volunteers are active in the classroom, facilitating one on one learning as well as group work. They may have scheduled hours in the library, assisting with general clerical duties, and although confidentiality prevents them from assisting in the office with many of the duties, they are able to assist with photocopying and other non-confidential tasks.

Adult participation in the school setting has created a lot of empathy and respect for teachers. Volunteers become cognizant of the school and neighborhood climate and realize the needs of some of their community members. Communication channels are opened and a sense of family is established. A sense of family leads to tolerance for differences as well as respect for all the members of the unit. Community schools are the structure to foster these foundations.

The 'Community Kitchen' is a structure that is making a difference in many neighborhoods in North America. It enables a small group of parents from low income families to meet and learn skills that promote nutritious and economically feasible meal planning and cooking. This program is facilitated by the local health authorities, but the coordinator should be a volunteer in order to keep the cost of the program minimal. These programs have been well attended by many single moms or low income parents who often find their cupboards bare as the end of the month approaches. The community kitchen enables them access to frozen low cost meals as emergencies arise.

Nutrition programs are offered in many inner city schools. These are generally manned by volunteer labour. Their goal is to introduce healthy snacks to the students who may have more access to junk food, as well as to provide a

snack to students who may not have been given adequate breakfasts.

Breakfast programs have been implemented in many communities to meet the needs of students who leave home without proper nutrition. It has been recognized that students will not learn if their basic needs have not been met. Hungry students do not meet with success in the classroom. With limited funding, for supplies only, volunteers have been able to offer students a healthy breakfast before their academic day begins.

These nutrition programs cannot operate in a community if there is no facility available. In the construction of new school buildings there needs to be planning for large community kitchens. Volunteers who attempt to implement programs in inadequate accommodations will not meet with success if they are restricted by the facility.

Community kitchens, nutrition programs, and breakfast programs rely on volunteers for their success. If the planning hours are not donated, the programs will find their funding consumed by administrative costs. Addressing the needs of the community become the main goal of the volunteers in a community school.

Community involvement includes the term 'lifelong learning'. This concept focuses on the belief that we must not restrict our learning to our grade one to twelve and post-secondary experiences. Career changes and technology have increased the need for adults to continue their learning throughout their lives. Community schools can offer adults a facility to use for furthering their interests. Often these interests are academic, but they may be recreational.

Lifelong learning is not restricted by any definition of programming. It refers to the on-going study of interests. Although these interests often start as recreational or hobby related activities, the sense of community will evolve and foster growth on a more academic plane as community members bond. Volunteers from the community population provide most of the instruction for these programs. Therefore, there is no cost involved and operating from the

community, transportation does not restrict participation.

Schools can be used for settings for town hall meetings when the need arises in a community. They can provide the community hall facility that is often not available in many city communities. Community concerns, such as the need for pedestrian crossings, may be discussed and plans for action developed. Neighborhoods are made up of people from varying walks of life. The strengths of interested citizens provide a wealth of manpower for many neighborhoods. Volunteer organizations have the potential to be very strong lobby groups, meeting the needs of the community.

There are some parameters that must be established before volunteer programs will operate to the fullest potential. Honesty and trust between volunteers and the school personnel must exist. If either parties are participating with a hidden agenda, the potential of the partnership may be diminished. Job descriptions must be provided to ensure the parent/adult volunteer appreciates the importance of the assignment. Confidentiality of student information must also be included in orientation programs. Often a morning coffee session, held in the school year offers new and experienced volunteers a chance to network. Machine operations and the basic expectations of the volunteer program can be outlined at this time.

Acquiring willing volunteers is a first step to opening our doors to the community. Staff must never take their assistance lightly. There is a genuine need to remember protocol when acknowledging the contribution of volunteer labour. Often a thank you is suffice but some public recognition at an annual appreciation social is a guaranteed measure for honouring the volunteers commitment to community education.

A study conducted by the United States Department of Education in 1987/88 provided some interesting statistics related to volunteer involvement in public schools (Michael, 1990). In schools of less than 150 students, 60 percent reported that they average about seven volunteers per school. Larger schools,

with populations of more than 500 students, averaged thirty volunteers per school. The employment of volunteers is higher in the elementary schools, 75 percent in elementary, compared with 50 percent in the middle and secondary schools. Volunteer labour is not common in schools that cater to minority groups. This may be the result of a number of factors, minority students are often from low income families where there are two parents working. Often language may be a barrier and also low self esteem on the part of the family contribute to their limited contributions as volunteers. In the United States, 70 percent of the schools in the west used volunteers. This was the highest rate geographically. This could be due to the high socioeconomic areas that are situated in the west as well as the minimal rate of minorities. Family structure in some areas of the United States may be relevant in the correlations that exist in volunteer studies. Participation by volunteers was lower in the rural areas and highest in the suburban areas. The socioeconomic climate of the community appears to lay the foundation for the study on volunteers in the classroom.

Another study, conducted by the United States Department of Education in 1885, reveals some interesting facts related to the implementation of volunteers in schools (Michael, 1990). Collectively, the results showed that the volunteers in the elementary schools were most often immersed in instructional support (40 percent). Thirty percent were involved primarily as extra curricular support - field trips, clubs, athletics, etc. The remaining 30 percent were engaged in advisory roles, in clerical support, or in supervisory/guidance roles.

At the secondary level it was found that the majority of volunteers were involved in extracurricular activities. About 25 percent of the volunteers were working in an advisory capacity and about 12 percent were assisting with instructional programs.

These statistics are very dissimilar to those found in the elementary schools. Parent volunteers tend to go through an evolutionary process whereby they grow with their children and the duties they perform change as their children require

assistance in other areas of interest in the secondary school programs.

Volunteers may be any age and may come from all walks of life. Volunteering in community schools creates a swinging door picture in one's mind. Just as adult volunteers go into the schools, students must go into the community. It is a two way street working to all participants advantage. The ultimate goal being responsible citizenship. Introducing our students to the outside world enables them to experience life beyond the context of the school. Through networking with agencies, citizens, and community we are offering our students opportunities to experience the functioning, real world. We are enabling them to apply their understanding to the realities of society. Conversely, allowing adults into the sacred ground of the school is not easy. For educators from the old school of thought allowing the public into our domain is like an invasion of privacy. Those who have experience in community schools understand the rewards of the partnerships. The benefits to all parties are immeasurable and may only be evaluated by the family atmosphere that is fostered in a functioning community school.

A brochure, published by Volunteer Ontario (1996) provided the following definitions:

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will.

Volunteering is an extension of being a good neighbor. As people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others, houses are transformed into a community.

By caring and contributing to change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while gaining skills, self esteem, and changing their own lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbors and, in turn, enhance their own.

The benefits of encouraging volunteering is not only for the good of a school, a neighborhood, or a community, it is for the good of the country. It fosters the growth of strong citizenship.

Chapter 8: STAFFING IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Schools cannot become community schools by the interjection of additional funding or by changing the name on the boulevard sign. The hiring of community school personnel must depend on their knowledge of the community school philosophy and their willingness and ability to work cooperatively with coworkers as well as volunteers. Community school staff must be interviewed with a focus commitment to becoming actively involved in the community and school activities and their commitment to the fostering of the sense of community. Potential staff must be made aware of the extra hours required beyond their role as teacher. The extra time involved may be required to encourage volunteer participation, assisting with planning and participating in community events, and teaching or facilitating extra curricular programs to students and adults. It is my experience that these extra hours do not become a burden, rather they are an asset to the staff and their families, as they develop a family atmosphere and build support structures with their staff as well as in the overall community.

Alfred Adler (1910), a noteworthy psychoanalyst, emphasized human nature as being fundamentally social. We all have the yearning to belong. Staff must be willing to participate in the extra curricular activities of the school. Socializing with the families and community members who trust and value their relationships creates another example of community schools fostering a sense of self worth in the community.

Beyond the typical staffing in a school, additional staff must be employed to ensure the success of the programs. There must be a paid coordinator or facilitator to incorporate the community school goals and community education programs into our existing educational systems. There has been little success with the use of volunteer coordinators as they may not have the professional training or support of the school staff. Also, if they are volunteering, they may be

impermanent and their programs may not have continuity. The hired staff, as well as the volunteer component, work on a more professional level if they have a respect for a paid, knowledgeable leader.

The ideal framework is to employ teachers in the position of coordinator. I believe that the coordinator's position should be rotated throughout the staff, implemented on a two year placement. The arguments for placing a teacher in this position is that they will become aware of what services are available in the community and networking will occur on a personal basis with themselves as well as other staff members. Another very crucial reason for filling this position with a teacher, is that teachers usually have the respect and trust of the community. Their familiarity to the curriculum enables them to mesh school and community resources. They are familiar with the needs of the populace in a given area and understand some of the cultural, socioeconomic, and basic values of the community.

Community school personnel are responsible for the coordination of the helping agencies in the schools. Teachers typically identify problems that exist with individuals but generally only treat the symptoms (Berridge, 1973). A community school coordinator will pair up the needs of the student/teacher to the appropriate outside agency. A teacher in the community school coordinator's position, with their expertise in education, is able to link appropriate strategies from the community to treat the cause of a classroom problem, not just the symptoms that are often treated in our school settings. It is imperative that teachers have a liaison in the school building who can be readily available for guidance.

Teacher's in this position are often consulted for counseling and guidance advice. Families 'at risk' as well as children 'at risk' will have access to a professional who can assist them or refer them to the appropriate community agencies for assistance. Working with the assistance of outside agencies, schools will be able to address the needs of the families beyond academic

concerns and growth.

A knowledgeable community school coordinator who is familiar with the community will experience greater success in working with agencies as well as enhancing the curriculum by introducing community resources into the classrooms and ensuring curriculum development is localized. They can add an important slice to the curricular pie by including the human and physical resources available in the area.

Scheduling can be an ordeal for the coordinator. Often, once the school is made available to the community, it is difficult to cope with the great number of user groups who would like access. Coordinators generally have difficulty in denying groups and accommodating them becomes quite labourious. Their commitment to the school community and the desire to meet their requests is very stressful.

Coordinators tend to be 'yes' people and they will bend over backwards so as not to deny their community assistance in facilitating their programming. Fulfilling the requests of the user groups is required to meet the needs of the participants. The overall feeling of community produced in this amiable working situation is an outcome that cannot be measured in dollars. Allowing all citizens access to the school promotes responsible citizenship and builds a comradery and empathy within a community.

Community school coordinators may become active members of helping associations that exist in the city, rural jurisdictions, or larger divisional areas. This enables them to be in touch with those programs locally available to their community as well as with what is occurring in a more global scope. They become a voice for their community - one that is often consulted by community agencies attempting to address the needs of each community. Often networking and the sharing of programs becomes easier when there is committee support within an area. The duplication of programs does not occur as there may be some pairing of neighborhood communities.

Gayfer (1976) defines the role of a coordinator as someone whose role in the community is to help people learn how to help themselves. As a facilitator this position involves attending many meetings to determine which agencies would like to participate in school programming. In this capacity, they are facilitating interagency cooperation. Community meetings are allow the coordinator assess needs. The needs of the community must include the needs of preschool children, seniors, teens, working parents, stay at home moms, single moms, and immigrant groups. The needs of these special interest groups will fluctuate requiring reassessment. In the nineteen eighties, most of our immigrant population was of Vietnamese origin. Today, most of the new immigrants in our school are from the Bosnian area. Their needs are certainly different than those of the Vietnamese families.

Coordinators, with school board cooperation, must develop fee schedules for user groups. This schedule is usually quite varied as often is there is no charge for educational and recreational groups or non-profit community events. Minimal caretaking fees are charged for social events and rental fees are only charged to commercial ventures.

During the creation of new community schools coordinators may lead the development of mission statements and mottos. As a liaison between the educative community and the school community the coordinators role is also to encourage lifelong learning and determine what level of learning is currently required such as parenting classes, hobby classes or home security information nights.

Other tasks that may be included in the job description of the coordinator are: community newsletter editor, establishing newsletter and information distribution, attending district coordinator meetings, facilitating the before and after school care supervision programs, organizing further education classes that promote lifelong learning, and participating as an active member of a Community Education Association.

The coordinator really does become an active member of the school and community. They can have an impact on so many facets of people's lives. No two coordinators will have the same responsibilities or the same commitment to the community. These will depend on the community environment, the school environment and the dedication and personality of the coordinator.

Support staff are required to keep a community school running smoothly. Their commitment to the people they serve will not be fully developed if they do not live by the ideals of the community school philosophy. Clerical staff must be able to work under the pressure of deadlines and with constant interruptions by volunteers. The evening custodian becomes a facilitator for evening user groups. They must be prepared for emergency situations that require additional audio-visual aids or room changes to accommodate unexpected attendance figures.

The success of a community school depends on the level of support and commitment by the personnel. The coordinator must be multi-talented, interested in many facets of life and excited about lifelong learning. Trust and friendship provide a foundation for growth. Cooperation and collaborative practices among teachers ensures the growth of the educative community. Cooperation and collaborative practices among the teachers, volunteers and outside agencies ensure the growth of the community. Gayer (1976) alludes to the commitment of educators in the following statement:

We should try to see the school as a humane place so that it can think and live beyond the building. Every educator has to be aware of the aspirations and aims of the community - because you can't separate the school and the community (p. 42).

Chapter 9: PROVINCIAL CHANGES TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

In 1994, the same year the axe came down on community school funding in Alberta, the Government of Alberta appointed a Commissioner of Services for Children. In a precis distributed to Albertans in 1996, this new department stated their mandate, “to design a new, integrated, more effective and community based system of support for children and their families”. This mandate was very disturbing to the community school supporters in Alberta. The funding to community schools had been eliminated and was earmarked for another department that had the same goals. Representatives from the office of the commissioner circulated throughout the province to gather opinions from Albertans about the changes that should occur.

Their findings were:

- people need to be able to find help**
- parents and youth don't want to be labelled**
- we need to take a “child in the family” approach**
- we need more prevention and early intervention services**
- we need to integrate services**
- leadership and responsibility should be returned to the community**
- existing Aboriginal agreements and treaty rights must be recognized**
- programs should be funded only if they are successful**
- communities need stable and flexible funding for services**

Most of these suggestions fit into the mandate of community schools. The integration of services, community responsibility, assisting people in finding help, and the need for more prevention and early intervention services are fundamental elements of the community school philosophy.

In the fall of 1994, a new plan was announced that would change the approach of meeting the needs of children in Alberta. The boundaries of the existing Regional Health Authorities would serve as the same boundaries for the

new created Child and Family Service Authorities. Each region must establish a Regional Steering Committee and a Regional Authority to coordinate and implement the new system. In 1996, this new strategy was renamed the Children and Families Services Initiative.

The main areas of focus are community delivery, early intervention, aboriginal services and integrated services. One reason, reported by the Commissioner, in support of the restructuring, was the understanding that communities could best understand the needs of its people.

Community delivery moves the responsibility from the government to the community. Over a three year period communities are to assume the role of planning, integrating and monitoring the services offered to children and their families. The early intervention programs are to assist 'at-risk' families. The community is to be responsible providing the necessary programs to avoid crisis situations. The precis also states that families and communities must help and support each other to ensure children and youth remain safe and healthy. The document also states that programs for the Aboriginal people of Alberta must be culturally sensitive and there must be a close working bond between the community and the Regional Steering Committee. It was recognized that 50 percent of the children identified under the auspices of Child Welfare were Aboriginal and the Commissioner supported the belief that the Aboriginal communities could best be served by people who are sensitive to their needs and culture. The integration of services was included to ensure that the diversity of needs would be acknowledged and it was also hoped that integration would lead to easier availability and sensitivity of the needs of the people as well as lead to collaborative goal setting.

During the period of information gathering, citizens shared their hope for their fellow Albertans. The precis (1996) listed the following hopes:

- all children are safe, well-nourished and live in a stable environment which stimulates their learning, and promotes personal development**

- **services for children and families are effective, efficient, community-based and community-managed. Services recognize, respect, and honour people's culture and values;**
- **communities, friends and neighbors help and support each other, and work together to find solutions to their problems (p. 4).**

The basic principles, included in the precis, to be incorporated into the planning are:

- **the safety and healthy development of children as priority;**
- **parents and their extended families have the primary responsibility for their children;**
- **focus on the child's needs and the ability of the family and community to meet those needs within the family and community;**
- **success is measured by positive outcomes;**
- **services are community-based and integrated to remove barriers in meeting children's needs;**
- **people who use children's services will be involved in all decisions that affect their lives (p. 4).**

A three step planning process was implemented to start the wheels in motion. This included a needs assessment for each community and coordination of services within and between regions. At this point, the information is transferred to the Child and Family Services Authorities so they may facilitate programming through training, budgeting contracting, evaluating, and seeking community input.

The Government of Alberta has mandated the regional authorities to ensure that the interests of children, women, and other individuals who are included under their umbrella be acknowledged. They stress the need to service people in the confines of their community whenever possible and to include the family as a support structure. They also must identify the needs of the family in difficult circumstances.

The area of concern that most interests community school supporters is the integration of services. Although the regulations do stress the need for coordination of services, they do not mention the school in this document. They have neglected to involve the school in the identification of children and families who could use a support structure or intervention program and they have neglected to recognize teachers as professionals who should be included in the design and implementation of the programs.

In July of 1996, the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families distributed another document. This paper, *New Ideas and Approaches*, contains a bibliography of resources related to integration of services. The majority of the resources cited are community centres, operating within a community school. These are American models for creating a one stop service centre with integrated services. The Chicago Newstart Program is a community based program focussing on the needs of adolescents. They are attempting to create 'full-service' schools in the Chicago area but are looking to private funding to accomplish their goal. They also have a group of five schools that are working with families 'at-risk', providing group programs and networking in a program entitled, Families and Schools Together. They offer programs in conflict management, life skills and self esteem.

In only four years we have come full circle and now the provincial government is encouraging community schools/community education, albeit, under a new name.

The Alberta Teacher's Association sponsored a workshop in Edmonton in the fall of 1996. The name of this workshop was Under One Umbrella. The main topic was, Integrating Health, Social, Justice and Educational Services in Schools. The sub-heading for this conference was "Learn how to deliver children's services at the school site" (Appendix E).

The document that was the basis for discussion at this workshop was entitled, *New Beginnings*. It outlines a joint venture operating in San Diego

County where a community based collaborative approach to integration is being implemented. The school district is a member of this collaborative group as well as other agencies or organizations in the county, who have a vested interest in the well being of the community, such as colleges, universities, parents, housing commissions, hospitals, etc. One of their key principles is that services must be accessible and responsive to the needs of families, not the convenience of agencies and their staff. These San Diego educators realized that a fragmented system was not fiscally sound and was inefficient in terms of energy, resources and time.

The Minister of Education, the Honorable Gary Mar, attended this conference and supported the concept of interagency connections. The following paragraphs are from the *New Beginnings* document (1996):

The multi service center is designed to provide accessible, integrated prevention and early intervention services to families in the school service area. Staff members come from existing partner agencies to work in new roles in the New Beginnings Center; they form interdisciplinary teams to help meet the multiple needs of family and children.

Services provided at the center include: information and referral; parenting and adult education classes, workshops and counseling; and case management, family advocacy and service planning to meet the multiple needs of families. The center also provides basic health care including immunization, Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) exams and minor treatment, as well as mental health services for children. There is also a community leadership development component to develop the capacity of the community itself to deal with issues such as safety and quality of life.

If the provincial government is supporting such a model and is advocating Alberta's helping agencies and educational systems to implement such a model, are we not going back to where we have just been. Have we completed a full circle in less than three years? I realize that trends are like pendulums, but this is a very fast swing.

In my conversations with the minister (March, 1997), Mar confirmed that he is unaware of community schools and their purpose. I do not criticize Mar for that,

however, I do wish to criticize the provincial government for their heavy handed restructuring style and their obvious lack of previous knowledge with regard to what they have been supporting, in the province, over the past twenty years.

New Beginnings had placed a social worker at the school site to accommodate the needs of families. They also are attempting to create a collaborative environment to provide training for agency and school staff to work within communities and design programs through integrated services. Their primary goal is to branch out into the communities involved and encourage school linked and school based integrated services. Four areas were identified as reasons school should be included in this venture: durability and stability of schools, community based, schools can't address children's issues alone, and contact with families and children.

Mar, a guest at the conference, spoke highly of a concept that could accomplish interagency cooperation (Appendix F). Interagency cooperation is a declared goal in the community school brochure, *Beyond the Classroom Walls*. From the late 1970's to 1994, the provincial government had been funding community schools in Alberta. Now, they are excited about their new focus for children. Community school supporters believe they were meeting the needs of Alberta's children and families but the current political leaders of education in Alberta do not know what community schools are or that they were funding them. The Community Education Association of Alberta is dismayed at this lack of responsibility demonstrated by our governing powers.

Are these *New Beginnings* or *Old Beginnings*? John D. Bracco School in Edmonton is utilizing the services of a social worker to frequent their facility. This was done to remove the 'stigma' attached to visiting a social worker in a more clinical environment. Community and Family Services also provide family counseling in the school. They have stated that the first contact can more easily be made at the school in what is often perceived to be a less threatening environment.

The Alberta Teacher's Association (A.T.A.) is working to relieve the stressful situations that exist in schools today (Appendix G). Dryfoos (1994) estimated that one in three students arrives at school with social, emotional, and health problems that place them at-risk of failure. Teachers must address these issues before they can teach. The A.T.A. is a liaison between the teachers and the government to encourage interagency support and encourage agency placement in the school to allow the school to operate as a 'full service center'.

Chapter 10: EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN

The Department of Children's Services, has been allocated \$55 million, annually, to establish early intervention programs to those children who have been identified as 'at risk'. The funding that was previously allocated to community schools through the Department of Education is now being channelled through Children's Services to various interest groups who have made application for early intervention funding. The bulk of the funds, as previously stated, is directed to aboriginal peoples.

In 1983, the University of Alberta conducted a study of schools in northern Alberta and found that issues pertaining to the natives in that area were similar to those of blacks in the United States. It was recognized that if the parents were included in the educational process, then it would be easier to understanding and teach the native children . E.J. Ingram and R.G. McIntosh (1983) outlined the similarities in the university study that found many of their problems seem similar -- alienation of youth, irrelevance of organized learning and cultural difference. Perhaps there are things to be learned from the United States experience. (p. 24)

Despite studies that have been conducted, such as this one cited, the Alberta government does not heed the advice or follow the recommendations of their committees. Community schools can offer a strong educational organization to communities at risk.

These programs, and the philosophy behind their existence, are a reinvention of the wheel. Community Schools had been operating programs with community agencies to do exactly what has been proposed by children's services. In the proposals, submitted by Albertans, there have been many suggestions for programming on how best to spend these dollars. Many of the proposals are replicas of programs that were previously offered in community schools.

Educators believe that the school is the best place to reach the children who may require assistance due to circumstances in their environment or their

lifestyles that make them potentially or currently 'at risk'. The trust relationships between the school and the families already have a strong foundation. Some children may have more trust and respect for their teachers than they do for their family, especially if they are in negative environments. Adults and families have developed a trust and bond through previous contact between the professionals in the educative community and the community members. The schools are the setting to identify clients for special programs, whether they be early intervention programs dealing with current issues, programs focussing on a particular user group, or general interest courses such as parenting skills.

The schools must be the medium through which the distribution of programs is channelled. If the Department of Children's Services sincerely wants to reach a specified clientele, they need to work closely with the schools to ensure they are creating the safety nets for the target audience. Preventative measures must be put in place to protect children. Educators have the knowledge to put in place the safety nets to keep children from falling into the valley bottom.

Children and families 'at risk' would best be identified and served from within the school, a facility that is familiar to them, a facility that is not intimidating. The money should come directly to the school and filter out to the community agencies.

The schools have the trust and know the climate of the community. It is senseless to access the money, then determine the clientele, then contact the school. The school is the hub of the community and the central location for recruiting children 'at risk', and agencies should circulate from that central hub like spokes in a wheel.

Chapter 11: ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS/INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

The philosophy behind the 'little red schoolhouse' is alive and well. Schools belong to the taxpayers and they have a right to use the buildings for whatever purpose meets the needs of the community. All community members should be invited to have input into the management of the community and the school. We are living in a world where responsibility for others and the environment has become a major obligation for all citizens. It is time to encourage our governments to support a form of education that looks to the future. There is no dollar value that can be placed on the desirable educational outcomes that we must try to generate in our students.

I am confident that the Alberta government will reinstate funding for community schools. They have demonstrated their belief in interagency cooperation and appear to be slowly accepting the benefits of working through the schools. Interagency cooperation under the umbrella of Social Services is a duplication of the community school programs that existed prior to the cutbacks that eliminated community school funding. As our elected officials become aware of the trends in education that are sweeping across North America, again, I believe they will readily adopt some of the excellent programs previously implemented by community schools to meet the needs of communities.

Students graduating from high school today are facing very adverse job/career opportunities. It is predicted that the average North American will have to change careers five to seven times during their lifetime. Through the use of computers and technology, the information age is exposing students to more information in one year than their parents were exposed to in a lifetime. It has also been calculated that ninety percent of the knowledge that will be required in the year 2000 has not been discovered. These facts clearly support the concept of lifelong learning and the need for individuals to develop the skills to continue their pursuit of knowledge, independent of their teachers. The 'wish list' of

businesses who are hiring our graduates includes collegiality, cooperation and flexibility as characteristics they are looking for. We need to produce graduates who are lifelong learners and who are responsible members of an organization, committed to team effort and shared leadership. A progressive education model will help meet this end.

Adult education classes have been removed at the neighbourhood level. Parents have been mandated to take on a more responsible role on parent council. The government has taken away a successful parent and school bond and forcefully pushed on new responsibilities. The Roles and Responsibilities Discussion Paper outlined a wish list from the government level. 'Partnerships in education' and 'interagency cooperation' were the new buzz words in the educational circles. People who were aware of the community school mandate realized that what the province was looking for was what they had just eliminated.

Lifelong learning is a key term used by community educators. The age of technology and the expectation that career changes will be the norm rather than the exception in the future, makes the term lifelong learning even more vital for our students. They need to understand that learning does not terminate with a diploma or even a degree. The potential for multi-degreed persons exists.

Our society is troubled and we need to make a lot of changes to promote a healthy environment. The benefits of community schools and progressive education could have a great effect on our future. It enables children to utilize their natural curiosity and value toward a common end.

We need to make some extensive changes to our educational system. The community school philosophy was on the way to making a difference. The provincial government has eliminated funding and is promoting some of the ideals without financial support. Under the present system, many Albertans will not receive the help they need, as teachers will not be consulted regarding intervention. We will not have an avenue for interagency collaboration. Schools

will again become 'just' educational institutions, closing their doors to the community and losing the opportunity to be a link to the entire community.

The use of community liaison workers is not going to answer the problem of incorporating outside agencies into the schools. 'Makeshift' coordinators are funded in a joint project with city, social services and education dollars. The community liaison workers are having difficulty in obtaining access into the homes of the neighborhood families. They are strangers to the families and it is the teachers and counsellors who have spent years building bridges and trust, especially with the aboriginal and ESL families. This situation is unfair to these workers and the community children and families. They have been placed in some unaccepting environments. Community liaison workers do not have the training or expertise to work closely in a school/family environment. They are not professionals and the need for confidentiality can become a serious issue. These are pseudo cost cutting ventures - moving city departments' staff from such areas as day care, into the schools.

Minzey and Le Tarte (1994), the "how-to" gurus of community education believe that we need to redefine the role of the traditional school and traditional education as we know them. Their arguments are:

- There is still a great need for major change in education, not just in rearranging the current program but in restructuring the very nature of schools and actually redefining and altering the current paradigm we call public education
- The concepts of community education offer an excellent option for restructuring the schools in a way that will be needed in the twenty-first century.
- Much of what the futurists are suggesting for changing the public schools is based on community education principles developed fifty years ago
- Many of the programs begun by community educators are now integrated into the regular school program - latch key, pre-school, community use of buildings, involvement of the community in school programs, adult education programs, community councils, parenting programs, home-school counselors, extended school days (days, hours, weeks) and use of the schools by social agencies (p. xiii).

Albertans do not have to go far to see a working example of a famous community school. Steve Ramsacker, principal of Alex Taylor Elementary School in Edmonton, is famous for his 'hugging' initiative. Each morning he greets his students and staff with a hug. He instituted this practice to show his students that they were all accepted at his school regardless of race, religion or social status. The end of the community school extra government funding did not put an end to the hugs at Alex Taylor, but it will place a strain on the services offered to children and families in need, extra-curricular programs and meal programs that were in place. Alex Taylor will operate as a school family without the resources for the parents to participate in the support programs that allowed them to grow and experience new learning opportunities. Interagency cooperation becomes harder to organize as there is insufficient staff to coordinate the affiliations. If Ramsacker chooses to access funds from the Department of Children's Services it would involve writing proposals and a lot of his valuable time would be taken from his administrative position.

We have come full circle and perhaps the future holds some hope for community schools in Alberta. Regardless of the funding guidelines, there must be interventions put in place to create safeguards to help our families on their journeys. It is the responsibility of all Albertans to work toward providing a caring environment where we do not allow each other to fall over the edge and plummet to the valley bottom. We must provide interventions that enable families to remain on the road to reach the top of the mountain.

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APPENDIX A

SOUTHVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOL HUNT FOR SUCCESS

Southview Community School is a very special place!

In 1981, Southview became a designated community school. Since that time, we have been committed to the principles that support the community school philosophy. Our motto "everyone a learner, everyone a teacher" has been the focus and foundation for the education of our students and the community members.

We are proud to have piloted many projects that have been adopted by other schools in our district.

Our community population is very diverse. We have been able to assist our community members with personal growth as we have always included them in the programs at our school. Community members, in return, have assisted out staff in many ways. We are proud of our volunteer component within our institution. During the 1993-1994 school year volunteers logged over 5000 hours of their time working for our students. Our volunteer registry included over 250 committed helpers.

Southview Community School students received help from volunteers in many ways. Direct help in the classroom in various programs is an on-going process. Parents and helpers enable students to receive valuable one-on-one instruction. They are able to listen to students read, assist students with individual problems, contribute to bulletin board displays, tutor in computer classes, build friendships with students who need a good listener, prepare hot lunches, and generally help foster the caring and sharing environment of our school.

Southview Community School has enlisted volunteers to teach after school course to our students. These courses provide a special opportunity for children to learn crafts and skills that would otherwise not be available to them.

As a community school, Southview, in the past was able to offer many further education courses to our adult population. These courses focused on life skills, employment skills, home-making skills and recreational activities. Unfortunately, the removal of community school funding has forced us to down-scale this operation for the time being. We feel there is a real need for these courses in our community as we have a high number of English-as-a-second-language parents and low income families. They are able to enroll in classes in an institution that they are familiar with and they do not feel intimidated by large class numbers.

We presently offer space to community groups so that they are able to meet in their neighborhood, at a very minimal charge. Our after school hour user groups include support groups for Arthritis, Attention Deficit Disorder, Parents in Crisis, Medicine Hat Association for People with Disabilities, and single moms, floor hockey for six adult groups, and youth organizations, such as Cubs, Scouts, Beavers, Brownies, Optimists Basketball and the Girl's Softball Association. Various groups meet weekly to provide quality facilities for their members, i.e. Saamis Metis Association, Saamis Immigration, the Women's Shelter child program, Salem Memorial United Church, and the Medicine Hat Speed Skating Club. Tai Chi and line dancing classes are held two evenings per week in our school. We also have many occasional groups such as the Medicine Hat Christian Counseling group that enjoy the use of our rooms. Southview is happy to provide an excellent facility for these groups. Our school is certainly being utilized for the major portion of every day.

In May of 1994, we opened our expansion, Henderson Community Wing. This facility was built primarily through private funds from the Muttart Foundation, the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch No. 17, the Wildrose Foundation, and grant from C.F.E.P. Our school district also provided funding for a lunch room and two required classrooms. Southview Community School has become a model community center and despite the cut in funding, we have been able to maintain some manpower that allows us to continue to serve not only our students, but the community as a whole. We are committed to the 'one-room schoolhouse' approach and recognize the need for total participation in order for a community to be strong. Our students continue to grow as model citizens because of the opportunities we have provided for them.

APPENDIX B

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, CONTACT:

Dr. Brian Staples
Alberta Interdepartmental Community School Committee
10053 - 111 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2H8
Telephone: 427-2037

FOR USE OF THE FILM "BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS," PLEASE CONTACT:

The Community Education Association of Alberta
Box 1277
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2M8

or

Professional Resources Library
4th Floor
Devonian Building W.
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L2
Telephone: 427 2945

"BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS" IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON VIDEO TAPE. FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

ACCESS
Media Resource Centre
1611 - 29 Street, N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 4J8
Telephone: 283-8241

 **ACCESS**
Alberta Educational Communications Corporation

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CONCEPT IS VIEWED AS PART OF A LARGER CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION.

Community Education - is a process in which people within communities utilize educational, democratic and sound research methods for both individual and community betterment. By design, the community education process ideally exhibits all of the following characteristics.

- 1. Interagency Cooperation**
There is an effective and systematic community/interagency cooperative relationship and interagency commitment to the use of the community education process.
- 2. Citizen Involvement**
Strong emphasis is placed on facilitating informed citizen involvement in local needs identification, decision making, problem solving, and program implementation.
- 3. Use of what is there**
Priority is placed on full utilization of existing local human and physical resources as a basis for considered community action in the common interest.
- 4. Community School a Part**
The community school and other community agencies and resources are viewed as integral parts of a total community education system.
- 5. Volunteerism**
Emphasis is placed on encouraging community self-help, volunteerism, community initiative and self-renewal through the process of community education.
- 6. Local Leadership**
An important aspect is the development of opportunities and training so local lay and professional people can assume community leadership roles.
- 7. Lifelong Education**
There is an offering of supplementary and alternative educational opportunities for community members, regardless of age, to extend their skills and interests and to bring about community improvements. Education is viewed as a lifelong process. All positive forms of education are considered potentially useful in this regard, including the use of technology and the mass media.
- 8. Sense of Community**
An important underlying goal in the above considerations is the fostering of a sense of community.

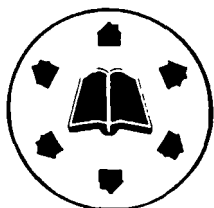


Beyond the Classroom Walls

Community Schools in Alberta

A COMMUNITY SCHOOL is consciously oriented to the community it serves. With the sanction of the School Board in co-operation with other local authorities and community members, there is formal commitment to use the educational process for both individual and community betterment.

By design, a community school ideally exhibits these kinds of characteristics:



1. COMMUNITY RELATED CURRICULUM

Basic education is enhanced by relating the curriculum to real life situations in the community. Students go into the community to use available facilities and resources, and to provide service while they learn. In turn, community resources are brought into the school. Intense study of the local community becomes the basis for study of life in other communities and the world.

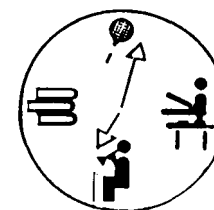


4. EVERYONE A TEACHER

The faculty includes teachers, working in co-operation with each other, and community adults and students.

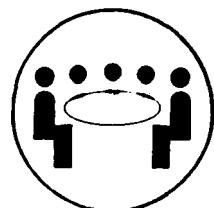
5. EVERYONE A LEARNER

Although the education of the young is the priority, all members of the community are potential students, including pre-schoolers and adults of all ages. Educational activities involving people of all ages are encouraged.



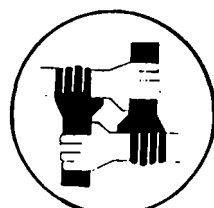
8. COMMUNITY USE

The school facility is available for community educational, recreational, cultural and social use on an extended time basis daily and yearly. Community activities might be scheduled at any time during each operational day.



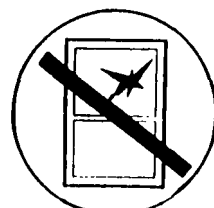
2. INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

There is an effective involvement of parents and other community members in helping to develop the curriculum of the school and in helping teachers through appropriate voluntary service.



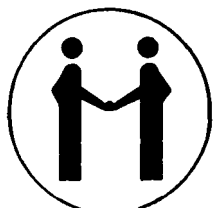
6. INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION

The school regards itself as an integral part of a total community education system. The school co-operates with other community organizations and agencies to provide comprehensive educational, recreational, cultural and social services to people in the school attendance area.



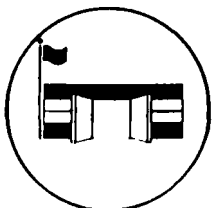
9. COMMUNITY ISSUES

The school, by policy, encourages a study of problems and issues of significance to the community, often in co-operation with other agencies and organizations in the community.



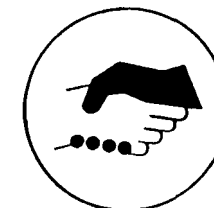
3. COLLEGIALITY

A democratic, collegial philosophy is encouraged by the School Board and principal teacher in the administration of the school. Parents and other interested community people are regarded as allies.



7. FACILITY ADAPTATION

School facilities may be designed or modified with effective teacher and community involvement so that, ideally, the entire structure is designed to facilitate community use as well as to accommodate community education activities.



10. SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The school has a vital stated goal, which is to foster a sense of community. It assumes it is important that the people who live in its attendance area know and care about each other.

APPENDIX C

PREMIER'S CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS

2. Schools

- ☐ Schools welcome families and community members
- ☐ Schools plan events that include all family members
- ☐ Schools are responsive to different family types and structures and sensitive to their needs
- ☐ Schools are accessible to the community that they serve
- ☐ Outreach support for children in need and their families is facilitated/arranged by the school
- ☐ Public participation is initiated on decisions that affect families
- ☐ Schools have effective, functioning parent advisory committees
- ☐ Before and after school child care is available at or near the school with busing arrangements where required
- ☐ The curriculum is sensitive to community values and standards
- ☐ Schools are designed to meet the needs of children and their families (cafeteria, playgrounds, recreation areas, etc.)
- ☐ School facilities are made available for after hour use
- ☐ Staff are friendly when meeting the public
- ☐ Parent/teacher meetings are arranged to reflect parents' work schedules
- ☐ Business and schools work together in partnerships to encourage career exploration, job training, and skill development
- ☐
- ☐

Based on a consideration of all these factors,
how does your community rate? (circle one)

Excellent		Good		Needs Improvement	
5	4	3	2	1	0

APPENDIX D

'COMMUNITY' SCHOOL WINS GRANT

'Community' school wins grant

STEPHEN MEYER
Of The News

A new wing will be built at Southview School to help turn the school into a community centre, thanks in part to a grant from an Edmonton foundation.

The Muttart Foundation has offered public school trustees a grant of up to \$150,000 for the building of a new community wing at the school.

Executive director Bob Wyatt says the grant is the largest ever given to a school district by the foundation.

"In our view Southview is an exceptional school where the community is taking an active role in deciding what programs the school should offer," says Wyatt.

The school's neighborhood is unique in having many newcomers to Medicine Hat, even to Canada, he adds.

"Southview, we came to learn, was a special kind of community."

The province has approved the addition of two classrooms and storage areas to Southview School in 1993.

The school also pursued the idea of adding a wing devoted to community programs and functions, applying to the Muttart Foundation for assistance in 1992.

Southview School is the only community school in Medicine Hat, and principal Larry Henderson says staff try to involve parents in every aspect of the school.

'... Southview is an exceptional school ...'
— Wyatt

The school encourages guest speakers, field trips, and hosts English as a Second Language courses.

"It is based on the principle that everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher," he says.

The idea of community involvement ranges from parent volunteers in the classroom to a seniors reading program, says parent council chairman Gail Gagle.

She adds the new wing should allow the school to expand its English language classes.

"We were limited in the space we could provide," she says. "This means a lot to us."

Buoyed by the foundation's announcement and a \$20,000 donation from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 17, the district plans to add the community wing to the school at the same time as the addition.

The preliminary estimate for the new wing is \$250,000 — the Muttart grant is

conditional on the board raising the other \$100,000 and must agree to operate the new area as a community wing for 15 years.

At its meeting Monday the board approved an agreement with the foundation to assist in financing the new wing.

"We're very pleased. That's more than we ever expected," says Henderson.

The wing will contain one large room with a divider, plus a couple of small meeting rooms and a kitchen, he says.

"It will be like a community centre," he adds. "It will be used for meetings and as a drop-in centre for seniors and, hopefully, teens as well."

With the Legion's \$20,000 donation, the school is hoping to raise the other \$80,000 from other foundations and service clubs.

The Muttart Foundation — named after an Edmonton couple — was started in 1953 to handle donations coming through their businesses.

The Muttarts died within months of each other in 1969-70 leaving a large portion of their estate to the foundation, says Wyatt.

The organization has distributed about \$16 million in grants in Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Territories, and is using income generated from the original endowment, adds Wyatt.

APPENDIX E

UNDER ONE UMBRELLA- CONFERENCE



**Under the Umbrella:
Integrating Health, Social, Justice
and Educational Services in Schools**

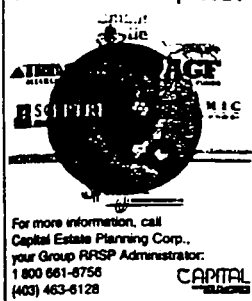
November 1 (evening) - 2, 1996

Barnett House
Edmonton, Alberta

SPONSORED BY THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION,
ALBERTA EDUCATION, THE ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION AND THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE
ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, ALBERTA
JUSTICE AND THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

APPENDIX F

MINISTER SUPPORTS INTERAGENCY COOPERATION



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Capital Estate Planning Corp.,
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The ATANews

Publication of The Alberta Teachers' Association

Special
Pullout:

ATA's
Discipline
process
explained



Mackay, Mar promote integration of children's services in schools

Shelley Russell

Alberta took what ATA President Bauni Mackay calls its "first baby step" toward integrating children's services in schools when 150 teachers, parents, trustees, nurses, social workers, police officers and other professionals converged at Barnett House November 1 and 2 for Under the Umbrella.

The aim of the conference was to spotlight children, share information with teachers and other professionals, motivate them to become involved in the redesign of children's services and enable them to develop a vision of the integration of health, social, justice and educational services in schools.

In her opening remarks, Mackay identified *Trying to Teach* as the impetus behind the conference. Through the 1992 report, teachers shared their stories about trying to meet the needs of all their students and expressed their sadness and frustration at being unable to do so. Their passionate pleas for help went largely unheeded, Mackay said.

"Teachers want to teach: that's what they are educated to do; that's what they are hired to do. However, a child who is hungry or abused or neglected physically or emotionally or frightened and confused by his family's situation cannot learn. Nor can any caring adult ignore that child's plight."

As a result, teachers find themselves spending more and more time trying to meet their students' basic needs and less and less time teaching, Mackay said, and the situation shows no signs of improving.

"The unmet needs of children are not likely to decline in the foreseeable future, but teachers cannot continue to play the role they have been playing and



"These umbrellas are the educational, health, justice and social services provided to children in a place which for some of them is the happiest and safest they know."

—ATA President Bauni Mackay

still provide the high quality of public education that the people of this province enjoy. Nor can the declining dollars available in school budgets continue to be stretched far enough to meet all of the needs of the children in our schools."

Integrating children's services in schools is one way to deal with what is rapidly becoming a quiet crisis, Mackay said. All professionals must work together to meet students' needs, and dollars must be shared.

Education Minister Gary Mar agreed teachers should be freed to teach. "As caring as they are, teachers are not cops, they are not social workers and they are not surrogate parents," he said.

"Education cannot, must not and should not do it alone."

Mar stressed that Alberta Education's mission is the best education for all Alberta students. "My department supports that mission with high standards, quality curriculum, achievement testing, teacher support and technology. We support it by involving parents, business and the community like never before. The question is what is the problem."

"The fact is the best curriculum and the newest computers are not enough if a child comes to school hungry, cold, tired or depressed. When we talk about core programs, nothing in my view is more core to learning than a full stomach. When we talk about motivation, nothing is more motivating than feeling cared for. We need our students to stretch their minds, and to do this, sometimes we need to help them untangle the knots."

Mar acknowledged increasing numbers of students enter school with complex needs and require more than the regular curriculum can offer them. "It takes all the ribs of the frame of an umbrella to give adequate protection. If any part of that support frame is broken or missing, the umbrella is useless.

Likewise, children's services will only work ... if we all coordinate our efforts."

Mar said the government has recognized children's services as a priority by appointing a minister responsible for children's services and a commissioner of services for children and families. Alberta Education works closely with the minister, the commissioner and other government departments in the redesign of children's services, he said. Thirty-three educators sit on regional steering committees, and another 467 educators are involved in community

focus groups.

He said his department is also working to improve the coordination of services for special-needs children, the third goal of its three-year business plan. To that end, it has launched a series entitled Promising Practices in Service Coordination, which profiles school-based initiatives.

Mackay acknowledged that integrated services already exist in some Alberta schools. "Our hope is that this conference will result in many more umbrellas being raised all over the province to give children shelter from those things that cause them fear or sadness or pain. These umbrellas are the educational, health, justice and social services provided to children in a place which for some of them is the happiest and safest they know."

Under the Umbrella was sponsored by the ATA, Alberta Education, the Alberta School Boards Association and the Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, with support from the Alberta Association of Social Workers, Alberta Justice and the John Howard Society of Alberta.



ATA President Bauni Mackay (left) and Connie Roberts, Under the Umbrella conference keynote speaker and director of community initiatives for children and families for the County of San Diego.

Teachers have vital role to play in redesign of family services

*Pearl Calahasen, Minister
Without Portfolio Responsible for
Children's Services*

The following article is reprinted with permission from *Focus on Children and Families* (Issue 3, Fall 1996).

Teachers bring a great deal of insight to the planning of services for children and families.

There is an important initiative underway called the Redesign of Services for Children and Families. Teachers, principals and counselors play an important role in this redesign.

When a child has a troubled family life at home, one of the first people to see signs of it may be his or her school teacher.

Even in Kindergarten and Grade 1, you start to see where kids are at risk, says Freddi Bromling, principal of an elementary school in High Level.

What's happening at home can take its toll in the classroom in a variety of ways. A student with good abilities may be underachieving or unable to concentrate. A child may withdraw or begin to act out. Or perhaps even confide in the teacher about problems in the family.

It can leave the teacher with a great deal of insight into the needs of the disturbed child but also the frustration of knowing that he or she is unable to play the role of counselor, social worker or health care worker.

We see these kids day in and day out, says Bromling. As much as we'd like to

Teachers have a
unique vantage point into
the needs of children by virtue
of the fact that they see them
every school day from
the age of six, or younger,
to age 16 or older.

help these kids out, we just don't have the skills and don't have the time. Teachers have to stay focused, she adds, on their role as academic instructors.

Teachers have a unique vantage point into the needs of children by virtue of the fact that they see them every school day from the age of six, or younger, to age 16 or older.

It's a perspective that brings a vital contribution to local groups and steering committees that are planning services for children and families. The need for, and opportunities for, the input of educators will continue as the planning proceeds.

Micky Carleton, steering committee co-chair for Region 11 and a trustee for the Sturgeon School Division, attributes the significant level of involvement of educators in her area to the fact that they are often the first to see signs of problems.

Family • See page 8

She believes that, generally speaking, people aren't aware of the wide range of medical and emotional problems among students in any given classroom. It means teachers have to meet a variety of needs, including those of youngsters with learning disabilities, behavioral problems, children on medication and students whose parents are separated.

It also means that schools can't go it alone in their communities with respect to all needs of their students, says Rick Morrow, deputy director of the special education branch of Alberta Education.

In a classroom of 30 students, 50 to 60 per cent of children may have some type of special need or are at some kind of risk, he estimates. And the diversity of needs in Alberta's schools is increasing, he adds, with the growing diversity of family backgrounds and cultures.

As a member of the team that sought the views of Albertans during the commissioner's consultations in 1994, Morrow recalls that many educators were active in presenting their views and submissions at the time.

With their knowledge of child development and special needs, Morrow believes teachers and other educators can now bring a great deal of experience and expertise to the current planning process on behalf of Alberta's children and families.

Pearl Calahasen, minister responsible for Children's Services, says, "I encourage all personnel to provide their important perspective to this redesign. Your help will mean we begin to work together to help children and families. Thank you to all those who have been involved to this point."

APPENDIX G

ALBERTA TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION PUBLIC EDUCATION COUNTS

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE



What are the challenges facing public education?

- More children need special attention.
- Teachers have less time for each child because class sizes are too large.
- More children arrive at school unable to learn because they are hungry, lack sleep or suffer from emotional stress.
- Less time is spent on teaching and learning because teachers are busy meeting the medical and social service needs of children.
- Support services such as teacher-librarians, counsellors and specialists have been reduced.
- School fees and fundraising activities have increased to make up for inadequate funding.
- Schools lack the personnel and equipment needed to integrate technology into the classroom.
- "Have" and "have-not" schools are being created.

What should be done?

- Increase professional and support staff to help ensure that all children, especially those with special needs, have a genuine opportunity to learn and succeed at school.
- Increase funding to school boards so that they can reduce class sizes and ensure that students get more individual attention.
- Provide necessary teachers and equipment to implement technology in schools.
- Eliminate the need for students and parents to pay for curricular support materials.
- Arrange for the delivery of non-educational services for children so that schools can concentrate on teaching and learning.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Show your support for public education by speaking up and speaking out for children:

- **WRITE** or **CALL** the Minister of Education.
- **URGE** your MLA to support the actions proposed.
- **TALK** to your friends and neighbors about the need to support public education.
- **CONTACT** the media about your concerns.



An action plan for all Albertans

F R O M A L B E R T A ' S T E A C H E R S