Issue Introduction

By Rashmi Kumar and Sonia M. Rosen, Editors

Volume 7, Issue 1 of Perspectives on Urban Education explores partnerships between and among K-12 schools, universities, and community members and organizations. Across the United States, educational reform efforts in urban districts have simultaneously created the necessity and opened up opportunities for collaborations among K-12 institutions, local universities, and community groups, making the discussion of this topic both timely and salient. Two critical characteristics have made relationships among these three groups complex. First, each group occupies different roles within broader conversations about education; second, they are positioned differently with respect to the populations they serve. As a result, it often appears as if K-12 institutions, local universities, and community-based organizations in urban areas have disparate priorities and dissimilar and sometimes incongruent objectives.

The primary goal of school-university-community partnerships is to enhance the opportunities available to all stakeholders in the participating institutions and to do so in such a way that K-12 schools, students, and teachers are situated at the center of these efforts. In this issue of the journal, our authors explore intersections between these distinct groups and the factors that inform their collaborative work. They highlight the paradoxes and tensions that emerge in such partnerships as well as examine how these difficulties get resolved. Finally, the authors articulate the various ways in which the progress and direction of their work is influenced by factors that are internal and external to the field of education.

The articles in this issue touch on ways these partnerships have impacted student learning, school climate, and teacher practice, among other topics. Among the feature articles, *ARISE to the Challenge: Partnering with Urban Youth to Improve Educational Research and Learning*, describes a project based on participatory action research. In this piece, Brown discusses her multi-year work involving university researchers, K-12 students, and pre-service teachers, exploring the disconnect between practice and research and the challenges that surface in this context. Cole's *School-Community Partnerships and Community-Based Education: A Case Study of a Novice Program* offers an analysis of high school students' engagement with social problems through their placement in local non-profit and social agencies and the course that accompanies this internship program. Cann and DeMeulenaere take a unique approach in their article *Forged in the Crucibles of Difference: Building Discordant Communities*, using autoethnography to consider what it means to bridge the roles of university educator and high school teacher in a university-school partnership. In *Authoring New Narratives with Youth at the Intersection of the Arts and Justice*, Vasudevan et al. write about an alliance that is less frequently explored in educational literature, the partnership between university researchers and an alternative program for incarcerated youth. Their article documents the collective advantages that can be leveraged by the knowledge and skills that each group brings to the endeavor. In another vein, Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin examine the relationship between the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices and school typology and student ethnicity.

The Notes from the Field and Commentaries sections of this issue offer other entry points to this topic. For instance, two articles offer a big picture view of what it means to participate in these kinds of partnerships. Cucchiara's paper paints the historic and contemporary landscapes of university-run schools in the U.S., and Hershberg and Robertson-Kraft analyze the newly initiated Race to the Top Fund and its implications for urban schools, teachers, and teacher unions by articulating the increased emphases on teacher evaluation and student growth. Most of the articles in these sections, however, focus on practice. *Family Involvement in Four Voices: Administrator, Teacher, Students, and Community Member*, by Angela Wiseman, draws on fieldwork done in an 8th grade English classroom to examine various stakeholders' perceptions of and approaches to involving families in a community-partnered poetry program. In *Project Coach: A Case Study of a College-Community Partnership as a Venture in Social Entrepreneurship*, Intrator and Siegel document and reflect on their work of developing and implementing programs geared toward preparing future educators and involve adults and K-12 students from mixed age groups. Building on this theme, Catapano and Huisman discuss the process of preparing beginning teachers to teach with a thorough understanding of the needs of neighborhood schools. Similarly, Bartone emphasizes the necessity for pre-service and beginning teachers to develop a deep appreciation of the communities they serve, and Clapper et al. present a vision for a teacher preparation program embedded in a democratic K-12 school. Recognizing the relative lack of evaluations of science outreach programs developed by university faculty, Miranda and Hermann provide a critical overview of three successful programs and identify the attributes that have allowed these programs to sustain long-term partnerships. In a more self-reflective piece, Patrizio questions her own stance as a university researcher partnering with community organizations and contemplates on her deliberative process and the decisions that emerge from this process. The three

book reviews for this issue further point to emergent ideas and potential directions for future work in this field.

As a whole, then, this issue of the journal considers questions about school, university, and community partnerships and the possibilities and challenges that surround this topic. For instance, what factors lend themselves to creating strong, productive partnerships between K-12 schools, local universities, and/or community members/institutions? What are the characteristics of such partnerships? Who should be defining the goals in these collaborations, and what might such a process look like? What roles can various stakeholders play in these partnerships? How can all of these partners (K-12 schools, universities, and community members/institutions) benefit from such collaborations, and how can we gauge the effectiveness of these partnerships in fulfilling the goals of each set of stakeholders? What kinds of connections should teacher education programs be making with local K-12 schools, and how might teachers be better prepared to connect with the communities they serve? What can we learn from past and present examples of school-university-community partnerships?