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Auerbach, Susan. (2012) *School Leadership for Authentic Family and Community Partnerships: Research Perspectives for Transforming Practice*. New York: Routledge.

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In her conclusion, Susan Auerbach highlights the premise of *School Leadership for Authentic Family and Community Partnerships: Research Perspectives for Transforming Practice*, “Leaders need to enhance their political awareness, cultural competence, and interpersonal skills as they navigate complex individual and collective encounters with stakeholders” (p. 249). These words remind me of the song “Better People” by India Arie. The song speaks to the theme of the book that the collective is necessary for a socially just world.

Yeah, I can help you with the brand new technology
You can help me with the age-old philosophy
Together there's so much we can do with

Young people who talk to old people

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Old people who talk to young people
If Black people would talk to White people
And if White people would talk to Black people
It would make us a better people all around

Yeah, yeah if Republicans would talk to Democratic
people it would make us diplomatic people all around.

The song acts as a good viaduct to the editor's perspective that school leaders have the potential to create more equitable and socially just communities via authentic family community partnerships. This book provides school administrators and researchers with models for addressing the complexities of family and community partnerships. The book is a mix of original scholarly articles that include empirical, conceptual and reflective chapters in the form of quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods. There are 13 chapters including helpful tables that act as aids.

The book is organized topically. It gives validity to the fact that current involvement practices need to be radically transformed. The book acknowledges that the road to partnerships is a complex and windy road but a trip well worth the travel. As a researcher who investigates and publishes on the topic, this book reinforced my own work and builds upon the work of other scholars such as Joyce Epstein, Debbie Pushor, Jawanza Kunjufu, Gail Thompson, Rema Reynolds, Beth Harry, and Janice Hale. More information specific to partnerships in special education is needed, but this book may be a dynamic tool for teacher education and educational leadership programs since it offers various models applicable to various settings including: urban, suburban, and rural.

The theme is carried throughout the book. The editor considers authentic partnerships to be a matter of social justice and equity. Leaders are strongly encouraged to enlist families in decision-making and be aware of the fact that they are either promoting or deterring family involvement and advocacy. The book details how to enlist family involvement and identifies practices that hinder involvement. We know that the more families are engaged the less likely it is for those students to be over-represented in special education, receive harsh punishment, and drop out of school. Research on family

involvement suggests that high performing schools do a better job of including family and community in two-way communications, making them feel welcomed, and shared-decision making (Pushor, 2007). The book challenges leaders to reconsider how involvement is defined, who defines it, how it is prioritized, and how it is funded. One of the prongs used in the book to distinguish between traditional involvement (school events, meetings, back to school) and partnerships are the use of family or community for the sole purpose of enacting school-sanctioned agendas. Similar prongs are used in other transformative works on family engagement (Pushor, 2007; Williams, 2007).

The editor utilizes description, narration, exposition and argument to support the thesis. For example, chapter 2 by Riehl builds the argument that home and school will not coalesce unless school leaders help to prioritize, establish and facilitate these relationships. In chapters 3 and 4, Auerbach, and Ruffin-Adams and Wislon, respectively, describe the key practices of leaders when authentic partnerships exist in schools. Hands, chapter 10, provides the reader with a narration of how a leader may support a teacher to excel in the area of partnerships. In Chapter 6, Owens offers the reader an exposition on how to engage bicultural families.

The book utilizes sound theories and research to support the book. Auerbach starts with an examination of the role of research on transformational, constructive and collaborative leadership models that espouse leadership as a focal point in authentic partnerships. She states that organizationally focused research seldom contributes to the knowledge on leader's influence on student outcomes and more research is needed on it. This book makes a contribution to fill in the gap on the effect of leaders on student outcomes. Each chapter is supported with a wide-range of research including primary research that utilizes strong methods and good samplings.

I found the book to be thought provoking, exact, and objective. The book goes beyond descriptive studies and offers models for addressing issues of race, culture, power, and class. I agree with the overall premises that family and community partnerships are a matter of social justice and parity. Each chapter reinforces the need to: a) expand the

administrators and teachers roles in reaching out to families, b) use evidence-based strategies for engaging diverse families, and c) use the strengths and interests of families and communities for improving schools. The research makes it clear that the benefits of authentic relationships in schools may be beneficial in addressing the overrepresentation of Native American, African American and ELL students in special education and in closing the achievement gap (Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1992; Latunde, 2009; Kunjufu, 2005; Pushor, 2007), yet remains unmatched in resources and prioritization (Auerbach, 2012).

The book suggests creating policy and programs that empower families and expanding boundaries for engagement. One model, in the chapter by Chrispeels, is the use of the social, human and intellectual capital of diverse families for improved schools. Another strategy offered is the use of strategic community partnerships. Auerbach states that in order for either of these to happen leaders have to be inspirational and provide support. The book does a good job of unmasking the tensions between mandates, relationships and power sharing. Auerbach states that despite all of its benefits family community partnerships go unmonitored and lack appropriate funding as partnerships tend to get lost among the plethora of standards and assessments. She believes this is unfortunate considering the research on involvement and student outcomes.

The book provides leaders and researchers with models of promising practices. It challenges leaders to be reflective in their practice and identify barriers schools may be erecting to partnerships. Auerbach leaves us with these final thoughts on partnerships, "Practitioners urge leadership preparation programs to focus more on developing candidates' listening, facilitation, and political skills" (p. 249). Teacher education programs must do a better job of preparing leaders to collaborate in schools, particularly with diverse families and communities. Researchers agree that partnerships need leader support, and that a posture of cultural reciprocity can help leaders develop authentic partnerships.

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