

# EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY: ADVANCING THE AGENDA

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*A summary of a comprehensive process of understanding the progress  
and anticipating the future of a complex initiative in educational renewal.*

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The preceding fifteen years have witnessed the emergence of several educational improvement initiatives of national scope that have taken shape largely with the support of private philanthropy. Most have focused on schools; several on teacher education. One has assumed since its inception the close relationship of the two and addresses their simultaneous renewal. It is driven by a research-based agenda referred to as the Agenda for Education in a Democracy by the thousands of school and university people involved.

About three years ago, those individuals primarily responsible for the genesis of this initiative turned some of their attention to assessing what had been accomplished, what had been learned, and what priorities should prevail in the early years of the twenty-first century. The results of this assessment and projection are summarized on succeeding pages.

## CONTEXT

Three agencies have been and are engaged with the Agenda for Education in a Democracy: the Center for Educational Renewal (CER) at the University of Washington, founded in 1985; the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), assembled in 1986 and reconstructed in 1990-91; and the nonprofit Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI), created in 1992. The major function of each has been research (the CER), implementation (the NNER), and leadership training (the IEI). The Agenda (as it most often will be referred to in what follows) emerged out of two decades of inquiry on educational change, schooling, and teacher education conducted first by teams in the research division of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities located in Los Angeles and then at the CER in Seattle.<sup>1</sup>

The Agenda is comprehensive in its inclusion of a four-part mission, some five dozen conditions necessary to advancing this mission embedded in twenty propositions referred to as postulates, and a strategy of individual and institutional renewal. The whole is grounded in a concept of education as a moral endeavor serving the individual and common good through the development of those civil and civic

dispositions espoused rhetorically by the great religions and lay thinkers in their advocacy of the ideal human condition. In the rhetoric of the Agenda, these are referred to as indicators of democratic character, both individual and collective, whether social or political.

The Agenda's strategy has focused on the simultaneous renewal of schooling and teacher education for the well-being of children and youths. The mission addresses this end in two parts: the enculturation of the young into the freedoms and responsibilities of a democratic society and their deep and broad introduction into and preparation for participation in the human conversation. For those who teach the young in schools, the mission includes education in and commitment to this conception of what our schools are for and adds two additional responsibilities: caring pedagogy and moral stewardship of schools. The goal of identity and social responsibility embraces schools and universities as citizens just as it does individuals.

Whereas successive eras of school improvement have emphasized reform and accountability, the Agenda emphasizes renewal and responsibility. "Reform" and "accountability" connote compliance, a response that ranks low in its appeal to the human spirit. "Renewal" and "responsibility" connote limitless possibilities and disciplined commitment to moral principles. There should be no surprise in learning that most people who choose educational work as their calling are motivated and challenged by an agenda of renewal but are scarcely moved by still another round of reform. We should be surprised, however, that the former has been scarcely tried.

## INTROSPECTION AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL PRIORITIES

As with those other educational improvement ventures of recent years that have challenged educators to take the high ground of responsibility for renewing themselves and their institutions, the Agenda for Education in a Democracy has been funded almost entirely from private

philanthropy, supplemented by regular budgets. Several of the foundations have remained for the long haul (see Appendix A). The goal put forward in the early 1990s to be reached by the end of the decade was to have each major component of the Agenda at an advanced level of implementation somewhere in the settings of the NNER so that a person visiting all in the Network would see in composite all of these components.

Two years prior to the end of the decade, we began a process of comprehensively assessing progress toward this goal and lessons learned. Four books published in 1999 describe the Agenda and recent engagements of NNER settings with it; our conception of partner “teaching” schools and the progress of settings with them; emergence of the much-discussed innovation, the center of pedagogy; and an ongoing institutional renewal effort designed to effect coherence from admission to completion of teachers’ preparation programs.<sup>2</sup> These books were a rich resource for the 1,500 educators, journalists, lay citizens, and representatives of twenty other educational improvement initiatives who joined delegates from the NNER settings in demonstrating their accomplishments and discussing issues at the “In Praise of Education” conference hosted by the IEI in June 1999.<sup>3</sup>

While these books were being written, we began a more formal assessment of the implementation effort, drawing on an array of data gathered over a ten-year period: the field notes of our staff from their visits to NNER settings, participants’ evaluations of the Leadership Program conducted each year by the IEI since 1992, various self-assessments of the settings in response to specific questions, interviews with individuals in positions to observe changes in local teacher education programs over a period of years, the assessments of our senior staff based on long-term association with the NNER, and more.

Kenneth Sirotnik took major responsibility for collating and analyzing these data and for writing the report referred to near the beginning of this document (see note 1). It includes a summary of the inquiry on which the Agenda for Education in a Democracy is based, the results of a survey of more than one hundred teacher-preparing sites (outside of the NNER) claiming some use of the Agenda in their work, and a review of the educational literature designed to determine general awareness of the Agenda in the professional community. To date, copies of this comprehensive report have gone only to the several supporting philanthropic foundations.

Fortunately, the first draft became available as a primary resource document just as staff members of the CER and IEI were launching a Janus-like look into the past and future of the entire educational improvement initiative embraced by the Agenda for

Education in a Democracy. This kind of introspection has been characteristic from the beginning, but the evaluative information that had become available during the concluding years of the twentieth century offered a unique opportunity to determine priorities for the early years of the twenty-first.

In addition to intensifying its in-house planning process, the staff sought the counsel of four groups of discussants for sessions of several days each. All received in advance various readings. Some had prior knowledge and experience with the Agenda; some had none. They were selected because of expertise in their fields of study and practice and the relevance of the Agenda to their work.

For the first session, in October 1999, we brought together school and university people from the local area, few of whom had previous knowledge of the Agenda. We sought first-hand information of its appeal or lack of appeal to both groups. Given the intellectual challenge of the Agenda, we were pleased with its reception and simultaneously informed of a hunger for such not being satisfied through ongoing in-service professional development. The second session, in December 1999, focused on the NNER as an implementation strategy and brought participants from both within and outside the Network. There was agreement on the need to expand participation (without endangering quality) while continuing to provide support, particularly through the leadership development program of the IEI. Again, the recurring theme was the intellectual challenge and the way in which the mission of the Agenda elevates the appeal and social significance of teaching as a profession.

The third session, in January 2000, addressed primarily national agendas for change, tension between politically driven reform and educator-driven renewal, and the need to extend understanding of the Agenda to a larger lay audience. There was strong endorsement of the ongoing program of the IEI designed to enhance journalists’ reporting of educational issues. A large part of the discussion addressed the extent to which the credentialing role of higher education is squeezing out the provision of a solid general education for all students. One can no longer count on future teachers securing a good education, not because of the time professional education cuts into general education but because ensuring the attainment of such is not high in the priorities of many universities.

The fourth and final session, held in late April 2000, brought together specialists in the study of the democracy-education relationship with representatives from each of the NNER settings endeavoring to forward this theme in teacher education and schooling. The purpose was to establish a baseline with respect to progress and an inventory of the problems being encountered and the assistance

that would be helpful. It became clear that the ongoing inquiry into the mission of the Agenda (reflected in several books published in the 1990s) must be expanded in coming years into more fine-tuned implications for practice. (For a summary of suggested activities that surfaced during the first three sessions, see Appendix B.)

The discussions in these sessions ranged by deliberate design over virtually the entire compass of programmatic alternatives and activities from which to select and order priorities in seeking to advance the Agenda. But one major theme seemed to envelop all of them, emerging as of paramount significance. Indeed, it stimulated from time to time moods of idealistic passion, which quickly were tempered by moods of deep concern. The central issue can be described as the gulf between a prevailing narrative or world view that perceives economic advancement as the nation's educational imperative and the virtually marginalized alternative represented by our Agenda. The national political debate over schooling is so focused on the former that it is commonly viewed as THE debate. Not to be part of it, or at least not to voice support for it, is translated not just into opposition but into accusations of irrelevance or anti-improvement. For the education of the young to be so channeled endangers the future of the work-in-progress referred to as democracy.

The discussions frequently probed deeper than just the conceptual differences between these two views of what our schools are for. The deeper stratum has to do with what childhood is for: whether valued for its own sake like the rest of the life span or for its instrumental value for some other end. The latter view has prevailed for centuries. Indeed, in the western world there was no recognition of childhood until relatively recently; one was a young adult learning by observation and participation how to be a mature adult. The positive moralization of society taking place in Europe in the seventeenth century aroused in some parents a sense of their role as spiritual guardians to ensure the training of their children as preparation for later life. This special training would be provided by a school — "an instrument of strict discipline, protected by the law-courts and the police-courts."<sup>4</sup> In a sense, school created childhood, not as a period of maximum cultivation of the self but as preparation for responsible adulthood. This concept of a formal system of "civilizing" the young carried over into the New World where it has prevailed and narrowed into a concept of ensuring humanpower for sustaining the nation's economy — what Postman refers to as the narrative of economic utility.<sup>5</sup>

An alternative narrative that values no phase of the life cycle above another and education as a civic right for the enhancement of each phase has made on-stage cameo appearances throughout the twentieth

century, but often has been given short shrift as soft and tender and not suited for the hard and tough rigors of adulthood. Although childhood has achieved identity as a consuming market and an investment in future economic productivity, it has not yet emerged as having existential human value equal to that of adulthood. So long as schooling continues to be perceived primarily as instrumental to the future economy, the compass of its education will continue to narrow to the detriment of childhood.

The Agenda for Education in a Democracy is not alternative in the sense of replacing or rejecting the prevailing economic agenda. Rather, it encompasses much more and rearranges educational priorities. The well-educated individual is not a certified product but a self acquiring wisdom, with each step along the journey important in its own right. The desired habits of the workplace are also the habits of civil and civic associational living in the family, on the playground, in the classroom, in the shopping mall. The well-educated individual easily acquires the skills of a specific workplace when such becomes necessary. But to make the dozen or more years of schooling instrumental to the future needs of the workplace, however carefully predicted, is immoral and dangerous.

To educate for the future is to educate for the long view of many possible scenarios, no one of which is predictable or all-encompassing. Hence, to educate for the future is to educate broadly and deeply in the here and now and not be blind-sided by confidence in twenty-year forecasts. "What happens fast is illusion, what happens slow is reality. The job of the long view is to penetrate illusion."<sup>6</sup> Penetrating the illusion of oft-repeated school reform that "it's all for the children" is a long-term undertaking.

The introspection in which we have engaged over the past two or three years has strengthened our belief in the Agenda. It has not been challenged. Rather, part of it has been described as challenging the teacher education community to fill teacher education's "empty suit" through teaching a core of ethical values.<sup>7</sup> David Imig, arguably our best-informed analyst of trends in teacher education, sees the Agenda as increasingly filling a very large void in the field.<sup>8</sup>

Our initial ambition for the Agenda was for it to guide teacher-preparing colleges and universities, together with collaborating schools, in a process of together renewing their respective institutions and programs. We were hopeful but cautiously optimistic about the dependence of teacher education on the arts and sciences serving to draw the general education components into the renewing process. This is occurring, but slowly, as expected. A gratifying development is the degree to which raising questions regarding the adequacy of general education for teachers is raising the question of the adequacy of

general education for all students.

We are less than satisfied with our attention to the school side of the desired simultaneous renewal. Substantial immersion of cohorts of future teachers in partner schools is becoming commonplace. But this immersion is taking place less than we would wish in schools busily renewing their practices in line with the Agenda's mission. Yet there are teachers in the partner schools who are every bit as knowledgeable about and committed to the Agenda as are their university colleagues. But they often see the focus of our work to be more on renewing teacher education than on renewing schools, even though the two are companion pieces in the change process—a learning that continues to elude common understanding. Clearly, we have much yet to do toward making the Agenda more compelling and relevant to principals and teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

It became increasingly clear in the discussions of this past year that the success of an agenda addressed to schooling and teacher education on the inside must have considerable understanding and support on the outside. Our seminar program conducted for journalists on the West Coast was strongly endorsed by discussants. But clearly we must do more: with journalists nationwide and, perhaps, school board members, policymakers, business leaders, and others. Since we cannot reach all groups directly, a promising alternative is to develop a print and electronic media program for selected segments of the general public as an addition to, not a substitute for, the materials we produce for professional educators.

The challenge, it appears, is to operationalize an agenda now rather widely perceived by teacher educators as relevant and useful so as to make it more widely appealing to both educators and the general public. The centerpiece is the place called school. Teacher education is in the service of the school's mission.

Could it be, then, that the renewal of teacher education as a moral imperative has catalytic power for motivating educational renewal beyond? We think so, and the process of ordering priorities for our future work reflects this assumption.

There is a period of at least a dozen years (age 4 through age 16) when children and youths play no significant role in the work force and for whom responsible custodial care must be provided. This is a top priority for the majority of parents, most of whom—because of the demands of their employment or other reasons—yield this care to others. Reformers commonly forget this traditional function of our schools, which a technological future for education will not soon, if ever, replace.

The legal protection of the young from the marketplace and, in turn, the prolongation of adolescence to protect adults' participation in the

workplace gave "going to school" an occupational identity but no clear and highly valued social identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Neither schools nor their teacher-custodians counted for much in the marketplace; indeed, they became a close-to-the-people financial burden. Our recent research into both schooling and teacher education revealed a near-vacuum with respect to mission, with much of the once robust debate among educators languishing. It should come as no surprise that the entrepreneurial eyes of the marketplace were opened to schooling when the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, charged the schools with responsibility for fueling the nation's leadership in the global economy. Our schools and the fifth of the human life span they encompass have acquired, in part by default, a pervasive economic mission.

For want of a clearly articulated alternative that includes attention to the workplace and to both individual and collective well-being, we are on the verge of losing a unique opportunity to create out of a period of necessary custodial care a richly educative phase of life geared to a mission not addressed anywhere else: that of developing the essence of each individual self in the context of justice, fairness, responsibility, and mutual caring to which the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution speak so eloquently.

The cause is far from lost. Scholarly books and papers on the need abound, and the message is entering the more popular press. The Agenda for Education in a Democracy is a currently ongoing response with an encouraging track record crying out for expansion.

In summary, the introspection in which we have been engaged internally and with others has confirmed the following:

- Continued clarification of the Agenda's mission is essential. Although staff members of the CER and the IEI have produced books and papers on the interdependence of education and democracy and provided reading lists on the subject, attention to this relationship is a continuing need. Participants in our discussions pointed to the dearth of intellectual dialogue among educators regarding the very nature of the business in which they are engaged and of what their institutions are for: education. And there is much to clarify in regard to the meaning of democracy and democratic character. Expanding understanding and dialogue beyond educators was identified as an imperative.
- But unpacking the Agenda for meaning is not sufficient. What are its implications for school culture, the classroom ethos, pedagogy, and the stewardship responsibilities of teachers and principals? What are the implications for the curricular and pedagogical

components of the teacher education program? What are the implications of the postulates for top-level administrators and policymakers? Every component of the Agenda requires detailed operationalization—not for purposes of prescription but for exemplifying what falls within and what falls outside of the compass of education as a moral endeavor. The inquiry involved goes beyond the theoretical and conceptual work of clarifying the Agenda’s mission. Inquiry must be indigenous to the process of simultaneous individual and institutional renewal to which the NNER is committed. If the CER and the IEI are to assist in operationalizing the Agenda for practice, they must be engaged with ongoing practice. The December 1999 discussion, in particular, offered suggestions for such engagement.

- Frequent reference to the impact of the IEI’s Leadership Program pointed to its continuation as an imperative. At least three sets of directives emerged. First, educational practice is characterized by the continuous infusion of new personnel. Consequently, the IEI should continue to offer updated versions of the basic program that immerses participants deeply in the substance of the Agenda. Second, there will be a continuing need for more specialized programs that combine features of the basic program with attention to bedrock issues and specialized interests. The current initiatives addressed to diversity in teaching and teacher education and to the arts in teaching and teacher education are examples. Third, the IEI staff should anticipate a demand for advanced leadership programs for people with considerable understanding of the Agenda desiring to explore in-depth implications for their practice.

- Whereas the bulk of the attention to educational change over the past decade has been on stimulating renewal within existing institutional structures and improving inter-institutional symbioses, there is need to look into the relevance of many taken-for-granted features that should be eliminated rather than changed or markedly reconfigured. For example, do the long-established configurations of schooling now fit the populations for which they were intended? Should the IEI and/or the CER establish close working relationships with local settings for purposes of exploring alternatives other than today’s conventions? Do we need a broader participation in the schooling of the young that would produce partnerships extending beyond that of schools and universities? Should professional development schools become professional development centers for all of the health and human service professions focused on the young?

- There emerged from the introspective process widespread agreement not only on expanding

membership in the NNER but also on expanding what is referred to as “the conversation” to a broader spectrum of educators and the general public. Activities suggested ranged from brown-bag luncheon discussions around seminal topics for local groups to offering various versions of the IEI’s Leadership Program for school board members, policymakers, business leaders, and others. Expansion of the initiative addressed to journalists (joined by educators) was strongly recommended.

- A suggestion that emerged from time to time pertained to the local presence of the CER and the IEI. Implementation of the Agenda has been national, with no more emphasis on the University of Washington’s participation than on any other. However, the role of the Seattle-based CER and IEI has brought hundreds of educators from across the country to the headquarters and small conference facility of the latter and to larger gatherings in Seattle and Bellevue. Further, staff members of these two agencies have generated most of the books, articles, and special reports that unpack and seek to develop understanding of the Agenda. Consequently, this Seattle base looms large for positioning in geographic place a significant source of leadership and inspiration. Would it not make sense, then, to expand and deepen implementation as well as generation of the Agenda in the local area?

- Not surprisingly, the matter of publications came up again and again. The recommendations were predictable: continue to produce the books and papers that seek to advance understanding of the Agenda, adding to staff resources the relevant scholarship of others as in the past; endeavor to direct more of this scholarly material to audiences in addition to educators; create a periodical publication that deliberately seeks to direct attention to and participation in the Agenda; make use of electronic media to help tell the story.

## LEADERSHIP

**A** lesson learned from our work is the importance of a compelling agenda. Educational improvement has suffered from the benign notion that money, an enthusiastic coming together of potential participants, and positive change go hand-in-hand. But these do not often turn out to be a winning combination. The participants rarely have time to hammer out the necessary agreements regarding mission and scope of work. The money and the designated leaders usually disappear before such agreements are forged.

Our observation of initiatives in educational renewal that are frequently cited as having some success is that a good deal of the work necessary to the creation of an agenda preceded the coming together of participants—participants hard-pressed even for time to be present. In other words, the participants “bought into” an agenda seeming to offer promise for improving their work. Such was the case, for example, with Theodore Sizer’s Coalition of Essential Schools, Henry Levin’s Accelerated Schools Project, and Carl Glickman’s League of Professional Schools. Similarly, Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences and his availability to those attracted to it are fueling implementation efforts.

An agenda designed just to jump-start an effort will not suffice. The agenda must be sufficiently complex to offer continuing interpretations and direction so that many of the previously dominating regularities are replaced by the new. Otherwise, what Barbara Benham Tye calls the “deep structure” of conventional practice will take over once more.<sup>9</sup> The discretionary supplemental money and the designated leaders rarely outlast the firm establishment of the alternative ways envisioned.

Shortcomings in the breadth and depth of the Agenda have never been part of our worry, given the fact that the Agenda was crafted out of a combination of empirical-inductive and theoretical-deductive inquiry into its major components extending over a period of two decades. But the leadership issue did bother us early on. We have not identified any educational cause that came on full-blown with agenda, designated leaders, and essential participants in place. Despite protestations regarding the abuse of democratic principle in beginning initiatives with the existing designated leaders, it is exceedingly difficult to proceed otherwise in seeking to rearrange the bones of institutional structures. We began with superintendents of schools and deans of education simply because they are the designated leaders for enterprises seeking to bring schools and universities into collaboration, and because they are readily identified and solicited. But they also have short tenures—commonly three or four years for superintendents and five to seven for deans of education—and are likely to be several years into this expectancy at the time of initial contact.

And so, in February 1992, we created the Institute for Educational Inquiry with leadership development in mind. By summer of that year, we had designed a program of topics focused primarily on the Agenda’s mission, selected a list of required readings, developed a schedule of four sessions for the 1992-93 year, and (from nominees recommended by the NNER settings) selected a cohort of participants made up of individuals from the arts and sciences, the schools, and the colleges of education and diverse in ethnic and racial

representation. Six years later, the 112 or so graduates constituted a leadership corps in each of the NNER settings. These leaders, in turn, have cloned our program, and there are now more than 1,200 graduates serving locally. The data are now in: the presence of a cadre of these leaders is serving as an antidote to the anticipated turnover in designated leaders. There is a clear correlation between diligent attention to developing leadership groups and the modest to low negative impact of retirements and departures. An ongoing, intense commitment to an improvement agenda may not keep designated leaders in office (although many in NNER settings have stayed beyond the norm), but the continued presence of leaders well prepared in the substance of that agenda significantly increases the probability of its continuation.

We have been acutely aware of the inevitable aging phenomenon with respect to the staff of the CER and the IEI. Consequently, we began to assiduously cultivate backup personnel a decade or two younger than our potential retirees (some of whom had retired earlier from other work). And so, we watched for the leaders emerging in the NNER settings and then involved them as colleagues in various initiatives. The criteria of selection included pedagogical skills, excellent relations with peers, and understanding of and commitment to the Agenda. The available pool of talent—growing each year—and the process of selection assures a steady stream of first-rate leaders for years to come. So far, we have not detected undue worry in the NNER settings regarding the ultimate loss of these individuals. We have not, for example, encountered resistance to their taking short absences from their home settings to come to Seattle or travel to other settings. There appears to be unspoken realization that we are all engaged in the same work.

A priority need growing more apparent each year is that of replacing the time of key CER and IEI staff desiring to cut back on their commitments. We worried that individuals at the top of our wish list located elsewhere would be reluctant to join a maverick enterprise supported entirely by “soft” money. After all, we could not go to faculty groups in the University of Washington and expect them to create tenure-line tracks to suit our interests. Yet, early in the 1999-2000 year of planning, while keeping several ongoing projects afloat, it became obvious that the robust future we were endeavoring to map would need at least a couple of new people. We were successful in recruiting two first-rate individuals, each with extensive experience in our work, who will join us on September 1, 2000.

Dr. Corinne (Cori) Mantle-Bromley will become executive vice president of the IEI; Dr. Paul Heckman will become director of the CER. We are awaiting final approval of the Regents of the University of Washington for their recommended Research Full

Professorships in the College of Education. Cori is a graduate of the IEI's Leadership Program who has been active out of her academic position at Colorado State University in the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal, a member of the NNER. She has been deeply involved in evaluative study of that partnership, the Diversity in Teaching and Teacher Education initiative of the IEI, and partner schools, and has served as a facilitator in leadership training. She will relieve John Goodlad of some of his management responsibilities in the IEI, with particular attention to coordinating the Institute's ongoing initiatives. (Goodlad will continue as president and chairman of the board of directors of the IEI.)

Paul Heckman has had a long history with our work, some of which preceded the emergence of the Agenda in its present form. With Kenneth Sirotnik and John Goodlad, he participated in creating the Laboratory in School and Community Education at UCLA, which, in turn, created the Southern California School-University Partnership, *circa* 1980. Later, he consulted in the early development of two additional school-university partnerships (in Maine and Utah). All three partnerships were early members of the first iteration of the NNER (1986-1990). He then became one of three regional coordinators of the whole. For the past decade, working out of the University of Arizona, Heckman has focused attention on the schooling, home, and neighborhood experiences of low-income children, an underrepresented, largely overlooked segment of the nation's citizenry. Roger Soder and John Goodlad, currently co-directors of the CER, will continue their involvement but with reduced work commitments.

With appointments to both the IEI (as senior associates) and the CER (as research professors), the two additions to our staff will contribute to the continued collaboration of the two agencies as well as to the work of the NNER. With all members of the present staff continuing, the prospect is for considerable additional leverage in advancing the Agenda.

We have been acutely aware of the need for Cori and Paul to be apprised of the current process of refining tomorrow's priorities, since each will play a major role in carrying them out. Both participated in planning sessions in 1999 and 2000 referred to earlier on. Both will be further involved as we move to refining priorities. Effecting these two appointments may well rank at the top of what we have accomplished.

Clearly, the human resources for advancing the Agenda are enormously strengthened. All of the Seattle-based senior associates carrying major responsibilities over the past decade will continue to do so, although some—for example, Wilma Smith and Dick Clark—are endeavoring to cut back somewhat.

Ken Sirotnik, who founded the CER with Roger Soder and me, directs the Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, within which the CER is housed, and is a senior associate with the IEI. Others who have played or are playing major roles are available as consultants to the CER, the IEI, and the NNER. And now, as described above, there are hundreds of leaders scattered across the United States who bring knowledge and commitment to advancing the Agenda in their own as well as other settings.

## OPERATIONALIZING THE AGENDA

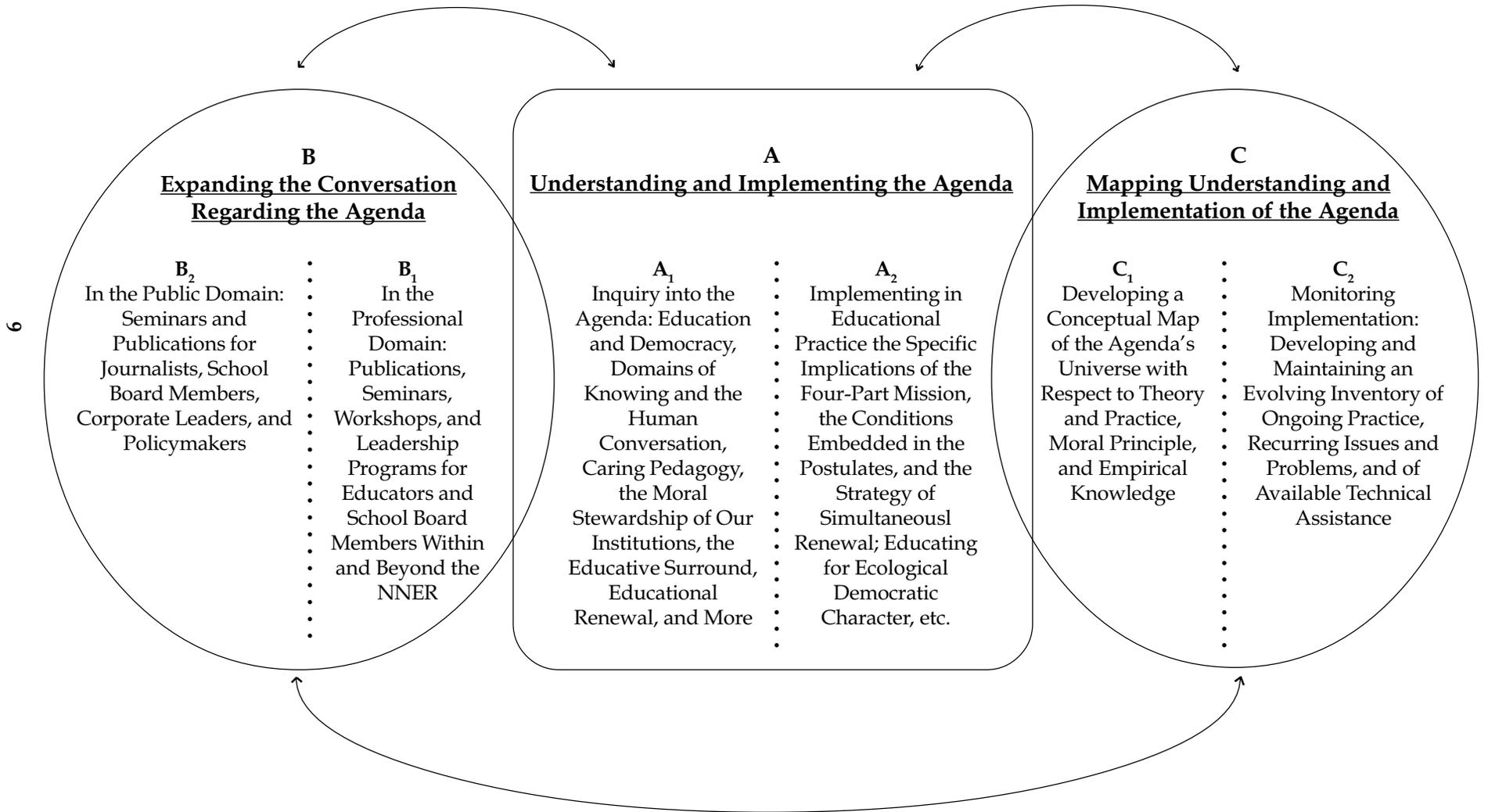
Our ongoing introspection has revealed a significant shift in orientation to our work. Although the Agenda's mission, and particularly the moral dimensions of this mission, are cited again and again as providing direction, guidance, and encouragement, the individual activities have tended to dominate over the whole of the work in progress. Most of us behave this way; the principle takes on meaning in the practical activity. We have encouraged those seeking to implement the Agenda in their attention to relevant projects and have been delighted at the frequency with which they justified endeavors by referring, for example, to the moral grounding of the Agenda's mission. But, early on, the substance of the Agenda was hazy. It was easier to claim allegiance to it than to peel it back for deeper meaning and implications for practice. The Leadership Program focused on the Agenda as a coherent whole and, as the number of graduates increased and assumed leadership roles in the NNER settings, the specific activities of each began to put flesh on what had been only the structural bones of the Agenda.

The fashioning of a quilt provides an apt analogy. The most intriguing quilt tells a story; the pieces, each with its own identity, build the story as they are sewn into the whole. Now part of the quilt, these pieces advance the story. What appears to have been happening in our work is increased attention to the quality of each piece—be it programmatic coherence, partner schools, cohort groups of future teachers endeavoring to connect theory and practice, centers of pedagogy, or some other domain of relevant activity—not just in its own right but for its contribution to the composite whole. The subtle shift in orientation is toward increased awareness of the Agenda's significance and increased desire to dig more deeply into it.

How to respond to this desire—probably more embryonic than characteristic—is the challenge that now faces those of us in the CER and the IEI who believe in and wish to advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy as a guiding story or narrative for widespread educational renewal. Earlier

FIGURE I.

Advancing the Agenda for Education in a Democracy in Service to the Individual and the Common Good



on, we were able to “package” proposals for funding projects that had validity in their own right without burdening them with justification tied closely to a complex agenda not easily summarized in short space. Now, however, we must address the Agenda itself so as to transcend the conceptual elaborations in the books and papers published since it was put forward in 1990. In effect, we must operationalize it so as to make it more accessible to understanding and for practice.

From a funding perspective, presenting the whole to prospective grantmakers is not promising. We have been fortunate in securing grants ranging from less than ten thousand to several hundred thousand dollars in a given year from the foundations listed in Appendix A. Proposals seeking support for advancing the Agenda as a coherent whole probably would have been rejected by all but a very few. The challenge now is to present pieces of the whole having an identity of their own that we are then able to incorporate rather readily into the design and story of the quilt that is and will continue to be a story unfolding. This means that each piece must make sense for the intended audience and context while satisfying the criterion of contributing to the clarity and accessibility of the Agenda.

Figure I represents an effort to define and connect chunks of activity that, carried out together over time, would operationalize the Agenda in the sense described above. There are six of these chunks grouped in three connected clusters: understanding and implementing the Agenda is at the core (A), with this work continuously feeding the conversation about the Agenda (B) on the one hand and the mapping of its progress (C) on the other. Most of the laundry list of possible priorities summarized earlier in this paper are contained somewhere within this conceptualization.

The task before us now is to define, design, schedule, and carry out a manageable array of initiatives that meet the criterion of significance in their own right and relevance to the Agenda. No one of the six sections in Figure I should be neglected. Each plays an organic role and must be healthy; each contributes to the health of the system as a whole and, consequently, to each of the others. Figure I should be addressed visually by focusing first on section A, and then, without losing the image, moving vision outward to sections B and C. Selecting an initiative to advance A triggers expectations for contributing to the rest of section A and to all of B and C. If the entire system is functioning in a robustly healthy way, all parts of the system are alerted to and energized by the initiative and conduct of activity in any one. Similarly, the whole is energized to assist in nullifying the impact of pernicious elements threatening the work of part of the whole. Ideally, the activity ongoing in B should include affirmations regarding the concepts and principles being advanced in the Agenda that help to answer questions about the work so that these do not

become pernicious.

Our introspection has included analysis of currently ongoing initiatives in order to determine the degree to which they satisfy the criterion of significance in their own right and relevance to the Agenda. This analysis revealed that, although we have gathered over the years a considerable amount of the information implied in section C, the process has fallen short of being deliberate and systematic. The report by Ken Sirotnik, referred to earlier, that has collated, synthesized, and analyzed what we have provides a good deal of direction for planning and implementing the activities briefly summarized in section C. Whereas  $C_2$  proposes an ongoing inventory of what exists in the field of practice regarding the Agenda,  $C_1$  is intended to focus essentially on what the Agenda implies for exemplary implementation and, consequently, should help give direction to practice.

Most past and present initiatives fit the description of  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  and have connected closely to the publication and leadership programs of  $B_1$ . A group of scholars, some from the NNER and some not, has engaged in conversation about the relationship between education and democracy ( $A_1$ ) that have resulted in two book manuscripts ( $B_1$ ) now going to press that lay the groundwork for turning our attention to developing democratic character in the young ( $A_2$ ).

Eleven settings of the NNER are joined with the IEI in addressing the need to prepare teachers for dealing with student diversity in their classrooms—a need highlighted by the Agenda’s focus on creating productive learning environments for all children and youths. Eight settings, one of them outside of the NNER, and the IEI are seeking to connect the arts in teaching and teacher education to the Agenda’s mission of ensuring for all a comprehensive introduction to the human conversation. Just as education for the development of democratic character embraces humankind, it must also embrace humankind’s habitat. A proposal for what we refer to as the development of ecological democratic character is now being written. All of these initiatives are directed toward section A of Figure I, “Understanding and Implementing the Agenda.”

Almost neglected in the twentieth-century debate over schooling and teacher education is a teacher’s general education as a professional tool. The CER is working with NNER settings in endeavoring to rectify this situation through a process of engaging professors in the arts and sciences and education and school leaders in conversations about the issues involved and what warrants the description, “a well-educated teacher.” A book manuscript is likely to emerge ( $B_1$ ). It is anticipated that this domain will attract our interest, time, and energies for some time to come. Recent funding now enables us to inquire into the impact of so-called concurrent enrollment (in

secondary schools and institutions of higher education simultaneously) on the quality of general education and program coherence. Again, work in this area fleshes out the A section of Figure I, embracing all major categories of the Agenda: mission, conditions, and strategy.

In section B<sub>2</sub>, "Expanding the Conversation Regarding the Agenda," a grant just received will enable us to offer participation in our Leadership Program to school-university settings beyond the NNER. The major extension of our seminar offerings is an ongoing program for journalists. A recent grant in hand and, we hope, successful negotiation of another will enable us to expand what we consider to be a high-priority endeavor. A useful newsletter series has emerged from this initiative.

Currently, an inquiry is under way regarding our entire publication program (B). Conversations with groups convened during the 1999-2000 academic year produced recommendations for publications in addition to those intended for audiences of professional educators. The inquiry includes interviews with individuals representing a wide range of interests. We anticipate getting closure on a long-range publication plan within the next few months.

As stated above, the mapping of our journey has not occupied sustained attention, not because of failure to recognize its importance but because there always has been more that we wanted to do that we simply could not do. It is difficult even for us to comprehend how so much has been accomplished by so few people with such modest financial resources. We simply were too busy traveling on our journey to record the passage. Nonetheless, we managed to leave a sufficient record to enable Ken Sirotnik to piece together a compelling story.

Whereas our past attention was directed to the larger contours of the Agenda's use and implementation in the NNER, future attention must be much more to details. In order to employ time, energy, and financial resources efficiently and effectively, we must be able to determine rather quickly and precisely the state of ongoing work in all initiatives, the major categories of the Agenda, and the Agenda as a whole.

Figure I identifies two interdependent potential sources of the information that should always be as up to date as circumstances permit. C<sub>2</sub> pertains to ongoing work in the NNER settings and beyond. Participation in providing the necessary information on a continuing basis will be voluntary, we assume. But the potential usefulness of the databank to settings involved with the Agenda leads to the assumption that such settings will want to participate. The need will be for funds to enable adequate participation in the process. Such a databank should facilitate both self-assessments of progress and determination of strengths

and shortcomings overall. The information can then be used to guide networking and technical assistance. This proposal is geared to the guidance of practice in implementing the Agenda, with usefulness depending on a steady flow of dependable information.

C<sub>1</sub> pertains to deepening comprehension of the Agenda itself. What empirical knowledge is available to help us understand, for example, the nature of the caring pedagogy that constitutes one of the four major components of the mission? What constitutes moral and immoral practice in the stewardship of schools? What is a democratic school, and how will we know it when we see it? What activities are likely to develop democratic character in young people as they move toward and through puberty? These questions and more cry out for attention.

This conceptual map will be derived from two sources: ongoing implementation of the Agenda as identified in the databank on the right-hand side of the circle on mapping, and both theoretical-deductive and empirical-inductive inquiry. In time, it could become a valuable resource for policymakers, journalists, educators, school board members, and others seeking to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of proposals for the improvement of education in schools, institutions of higher education, and the larger educative surround.

## NEXT STEPS

We have begun the process of delineating for each of the sections of Figure I initiatives of several years' duration yet to be launched that will ensure continuing, optimum advancement of the Agenda. To repeat, the guiding criterion for each is the combination of significance in its own right and contribution to the whole. Simultaneously, we have been examining each of the presently ongoing initiatives to ensure relevance to the criterion and to determine any necessary adjustments. We will select a "chief worrier" and a small team of colleagues for each. The major task now is to secure the new and continuing funds for advancing each initiative and the Agenda as a whole.

## NOTES

1. The inquiries on school change, schooling, teacher education, and the mission of schooling and teacher education are summarized in Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Associates, *Telling Our Story: Unraveling the Lessons from a Complex Change Initiative – Agenda for Education in a Democracy* (Seattle: Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington, and the Institute for Educational Inquiry, January 2000). Not available pending publication. See chapters 1 and 2. Chapter notes and Appendix C of the report provide a comprehensive listing of publications describing the whole.
2. In the order of the four themes listed, the books, all published by Jossey-Bass in 1999, are as follows: Wilma Smith and Gary D Fenstermacher (eds.), *Leadership for Educational Renewal: Developing a Cadre of Leaders*; Richard W. Clark, *Effective Professional Development Schools*; Robert S. Patterson, Nicholas M. Michelli, and Arturo Pacheco, *Centers of Pedagogy: New Structures for Educational Renewal*; and Kay A. Norlander-Case, Timothy G. Reagan, and Charles W. Case, *The Professional Teacher: The Preparation and Nurturance of the Reflective Practitioner*.
3. For descriptions of these initiatives, see Kathleen L. Florio, *Twenty-One Educational Renewal Initiatives* (Seattle: Institute for Educational Inquiry, 1999).
4. Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 413. Translation from French by Robert Baldick.
5. Neil Postman, *The End of Education* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).
6. Stewart Brand, *The Clock of the Long Now* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 146.
7. Kevin Ryan and Karen Bohlin, "Teacher Education's Empty Suit," *Education Week*, 8 March 2000, p. 42.
8. David G. Imig, "Whither Schools of Education? A Reaction: For All the Wrong Reasons," *Journal of Teacher Education* 50 (November-December 1999): 369-372.
9. Barbara Benham Tye, *Hard Truths: Uncovering the Deep Structure of Schooling* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000).

## APPENDIX A

### MAJOR INITIATIVES AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

#### **CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT (1984 - )**

- The College Board** (*December 1986 – November 1987*)  
support for the writing of chapters for *Access to Knowledge: An Agenda for Our Nation's Schools*, edited by John I. Goodlad and Pamela Keating
- Danforth Foundation** (*January 1986 – December 1988*)  
support for National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) partnerships and a task force on the principalship
- Exxon Education Foundation** (*January 1985 – August 2005*)  
support for a comprehensive Study of the Education of Educators, and core support for the Center for Educational Renewal and the National Network for Educational Renewal settings for advancing the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators
- Ford Foundation** (*July 1987 – August 1990*)  
support for a National Advisory Board to the Study of the Education of Educators and a task force on equity in access to knowledge
- William & Flora Hewlett Foundation** (*January 1987 – December 1991*)  
support data collection/documentation work and analysis of the work of the NNER
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** (*August 1987 – December 1989*)  
support to explore the normative dimensions (moral, ethical, and legal) of teaching in public schools and their implications for teacher education, and support for writing chapters for *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*, edited by John I. Goodlad, Roger Soder, and Kenneth A. Sirotnik
- Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation** (*July 1984 – June 1992*)  
support for the continuing efforts of the Study of the Education of Educators and the Center for Educational Renewal
- The Pew Charitable Trusts** (*September 1991 – September 2001*)  
support to sustain momentum already established to ensure that the NNER settings implement the necessary conditions for the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators, and support for the Well-Educated Teacher Initiative (general education of teachers)

- SBC Foundation** (*November 1987 – August 1997*)  
support work with policymakers to achieve greater flexibility in state regulations and general support to the Center for Educational Renewal
- Spencer Foundation** (*July 1987 – March 1990*)  
support research work on the history of teacher education, developing mini-case histories on institutions involved in the Study of the Education of Educators; and support for writing chapters for *Places Where Teachers Are Taught*, edited by John I. Goodlad, Roger Soder, and Kenneth A. Sirotnik
- Titcomb Foundation** (*April 1992*)  
general support to the Center for Educational Renewal
- Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation** (*October 1991*)  
general support to the Center for Educational Renewal

#### **INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL INQUIRY FINANCIAL SUPPORT (1992 - )**

- Allen Foundation for the Arts** (*February 2000 – June 2003*)  
support for a collaborative effort (with the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Texaco Foundation) to improve the training of elementary classroom teachers in and through the arts
- Annenberg Foundation** (*July 1992*)  
support to the settings in the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) in advancing the agenda of simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators
- Anonymous Grants** (*September 1993 – August 2002*)  
leadership training and support for Cohorts IV, V, and VI of the Institute's Leadership Program; support for the Leadership Teams for Simultaneous Renewal Program; and support for a three-year Leadership Program to advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy and to concentrate on problems and issues directly related to the Well-Educated Teacher Initiative (general education of teachers)
- Arthur Vining Davis Foundations** (*March 1996 – June 2000*)  
support for partner high school renewal in NNER settings by funding the preparation of portraits of high schools at various stages of

development, encouraging local networks of such secondary schools, and providing reports to national audiences concerning these schools

**AT&T Foundation** (November 1993 – October 1995)  
support for writing chapters for *Democracy, Education, and the Schools*, edited by Roger Soder

**Carnegie Corporation of New York** (September 2000 – August 2003)  
support for leadership training at regional centers for non-NNER settings engaged with the Agenda

**Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation** (April 1995 – August 1997)  
support a task force that will seek to gain a better understanding of the costs of redesigning teacher education programs around partner or professional development schools and examine alternative ways of bearing these costs

**Danforth Foundation** (April 1995 – August 1995)  
support for bringing together a group of superintendents to revise the pamphlet “What School Leaders Can Do to Help Change Teacher Education” and to participate in a videotaped discussion on this same topic

**DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund** (March 1994 – June 2000)  
flow-through funding to NNER settings to enabling selected schools and colleges of education to replace their existing teacher preparation programs with fundamentally redesigned ones, and support for a one-year period of data-based introspection seeking to determine and select from an array of promising alternatives for advancing the Agenda for Education in a Democracy beyond its present boundaries

**Exxon Education Foundation** (January 1997 – August 1999)  
support for a joint project (with the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley) for preparing elementary teachers to teach science education

**Ford Foundation** (October 1993 – December 1994)  
support for developing the arts and sciences component of teacher education renewal efforts by strengthening the participation of professors in the arts and sciences

**J. Paul Getty Trust – Getty Education Institute for the Arts** (July 1998 – June 2003)  
support for a collaborative effort (with the Texaco Foundation and the Allen Foundation for the Arts) to improve the training of elementary classroom teachers in and through the arts

**Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers** (July 1998)  
support for the production of manuscripts for

the Agenda for Education in a Democracy book series: *Leadership for Educational Renewal: Developing a Cadre of Leaders; Centers of Pedagogy: New Structures for Educational Renewal; Effective Professional Development Schools; and The Professional Teacher: The Preparation and Nurturance of the Reflective Practitioner*

**Joyce Foundation** (March 1997 – July 1997)  
support to evaluate the efficacy of small schools in Chicago

**W. K. Kellogg Foundation** (April 1998 – March 2001)  
support for the Diversity in Teacher Education initiative that addresses the recruitment and retention of an ethnically and racially diverse K-12 teaching corps as well as the education of prospective teachers and the continuing education of current teachers to meet an ever-changing and diverse student body

**Longview Foundation** (May 1997 – April 2000)  
support to bring together a small group of individuals for intensive inquiry into the essential content and pedagogy required of teachers capable of developing democratic character in the young

**Merck Family Fund** (July 1992 – June 1995)  
support for the development of the leadership curriculum; development of future education models involving home, school, religious institutions, health and social services, technology, and more; and the development of tomorrow’s leaders for educative communities

**Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation** (Feb. 1994 – August 1999)  
support for advancing the role of education and schooling in a social and political democracy

**Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** (January 1997 – December 1999)  
support for a comprehensive assessment of the methods, strategies, and programs of the overall NNER initiative

**National Science Foundation** (March 1995 – June 1997)  
support for advancing the role of arts and sciences faculty in the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators

**The Pew Charitable Trusts** (June 1992 – July 1995)  
support for the assessment of the progress made by the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative and Paths/Prism in carrying out restructuring efforts

**Philip Morris Companies Inc.** (April 1992 – August 1995; August 1996; August 1997)  
leadership training and support for Cohorts I, II, and III of the Institute’s Leadership Program; support for annual meetings of the National Network for Educational Renewal; and support

for the writing of chapters for *Leadership for Educational Renewal: Developing a Cadre of Leaders*

**SBC Foundation** (*April 1995*)

support for developing structures and policies at state and federal levels to support the NNER agenda of simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators

**Spencer Foundation** (*March 1995 – August 1997; April 2000 – November 2000*)

support for the development of a model process for defining costs of financing partner schools and centers of pedagogy; support for a Forum on Democratic Character for specific representatives of all NNER settings to examine issues pertaining to developing democratic character in the young

**Stuart Foundation** (*September 1998 – September 2001*)

support for a fellowship program to ensure that education reporters are well informed about the nature of public education in a democracy, and technical assistance to teacher-preparing institutions in the California Coalition for Educational Renewal—of which California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo is a member—to analyze and strengthen the general education of undergraduates who are prospective teachers

**The Texaco Foundation** (*December 1998 – December 2002*)

support for a collaborative effort (with the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Allen Foundation for the Arts) to improve the training of elementary classroom teachers in and through the arts

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Airborne Express  
Battelle  
Boeing Company  
Boeing Employees’ Credit Union  
DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund  
Exxon Education Foundation  
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Philip Morris Companies Inc.  
Starbucks Foundation  
Titcomb Foundation  
The Texaco Foundation  
Washington Mutual Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation  
Wyman Youth Trust

## APPENDIX B

### MAIN IDEAS FROM PLANNING SESSIONS THAT RELATE TO DEVELOPING DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER IN THE YOUNG OCTOBER 1999, DECEMBER 1999, AND JANUARY 2000

October 1999	December 1999	January 2000
<p><i>School as unit of change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Develop leadership capacity for democratic schools.</li> <li>–Develop skills needed to lead and work in democratic schools.</li> <li>–Inquire into the conditions needed to develop democratic character in the young.</li> </ul>	<p><i>“Pillars” at three locations in the country</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Develop examples of democratic schooling, exemplary in-service, continued evolution of COP that evidences presence of 19 postulates, expanded engagement of community, neighborhood, community power structure, policy.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Leadership Program for developing democratic schools/character</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Include 4-person teams.</li> <li>–Infuse a single setting.</li> <li>–Include community members, journalists, education aides, upper-level decision makers . . .</li> <li>–Provide real-world models to facilitate democratic processes.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policy and broad conceptualization of education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Work on the gap between the perceived purpose of schools as preparing people to work and preparing citizens for a social and political democracy.</li> <li>–Communicate with corporate and political leaders.</li> <li>–Connect with the larger school community to develop an educative community (media, museums, churches, libraries...)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Demonstrate “educative communities” at three locations in the country</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Conduct a 3-month project involving collaboration of media, schools, community colleges, university(ies), local government, faith community(ies), local businesses, technology enterprises, museums, and libraries in increasing knowledge of population (age 4 to age 90) concerning a particular theme.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Inquiry into the development of democratic character</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Conduct longitudinal case studies.</li> <li>–Create illustrative cases.</li> <li>–Inquire into qualities of NNER institutions to develop democratic character.</li> <li>–Produce a book of readings to help professors engage future teachers in discussing issues related to democratic character.</li> <li>–Develop case studies and models.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Local initiatives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Hold symposia, forums, and the like to engage local educators in conversations about current issues having to do with the conditions and curricula of democratic schooling (underperformance of students of color, safety, the arts and AED, standards &amp; assessments, teachers as activists, inquiry, leadership, stewardship vs. compliance).</li> <li>–Create a NW Academy to deal with these matters.</li> <li>–Conduct local leadership programs.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Local partnerships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Develop single pillar in Puget Sound area to pursue agenda similar to that identified above.</li> <li>–Secure involvement of three clusters of elementary, middle, high schools in three districts to pursue this work – each cluster to be linked to a university.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Community outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Develop retreats for school board members.</li> <li>–Engage school administrators in forums on democratic character.</li> <li>–Develop a regional experimental “laboratory” to engage the broader community in the agenda.</li> <li>–Hold brown-bag lunches for local educators, politicians, community and corporate leaders.</li> <li>–Reach out to corporations that are connected to global citizenship issues.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Clearinghouse for AED</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Develop case studies; respond to email inquiries; connect with the other 20 Initiatives for Renewal.</li> </ul>	<p><i>IEI/CER as a “think tank”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Consider current and persistent critical issues and prepare books, pamphlets, articles, videos designed to inform decision making on those issues.</li> <li>–Involve existing leadership associates and an expanded group of senior fellows in the think tank activities.</li> <li>–Convene study sessions to consider draft papers on these issues.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Technical assistance to settings working to develop democratic character</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Blend organizational models into one that can foster development of democratic character and community.</li> <li>–Develop long-term relationship with one school that will assess the presence of conditions needed for democratic character.</li> <li>–Send educators to a newly democratic country to teach about democracy.</li> </ul>